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New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate



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**University of
Northampton**

New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate

The Catalyst Fund enables The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to deliver strategic aims for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across teaching and learning, while driving innovation, collaboration, enhancing excellence and efficiency to support innovative solutions. Further information about the Catalyst Fund can be found here: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/funding/catalyst/>.

The New Spaces project was one of 60 projects to be awarded funding from HEFCE's Catalyst Fund in response to a specific policy priority. This focused on tackling sexual violence, harassment and hate crime within Higher Education Institutions. The project ran from 2017-2018 and was based at The University of Northampton, through the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice.

This project was a student-led, cross-disciplinary project and the research team involved academic staff from Law, Psychology and the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice. A number of other academic and professional staff contributed to this report and the final recommendations presented. The current report was produced by the New Spaces research team at The University of Northampton and sent to HEFCE and the University Management Team following completion of the project.

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1. Executive Summary

Sexual assault, harassment, violence and hate crime on university campuses is a prevalent and pressing concern. A recent Universities UK taskforce report recommended that urgent action in this area is needed. Universities are significant sites for implementing a joined-up approach and tackling these issues.

As a campus of Changemakers, students, inter-disciplinary researchers, professional and support staff at The University of Northampton decided to take action to address these significant and important issues, in particular within the context of a major campus move to a town centre location. As one of only 60 institutions across the country to be awarded funding from HEFCE's Catalyst fund, this 'New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate' cross collaborative project aimed to create vital partnerships in tackling sexual violence and hate crime on campus.

The aims of the project were to evaluate existing policies and develop a student-led collaborative approach to identify what currently happens when disclosures are made; staff and student perceptions, knowledge and experiences within the campus transition; as well as providing recommendations for new institutional policies, strategies and recommendations to support students in reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime. This project also contributes to HEFCE's wider work in creating guidelines and recommendations for HEIs for addressing these issues.

A survey of the published literature, as well as an evaluation of existing processes and policies at The University of Northampton were carried out within this project. Data collection involved 2 Staff and 2 student focus groups, as well as 11 interviews with members of the university management team. These were conducted to discuss staff and student experiences, what support was in place for disclosures and recommendations for future practice within the transition to the new campus. One of the student focus groups utilised photo-elicitation methods to allow students to visually conceptualise and create a new, safe campus space.

Recommendations are provided for understanding the prevalence of these issues within a campus context; tackle normative beliefs which may influence how they are perceived;

increasing knowledge and awareness of sexual violence and hate crime; implementing mechanisms for disclosure and reporting; addressing issues related to security measures and procedures; enhancing partnership working within the local community.

These recommendations have local impact and are being used to inform institutional policies and procedures at The University. Project findings are also being implemented into HEFCE's wider work and national action around these issues. Internationally, the dissemination of these findings is contributing to the limited research in this area.

The New Spaces Project Team

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2. Introduction

2.1. A Note on Spaces

The University of Northampton (UON) is preparing a major campus move - the Waterside Campus Development. This involves a move from a number of semi-rural campus locations to a new town centre campus. The campus move will also involve significant changes for staff and students in ways of working, to embed a technology enhanced, blended teaching and learning strategy, and collaborative working practices. Whilst there are many advantages to this strategy, in terms of staff student relationships, there are inevitable implications in terms of how students will access staff for more private discussions and other types of support services. This will impact how and when disclosures of experiences of abuse, harassment and violence may occur. In addition, the move to a town centre location raises new concerns about ways of keeping students and staff safe on-campus, and managing the risk of interpersonal violence and exposure to crime. This is a particular issue for Northampton, as there is a high per capita rate of violence and crime in the town at 28.8 per 1000 people. The violent crime rate is 103% of the national crime rate and Northampton is ranked 39th out of 104 postcode areas in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2018).

Therefore, there is a need to evaluate current practice in-line with sector-wide standards and enhancing existing safeguarding policies and practices to ensure they are suitable for the new context. This will include providing specific guidance for staff and students about particular forms of support and disclosure for issues related to sexual harassment, violence and hate crime. The current project proposed to build a community of practice and close collaboration with the Students' Union, student societies, student services, as well as working with existing local services (e.g. Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council, Rape Crisis, Women's Aid, and Voice) to build an effective university response to safeguarding issues. This includes building a strong, collective understanding of the importance of disclosure and responses to disclosure, between academic staff, administration and management, and the Students' Union, students and other student organisations.

2.2. Background and Context

2.2.1 Legal Context

The main legal framework affecting universities in relation to sexual violence and harassment is in two parts

1. Civil law responsibilities under Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010) and health and safety legislation.
2. Criminal liability and obligations to students arising from this.

Civil Law: The Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010) focuses on two aspects. Firstly, it provides protection for employees and students from discrimination and harassment based on sex. Secondly it requires that universities (as a public authority) are proactive in promoting gender equality under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 EA 2010). Section 11 of the EA 2010 provides the definition of the protected characteristic of sex which focuses on biological features and covers both men and women. Section 7 of the EA 2010 also provides protection for transsexuals.

For the purposes of this report, the main relevant section of the EA 2010 is s26. This states that:

“(1) A person (A) harasses another (B) if—

(a) A engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, and

(b) the conduct has the purpose or effect of—

(i) violating B's dignity, or

(ii) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for B.

(2) A also harasses B if—

(a) A engages in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and

(b) the conduct has the purpose or effect referred to in subsection (1)(b).”

This provision means that institutions are required to have in place appropriate policies and procedures which ensure that any incidents of harassment between staff and of students by the institution are appropriately dealt with. A failure to have in place appropriate policies

and procedures can lead to institutions being held vicariously liable for the actions of their staff. The EA 2010 also applies to Students' Unions as service providers and employers.

In addition to the provisions on harassment, which are essentially reactive, the EA 2010 also has provisions requiring universities to be proactive in the elimination of discrimination and harassment. The general duty can be found under s149 EA 2010 which states that;

“(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.”

This means that universities are required to demonstrate that they have taken proactive steps which address the general duty. This includes steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment based on sex. There are also a number of specific duties as set out in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. These include the need to publish equality data relating to their employees and anyone affected by their policies (i.e. students and visitors etc) (s2), and set one or more SMART objectives (s3). Section 149 is potentially further reaching than the harassment provisions, as this section would also include eliminating harassment between students and students harassing staff. Once again, Students' Unions would also fall under this provision.

In addition to legislation relating to harassment specifically, there are a number of pieces of legislation which relate to health and safety, which also create obligations on employers to ensure that there is a safe working environment for its employees and contractors. This also applies to universities and a failure to adequately protect staff from harassment by other staff members and students could therefore amount to a breach of these provisions. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA 1974) requires employers to ensure, as

far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees. As hate crime/incidents, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence can have significant impact on both the physical and mental wellbeing of staff, universities are under an obligation to put in place steps to prevent hate crimes/incidents, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

Finally, as universities are Public Authorities, they also have statutory obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998), which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK domestic law. This means that universities have an obligation to protect the rights of staff and students as contained in the ECHR. Some of the main rights which would be relevant in this context are; Article 2 (the right to life)¹, Article 3 (prohibition of torture)², Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life)³, Article 13 (right to an effective remedy)⁴ and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination)⁵. A failure to have adequate processes and protection in place may therefore also mean universities are in breach of their human rights obligations and legal challenges could result as a consequence of a failure to uphold and protect these rights.

Criminal Law: Essentially, the law in relation to sexual violence is governed by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Act sets out the requirements of the crime. A definitive sentencing guideline on sexual offences was also issued by The Sentencing Council (2014), which applies to offenders sentenced on or after 14th May 2007. In relation to rape, The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003) specifies that “(1) A person (A) commits an offence if (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents...”. Furthermore, in relation to a sexual assault “(1) A person (A) commits an

¹ This may come into play in the most extreme cases of sexual violence.

² See the case of *Aydin v. Turkey*, 57/1996/676/866, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, 25 September 1997 in which it was decided that rape could amount to torture.

³ This includes autonomy in decision making and the right to live with dignity and the right to physical and psychological integrity.

⁴ This may be relevant where a public authority or the State fails to investigate or take appropriate action where allegations of sexual violence or harassment have been made.

⁵ Although not a stand-alone right, as sexual violence and harassment is gendered, there is potential issue of sex discrimination which could be raised in conjunction with other Convention rights.

offence if (a) he intentionally touches another person (B), (b) the touching is sexual, (c) B does not consent to the touching, and (d) A does not reasonably believe that B consents...”.

When dealing with student misconduct, universities often refer to the so-called Zellick guidelines (formerly The Final Report of the Task Force on Student Disciplinary Procedures) produced in 1994, which provides advice on handling circumstances where a student’s alleged misconduct may also constitute a criminal offence (Zellick, 1994). This report was created by a taskforce comprising of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals, after a high-profile case involving a student, Austen Donellan, was accused of rape in 1992 by another student (National Union of Students, 2015). Essentially, the guidelines were introduced to provide clarity on how universities should respond to sexual allegations, as Donellan was suspended from university but was subsequently found not guilty of the rape in court. He therefore brought a legal challenge against Kings College London for their decision to suspend him, which resulted in the university having to pay significant damages (National Union of Students, 2015).

The Zellick guidelines specify that rape and sexual assault should not be investigated via the university’s internal disciplinary procedure “...regardless of whether or not the victim has any intention of reporting to the police or the preference for either party of an internal investigation” (Zellick Report, 1994 s.12-14 cited in National Union of Students, 2015). With regards to the university’s obligation to report matters to the police, the guidelines state that the incident should not be reported to the police without the consent of the victim. It is only in “exceptional circumstances”⁶ that the university should report an alleged crime to the police contrary to the wishes of the victim (Zellick Report, 1994 s.22 cited in National Union of Students, 2015). Nevertheless, universities are recommended to encourage the student to report the incident to the police. There is also the view that universities should report incidents of sexual violence as the university may face criticism from failure to do so, especially if there are further allegations made against the student (National Union of Students, 2015). Although this advice appears rather contradictory and unclear, the Zellick

⁶ For example when it appears that significant violence has been used which exposes others to danger, or where there have been similar allegations in the past which likewise suggest a risk to other persons. (Zellick Report, 1994 s.22).

guidelines are not statutory and the ultimate decision lies with the university and the Vice Chancellor (Zellick Report, 1994 s.18 cited in National Union of Students, 2015).

Nevertheless, there have been calls for these “much-criticised rules” to be reviewed (The Guardian, 2016). In 2016, Universities UK produced a report examining violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students. A range of concerns were highlighted regarding the Zellick guidelines. Fundamentally, the guidelines did not “...reflect important legislative changes, such as the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998, and the development of legislation, guidance and case law which views students as ‘consumers’” (Greatrix, 2016). In essence, the guidelines were too simplistic and outdated. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that they also did not reflect the institutions’ duty of care, changes in technology, or recent case law which established that universities can invoke disciplinary proceedings on the balance of probabilities. The welfare of students was also highlighted as not being the guideline’s main concern, in that it focused too heavily on protecting institutions rather than supporting students. Additionally, it was highlighted that the approach set out in the guidelines could actually discourage students from reporting incidents involving sexual violence.

Consequently, in October 2016, Universities UK published new guidance for higher education institutions on how to handle alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence. The guidance states that the enforcement of disciplinary actions and the handling of student misconduct should be dealt with in a contractual context, given that students are recognised as consumers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015. The report advises that institutions should publish a code of conduct (in accordance with further recommendations from the report), and a disciplinary procedure. There are various legal obligations a university has to adhere to in relation to its students. For example, the institution must exercise a duty of care, perform various contractual obligations, and abide by the principles of natural justice. These duties and obligations must also comply with equality and human rights laws. Furthermore, universities must balance the rights and interests of students in cases where allegations are made by one student against another, as the same duties and responsibility to protect students from harm are owed to both students involved.

If the incident of student misconduct constitutes a criminal offence the guidance advises that the criminal process must take priority over the internal disciplinary procedure. From a procedural perspective, the nature of an internal disciplinary process and the criminal process are fundamentally different. The criminal process is dealt with externally and focuses on the alleged criminal act of the student, which must be proven beyond reasonable doubt. In contrast, within an internal disciplinary procedure, the allegation must be proven on the balance of probabilities as it is a civil matter. With regards to the alleged criminal offence, there is generally no legal requirement for the university to report the incident to the police (with the exception of some offences, such as suspected money laundering and terrorist activity). Additionally, similarly to the Zellick guidelines, the new guidance recommends that the university should “...allow the victim to decide whether or not to report the matter to the police” with this only being disregarded in “exceptional circumstances” (Universities UK, 2016). For example, the university may disclose information to the police if it is necessary to protect the victim or others from harm, or to prevent the student from committing a further crime. However, the guidance acknowledges that an unauthorised disclosure of information may cause distress to the student and potentially damage the relationship of confidence between the victim and institution. Moreover, the disclosure of information must be justifiable by the university under the Data Protection Act 1998⁷. Therefore, it is advised that an assessment is made on a case-by-case basis about whether to report the incident to the police.

A former Manchester University student, Eleanor Muffit, alleged that she was sexually assaulted by another student whilst she was a fresher. Eleanor claimed that her university pressured her to report the incident to the police, and that no support was offered or action taken by the university in the interim. Although the other student was acquitted at trial, Eleanor did not know whether the university took internal action against the other student. They also would not tell her whether he still remained a student at the institution. Therefore, Eleanor decided to permanently withdraw from the university and did not complete her degree (The Telegraph, 2015). Similarly, Elizabeth Ramey claimed that she was raped whilst she was a graduate student at Oxford University. She reported the incident

⁷ Now General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

to her college, but was informed that she would need to report it to the police before the university could take any action. Elizabeth was reluctant to do so, but went through a criminal investigation regarding the incident in order for the university to conduct its own internal disciplinary procedure. However, the university refused to send the case for adjudication after the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute (The Telegraph, 2015). Elizabeth therefore filed a complaint against the university and took it to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator of Higher Education. Her case was supported by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the End Violence Against Women Coalition. However “...the high court declined to give her permission to bring a full judicial review challenge” given that Oxford University had since amended its policy and Elizabeth did not have her complaint dealt with under the new policy (The Telegraph, 2015).

A survey conducted by The Telegraph 2015, found that one in three undergraduate female students had experienced a sexual assault during their time at university. Of this sample, it was further reported that 97% did not report the assault to their institution, with 44% claiming that they failed to do so because they thought that their university would not take action. What's more, it was reported that “fewer than half of elite universities in Britain are monitoring the extent of sexual violence against students.” It was also established that there is a lack of guidance in relation to reporting allegations and making complaints within one in five of the Russell Group universities (The Guardian, 2015). It is therefore clear that more needs to be done in relation to the implementation of relevant policies and procedures regarding student misconduct which constitutes a criminal offence. It is also fundamental that ‘safe spaces’ are created and available for students, along with restoring student confidence in relation to their institution’s reporting system.

2.2.2 Higher Education Context

Sexual violence and harassment on university campuses are not a new concern, but a widespread issue which has a detrimental effect on student health, wellbeing and attainment (Association of American Universities, 2015; Halstead, Williams, & Gonzalez-Guarda, 2017; National Union of Students (NUS), 2010; Towl & Crighton, 2016; Universities UK Taskforce, 2016). Universities are part of an important, transitional period for young people, but one associated with change, experimentation, risky behaviour and exposure to

novel social situations (Lorant, Nicaise, Soto, & d'Hoore, 2013). This makes universities significant sites for action for tackling sexual violence, not only because they have a duty to provide safe and positive university experiences during this time, but also because of the paucity of research focusing on campuses within the United Kingdom (Phipps & Smith, 2012; Public Health England, 2016; Universities UK Taskforce, 2016). Much of the existing research in this area focuses on colleges within the United States (US), where on-campus sexual violence, harassment and assault are major concerns and have much a higher profile (Lewis, Marine & Kenney, 2016; Phipps & Smith, 2012; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Ministry of Justice Home Office & Office for National Statistics, 2013).

The prevalence of on-campus sexual violence and assaults within UK Higher Education institutions (HEIs) is only just becoming apparent. For example, a small but growing body of literature has suggested that the issue is just as prevalent and widespread on UK campuses (Freeman & Klein, 2012; Lewis et al., 2016; National Union of Students (NUS), 2014; Phipps & Smith, 2012; Phipps & Young, 2013). Limited work also focuses on students' perceptions of alcohol-related sexual trauma, despite research suggesting it is a common part of university and college life (Abbey, 2002; Abbey, Clinton-Sherrod, McAuslan, Zawacki, & Buck, 2003; Abbey & Jacques-Tiura, 2011; Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996; Abbey et al., 2001; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004; Jozkowski, 2015; Ward, Matthews, Weiner, Hogan, & Popson, 2012). Alcohol is estimated to be involved in almost 50% of reported sexual assault incidences and further complicates consent situations, because it reduces the ability to perceive risk, or to give and gauge sexual consent (Abbey et al., 1996; Abbey et al., 2001, 2004). Research has highlighted risk factors associated with the misperception of sexual intent (Abbey & Jacques-Tiura, 2011; Jacques-Tiura, Abbey, Parkhill, & Zawacki, 2007; Stormo, Lang, & Stritzke, 1997), whilst identifying young people's expectations regarding alcohol-related sexual activity (Stormo et al., 1997). For example, not only are women generally seen as more promiscuous simply by holding a drink, but victims are generally seen as responsible if under the influence of alcohol at the time of the assault. In contrast, perpetrators are seen as less blameworthy if intoxicated. Due to these findings and the high prevalence of sexual offences involving alcohol, there is a strong need for research to understand and prevent these types of harms within the UK student population.

Despite the paucity of research in UK, there has been some critical feminist research which has considered the so called 'Lad Culture' which, it is suggested, has played a role in this overall problematic culture within universities. Lad culture is defined as a set of attitudes that have a pack-like mentality where alcohol consumption is high, sport is played, and the 'banter' that unfolds is misogynistic, racist, sexist and homophobic (Cosslett, 2014). Research from within both the UK and US has suggested that both 'rape' and 'lad cultures', with their associated objectification of women and misogynist banter, exist as part of the normative fabric of most HEIs (Lewis et al., 2016; National Union of Students (NUS), 2014; Phipps, Ringrose, Renold, & Jackson, 2017; Phipps & Young, 2013; Phipps & Young, 2015). It has been argued that a dominant factor in the treatment of women is the acceptance of patriarchy in society, where gender roles are widely assumed and accepted (Bretz, 2014). This implies masculine dominance, which due to societal standards where men have to exert dominance, become an excuse to dehumanise women (Bretz, 2014). In addition to this, the media plays a role in the type of masculinity that is portrayed, accepted and normalised in universities. Images of men who are sexually promiscuous, aggressive, controlling of women and misogynistic have, to some extent, 'normalised' the use of sexual violence against women (Beynon, 2002).

Lad Culture is considered to be a form of 'masculinity', which dominates the social and sexual aspects of students' lives, causing a variety of problems in terms of sexual and physical health, acceptance into university clubs, financial issues and bullying (Phipps & Young, 2015). This usually occurs during 'initiations', whereby new students are put through 'forced humiliation', otherwise they are not able to join a particular sports club/group (Phipps & Young, 2015). Within universities what is considered masculine is determined by an alcohol fuelled, violent, sexist and misogynistic set of attitudes towards women (Edwards, 2006). Links between lad culture and sexual assault on campus are now starting to be explored and, due to this culture being widely accepted as part of university life, research suggests it is something that students come to expect (Craig, 2016).

Every year around 85,000 women and 12,000 men make a referral to the Rape Crisis Centre; of which only 5.7% of these results in a conviction; the lowest out of any other crime (Rape Crisis England and Wales, 2017). Sexual violence is a multi-faceted issue that is detrimental

to the mental and physical wellbeing of the victims (Brown & Walklate, 2012). Victims often do not report being sexually harassed, assaulted or raped for a multitude of reasons, including emotional responses of embarrassment, shame, guilt, anger and fear (Sable, Danis, Mauzy & Gallagher, 2006). In addition, research from the US has noted that there are also issues of the fears of not being taken seriously, that the crime was not 'serious enough' to be reported; that family and friends will find out; feelings that there was a lack of proof/evidence, fear out of reprisal and guilt, and fear of the criminal justice system.⁸

Recently within the UK, there has been some progressive work in this area. This includes a review of the limited available evidence by Public Health England (2016), a report of existing on-campus sexual violence interventions by the Universities UK Taskforce (2016), as well as a review of the so-called 'Zellick' (1994) guidelines, which advise universities how to deal with criminal misconduct allegations by students. While these reports have identified some effective prevention work within UK HEIs, particularly around bystander and educational approaches, most conclude that urgent action is required to tackle this issue. In 2016, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) released Catalyst funding for projects which seek to address sexual harassment on UK campuses. This has led to pockets of action taking place within some UK HEIs, but there is still some way to go before effective intervention work is in place across HE. This is partly due to the lack of action by HEIs, as well as the limited efficacy of existing prevention interventions in this area (Crighton & Towl, 2007; Ministry of Justice Home Office & Office for National Statistics, 2013; Towl, 2016).

It has been suggested that the poor responses to these issues by UK HEIs may be due to tensions between institutional duty of care, self-preservation and longstanding, embedded norms which actually condone on-campus sexual violence (Freeman & Klein, 2012; Lewis et al., 2016; Phipps & Young, 2013; Smith & Freyd, 2013; Towl, 2016; Hill & Crofts, *in prep*). This work suggests that the suppression or under-reporting of these incidences could also be due to HEIs attempting to preserve their reputation in competitive HE landscapes. Much of this literature also notes that changes within HE have led to the restructuring and centralisation of valuable university services, but that this does not account for the

⁸ See for example: Kilpatrick et al., 2007; M. Planty & L. Langton, 2013; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2010

additional reduction in funding for external support services and charities. Importantly, existing procedures may cause additional suffering to victims, by undermining offences or increasing barriers to reporting. It is now more important than ever to tackle these issues, as many students be prevented from accessing valuable support or guidance.

A year on from Universities UK's 'Changing the Culture' Taskforce and, following HEFCE's announcement of a Catalyst fund for projects to improve HEI's responses to reports of sexual violence and hate crime on campus, a conference was held to discuss recent legislative changes, showcase existing measures and projects that had been implemented, as well as sharing best practice and identifying future actions to be taken. The event was called 'Combatting Violence Against Women and Harassment on Campus' and was hosted by Westminster Briefing on the 25th October 2017 and chaired by Dr Pam Aldred, Reader in Education & Youth Work Studies, Brunel University. Members of the project team, along with representatives from Student Services⁹ at the University of Northampton, attended the event and contributed to the discussions and actions raised, many of which have been highlighted as examples of best practices in section 9 of this report.

2.2.3. The University of Northampton Context, Police Data and Review of Institutional Policies

This section of the report will focus on local police and data and an informal review of institutional policies related to these issues. This section will end with a summary of actions taken by the project team to address the emerging findings from this work.

a) Prevalence

The university currently collects minimal data on these types of incidences, other than those that are formally reported through currently available channels. As will be shown in the findings of this report, a number of members of senior management at the university have mentioned that there are very few cases currently being reported, despite staff and students discussing how prevalent they are. There is a strong need for the university to develop processes and procedures for collecting this information, in order to inform future prevention interventions.

⁹ Thank you to Anna Quinn for allowing us to use her notes from the event.

In 2016, as part of the university I Heart Consent Week initiative, 171 students participated in a survey focused on their experiences of sexual violence, assault and harassment on campus. This research (Hill & Crofts, *in review*) was one of the first indicators of prevalence related to these behaviours. In-line with published results from the National Union of Students and from other institutions, 1 in 5 students at the university had personal experiences of these types of incidences. The following data highlights are taken from this previous study, which outlines both personal experiences and data for incidences students at The University of Northampton have observed directed at other students:

25.73% of students experienced unwelcome sexual advances (**12.28%** observed directed at others)

25.15% sexual comments (**32.75%** observed directed at others)

10.53% verbal harassment (**23.39%** observed directed at others)

8.77% group intimidation (**16.37%** observed directed at others)

Within this sample, less than half of these students **45.03%** had not experienced sexual violence, harassment or hate crime themselves. **64.91%** of students did not know where to seek advice, but many approached a personal academic tutor or a trusted tutor. This research also identified that most students would not report these incidences due to confidence issues, safety concerns, not being believed and limited faith in existing university reporting mechanisms. Findings suggested consent is poorly understood by students, particularly when alcohol and the law is involved. The existing 'I Heart Consent' week was valued by students as it is seen to change the normative culture within the university, increases knowledge and provides students with vital information about support services. It is recommended that consent initiatives such as this need to be supported and managed centrally by the university of the Students' Union, with a clear identity and related, ongoing campaigns.

b) Police Data

The project team requested information from Northamptonshire Police on recorded offences relating to sexual violence, harassment and hate crime on campus during the previous 3 years, prior to the current project starting. Outlined below are the findings from

this request which suggest that, much like within other Higher Education Institutions, these types of incidences are prevalent at the University and increasing. Importantly, under-reporting is common and estimates suggest only 20% of cases are recorded, so the actual likelihood is much higher. There are also issues with how the data below are reported and particularly those related to 'other', which are not limited to, but could include offences such as sexual assault and voyeurism. In addition, it should be noted that the vast majority students tend to only be on campus for around 8 months of the year and this should also be born in mind when considering the 12 month data as presented.

March 2017 – March 2018:

9 Recorded Offences - 6 Sexual Offences Other; 2 Stalking/Harassment; 1 Rape.

March 2016 – March 2017:

4 Recorded Offences - 1 Sexual Offence Other; 1 Stalking/Harassment; 2 Rape.

March 2015 – March 2016

2 Recorded Offences - 1 Sexual Offence Other; 1 Stalking/Harassment.

This, coupled with the findings of the current project and data presented below suggests that urgent action is required to address these issues.

c) Policy and Procedural Review

An informal policy and procedural review has also been carried out by members of student support services, with the project team. Issues were raised about existing policies, such as the Student Code of Conduct, which does not list sexual violence as an unacceptable

behaviour, or include a definition of misconduct. The only reference to possible breach of the Code of Conduct which could be relevant is set out in the figure (see figure on right - accessed 28/7/18):

However, although this refers to harassment, this does not make clear that the issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence and assault are more specific than harassment and bullying

generally. This distinction should be incorporated into the Student Code of Conduct. This suggests that the University's stance and commitment to tackling sexual misconduct remains unclear. It was also not possible to find the 'Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy' referred to here.

There is a procedure for reporting harassment which can be accessed via the University's webpages. If you search for "reporting sexual assault", the harassment reporting form appears as the third item in the search results, as demonstrated in the screen shot (see figure right - accessed 28/7/18):

It is not entirely clear that if you have been sexually assaulted that this is the correct form to use. If you click on the link, it takes you to the reporting form, however, once again, this does not make it clear what would amount to

General Student Regulations - Student Code of Conduct Accessibility Mode Immersive Reader

Breach of policies and regulations

- f) Bullies, assaults or harasses any fellow student, member of University staff or visitor to the University or engages in any other form of harassment including cyber-bullying or discrimination relating to a person's race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or political beliefs, disability or marital status or any other individual or group characteristics. This includes verbal abuse towards fellow students, staff or visitors. Such behaviour will lead to use of the Disciplinary Policy. (For further guidance on these matters and hate incidents see the Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy).
- g) Deliberately misuses or damages any learning materials, equipment, furniture, fittings or property belonging to or under the control of the University or the property of any student or member of University staff.
- h) Misappropriates any funds or assets of the University.
- i) Commits any breach of University regulations specific to support services, including Information Services, Residential Hall agreements or any other University facilities and locations.
- j) Invades or abuses or attempts to abuse the security, integrity or privacy of any files or confidential material (including those held within the University's computerised data banks).
- k) Is found guilty whilst a student of the University of any criminal offence such as will damage the good name of the University or

Your search for reporting sexual assault returned 74 results

[Journalism students take on the challenge of General Election reporting](#)

NEWS 7th June 2017

Journalism students from the University of Northampton will get first-hand experience of political reporting as they take on the task of delivering live updates from the General Election, as part of the Broadcast Journalism Training Council (BJTC) overnight radio feed. After the polling stations close at 10pm on Thursday 8 June, the students will spend the night networking with professional journalists and politicians to deliver up to the minute results...

[Students learn about financial reporting from the world's richest football club](#)

NEWS 29th November 2017

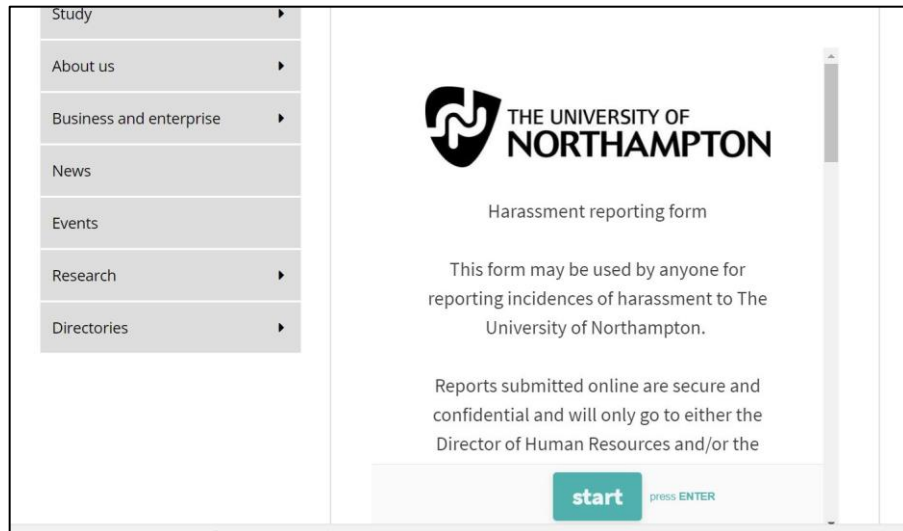
Accounting and Finance students from the University of Northampton had the opportunity to learn about how one of the premier football clubs Manchester United manages its finances when they took a visit to Old Trafford. Named as the 'world's richest club' by Deloitte's Football Money League, the students were given an insight into the unique way that the football industry reports on its finances so they could gain a more...

[Harassment reporting form](#)

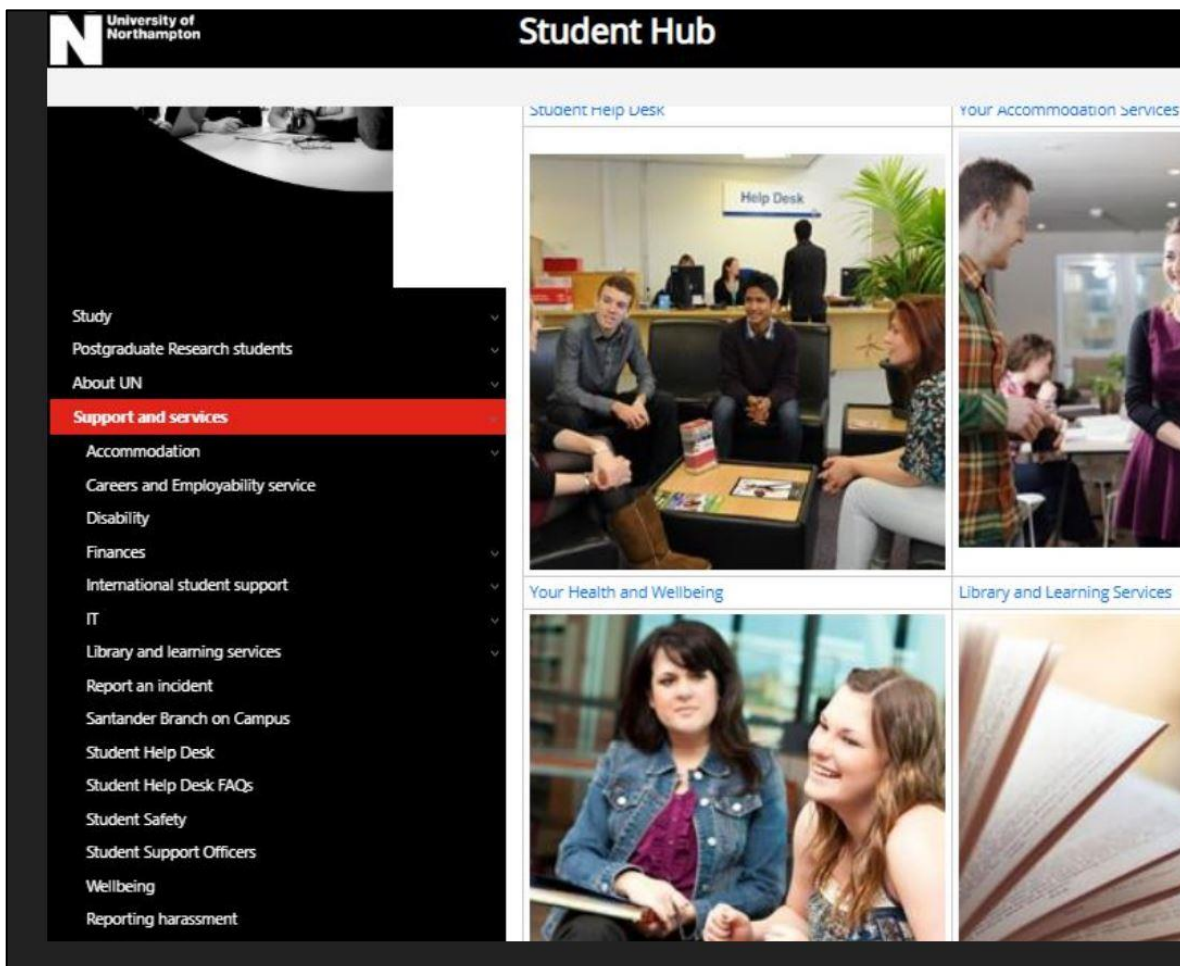
other

```
(function(){var qs,js,q,s,d=document,gi=d.getElementById,ce=d.createElement,gt=d.getElementsByTagName,id='typef_orm',eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/share/typeform.com";if(!gi.call(d,id))js=ce.call(d,"script");js.id=id;js.src=b+"widget.js?q=gt;call(d,'script')[0];q.parentNode.insertBefore(js,q)})();
```

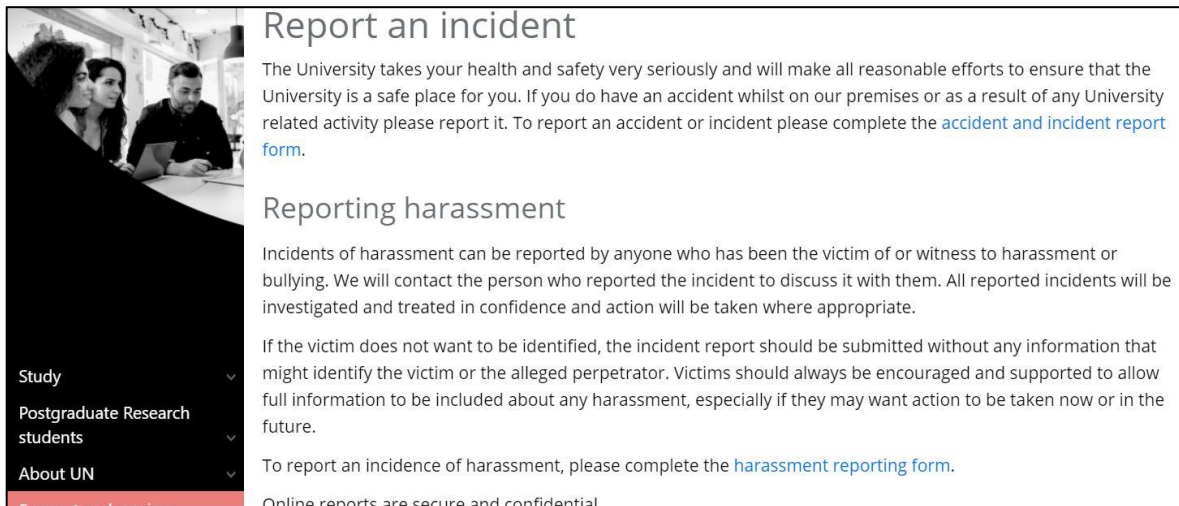
‘incidents of harassment’ and therefore a victim of sexual assault or sexual harassment may not automatically associate this form as the correct method of reporting such incidents (see figure on right - accessed 28/7/18):



In relation to the information which is available for students, the online harassment reporting form is also available via the Student Hub under the ‘Support and services’ tab on the left hand side, as is illustrated in the following screen shot (see figure below - accessed 28/7/18):



If you click on the 'Reporting harassment' link the information which is provided is as follows (see figure below - accessed 28/7/18):



The screenshot shows a webpage with a dark sidebar on the left containing navigation links: 'Study', 'Postgraduate Research students', and 'About UN'. The main content area has a white background. At the top left of the main area is a photograph of three people (two women and one man) sitting at a table, looking at a laptop. To the right of the photo is the heading 'Report an incident' followed by a paragraph: 'The University takes your health and safety very seriously and will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the University is a safe place for you. If you do have an accident whilst on our premises or as a result of any University related activity please report it. To report an accident or incident please complete the [accident and incident report form](#).' Below this is the heading 'Reporting harassment' followed by two paragraphs. The first paragraph states: 'Incidents of harassment can be reported by anyone who has been the victim of or witness to harassment or bullying. We will contact the person who reported the incident to discuss it with them. All reported incidents will be investigated and treated in confidence and action will be taken where appropriate.' The second paragraph states: 'If the victim does not want to be identified, the incident report should be submitted without any information that might identify the victim or the alleged perpetrator. Victims should always be encouraged and supported to allow full information to be included about any harassment, especially if they may want action to be taken now or in the future.' Below the second paragraph is a third paragraph: 'To report an incidence of harassment, please complete the [harassment reporting form](#).' At the bottom of the main content area, there is a small line of text: 'Online reports are secure and confidential'.

Once again, this information is not specifically about reporting incidents of sexual assault or sexual harassment and the link with bullying may also add to the lack of clarity regarding whether this is in fact the correct information and reporting mechanism for these incidents.

In addition to using the above harassment reporting form, a student can also make a complaint via the 'Dealing with Bullying and Harassment: Policy for Students'. This policy can be located in the Student Hub on the University website under 'Policies, Procedures and Regulations' and it falls under the 'Student issues' heading, which is about half way down the page. In relation to the specific issue of sexual harassment, the policy states that:

"4.6 ...University's Equality and Inclusion Policy and Procedure which should be consulted if an incident of bullying or harassment appears to be related to a protected characteristic.

4.9 Sexual harassment

Any student who wishes to report an incident of sexual harassment is asked to follow this policy. Where sexual harassment is being investigated the staff involved will ensure they are sensitive to the issues at hand.

4.10 Criminal offences

It should be noted that certain incidents of harassment may render individuals liable to prosecution under criminal law. In cases where a criminal offence may have been

committed (e.g. harassing phone calls, physical assault, indecent exposure or rape) you should contact the Police at the first opportunity. Only you can report an offence to the Police – though the University will offer support, it cannot do this on your behalf.”

Once again, there is very little by way of information and support where a student wants to report an incident of sexual harassment and no recognition of problems associated with power dynamics if a student is reporting an incident against a member of staff, particularly an academic member of staff. The section on ‘Criminal offences’ also appears to absolve the institution of responsibility for dealing with the complaint under its own policies and procedures by suggesting that a complainant should report the matter to the police. As has been highlighted previously, there may be numerous reasons why a student may not wish to take this route and the institution is still under an obligation to investigate a complaint even if it is not reported to the police. Again, such issues should be made clear in the information which is provided to students. It is also not clear anywhere in the policies what would happen to the alleged perpetrator of an offence, without having to look at the copious numbers of policies which are listed at the end of the document in question. (See figure below - accessed 28/7/18):

<p>6.0 Links to related UN Policies/Guidance/Regulations</p> <p>General Student Regulations - Student Code of Conduct; Student Partnership Agreement http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Student+Obs+R+and+R&submit=Search</p> <p>Student Complaints Policy http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Stuiss+SC&submit=Search</p> <p>Student Disciplinary Policy http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Stuiss+SDp&submit=Search</p> <p>Fitness to Practise Policy http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Stuiss+FTP&submit=Search</p> <p>Admissions policy documents http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/searchresult.aspx?Search=&Title=&Description=Admissions+Rules+and+Regs&submit=Search</p> <p>Strategic Plan 2015-20 http://www.northampton.ac.uk/Downloads/Strategic%20Plan%202015-2020.pdf</p> <p>Equality and Inclusion Policy (http://tundrasearch.northampton.ac.uk/results/showimage.aspx?index=1756134)</p> <p>Students' Union statement on its approach to situations involving sexual harassment</p> <p>PREVENT Duty and Safeguarding Guidelines</p> <p>Staff policies that can be downloaded from</p>

Finally, there are no university processes which focus particularly on safeguarding, or informing students of their reporting options internally via university mechanisms or externally to the police or Local Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC). There is a strong need for work by Student Services and related teams to ensure disclosures of sexual violence are handled sensitively and efficiently, but university support for the development and implementation of reporting, signposting and safeguarding mechanisms. The university does not currently have a joined-up approach across teams and external agencies (e.g. Northampton Police, Northampton Rape Crisis, Serenity) to facilitate appropriate referrals, inform best practice and provide training to front line staff in how to refer, signpost and support students.

The policies and procedures relating to reporting incidents of sexual harassment and assault are not clear and located in numerous policies and procedures which a student would be expected to look for. There is no clear link or information in relation to the harassment reporting form and the specific issues of sexual assault and harassment, nor is there any signposting to specific support services. The guidance is unclear and sometimes could put off a student from reporting an incident to the University (for example stressing the need to report to the police). There needs to be a clear section relating to sexual assault and harassment on the website and Student Hub containing all the information needed for reporting incidents, what will happen following a report and support and referral mechanisms.

3. Aims and Research Questions

The primary aim of the project was to evaluate existing policies and procedures, then enhance or develop new institutional policies and strategies to support students in reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime. To this end, the project was a student-led collaborative initiative, which aimed to identify what currently happens when disclosures are made at The University of Northampton, what good practice exists and how existing practice can be enhanced. The project team investigated and triangulated the views and experiences of both students and staff working in many different areas of the University. The focus of this research was on the transition to the university's new urban campus. The findings of this project were used to produce a data-led, robust set of recommendations regarding policies, staff training and support packages to enable appropriate and effective responses to the disclosures of harassment, hate crime, sexual abuse and sexual violence.

This programme of research addressed the following research questions:

1. How do staff and students conceptualise harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime, based on their experiences?
2. What is a 'safe' space for university staff and students? How do existing campuses and notions of the new campus fit into this representation?
3. What knowledge do staff and students have about the prevalence, nature and reporting of harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime on campus?
4. What is the perceived efficacy and impact of existing on-campus practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime?
5. What recommendations would students and staff make for improving existing procedures, policies and practices of disclosure, particularly within the move to the new campus?

4. Methods

Data for this project was collected from a number of sources. This included focus groups with staff and students, as well as interviews with the University's Management Team (UMT). Similar topics, related to the above research questions above, were covered within each focus group and in interviews with participants. In addition to this, an additional focus group was conducted with students which involved in-depth photo elicitation and photovoice techniques.

4.1. Recruitment and Sampling

Participants (both staff and students) were recruited via an open call using virtual learning environment sites, email, an internal university newsletter, announcements at relevant staff and student facing committees, subject-based research participation panels, Students' Union subject specific societies and other relevant University social media channels (e.g. Facebook/Twitter pages). Participants for the photovoice groups were recruited at the end of the first focus group.

There were no particular criteria with regards to staff and student participants required for both stages of research, as we were looking to recruit both male and female adults of varying ages. Due to the importance and inclusivity of this research, we wanted to ensure that all staff and students could participate.

Table 1: Staff Focus Groups – Participant information

Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2
7 Participants	6 Participants
7 Female	5 Female 1 Male
6 White 1 Mixed Heritage 1 European Heritage	5 White 1 Asian Heritage 1 European Heritage

Table 2: University Management Team Interviews – Participant Information

11 Participants
7 Female
4 Male
10 White
1 South American Heritage

Table 3: Student Focus Group and Photovoice Group – Participant Information

4 Participants
3 Female
1 Male
Ethnicity Data was not recorded for the Photovoice focus groups

4.2. Methods for Data Collection

4.2.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups involved a flexible guided discussion focused around the topic of interest. Because of its semi-structured nature, the interview schedule was designed for the interviewer to follow the respondents' interests. During the focus group, participants had the opportunity to be active and engaged in the research process through its dynamic, generative and interactive nature. The group facilitator, an experienced researcher, stimulated interaction between participants and participants were given the opportunity to discuss, debate, agree and disagree with each other, producing a lively, interactive encounter (Wilkinson, 1999). A trained student member of the research team participated as the co-moderator, acting as a second pair of eyes. Their role involved taking notes, observing very closely and paying particular attention to group dynamics. After the end of the focus group, co-moderators delivered a summary to the research team. The interactive nature of focus groups elicited a wide range of views, perspectives and experiences. This

method enabled participants to have significant influence on the interview agenda, allowing them to talk to each other, as well as to the moderator (MacDougall & Fudge, 2001). Focus group data was recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. The duration of the focus group sessions was generally around one hour and a half.

4.2.2. Photovoice

Photovoice technique (Harper, 2012) is a participatory method which employs photography and group discussion (based on the stories of the photographs) as a means for members of a focus group to deepen their understanding of the issue. It creates a power-sharing form of research and enables the communication of valuable information, because participants are empowered to reveal their experiences from behind the lens.

This method involved two stages:

In stage 1 and at the end of the student focus groups, participants were introduced to the photovoice methodology. Students who agreed to participate in a follow-up photovoice focus group were asked to take photos university spaces that have a specific meaning to them (for example, spaces that makes them feel safe/unsafe; spaces that are either a context for action and a source of identities; places where they can get support; places where their identities are fully endorsed or need to be hidden etc). Students were instructed to take photographs of the campus space and not of individuals and full ethical considerations were adhered to. In cases where the photos included individuals who were currently occupying the space, the research team ensured that all photographs which had identifiable information were removed from them. Participants were asked to select the photos they felt were the most significant to them. Some participants used their own devices to capture these images and sent their photographs to the researcher who uploaded the photographs to a secure project e-folder for sharing with other participants in the focus group.

In stage 2, students entered the focus group with their own data and topics for discussion and were in control of the group process. This promoted a student-led discussion and participants were not directed by the researcher (Mannay, 2016).

The photovoice focus group discussion consisted of two phases:

Phase 1 involved the facilitation of sharing and contextualising of images. Each participant spoke about each photograph she/he had taken detailing:

1. What is happening in the photo (what do you see here?)
2. Why did you take the photo?
3. How does this photo make you feel?
4. Why do you feel that this is an important space to document?
5. How is this space connected to the general topic of the research?

Phase 2 - Once all of the participants had shared their photographs and stories, they engaged in data analysis, discussing and critically reflecting on the photographs.

Discussions were recorded using a Dictaphone, transcribed. The duration of each photovoice group was approximately 1 hour.

4.2.3. Interviews

The interviews with members of the University's Management Team (UMT) were conducted using a semi-structured approach. This method facilitates the process of establishing rapport with participants and the interviewer was then free to probe emergent areas of interest (Smith, 1995). The research team decided to conduct interviews with UMT members as it was felt that this sub-group of staff members were responsible for developing and implementing the policies under investigation.

Semi-structured interview schedules were carefully developed in correspondence and consultation with staff, students and the research team. These schedules were used for both the focus group and the interview study. The questions included were relevant to the project aims and the nature of this study. Participants were invited to discuss their views and opinions about the scale, nature and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime on these campuses and talk about their own representations of safe spaces. They were also asked about their knowledge and perceptions of harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence, hate crime and were asked to recommend effective ways to manage disclosures.

During the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion the researcher followed the interview schedule, but there was scope for participants to raise issues that the researcher had not anticipated. The interview schedule was a relatively flexible 'agenda' for the interview. It included opening and closing questions and was organised in topic-based sections so that questions flowed logically.

4.3. Data Analysis

The qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis which aims to identify semantic patterns in data in the form of 'themes'. In our study, thematic analysis was used to produce sophisticated, interpretative analysis that goes beyond the obvious content (Braun & Carke, 2006). Procedurally, we followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The focus groups and interviews were transcribed and coded separately, then crosschecked by a number of different interpreters involved in the research. Cross-case analysis then investigated patterns across the data, which were grouped together according to themes and related to the key research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For the photovoice focus groups, with help from the facilitators, the participants analysed the content and context of the photographs and discussed the themes and issues that had emerged from the data. Participants drew connections between various photographs, relating their own to ones that others had taken. They codified the findings as issues to address (i.e. policies) (Wang, 1999) and each image generated many meanings (Wang et al., 1998). This analytic process, as well as the group dialogue, focused both on individual storytelling and on the group's narratives. The focus of photovoice was not to create a group consensus, but rather to present and explore the multiple experiences and realities that participants have to allow for a deeper understanding of the spaces they occupy (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005).

4.4. Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was approved by the University of Northampton's research ethics committee before the commencement of recruiting participants. Participant information sheets and consent forms were provided to the participants in advance of the focus groups and interviews. In the participant information sheets/consent forms, participants were informed of the aims and nature of the research, who was undertaking it,

funding it, its duration, their rights during and after the research, why the research was being undertaken, the possible consequences of the research, and how the results were to be disseminated. It was made clear that participants did not have to respond to specific questions if they do not wish to and that they may withdraw consent to take part in the focus groups and interviews at any point. Participants were reminded that data would be held confidentially and comments, as well as references to specific people or incidents, were anonymised. Participants were informed that anonymised data, quotes and images may be used in reports, research dissemination and other research outputs. They were also informed that, due to the nature of the group discussion, it would be difficult to withdraw data during and after the focus groups have been completed. In the event of a participant making a disclosure or providing information that they later do not want included, the research team have ensured this would be removed at the transcription stage.

We recognised that there might be sensitive issues raised within the focus group or that there was a risk that participants may make disclosures outside of the focus group. Therefore, participants were asked to keep anything discussed in the room confidential, not to disclose information from others and were reminded of the conduct expected of them when consenting to take part and before the focus groups began. In addition to this, as part of the project, the project team worked with both Northampton Rape Crisis and Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council, so that if disclosures of either sexual violence or hate crimes were made, appropriate signposting could occur. In case of participants experiencing physical or psychological distress/ discomfort, there were break out and private rooms booked so that individuals could leave the focus group settings at any time, or leave the study completely. Participants were also signposted to services on campus, such as counselling and the mental health team, where referrals could be made if appropriate. Staff members on the project team were extremely experienced in conducting qualitative research involving sensitive issues and therefore had the appropriate training/experience to be able to deal with disclosures or discussions appropriately.

As mentioned previously, with respect to photographs, students were guided to only take photographs of public spaces without including people, branding or logos. The focus of this research was on space and participants were provided with full guidelines. The research

team blurred out faces or any identifiable information and ensured the photograph was appropriate and necessary before using it in the focus groups. Participants granted the research team permission to use their photos for publication and other possible forms of public distribution or dissemination. Data was saved in password protected folders on secure and encrypted University systems and will be destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. All research documentation, including Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms and Interview Schedule can be found in Appendices 2-7.

5. Student Focus Group Analysis

This section will provide an overview of the themes from the thematic analysis of the first student focus group. A summary of the main and subordinate themes from this analysis can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Main and Subordinate Themes from the Student Focus Group Analysis

Main Theme	Subordinate Theme
1. Representations of Space and Safety	a. Socio-cultural b. Built Environment
2. Perceptions of Prevalence, Beliefs and Disclosure	a. Student Experiences b. Normative Beliefs c. Knowledge and Disclosure
3. Recommendations for Future Practice	a. Education and Awareness b. Policies and Procedures c. Safety Measures

As can be seen in Table 4, students had clear representations of how socio-cultural aspects of space and features of the built environment related to safety. Student accounts also discussed the prevalence of sexual assault, violence, harassment and hate crime on campus, as well as social norms, their knowledge of these issues and experiences of disclosure. Finally, in their discussions about the transition to the new campus, students voiced their recommendations for increasing education and awareness around these areas, improving existing policies and procedures, as well as safety measures. The following section will describe each of these themes in turn using illustrative quotes.

5.1. Representations of Space and Safety

During the focus group discussions, students spoke at length about how different aspects of space and linked to their conceptions of safety. This theme focused in particular on a) socio-cultural aspects of space and b) the built environment.

a. Socio-cultural

Students highlighted many socio-cultural factors when discussing their representations of space in relation to safety. The space location, conceptions of place, time of day and space occupants appeared to be important factors for all students. Students felt that it was the university's responsibility to ensure the campus space in which they occupied was safe, as evidenced by the following statement:

“Because we're on site, we're on the university site, we should be here, we should be safe.” (female student)

For most students, the location of the campus space was important and, as one female student explained, the town centre in which the university was located was generally seen as “not safe” by students. There appeared to be a general conception of a safe campus in being protected and situated outside of the public realm, particularly away from the town centre location which felt unsafe for students. Students gauged how safe each university campus was based on its proximity to the town centre, as one student explained, the proximity of one campus, situated next to a town-centre park, was an issue:

“Living here for so long, I know how unsafe the [park] is, day and night, no matter what, you cannot walk in that park on your own 'cause it is that unsafe.” (female student)

Another student agreed, adding:

“You don't know what's going to happen, [the park] is pure darkness.” (male student)

When asked to elaborate, students seemed to be concerned about the number of incidences that had taken place in the town centre and within this park. Most had heard of

these reports in the local or national news, from peers or through social media. As one student explained:

“You have so many reports out of, not just on students but as a whole, of people being attacked, people being raped, sexually assault, everything in that park, it’s always that park.” (female student)

Many students felt that the current university campuses and Students’ Union venues were relatively safe due to their position away from the town centre. In making this contrast between safe and unsafe spaces, students described strategies they adopted when out at night in the town centre:

Female student: “I think the SU’s all right because I’ve been out in town and I think it’s disgusting.”

Male student: “Oh yeah, town is like a different case.”

Male student: “Yeah, it’s awful, it’s disgusting.”

Female student: “So many things have happened [in the town].”

Female student: “It’s so unsafe.”

Female student: “town centre is a joke, it’s an absolutely joke, the amount of things that happen, I mean like literally was it the beginning of last year.”

Female student: “I won’t even deny it, I try and say to people, please be careful, please stay in groups, please stay at least two.”

Male student: “Yeah, never go on your own. Never go on your own.”

Female student: “I try and promote safety as much as I physically can because it is not safe in [the] town centre.”

Many students voiced their concerns about the new campus being located within the town centre, given that this was where they felt most issues occurred. One student explained that information already provided about the new campus had not alleviated their concerns:

“What I know about [it], and it’s not really, I’m not really happy with it, the location is not the best... so it’s quite unsafe in my opinion.” (male student)

As mentioned previously, the locations of the existing university campuses were seen to provide protection and safety from issues within the town centre, as one female student explained: “I find it’s [the existing campus is] fine personally in the day time”. However, for some, the isolated nature of these current campuses led them to feel less safe, particularly in the evening. For many students, closed spaces were not only unsocial, but meant that crucial support structures were absent. Students talked about their concerns with being away from the general public, particularly in the night time, as one student explained:

“I feel in town, that is, ‘cause I feel like it’s safer in terms of there’s people around. On campus, when something like that happens, no one, people will be around but no one will help you...someone could be getting harassed... but some people would be like...it’s not my business, I’m going to walk away from it. But if it’s in town, ‘cause I think it’s ‘cause they’re older, they know what’s happening so they’re more aware, so they’re more likely to come and help you.” (female student)

Being located away from the town centre also meant that many students would socialise on the current campuses during the night time in halls of residences or at social events. For many students, the existing campus spaces felt less safe during this time due to the unpredictable nature of students’ behaviour once staff had left the campus and the intoxication of space occupants. As one explained:

“The SU socials can be a bit wild...you can feel a bit unsafe, when it’s like really late and they’re just going out of the SU and they’re all drunk ... let’s say 3AM on Tuesdays because it’s when the [SU event] parties finish and when socials finish around half 11...[you] don’t know what’s going to happen really.” (male student)

Many students worked at the university or for the Students’ Union, which led them to discuss how they adopted strategies for getting home safely at night. These strategies increased students’ resilience and safety concerns, but not all students adopted them. The statement below evidences students’ concerns about criminal damage when parking their

vehicles on campus, as well as their concerns about walking home alone in case they were at risk of harm from other students:

“One of my colleagues I work with was saying, I don’t know whether my car’s going to be all right...we all work in the SU, we are provided taxis to go home and she’s like, oh we just walk, I was like, no, we’re not going to walk, like you don’t know what people are going to do, they’re drunk, you don’t know, don’t feel 100% safe, even if you just live down the street, it’s like it’s always good like to walk with someone or to order a taxi to go home.” (male student)

Despite this, students generally felt safest sharing their campus space with other students, compared to non-students. One student explained that this was because non-students were unknown, anonymous and could not be sanctioned in the same way that students could be:

“Dealing with students there are sort of measures...this university is a zero tolerance university, so if you report them they could get kicked out, they will face disciplinary, but if there is someone from the, there is someone external who you don’t know their name, you don’t know, they just come in, done it, went out, you can’t track them down, so it’s going to be obviously harder to get anything done about it..” (female student)

Other students agreed and expressed their concerns about the new Students’ Union venue which would soon open in the town centre for students and non-students. For many, this would put students at more risk, exposing them to existing problems within the town centre. One student explained:

“My worry now...we’re going to open a venue in town that’s going to do parties for non-students and students, that is going to be nuts because you can’t, there’s no, the amount of security you can have is not going to stop all town centre [trouble].” (male student)

Many students could not see any benefits of letting in non-students into these venues, except for financial gain, as one student explained:

“Anyone can come in...it’s a university campus, you should only let university students, not ‘cause you’re going to earn £300 more because you let three random people come in.” (male student)

b. Built Environment

For students, many aspects of the built environment were related to their representations of space and safety. Features discussed were often related to security measures such as CCTV, lighting and accessibility. As mentioned previously, existing university campuses were generally seen as safe as they were situated away from the main town centre, but most students expressed issues with security measures on these existing campuses. One student explained:

“I’ve lived here two years ago, when I was in my first year, and although I, this campus is a bit out of town and you would think it’s a safe campus, which mostly it was. I was living on top floor in [name of halls of residence] and while I was in the kitchen someone, a stranger walked into my room and took my money. He knew where the money was...it took security 20 minutes to get there, the police was there in 4 hours...nothing was done.” (female student)

Other students explained that they had too experienced similar incidences within halls of residences, despite some security measures being in place:

“I’ve had so many incidents personally in [name of halls of residence]...where the security is considered high because they have a reception with a gate that you need to pass...one time when I called security late at night because there was like a fight in the flat next door and security said, I’m working alone tonight and I won't have time to come within the next few hours. And I thought are you crazy? ‘Cause this [inaudible] has broken into our flats, threatened to like fight us, I don’t even feel safe inside my flat, I’ve had people breaking into my flat as well, I’ve lived here for two months, I’m a first-year student, I’ve lived here for two months and I’ve had three incidents where I feel so unsafe that I’ve considered moving.” (female student)

For students, the visibility of security was important, particularly at night, but many students had not seen security personnel on existing campuses. As one student explained:

Male student: "It's scary."

Female student: "They even say security comes at night but I've never seen security there."

Female student: "No, me neither, I didn't, in my first year I didn't see them at all."

Students explained how the number of security personnel present during Students' Union events was adequate, but that the approach used did not always tackle some of the more serious incidences, which happened in halls of residences or away from these events. One student explained:

"There is security...eight or nine members of security on one night so...nothing actually happens, but they don't control these kind of situations." (male student)

Students also discussed their concerns about other features of the current campus environment, such as lighting. One student explained:

"You don't know, you can't see anything...No lights at all." (male student)

Another student agreed, adding that existing campuses were also not surveyed enough:

"I think the only good thing that's going to happen when it comes to Waterside is the additional cameras out on the streets, that's the only upside... town is literally covered in cameras." (female student)

Due to this and students' concerns with the new campus location, many hoped that security measures would be improved. However, students appeared to know very little about security measures at the new campus, as one student explained:

"[the new campus] is quite near town centre and a lot of crime across the board happens in town centre so they could easily, within two minutes, be on [the new] campus... sexually assault someone or do whatever within a matter of seconds...How is it going to be monitored?" (female student)

Another added:

“Although it’s [the new campus] very good in terms of everything being so close, it does bring its risks and I don’t think the ways of protection are being talked enough. Because there are questions arising about is it going to be open 24/7, is everyone going to be able to walk in 24/7, considering the library is open 24/7? And although you need to cross a bridge in order to get there, anyone can get in.” (female student)

As evidenced by the above statement, students had issues with the accessibility of the new campus. For students, the proposed openness of this public space was an issue for them. One student explained:

“Well [the new campus] from what I’ve seen seems like a pretty open space, so I don’t know what I would necessarily define as safe...[it is] unsafe because it’s so accessible to everyone.” (female student)

As well as unauthorised access to the new campus buildings, students were concerned about the new campus grounds being used by the general public, as they felt these should remain protected student spaces. One student added:

“I’ve seen people here walking their dogs on campus, it’s not bad but it’s like it could be anyone at 12 o’clock, 2AM, 4AM.” (male student)

In correspondence to students’ views about non-student space occupants and in contrast to interviews with university staff and the Senior Management Team, students did not want the campus to be an open public space. For them, safety comprised of a protected space for and predominantly occupied by students, situated away from the general public and the issues with the town previously discussed. Further information about students’ focus on security measures will be discussed within later themes which focus on recommendations.

5.2. Perceptions of Prevalence, Beliefs and Disclosure

During the focus group discussions, students spoke at length about their perceptions of the prevalence of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime, both generally and on university campuses. This theme comprised of: a) students’ experiences; b) normative beliefs, as well as their c) knowledge about reporting mechanisms and experiences of disclosure.

a. Student Experiences

Students spoke at length about their experiences of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime on campus, with many suggesting these incidences were generally prevalent on university campuses and on their university campus. As two students explained:

Female student: “It happens quite frequently though doesn’t it?”

Female student: “That has been happening on campus, yeah.”

Many students had also observed these types of behaviours in their roles working for the university or the Students’ Union. For example, one student described what contingencies were in place for this:

“Yeah, I’ve had that kind of experience where girls like come to me crying, ‘cause we have like a secret code in the SU, the students will say it to you and you automatically have to react like, you have to escort them outside and call a member of security, call a taxi or the police, Ask Angela, I think it was, the code, so it’s just if that happens, we do have the security things.” (male student)

Another student agreed that uninvited groping behaviours were commonly seen at social events, but that they frowned upon this, adding:

“I see guys and they...I see them like just go up and they just like touch someone’s bum, because they are in the big crowd...she’s not going to notice, I’ll just touch her bum. And I look at them as like that’s disgusting.” (male student)

Others agreed that they had seen these behaviours on campus, but felt that there were differences between the nature and prevalence of incidences, as one student explained:

“I could say sexual violence [happens on campus], it depends on what grade we’re talking, but for example I work behind the bar and what I see is like a lot of grabbing, a lot of touching, a lot of random kissing and it’s like ugh, not good. When it comes like to like proper rape, I doubt it very much.” (male student)

For most students, this type of behaviour was unacceptable. As one student explained:

“There’s just no other way, it’s like you touch me in a nightclub without...I didn’t ask for it, that is a sexual assault, why are you touching me? Like there’s no need for it...don’t go there.” (male student)

However, students explained that there are differences in how these behaviours were perceived among students and some friends felt groping or unwanted touching were part of a normal night out. As one student explained:

“Out in the nightclub, you have a few bevvies, some people are just like slap, hah hah hah, someone’s just slapped me, yeah, do you know what I mean? But then others would see that as sexual harassment.” (female student)

Students appeared to be fully aware of the impact these incidences have on victims, with some students speaking from experience. As one student explained:

“Demoralising, that’s the word ‘cause you knock people’s confidence... oh my god, you’ve just blatantly embarrassed me for no reason. So it can knock a lot of confidence out of someone.” (female student)

For students, this impact also depended on the type of behaviour the victim would be subject to:

“It depends on the severity of the act as well, not saying that one is more important than the other, but obviously it’s...going to have a different impact than actually being touched by someone without, but in any case, the impact on the victim and anyone around the victim actually is horrible, at least to say, because that’s something you need to be dealing with for the like rest of your life.” (female student)

As well as physical touching, groping or unwanted advances, student spoke at length about negative verbal comments and other forms of harassment. Many students had experienced hurtful comments from other students. As one explained:

“I think if people think they can do it and get away with it though they will, that’s like a big issue.” (female student)

There was an agreement that all students should respect one another and be aware of the impact words can have on others. One student said:

“People just don’t think do they, they just think they’ll say it [hateful comments] and then they’ll forget about it, but it does affect people.” (female student)

For many students, it was important that this type of behaviour was sanctioned, particularly at a time when students may be moving away from home, their parents, or other support structures. Students felt that those carrying out these types of behaviours did so because nothing would be done about it, as evidenced by the following statement:

Female student: “Students are here mostly and when they come out of their parents’ parental control, it’s just like they feel that it’s, I mean they, us, but I don’t feel like that, it’s just people feel like it’s all right to do that for a laugh.”

Male student: “It’s funny.”

Female student: “No one’s going to do anything about it, so it’s definitely...there are definitely comments being dropped on a daily basis”

b. Normative Beliefs

Students spoke at length about the social norms and normative beliefs generally held in relation to these behaviours. It appeared that these beliefs impacted their perceptions of prevalence based on a number of factors. For example, many students felt that victim blaming was still a common issue in society and needed to be addressed, as one student explained:

“In terms of social myths... I think there is a lot of blame being put on the victims... it’s still common to perceive that if someone is wearing a mini skirt and has long legs that they are just up for it...If someone is wearing a deep décolletage...you can just go for it. So there is a lot of prejudice being put on how people dress, how people wear their hair, how people behave...it’s because of those misconceptions and prejudices that a lot of blame is being put on the victims...we need to ask ourselves where our society is going in the 21st century.” (male student)

Many students felt that these misconceptions were preventing victims from speaking out and may prevent them from reporting or disclosing these incidences, as another student said:

“The misconceptions in society make it harder for the victims to reach out and seek help because there are still beliefs that if something had happened to you, that it’s either your fault or you’re dirty or...Yeah, and you done something to provoke it.”
(female student)

Students spoke at length about the gendered nature of sexual violence. For many, sexual violence is perpetrated by men against women, but this was not always the consensus within the focus group. For example, students explained how victim blaming was highly gendered against women, as one student said:

“You know how society view it as it’s the woman’s fault, I’d be thinking he’s thinking as well that it’s my fault.” (female student)

However, for some students these stereotypical victim prototypes were not always accurate, as women can also be perpetrators:

“It’s like it’s not just men, just so, to put it out there, women can be just as bad as what men can be to be fair, do you know what I mean?” (female student)

This led the students to discuss some of these issues in depth, as one student stated:

“Women are more believed than what men are because it ain’t going to happen to a man.” (female student)

This comment led to some disagreement among students, particularly about aspects of consent, rape and the law. This highlighted the importance of creation conversations about consent, but also in educating students about these issues. For example, students replied:

Female student: “A lot of people perceive that how can you sexually harass a man, how, how can you do it? It’s easier to do it to a woman than it is to a man, but it ain’t, it’s just the same.”

Male student: “why does it have to be like a man raping can’t be either way...”

Female student: “It can be...”

Male student: “You can't, it's like well you can...”

Female student: “You can...”

Male student: “There’s loads of ways...”

Female student: “You can, it happened with my...”

Female student: “But according to the law, like rape is penetration not by an object, so like a woman can't rape a man according to the law because she does not have a penis to penetrate him with.”

Male student: “Stupid.”

Male student: “There’s loads of ways you can actually do it.”

Another student explained that these perceptions may also differ depending on sexuality, explaining how:

“As gay I can say that in the gay community it’s very common as well, it’s like you get it a lot, just because you’re gay it seems like more, you, has like more access and that is not true... when I go out to a club, it’s like everyone is like, free to touch, it’s like, no, excuse me, private property.” (male student)

For students, age and experience also had an impact on how sexual violence was perceived, but also how students would respond when it was directed at them. For example, one student explained:

“I’m old school, I think I’m the oldest here and I’m like you don’t touch me unless you ask me, simple as that... Even if like, out in a nightclub, I find it sexual assault when someone comes and slaps me on my bum, don’t do it... I’ll end up just turning ‘round and slapping you or calling the police.” (female student)

For this student, any form of uninvited or unwanted contact with someone was viewed as sexual harassment. Although many students agreed that this should be the case, as mentioned previously, many felt that groping or unwanted contact with others was not only the norm, but expected as part of a normal night out. More worryingly, students thought that perpetrators felt they had the right to act in this way, as one student explained:

“The youngsters were like, well it’s just the way it is. It’s the norm...feel like they have the right to do it.” (female student)

Students also felt that social norms impacted whether consent could be withdrawn, which they felt was an issue that needed addressing through education. One student explained:

“In bed with someone, the guy had the condom on and then she was going for it but then she said to herself, well no, I don’t want to, but 95, 96% of society would say, well I’ve already got it on, just do it....yeah, give into it but that is not consent, that is sexual assault, although you have done it but you’re not happy with it... when I say no, it means no...she was drunk, she just accepted, she went to the bed with a guy and then she woke up the next morning and was like, oh what have I done.” (male student)

For students, longstanding normative beliefs also dictated the behaviours they were expected to carry out on campus, including their involvement in sports, or other types of social activities. For example, students discussed how:

Female student: “If a girl was to go out with a group of boys they wouldn’t think, oh well you’re a lesbian would they, not...”

Female student: “No, they’d class you as a, how can I put it without swearing, well yeah, as a slag, do you know what I mean, that’s the only way I can put it...”

Male student: “As a tomboy.”

Female student: “That you sleep with all of them, do you know what I mean?”

Female student: “You get that perception when you go out with girls, because oh that’s what gay men do.”

Female student: “I go out with blokes and I’d been known as, ugh look at her, she’s hanging around with, I wonder if she’s slept with all of them, ugh look at her, do you know what I mean?”

Female student: “It’s weird how the two, they’re both the exact same thing but different sexes but yet, a view totally different to each other.”

Male student: “Exactly.”

For some students, these normative beliefs were engrained in the university culture and that they had to regularly put up with stereotypical comments:

“I’m football mad, absolutely football mad, every time I go to a game they’re all like, it’s a woman, what’s going on? But I’ll still get that haters thing like, what you doing here...It’s like stereotypes....it’s become a social norm to do that as well, to a certain degree that even some people don’t realise they’re actually being victimised and it’s a hate crime and they don’t even realise that it’s happening because it’s a social norm. And it’s just like, oh it’s just normal, it happens every day.” (female student)

Another student added that they had also had comments related to their sexuality and their behaviour:

“I like watching football, I like watching rugby, rugby is one of my favourite sports and I love watching it on TV and I’m a big supporter and they say, oh well but you’re gay, it’s like, and? Like what has that got to do? It’s like but we, just people do it because they find it normal.” (male student)

For students, it was important that universities should develop a culture of understanding and respect in order to tackle sex role stereotypes, sexism and sexual prejudices. This shall be discussed further in the later recommendations theme.

c. Knowledge and Disclosure

Students were asked what they knew about sexual assault, violence, harassment and hate crime. Many appeared to be confident in defining sexual harassment, as one student explained:

“No, it doesn’t have to be done outside in a bush somewhere, it can be actually from a point where you actually go to a room with someone and that someone won’t then take no for an answer...then it’s like, well no, we’re already here, let’s do it.”
(male student)

Another student added:

“It could be anything really couldn’t it ‘cause like you see, you know the whole builders and cat calling situation, I think that’s harassment...any form of being a nuisance to someone and kind of trying to force them into something they don’t necessarily want to do or just trying to intimidate them.” (female student)

As mentioned previously, students were less clear about aspects related to initiating and removing consent. For example, some felt that if consent was removed it had to be explicitly stated:

“You can stop at any point...but you need to express it, even so, even though you may be for it in the beginning, if you say no at any point in time, anything that happens after that without you being is... that’s important though, it’s when I say no...if for example she wasn’t to say anything and she was just to carry on, do you know what I mean, and then she’s decided that.” (female student)

Others suggested consent can involve subtle non-verbal cues, as students discussed:

Female student: “As long as there’s something there, I don’t know, not like maybe eye contact but something a bit more, you can show it [consent] with your body language, can’t you?”

Female student: “You can see there’s obvious signs whether someone’s going to agree with it or not going to agree with it so...”

Female student: “Yeah, I think that there doesn’t necessarily need to be a verbal answer...there needs to be some kind of a question

posed so it doesn't have to be verbal but it can be body language, but you need to understand"

Female student: "So it still needs to be easy to understand it as a question and an answer so..."

Female student: "Yeah, I think as well until that's like established that, you know, like I'm 'going to go...'"

Female student: "Boundary."

Female student: "Yeah, until that's established then there's like no consent"

For most students, university consent initiatives, or discussions about these issues during their classes were important for increasing their knowledge in this area. For example, as one student explained:

"Some things I would even think they are normal if I hadn't been taught in my module, like no...this comes under the definition and, so I think we're in a great advantage in terms of that, just so we know what's going on." (female student)

Others agreed, stating:

"I think if we weren't studying [degree subject] or [degree subject], we wouldn't have any idea about what's going on." (female student)

Another student added that these discussions were important for awareness, as they had made them reconsider their own experiences:

"To be honest I've had one of my course mates tell me that someone actually like, she was, we were having this conversation... we were just talking about last year's I Heart Consent Week and she was like, you know what, when someone asked me previously if I was ever sexually harassed or assaulted I would say no, but now thinking about it, I've had a comment made to me...I found that as sexual harassment." (female student)

Most students were also confident in being able to define hate crime, based on what they had been taught in their classes. As one student explained:

“Hate crime would be, so any type of crime incentivised by hate towards someone in any sense, so it can be you hate, the hate because of the race, it can be the hate because of the sex, it can be the hate because of the hair colour, because of religion, because of any kind of treat the victim has that the perpetrator hates...it’s because of that hate that he committed that crime towards you.” (female student)

Others agreed, explaining:

“Hate crimes, like you’re putting me in a box that I am not in only because I have certain likes. Like you like bread, I like strawberries...I say, oh what, she likes bread, it’s normal, like don’t do that...it’s common and we see as acceptable, we just put people in different boxes.” (male student)

This further highlights the importance of embedding these issues within the higher education curriculum. In terms of disclosure, participants were much less clear on university processes for reporting these types of incidences. Many would not know where to go to report and none of the students in the group had any reporting experience, despite most students being aware of incidences like this on campus. As one student explained, even their training for university roles had not included information on this:

“Even though I’m a student rep, I don’t know which way to go, apart from going to the module leader, do you know what I mean? I don’t know the policies, I don’t know, because I haven’t been informed.” (female student)

This further highlights the importance of training for university staff, but also for ensuring signposting procedures are in place and that policies are clear and accessible. In terms of reporting incidences observed happening to others, most students would “encourage them [others] as much as I physically could to go and report it”, but would not report this themselves. For many students, the issue was approaching a tutor with issues like this, which highlights the need for alternative reporting procedures, such as an online platform. Not only would this type of a system be available and accessible at all times, but might help to collect data about these issues through an anonymised reporting feature. In terms of incidences happening to them, some students would “quite happily” report to a module or

Personal Academic Tutor, as one student explained: “you can really like talk to them about anything”.

Other students agreed, stating:

“I personally find it comfortable going to my tutor, only for the sheer fact that we’ve got a good relationship...so out of automatic reaction I’d just go straight to him, just out of pure advice of what to do.” (female student)

However, many of the students within the focus group mentioned that they would “never go and talk to a tutor”, or that they would be “embarrassed” and would “rather go to someone that you don’t know”. As one student explained:

“I don’t know my tutors, I don’t feel like I have a personal connection to them at all and I didn’t really know I was supposed to...where it’s rape, I wouldn’t feel comfortable talking to a male about that.” (female student)

Another student agreed, adding:

“At the moment I personally feel half of my tutors are very accessible, the other half ain’t.” (female student)

As well as not finding tutors approachable or appropriate to discuss these issues with, some students did not realise tutors were there to help with these issues. One student explained:

“I didn’t know I was supposed to, can I, will they listen, do they care? Like why would a tutor want to hear about me feeling sexually assaulted on campus?” (female student)

Unfortunately, some of other students explained that they would not disclose any of these incidences, or expressed disagreement in terms of what should and should not be reported. As one student explained, they would not report these issues as:

“I’m just going to embarrass myself...no one is going to believe me.” (female student)

Others felt that spoken comments should just be ignored, as one participant explained:

“Why is that a problem? Just brush it under the carpet.” (female student)

These statements suggest it is important to emphasise to students that the university does not tolerate these issues and that support structures are clearly signposted. These excerpts also suggest that academic tutors and programme tutors are trained in dealing with students, particularly around these types of disclosures. Additional work must also be carried out to ensure students are aware that they can discuss these issues with tutors, as well as other members of staff.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Practice

Within the focus groups students provided their own recommendations for future practice for their university and for other universities more generally in tackling these issues. This theme focused on a) increasing education and awareness; b) improving policies and procedures; as well as c) enhancing safety measures for the transition to the new campus.

a. Education and Awareness

For many students taking part in the focus group, tackling these issues required a whole campus change. Students felt that this would be achieved by educating students and staff about these issues, as well as building a culture of respect and empathy, as well as openness in sharing experiences and increasing awareness. As one student explained, issues like this “need to be discussed more” at every opportunity. Interestingly, some students made excuses for others’ conduct, explaining that these behaviours were carried out by other students because they lacked awareness, or did not know any better. As one student explained:

“They’re not educated in it, they perceive that it’s OK to touch someone’s bum, they think it’s OK to do that when in all honestly it’s not.” (female student)

Other students agreed and there was a general consensus that, as an educational establishment, it was up to the university to do more to focus on these issues, in order to prevent them. One student said:

“There’s isn’t enough emphasis put on it, that is the problem. People are unaware of many things that they do because they don’t have, in their mind and in their subconscious they don’t know what is right and wrong because they are not given a proper education on it.” (male student)

Students were also confused as to why university enrolment and induction events did not focus on these important issues, despite including information about other support and health-related services. Some students recognised that mentioning these issues might discourage students from studying at the university, but most agreed that talking about these issues was more important. One student explained:

“It’s a matter of people not thinking that it’s their issue until they get affected by it and there is not enough being talked about in other courses about it...we talk about [support service name], financial team guidance, GPs surgery we have on campus, couldn’t we say like, in case of this and this, you can do this and this as well? Why is focus being put on only certain things in order to sell the university and this kind of stuff is just being hushed down?” (female student)

As well as educating students on these issues, developing an awareness about available support structures at the university was extremely important for students. As one student explained:

“I don’t think there’s enough done to kind of let people know it is all right to, and we are here to listen to you if you have got, you know, any issues, to do that.” (female student)

In order to develop this awareness, students also felt it was important to build a culture of respect, by setting “ground rules” about conduct and unacceptable behaviour early on when students start university. As one student explained:

“A university doesn’t mean freedom of sex, university doesn’t mean I can touch whoever I want, university does not mean this. Like if you’re going to talk about...introduce your modules, they can give a 15, 20 minutes spare to talk about that, like let them be conscious of what can happen and why you don’t have to do that and what kind of discipline you can actually find if you actually commit.” (female student)

Students were aware that, at many universities, this culture of respect was contrasted by a culture of excess, intoxication and so-called “lad-culture”. Many students felt that the

current format of Fresher's week had partly contributed to this, due to the range of events on offer, as it was the first thing students experienced. For example, one student explained:

"Instead of going partying, like Fresher's...let's make it, it's university, you're not in A Levels, you're not in school...18-year olds come here thinking that this is, wow I can do whatever I want, and that is so not true. It's like you have to start being mature, this is not school, this is university... I was working though, but I would not go [to Fresher's] ...Like I prefer working." (male student)

Other students agreed, added that Fresher's week range of events, particularly at night time, was particularly unappealing for mature students:

"It's not about getting drunk, it's about having, enjoying life...I didn't even go to Fresher's week because me as a mature student as well was scared of the, the groups of teenagers going to SU, I was like I'm not even going to go because I know I'm going to have a really bad time anyway... Yeah, I outright refused to go to them sort of things. I went to the day parts, like the fair and that, but I wouldn't go out night." (female student)

Others agreed that this first orientation week provided a good opportunity to set ground rules and start to raise awareness, as one student explained:

"When it comes to Fresher's week or when first years actually come here, it's like spend the relevant amount of time to speak about this kind of stuff." (male student)

Other students agreed, adding:

"Not enough...education on...sexual violence, consent...that should be conducted in Fresher's week to make sure everyone's reading off that same page at the start of their sort of new lives here." (male student)

For other students, having something during Fresher's week, or for one week of each year was not enough, or as an add-on in some classes. For students, these types of campaigns, education and awareness needed to be ongoing throughout students' education:

"I think awareness is key, so like not just a reminder, I Heart Consent week, like that's effective but I think it needs to be constant and throughout the year, like not just at

the start of freshers, people need to be like reminded of these things.” (female student)

b. Policies and Procedures

Many students were aware that general support mechanisms were in place at the University, but more needed to be done to signpost students to these services and provide information to students about processes and procedures. As one student explained:

“I think it’s [student support] quite neutral to be fair. I don’t think there’s enough done to kind of let people know it is all right to, and we are here to listen to you if you have got, you know, any issues.” (female student)

In terms of support for sexual violence, assault, harassment and hate crime, students were less clear about available support services. Some students were aware of support mechanisms, but felt more needed to be done to inform students about them:

“The Students’ Union does help, the nightline for example, they do have other ways of supporting people but it’s not talked about enough, the same way as the university’s policies are not talked about enough.” (female student)

For many students in the focus group, there was a concern that much of the information students needed were within inaccessible policy documents, which were not student friendly. In addition to this, with the campus transition being an important focus for the university, students were concerned that many of these issues were now a low priority. As one student explained:

“Even with the policies that are in place...I know there is a problem with accessibility of the policies, the links are not working...even if you want to do it [report] from the, like from the quietness of your home so you can feel safe, so you don’t have to personally go in and do it, so everyone doesn’t know that you done it, you can’t... everything is being justified by we are moving to [new campus name], we are just adjusting the website so bear with us. But there are people to whom a day means a lot to wait ...there are people who...need those policies to work for them and that is not happening.” (female student)

The above statement suggests that there is need for a simple, anonymous reporting mechanism for these incidences at the university, as well as easily accessible, student-facing information which presents policy information in a variety of clear and understandable forms. This is also evidenced by the following statement:

“We need to make sure the students are aware that there are, first of all policies in place to be dealing with that, that they are made accessible, that students can understand them and that it is signposted in the policy, on the website, everywhere, where students report.” (female student)

As mentioned previously, this information should be available throughout the degree and specifically refer to these incidences. One student also explained that any approaches implemented by the university, or training developed for staff need to include students, in order to ensure this support is appropriate:

“Thank god I haven’t had any personal experience, but from other people, there have been instances where people have just not been understood...then people, when you talk to them and say, go seek help...and then they just say, what should I do?...So I don’t think this university here has enough support provided to victims, it’s not talked about enough, and even the students are not involved and that’s an issue we need to really look at.” (female student)

Students also recommended that the university introduced a new role for a specialist, trained individual to address these issues. As one student explained:

“I would add like someone specialised like to treat these kind of cases, if you don’t feel comfortable speaking to your academic tutor because you think, oh maybe it could have some influence on it, have specialised staff that could actually treat sexual assaults, rape, harassment, hate crime and you can actually report it and make, have some effect on it. Not just saying, oh I've been, oh poor you, that’s how, it’s what happens... the shortage of staff available, and well-trained staff, is a huge problem.” (male student)

Students were clear that this needs to be a new role and could not fall on existing tutors or student reps, as one female student explained “it’s too serious of an issue” to not have a dedicated member of staff or team working on.

c. Safety Measures

As mentioned previously, many students had concerns about the new town centre campus location and being situated next to the general public. As previously discussed, students also had concerns about existing security arrangements at the current university campuses. Students’ recommendations for safety measures at the new campus tended to focus on aspects of the built environment and security, which students felt would increase their feelings of safety. As one student explained:

“I strongly believe that there needs to be an enormous like change when it comes to security and staff. I don’t feel like I can rely on the security at all, not if something happens, they’re not going to be there for me, they’re going to be two hours away. I don’t feel like anyone’s there to make sure that I’m safe, that needs to change”.
(female student)

Many students simply wanted reassurance and information about security arrangements at the new campus. For example, one student said:

“Is it just going to be one team in one building standing behind reception and take 20 minutes to answer? Are there going to be CCTV cameras around, obviously not in anyone’s bathroom or their room but are they going to monitor the halls, who comes in and out?” (female student)

The separation of the campus space from the town centre was further highlighted when students discussed how security measures at the new campus should be different from those in town, despite the new campus being located here. For example, one student explained:

“It needs different security to what it is in town, they have the police out in town.”
(female student)

However, others felt that the police would have to monitor the new campus space, given its location, as one explained:

“It’s still not good enough...They still need that additional security from external influences for the safety of people on campus.” (female student)

The above comment is interesting because it suggests that students may view the police as dealing with the general public and not student issues, despite the need for the university and police to work together to address these types of incidences. Students also felt that these issues should be addressed within existing halls of residences. For many students, feeling unsafe in their homes or halls of residence had a large impact on their conception of how safe they felt at the university. This was particularly important because many of them were living away from home for the first time. As one student explained:

“There needs to be CCTV cameras outside of entrances into the halls because you need to be able to monitor who goes in and out, because 1,000 beds is a lot to monitor. I think the security staff, numbers needs to be increased and the university needs to stop saving on that...we pay £9,000 and over, so that’s something that is definitely not supposed to be saved on.” (female student)

Other students agreed that changes should be made to the built environment of existing halls of residence and to other security measures, adding:

“I know there is CCTV like on the buildings, on the outside but there’s nothing inside, you know...like an actual security person...there’s nothing, there isn't a lot, nothing, I don’t think they really care”. (female student)

Students raised an important issue related to safety and privacy. For many students, increasing all security-related aspects would make them feel safer, but other students did not want their privacy invaded. For example, one student explained:

“I think with the security-wise, I think more CCTV cameras would be good but then you'll have, on the other hand you'll have people being like, oh I’m not on Big Brother, I don’t want to be watched 24/7. I don’t mean it in their flats or in the houses and stuff ‘cause that’s a bit much, but just outside.” (female student)

6. Student Photo-Voice

In this study, 4 participants took part in a second student photo-voice focus group, involving 3 female students and one male student. The photovoice group started by the facilitators asking participants to share and contextualise their images. More specifically, each participant was asked to speak about each photograph she/he had taken detailing:

1. What is happening in the photo (what do you see here?)
2. Why did you take the photo?
3. How does this photo make you feel?
4. Why did you feel that it was an important space to document?
5. How is this photograph connected to the general topic of the research?

In the section below, the photographs students brought to the group are illustrated with their descriptions.

6.1 Contextualising the Images



This one is in the library obviously, I took this one because this is where I go to study with my friends, and we all meet up there so it's quite a comfortable area and it's also, that room's quite light and bright and compared to some other places in the library you can sort of see in the doorway, the difference in the light, because it's really dark in other parts of the library but this room's really light and bright, and I just study, basically, there. [...] So, I took the photo because I love this place, it makes me feel relaxed going here because I'm used to all my friends being here and it's really easy to study in this area. There's always people around, I don't like being on my own in the university, it feels a bit creepy when there's no one else around so in this room there's always people walking in and out and you can see the people walking by in the corridor, so I like sitting there.



This is Fawsley reception, so psychology reception. Again I took a picture of this, it sort of represents the building as a whole because that's where I have all my lectures and everything, it's where I spend a lot of my time. Again lovely space because it's well lit, comfy seats, it's nice to relax [...] I like the board that they have with all the staff on it because that does actually make it nice, that you feel like you know where you're going and I've used that board before to check where people are and things. [...] It makes me feel happy again because I like it and it's, it makes me feel happy but also it brings back memories of all the work and stuff which sometimes isn't, can be a bit stressful. And I just thought, again, it was important to document because I spend a lot of my time in this building.



Female psychology student 2

it's just a plain old classroom in Fawsley and the reason why I took the photo is, I'm a psychology student so I spend a lot of my time in Fawsley, in lectures, workshops, in classes so yeah, it's just, I think Fawsley's just a place where I feel like I can get the support I need from lecturers, it's a place of learning and study and yeah, it's just a place that I feel comfortable because I know it well [...] the classrooms [...] the classrooms are quite small so you kind of feel it's a bit more sort of intimate, like you get to know people and you get more one on one time with the lecturers, so yeah, I just, I really liked the space, so it's, I think it's connected in the sense that it makes me feel comfortable and it's a place that's made me, it's designed in a way that it's made me feel familiar with it over the years.



Female psychology student 2

This one is a photo of outside the student union, I'm in the third year now and for my first and second year I lived on campus and I lived outside the student union, so yeah, the reason why, I think the main reason I took this photo is because you know, it's a space where there's a lot going on, there's a lot of activity and yeah, because I lived so close to it, on the nights where it'd be student night I'd hear like all, like people coming out, you know, the loud music and yeah, so looking at it is not the best feeling because I didn't get a lot of sleep because of that and you know, the reason why I took it from sort of the point where I stood was because just behind me was the halls that I was living in and on the first night that I came to the university, you know, it was like a student night so you know, I went out and they were like, I don't know, it wasn't like the best night, had some guys behind me shouting stuff and then yeah, so I think it's the only time, I think I took this photo because it's the only time I've not felt safe at the university, it wasn't a good first night. So, I mean I have had some good nights there so it's kind of mixed feelings I think, so yeah, I think an image of the student union is a really important space to document because people have both good and bad experiences there, so yeah, I think it's heavily connected to, you know, the focus of the research in terms of, you know, there are good spaces but there are also spaces where, you know, it's a bit of a mixture between the two depending on...



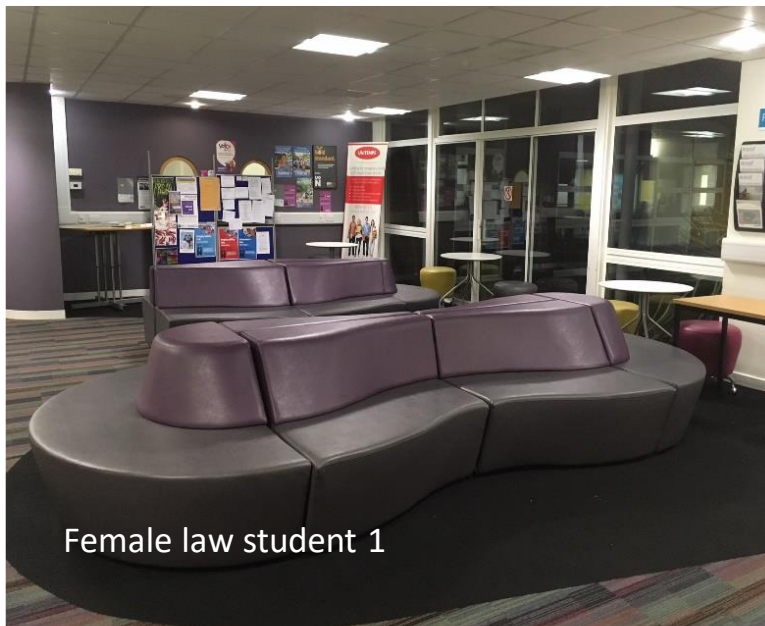
Female psychology student 2

So the last one is in the library, again when I lived here, this is where I spent a lot of my time, in the silent area because that's you know, where I like to work most and a lot of times when there were student nights and I wanted to get on with my work I would come here at like eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night when it was dead and so yeah, it would look a lot like this and I would just be able to get on with my work and it made me feel like, really at ease and I was able to sort of get away from you know, sort of the hustle and bustle of other things going on and I was able to just come here and focus. So yeah, just looking at it makes me feel pretty relaxed if I'm honest. So, yeah, it's an important space for me because it's where I've been able to get on with what I need to get on with and yeah, it's just, for me the silent area's a very sort of safe space, it's like of like a refuge almost, where I go to just get on with stuff and get away from, you know, noise and where I can just get my head down really



Female law student 1

[A] silent area of the library so it's the third floor [...] I used to sit there so I used to sit in the corner and I'm the opposite to FPS1, I actually liked it when it was quite dark in the library, I preferred dark library because to me it made me feel, I suppose cosy and I used to study at night as well so I'd study from like 6pm, that'd be my study time, so I suppose I'd associate it with being dark and that's my most productive time of study. I took the photo because, similarly to FPS2, I felt safe here in the library, it's nice and quiet, just my own area. I always used to study with, so I used to study on my own but my friends would often be downstairs so it was nice to know that although I was up on the third floor on my own, in my own little study bubble, I did have my friends downstairs that I could go and visit if I needed a break. This photo makes me feel, it makes me feel cosy[...] I suppose it's where I felt safe, like you said about refuge, if I was ever feeling like I needed to, even not study, just go and take myself away and have a bit of me time [...]



Female law student 1

This is Naseby open space [...] This has different connotations to me because as a student, depending on what year group you were, this space could be quite intimidating because depending on who's sat in that area, you have to walk, so if I just show you, like reception's here, you have to walk past it and depending on who's sat in there, it can be quite intimidating, like if it's not your year, if it's not your friends, then walking past is intimidating like I say. But if it had your friends in there then I'd say it's quite a nice, open space. You can study in there, you can talk in there [...] And I also think it's cosy because, I suppose when it's dark and artificially lit, it's just your own space, but on the other hand I suppose it could be quite vulnerable. Same for the library space, like I said because it's, you're on your own and you're at the top floor, you could be quite vulnerable up there so not many people know you're here and security come round and lock the building, because we're quite separate from the rest of the university. So yeah, it's connected to the research topic because again, it can, has connotations of feeling safe and vulnerable.



Female law student 1

This one, so this is a lecturer's room, so this is my dissertation supervisor's room, so I instantly felt safe in this room because 1) I got on really well with my supervisor and 2) I think it's just a nice safe room and I think it's little things like this lamp, just makes it nice and homely as opposed to like the cold office space, it was more of like, not living space but more of a homely space. So yeah it just makes me feel happy [...] I think it was nice that my supervisor, I mean her desk was there but she'd often come and sit with me and sit across to me and it'd just make me feel like I'm having more of a chat than like an office meeting. I think it's important to document this space because in relation to the new campus, I know it's going to be quite open and I think if I was a student moving there, having my dissertation in my final year, I'd be quite apprehensive because it was nice to just go into my supervisor's room, have a chat with her, tell her my anxieties, not have anyone here apart from my supervisor and to just, I know people have breakdowns about their dissertations and cry, I wouldn't want to be doing that in an open space where everyone can see so I think it's nice to have separate offices, as well you know you can contact that supervisor, like I know, obviously I didn't pester her but if I needed her urgently I could go to her room and speak to her there.



Male university student 1

This is outside Cottesbrooke, it's on the outer edge of the campus and it's basically in the corner of the campus and I ended up taking this particular one because I don't think it actually makes me feel safe. You can't actually be seen too well even though there's loads and loads of like windows that face and point in that direction but most people won't look out of it because it's tinted, most people don't want to look out of it. It's the only place which, when I was going round the first week, I didn't want to walk round because I actually went [inaudible] walking during the night, couldn't sleep and I didn't actually want to end up going there. So that's why I feel it's linked to this topic. It made me feel sort of unprotected I guess, kind of thing. From a strategic point of view, I looked at it as there are two ways in, there are no cameras, there are no lights, there is nothing to say it's maintained, there's nothing saying it's being observed, there's nothing basically saying anyone's actually going to be there. So, that didn't make me feel too good [...]



Male university student 1

So this is just as you go up the stairs and I like it quite a lot because it's kind of, it's a little bit out of the way because it's on the side of where all the corridors are, you can park yourself down and watch all the traffic and life go by, it's got quite a bit of light, it's quite open and it's actually quite quiet, it's very soundproof which some people never actually notice that much but it's also very much inviting to everyone else, so you can end up having small groups and you can end up having a large group and be quite happy discuss openly. [...] It makes me feel quite happy, it makes me feel warm and I don't know quite why, warm, I think it's possibly the colours, it's not actually temperature wise, that warm in there[...]



Male university student 1

I then ended up having this particular one which is representing the laundry area [...] I don't like how it's cramped, I don't like how it's dark and I don't like the sheer fact of just, I understand laundry is definitely important, I just think why do you end up having to have one area which is away from all the halls, you purposely have to walk there, there's nothing preventing anyone else from seeing that you're going there and it's very much a locked tight area, essentially. I understand the fact that you don't really want windows there but could you not have top windows? Something to let light in, natural light? But yeah, that's kind of that photo. Obviously I think it's connected because I just don't think it's a good idea, safety wise, I don't really feel that safe there because obviously anyone can accuse you of anything and there's little evidence to support, there's little evidence to go against and obviously you don't really that safe in there because it's kind of a dark room and anything could end up happening, someone switches off the lights, which they can do freely.

6.2 Analytical Discussion

Once all the participants had shared their photographs and stories, the group engaged in data analysis. With help from the facilitators, the participants analysed the content and context of the photographs and discussed the themes and issues that have emerged from the data. In accordance to Wang's (1999) guidelines, during their discussion participants drew connections between various photographs, relating their own to ones that others had taken; they codified the findings as issues to address and they explored the multiple meanings each image could have generated. This analytic process, as well as the group dialogue, focused both on individual storytelling and on the group's narratives. As will be seen below, participants did not try to reach group consensus, but rather they presented and explored their multiple experiences and realities to allow for deeper understanding of the spaces they occupy (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005).

Participants identified the first common theme as '***Safety and vulnerability***'. They started their analytical discussion by representing the inner campus space as a space in which students feel comfortable, a designed for purpose space:

Female student: "So then the common theme is obviously safety and vulnerability."

Female student: "Yeah."

Female student: "That's a big thing isn't it, you've got the contrast between places you feel safe and places you feel vulnerable or you feel unsafe."

Female student: "Yeah, and I think all of us generally have taken images of inside university buildings and most of the comments that we've all made on them have been generally quite positive, they're quite comfortable areas, places that we feel like we can, you know, get on with what we're here for and they're quite well designed for purpose, I think that's sort of come out in everyone's really..."

When the facilitator asked them to think of their identities and identify spaces where different identities may feel either intimidated or endorsed, they delved into a discussion on space and gender:

Female student: “I think that’s interesting because a lot, on your photos, when I think about, I don’t have to go to the laundry or to the bit behind Cottesbrooke but if I had to, those kind of areas in the uni and there are more than just those two where it’s dark and you’re on your own and stuff, I think as a female, I’d feel quite vulnerable there...”

Female student: “Yeah. “

Female student: “Because you have heard of things happening at the uni against women and you’re always, wherever you are, you’re always on guard for that kind of thing but especially when it’s dark and there’s no lights, you’re always looking over your shoulder and making sure there’s no one following you and it does make you feel a bit paranoid.”

Female student: “Yeah and I don’t think it matters so much about the opposite sex either, I think there’s threats from both sexes...”

Female student: “Oh God, yeah.”

Female student: “You’d feel intimidated walking past a group of boys and I feel intimidated walking past a group of girls and a mixed group as well, I think it’s just the fact of the space, don’t think it matters who’s in that space to make you feel intimidated, it’s the actual space that is intimidating.”

Female student: “And men probably feel, I don’t know from your perspective...”

Male student: “Oh yeah.”

Female student: “If you feel intimidated there but it’s...”

Male student: “We do, it’s not necessarily a gender thing, I think it’s more kind of a perception of what could happen, so, as I’ve already pointed out with the field out here, it’s one of the few places which I didn’t actually feel safe to actually walk along, which, I went ‘round the rest of the entire campus.”

As seen above, a female student perceived space as being produced by gender relations. She argued that gendered violence does exist within a university space in her statement: “things happening at the uni against women” and that specific spatial patterns are fear-provoking for female students who find themselves being “always on guard” and “always looking over your shoulder and making sure there’s no one following you and it does make you feel a bit paranoid”. In this way, the female participant highlighted that there are spatial patterns to women’s perceptions of risk of violence that need special attention.

However, this voice is immediately subdued by other members of the group who argued in favour of a more generalised focus on fear of violence among students in the university space. For them, space is not a reflection of broad social relations, but it is by itself either safe or intimidating: “[I] don’t think it matters who’s in that space to make you feel intimidated, it’s the actual space that is intimidating” (Female student).

The discussion then focused on a specific university space, the Students’ Union. As seen below, participants explored their multiple experiences and realities that have led to the construction of the Student Union as both a safe space that is consisted of members of the same community (students) and an unsafe space that could be intimidating because of the large crowds it attracts and its association to a drinking subculture:

Female student: “[...] I guess, I don’t know, but I wouldn’t want to be around there when all the drunken people are there and the lairy people who might cause disruptions and stuff...”

Female student: “[...] I suppose you’re more likely to have just students, whereas there you can have anyone, you have people walking with their dogs, you have like randomers, literally coming onto campus so you’re not sure who you’re going to

encounter there, whereas I suppose you're more likely to encounter students there."

Female student: "Yeah, I mean I feel like the opposite... "

Female student: "Do you?"

Female student: "Yeah, yeah, I mean I've sort of, I've walked, when I lived here, I walked all 'round the campus, I might have even walked there. I mean it wasn't on my own so I didn't get that kind of feeling that, as a female on my own, I was scared, I walked round like with my partner at night and stuff so I didn't have that experience walking round all areas of the campus at night with that, whereas this, like. Even though there is security, there's a lot of people, I mean I don't know how many people [inaudible] been to student nights but sometimes for, sometimes there's too many people, that you know, that even though there's like two security guards, it's so busy on student nights that for me, that's what makes it a bit scary because then you know, something can happen but no one will notice because there's so many people, there's people spilling out. I mean I would, you know, you'd hear it, you'd see it, like you'd have people spilling outside, you'd have people all the way out here, you'd have people crammed inside, it was like sardines on student nights, especially on a Tuesday. So for me, even though there's a lot of people and I can understand that, for me that's where the danger lies a little bit, that's the part that makes me feel a little bit unsafe because you know, you can't count heads, like you can't, there's almost too many people to keep track of what's going on, so yeah, that's kind of, that's how I view it personally."

Male student: "And then even if you do spot something, they become physical obstructions preventing you from stopping it, so even

if there's just two security guards, you've then got 150 people stopping you from getting to the incident."

Female student: "Yeah because I think, because if there's too many people around, incidents get lost in the amount of people that's there, you can't keep track of everything that's going on and everyone's been drinking in their flat, so everyone's had too much to drink so I'm sure loads of things happen all on one night, so it's kind of, yeah, it's kind of that sort of thing."

The discussion then shifted to the new urban location of the Students' Union which encompasses a new geography for students. Participants talked about tangible features of the location such as 'dead' spaces which tended to have few people occupying them, as some explained: "there's sort of like a small alleyway and it's down" (Male participant), or its distance from the main campus "if they're walking it's quite a way to walk and you know, taxis and things are going to cost money so that's extra cost for students" (Female student), as well as the physical layout of the new space:

"Yeah, it's, they've pointed out that they've got loads and loads of security guards on there but it's also, it's not just one place because it can be split up into three different places, they've got it as a nightclub downstairs, a bar/nightclub in the second level which is ground floor and then they've got sort of a meeting area upstairs which can also be used as a party area." (male student)

The discussion then delved into the impact of the Students' Unions new inner-town location on students' feelings of safety. As seen below, participants described the transition from having their Students' Union in a location outside the public realm to a space open to the wider community and thus more exposed to safety risks:

"I think the even bigger concern is the fact that with here, we're sort of, not necessarily isolated but we're separate from where the main drinkers would be, whereas with The Platform [new town centre events location], because it's open to everyone, they've only got one day a week which is students' night and whether or not they regulate it brilliantly. I don't know, but what they do end up saying is, if

they do have it as the same price for students as they do for everyone else and they do encourage everyone to come in and drink which means, whereas at the moment we have got 15,000 people that you can then say, oh well, OK, and you describe a person, narrow it down from 15,000 people, you've now got everyone from Northampton, every possibly traveller who uses the train station, you can have anyone on a stag do going to the [inaudible] and you'll never see them, so they can get away with it [causing trouble]." (male student)

Another participant feared that their sense of belonging to the student community will be lost for students because of the integration of the new inner-town campus to the wider community:

"It's also the fact that there's kind of a community isn't there, in the student, within the students and I think that might be lost if you have everyone in there, because, I mean I don't use the Students' Union but because I'm a mature student, but even just a community with your students like in other spaces, you just know the faces, you meet people regularly, whereas if you're going somewhere with general public, you're not going to have that same community feel." (female student)

This discussion led the group to identify another theme which focused on ***Spaces of Belonging***.

The discussion below highlights the importance for these participants to feel a sense of belonging to a community. For them, the student community is consisted of people who shared similar experiences. Wenger (1998) argued that members in a *community of practice* have shared habits, practices, routines and values. Such communities are constituted by the pursuit of shared interests, knowledges and/or common goals (Wenger, 1998). This theoretical framework has been used extensively in social sciences and can also be applied to understand the social geography of spaces. In the same way Wenger (1998) offered a way of addressing how being part of a community shapes who we are- our identities, the participants talked about how 'mixing' with the wider community will affect their sense of belonging to their 'community of practice':

Female student: “You feel like you belong here, you’re part of something bigger.”

Female student: “I think even if you don’t know, even if you don’t know someone, there’s still a familiarity in the sense that you know, you have that connection with them from student to student, that you know that, you know, that they’re going through similar stresses to you, you go through similar experiences and if you know, it does change where you know, the kind of student community is mixed in with the wider community, yeah, I can agree that it will probably be a bit lost, yeah.”

When the facilitator asked them to discuss ways that these concerns could be addressed, participants engaged in a debate centred on preserving their sense of belonging to a community, enhancing security while avoiding at the same time a new security-obsessed culture:

Female student: “Maybe, I don't know because of the openness of the new campus, maybe there could be something in place so that after certain points in the day only students are allowed on campus, so it really is the student village, the student community and then the wider community can't access that time, in order to keep it familiar. Because like you said, if you're walking around, I don't know how it's laid out, but if you're going to the shop, you want to know that you're going to the shop with other students and not just some randomer who's just walked in off the street, so you want to know that, although you might not be studying psychology, they can be studying accounting or something so, is a student.”

Male student: “My concern with that is, I acknowledge the whole having a defensive system but how long before it becomes a regulated system where you literally get people going, hang on, let me

see your lanyard, right, haven't got it with you, you're going off campus."

Female student: "Well I think you know, it's easy to be, you know, addressed because it's what it's like now, it's just trying to keep it the same as what it is now. It's very rare you see people who aren't from the university here, it's just trying to keep the sort of the community feel that's here at Waterside and I think a lot of the issue lies with the sort of the social nights, that kind of seems like where the big mix is between the student and you know, the general public but that's just like a policy thing, that's, you know, them deciding who can come in and who can't. Like the do at the Students' Union here, when it was Fresher's week, you could have someone who didn't go to the university but it could only be one person or something and they had to have a wristband or something, they had to have something that identified them as a member of the general public. You could easily transfer that across to Waterside and that way you're still incorporating, you know, the general public which I think is a good thing but you're then, you're still regulating it as well."

Female student: "I mean a lot of places that you go in have security protocols where they have like visitor badges or things like that and I would worry that if Waterside is more open than this campus is to the general public, that it, if you don't have that then how do you know who's who? I mean like in the library I quite often chat to people I don't know because I know they're students, they're studying, you know, you've got that in common and I'll sit there and I'll maybe be swearing at my books and things because some things are going wrong and other people will be going, oh you know, I know how you feel,

I'm struggling on this, and it'll be a complete stranger, but you talk to them because you know they're a student. Whereas if you have a campus where anyone can come in, there'll be that bit of hesitation because you won't know, oh are they student, are they not? I mean even walking round the campus you sort of say hello to people and smile at people because you've got that common thing that you all know that you're all going through the same experience."

Female student: "Yeah, and I think if like you're a bit shy as well, I think if you're incorporating more of the general public in these spaces then it's going to be even worse because I know I'm not, it's the easiest for me to start talking to new people but one of the best ice breakers for me when I first came here was what are you studying? Like you know, you start a conversation like that and then you go from there and you find out more about them, but if it changes then you can't, you don't feel that confidence then to go up to someone to ask what they're studying because you're thinking they might not even be from here. It's just like if you, it's almost like if you were just walking out on the street a little bit, you wouldn't just go up to someone really, yeah, I think..."

As we have seen above, the theme of '*spaces of belonging*' took central stage in the participants' analytical discussion. For them, belonging to a community of practice implies that all the members of the community share the similar intentions or common goals:

Female student: "Everyone in the library is studying, I mean even when I've seen people bring in their kids or something, they've told, they've actually said to their kids, you know, be quiet, people are trying to work and obviously the teaching room's the same, you know everyone there is trying to focus and trying to get on with their work."

Female student: “And I think it’s nice as well, like, I’m not completely naïve, I know students do steal things, but in this library I always felt comfortable leaving my laptop to go to the toilet but then in the town centre, you don’t know who’s walking in, you don’t know who can take your things and I know students do do that, I know there were incidents of students stealing phones on campus, but I think the intention is less so, their intention hopefully is to study here rather than to come and steal things so I wouldn’t feel comfortable leaving things on a town centre campus because you don’t know who’s going to come in...”

Female student: “Well it’s like, sorry...”

Female student: “No, I was just going to say, people could come in with the sole intention to steal, which is sad.”

Female student: “And I think, because I’ve been in the library and I’ve said to people sitting next to me that I don’t necessarily know, can you just watch my stuff while I go and get a coffee or while I go and get, go to the toilet or something and even though you don’t know them, because you know they’re a student, they’ve been studying, that’s their intention, they’re not there just wandering about doing nothing, you’ve seen them studying, you know what they’re about, so you feel like you can trust them more than you could someone who was just there randomly.”

Female student: “Whereas like in a train station, you wouldn’t say to someone in a train station, can you just watch my laptop? You wouldn’t do that, that’s basically what it’s going to turn, potentially going to turn into.”

Female student: “If you leave a random member of the public with your laptop, you’ve got no idea if it’s still going to be there when you get

back, they could do a runner with your laptop and that's it, you'll never see them again, whereas I think in the university there's some sort of accountability. If someone, if you did say, you know, leave your stuff with someone and they ran off with it, first of all you know they're most likely to be a student and second of all, if they did run off with your stuff and they were caught, they'd probably more than likely be expelled or something so there's that accountability, they don't want to, there'd be some comeuppance from the university anyway."

As seen above, for the participants being a member of a community with shared goals and similar intentions creates a sense of safety in the university campus. Members of the community feel that there is a sort of accountability and shared responsibility and a shared identity that is developed through participation in a community:

"Yeah, I think it comes down to again that kind of shared identity thing, that the trust comes from the fact that you're a student, they're a student and that you know, that you know that they wouldn't like their stuff to be stolen so then they're not going to do that to you and then obviously like you were saying with the, you know, the accountability thing, the safety and the trust comes within the environment as well, so you know that if worse came to worse and it did happen, there'd be repercussions to that action or someone would be on the lookout for something or whatever. I think, yeah, a lot of it comes from that identity and the overall [inaudible] we've attached to the space as well." (female student)

It is interesting to note how the participants construct their sense of shared identity by defining themselves in terms of a social group (i.e. students) who share specific qualities. According to the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), the social part of our identity stems from the different groups to which we belong. According to this theory, social identity is formed through a process of categorisation (e.g. that person is a student), identification with a social group (e.g. I am a student) and social comparison (e.g. students are different to other social groups with respect to crime-related behaviours). It is through the cognitive processes of categorization, in-group members tend to favour their attitudes

rather than those of the out-group, in order to maintain a positive social identity and have a clear perception of how they should behave towards members of the ingroup and outgroup. Although students were aware of the processes of stereotyping, they have been engaged they seem driven by their desire to see their ingroup as positive (ingroup favouritism) and construct a positive social identity:

Female student: “I guess, I know this sounds horrible but there’s a certain type of people who go to university, people who are just interested in thieving and things like that wouldn’t go into do a degree would they, so you hope that people who go to university have got better intentions than just going there to nick things.”

Female student: “Yeah you don’t really like sort of tie theft with that student stereotype do you?”

Female student: “No. Whether or not that’s an accurate assumption or not is another thing, but...”

In their final part of their discussion and analysis of the photo-voice focus group, participants identified the theme of **‘the socio-spatial construction of disclosure’**. As we will see below, participants delved into the importance of space in facilitating effective disclosures and in creating a culture that will not perpetuate the dominant culture in which sexual violence is prevalent and normalised:

Female student: “The one thing I did want to mention about the photo with the office space, I have heard that there’s not going to be particular offices. Now, I know on this campus if I want to go and see my personal tutor or something, I know where they’re likely to be or I know where someone is likely to be that’s going to help me and I can go to their office and I can have a good cry and there’s no problem because that’s their office and there’s only going to be those certain people in there, you know, tutors you know and trust and things,

whereas if there's no set space for a person to be or if there's no room you can, sort of break out room you can go in to have that good old cry and stuff, that would make me feel quite vulnerable."

Interviewer: "And again if we look at, if we think of the aim of this research, I mean the focus, excuse me, of this research which is sexual harassment, hate crime, sexual violence, do you think in an open space, do you think you would feel comfortable to kind of disclose...?"

Female student: "No. "

Female student: "No. "

Female student: "And you need somewhere you can go straight away..."

As seen above, participants expressed their worries about making disclosures in the new open space university environment. For them, an effective disclosure is facilitated by a safe place and access to a tutor with whom you have developed a trusting relationship. In this sense, a personal or academic tutor's general office is perceived as a safe space which facilitates immediate and effective disclosures.

Participants then delved into the low rate of sexual violence disclosures and explored different explanations:

Female student: "Yeah. People are hesitant to disclose those types of incidents to start with, you know, you have you know, sex crimes are one of the most under-reported crimes in the UK and..."

Interviewer: "Why do you think?"

Female student: "Because it's so personal isn't it?"

Male student: "Police response, [inaudible] on the phone lines because they're not police anymore."

Female student: “Blame. Being blamed for it as well. Because people, having, you don’t have understanding people when it comes to that sort of thing, very rarely are people, outside of your, people you know, understanding about it, there’s always that sense of are you to blame, what did you do? To the point where they’re saying well what were you wearing kind of thing, when you get cases in courts and things like that and you need to have somewhere you can go and feel safe, someone you know, someone you can trust, that’s not going to judge you, that you’re not going to be overheard, so that you can, you have control over that disclosure rather than it being a public thing.”

Female student: “I think like [name] said, it’s the initial, after the incident’s happened, like I’d feel safe going here, I wouldn’t even have to disclose here, I’d just feel safe processing it, whereas if you don’t have that space, who knows where you’re going to go? You could go and do something silly, you could go back to another open space like halls and just not have the chance to process it.”

[...]

Female student: “I think just one final point, with an open space, I suppose if you’d been assaulted or sexually assaulted, the openness would add to my anxiety, like you said about knowing, like I know to go here, whereas if I’ve just had an incident happen, I then have to go and find an appropriate lecturer to speak to. I think if I don’t find them within five minutes, that’s it, I’m not reporting that incident because I’ve not found them, my anxiety’s already high, so I think I’d just turn ‘round and go home and less likely to report it.”

Male student: “Yeah.”

Female student: “And I think if you’re disclosing, and then if you are able to disclose it and it’s in an open space where other people can overhear, it’s a form of victimisation, surely, because you’re then having other people passing judgements on you, it’s as if you’re going into court and you’re having the jury right there, effectively. I mean that’s quite extreme but when you’re in that situation, I imagine that that would be how it feels so I really, I really think that’s something that really needs to be reconsidered because you know, mitigating circumstances is a thing here as well, a lot of personal information is shared, yeah, I think that’s one of the biggest things, there needs to definitely be somewhere that people can go to disclose sensitive information in private because then they can have some control over the situation when so much control’s been taken away from them already, so I think that’s probably, yeah one of the biggest points I wanted to make really.”

As seen above, the factors that participants have identified as being related to the lack of reporting sexual crime are: (a) the personal nature of the crime itself (b) the police’s handling of the disclosures and (c) the blame culture in which violence is normalised and perpetuated through the objectification of women’s bodies and the use of misogynistic language. In such a culture, women’s rights and safety are ignored. Participants felt that within such a sociocultural context, the university should provide confidential and safe spaces where female students can talk to people they trust without the fear of being judged. In contrast, an open space environment is linked to increased anxiety over disclosures and a perpetuation of the blame culture in which women are feeling exposed to the public’s judgments.

In other words, the participants spoke of the importance of taking control over their disclosures and have a sense of ownership of the space:

Female student: “And I think, like [name] said, familiarity.”

Female student: “Yeah, and that territory, you mentioned about being territorial, but you do get, like this is my place, this is where I feel safe.”

Three main themes have been identified by students during their analytical discussion: (a) Safety and vulnerability (b) Spaces of belonging and (c) The socio-spatial construction of disclosure.

6.3 Summary

The first theme ‘Safety and vulnerability’ explored representations of the internal space of campus as a space in which students feel comfortable, a designed for purpose space. The dominant voice in the group spoke of a more generalised focus on fear of violence among students in the university space. For them, space is not a reflection of broad social relations, but it is by itself either safe or intimidating. However, a minority voice approached the campus space as being produced by gender relations and highlighted that gendered violence does exist within a University space and that there are spatial patterns of women's perceptions of risk of violence that need special attention. Participants explored their multiple experiences and realities that have led to the construction of the Students’ Union as both a safe space that is consisted of members of the same community (students) and an unsafe space that could be intimidating because of the large crowds it attracts and its association to a drinking subculture. The new urban location of the student union encompasses a new geography for students. Tangible features (e.g. location, physical layout) were perceived as threatening both to their safety and to their sense of belonging to a community of students.

Constructions of space and identity was the focus of the second theme ‘Spaces of belonging’. In this theme, participants’ sense of belonging to a community of students was threatened by the new inner-town campus location and its subsequent integration to the wider community. Enhancing security while avoiding, at the same time, a new security-obsessed culture were among the factors discussed that could mitigate their concerns. The

student community was represented as a safe 'community of practice' (Wegner, 1998), consisting of people who share similar experiences, practices and values and are constituted by the pursuit of shared interests, knowledge, common goals and intentions. Members of the community were perceived as having shared responsibilities and as being accountable for their behaviour in the university space. It is through this participation, that a shared social identity was constructed, which is viewed more positive when compared to the outgroup.

Finally, the third theme 'The socio-spatial construction of disclosure' delved into the importance of space in facilitating effective disclosures and in creating a culture that will not perpetuate the dominant blame culture in which sexual violence is prevalent and normalised, women's bodies are objectified, and women's rights and safety are ignored. Participants asked for confidential and safe spaces where female students can talk to people they trust without the fear of being judged. Open space settings were linked to increased anxiety over disclosures and as perpetuating the blame culture in which women are feeling exposed to the public's judgments. Overall, participants spoke of the importance of taking control over their disclosures and have a sense of 'space ownership'.

7. Staff Focus Groups

This section will provide an overview of the themes from the thematic analysis of the staff focus group. A summary of the main and subordinate themes from this analysis can be found in Table 5.

Table 5: Main and Subordinate Themes from the Staff Focus Group Analysis

Main Theme	Subordinate Theme
1. Representations of Space and Safety	a. Built Environment
2. Perceptions of Prevalence and Existing Practices	a. Prevalence, Normative Beliefs and Responsibility b. Existing Policies, Procedures and Training
3. Recommendations for Future Practice	a. Information and Processes b. Culture c. Staffing

As can be seen in Table 5, staff also had clear representations of how the built environment related to safety. Staff accounts also discussed the prevalence of sexual assault in relation to their students' experiences of violence, harassment and hate crime on campus. They also discussed their knowledge of these issues and the appropriate policies and procedures as well as their experiences of disclosure and the need to have appropriate and timely training. Finally, in their discussions about recommendations for future practice, staff suggested that the clarity and availability of information relating to policies and reporting needed to be improved and that the culture of the institution was important in sending the right messages about appropriate behaviour and respect. The following section will describe each of these themes in turn using illustrative quotes.

7.1 Representations of Space and Safety

During the focus group discussions, staff spoke at length about how different aspects of space were linked to their conceptions of safety. This theme focused in particular on space

and the built environment. Staff spoke about the feelings of safety at the campus they were about to leave as well discussing their perceptions, positive and negative, of the built environment at the new Waterside campus.

a. Built Environment

For staff, much of the discussion related to the physical environment and in particular the safety features (or lack of) on campus. Participants in both focus groups mentioned the importance of lighting and the availability of security when discussing their personal safety.

“...there was a time when there were lots of concerns raised by predominantly female members of staff who are working here late at night, so very little security, probably working on their own in somewhere like Cottesbrooke [university building] and then walking from Cottesbrooke through very poorly lit or sometimes unlit passageway to the car park....” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

One of the female participants agreed that the lighting on campus was important, stating that:

“...now the night comes much earlier so you don’t always feel, I don’t know, comfortable or safe, I don’t know, because sometimes I do stay until late, we have some event or whatever so, and then the car park is very poorly lit.”

Another participant in the other focus group also highlighted lighting and security as an issue:

“I think a lot of that is to do with lights don’t work, it’s very quiet, you don’t see security guards walking around all the time.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

A number of the participants in both of the staff focus group session made similar points about the lighting in particular and different areas of the campus were highlighted as examples of where staff felt unsafe due to a lack of adequate lighting. The car parks were mentioned frequently as spaces where staff felt unsafe and where lighting needed improvement.

Other participants also mentioned the availability and visibility of security staff as a factor in whether they felt safe:

“Definitely have felt in more recent years more vulnerable here, ...you know, there is a security presence but it’s, I don’t really feel it, I don’t feel the security presence, certainly not around, you know, Naseby [university building] or if I’m working in Cottesbrooke I don’t really feel the presence, so definitely do feel a bit more vulnerable now.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

One male colleague also agreed that the availability and visibility of security staff was a problem:

“...if you are working late and you’re on your own and you’re in Cottesbrooke and there’s no security and there’s a problem, you know, what do you do? Who do you call? OK, you can call main security but they’re, what, quarter of a mile away, ...so there’s limited effectiveness there. ...who knows that you’re there? ...And the answer seems to be then as now, nobody.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

However, not all participants felt that the campus was unsafe:

“I like it, it is very safe place, the good thing that is, it’s not in the town centre, which is in a quiet place, very close to my house as well. And I think that in terms of safety, I haven’t any experience to say that this is not a safe place to work in.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Other participants agreed, although the statements were qualified by suggesting that the feelings of safety depended on the time of day and this was also connected to the concerns which were raised in relation to the lighting on campus:

“I feel OK at Park Campus, I would say more so in the day time, but in the evening, I spend a lot of time quite late at night on campus and could leave campus at 2, 3am and I don’t feel necessarily 100% safe when I’m walking to a bus stop or to a taxi.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“During the day, you know, I find this, you know, a really welcoming place actually and I feel quite comfortable in the space but at night time, you know, a few years ago I used to teach an evening session which didn’t used to finish until 9 and I used to feel ever so uncomfortable.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In addition to raising the lighting, staff also discussed some of the physical safety features in offices, such as the availability of panic alarms, as well as the layout of offices and classrooms which made staff feel more or less safe. This was most apparent in comments from staff who were in close contact with distressed students:

“It’s always of concern to us because we are often delivering bad news to people, to students, that they can't do something or we won't allow them to do something, so there’s always that risk of anger, resentment, retaliation, some form of threat that might be forthcoming.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“...we both meet with students alone every day, we don’t have any panic button and often it is quite emotionally sensitive things that we meet with students about, generally speaking we know where each other are because we work quite closely together, but if one of us is off, if one of us is on holiday, then I think it would take a while for anyone to know.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The layout of rooms and offices was also mentioned as a factor in making staff feel that they were safe and had an escape route if required:

“...two of the rooms we use have got a big table in the middle so you’d have a bit of an obstacle to get out quickly anyway just from how they’re set up.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“...we actually don’t have rooms which are our rooms and therefore they’re not set up the way that we would necessarily set them up. We actually sometimes are upstairs, sometimes we’re downstairs, we work where there’s no panel in the door for anybody actually to see you and so you can go in there, shut the door with a student, and unless you’re aware to make sure that you’re the person that’s nearest the door and those other things that you might sort of do yourself, you potentially could have a student kick off, for want of a better word, and until it got to a stage that there was an awful lot of noise that nobody would be any the wiser that you were having an issue with the student.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

As well as raising concerns about the built environment at the 'old' campus, participants also discussed safety and their perceptions of safety on the new Waterside campus. Once again, concerns about lighting were mentioned:

“making sure it’s really well lit and the surround of the campus is also really well lit at night, so that if you are walking to the bus stop or to the train station, that that is, you know, accessible and that there aren’t any kind of hidden dark spots like there are around here.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Other safety features for the new campus were also mentioned, such as the fact that CCTV cameras would be installed and monitored and that security would be increased:

“...we’re having an active CCTV control room at Waterside that will be monitored and acted upon and that increased security presence that you talked about at the beginning, these are all things that have already actually been factored in for Waterside in our arm of the development, so those are things I think should happen and they are. (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

However, some participants were still concerned that there needed to be sufficient information about the security arrangements at the new campus:

“...there should be more information about where they’re [security] going to be. I mean I know Waterside is not built yet but is there going to be someone in each building, is there going to be someone outside, you know, are they going to be walking around like you’d have bobbies on the street, you know, just a presence, because that would work, I think that would make me feel safer here if we saw them more.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

There were some mixed feelings about whether the new campus would be safer than the 'old' campus. Participants thought that the location of the new campus, closer to the town centre, could have both positive and negative consequences in terms of safety. Similarly, there were differing views expressed about the pros and cons to having a campus which was much more accessible to the public.

Some participants expressed concern that the campus would be so open and accessible to members of the public:

“But that speaks to who was going through campus, ...but you don’t know who’s walking through and it was one of the things I thought, I know they’ve implemented stuff in the library so now you have to put, but you can be in there though, so if you’re in there already before the security comes then you’re already in aren’t you, they’re only checking people after a certain time going in and out, so I don’t know. I wonder if they will be putting some safeguarding in place...” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“Questions I think have already been asked about what, it’s an open campus, there are no gates, no security as far as I understand, so it will be open to anyone and the buildings will be open to anyone and the idea is that it will be open to the public, it’s being sold as an innovative building, an innovative experiment almost in higher education. And I think it’s quite interesting a number of comments that I heard at a public meeting about Waterside saying, you know, you’re going to have tramps sleeping on campus, you’re going to have people sleeping rough on campus because it’s completely open.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

In addition to the accessibility to members of the public, participants also discussed whether it would be easier for parents, and other people the students may not wish to see, to access the students on campus given that it would be more open to the public due to its location:

“Going back to what you said though it makes me wonder how safe certain students would feel at Waterside, because when you said your parents might be turning up or flatmates or someone they might have had an argument, I mean on this campus you get some very shifty people, they drive up and they sell something and they drive away again and there’s been incidents where someone hasn’t had the money or whatever. But at Waterside the more open it is, if you’re hiding from, you don’t want to see you father for whatever reason, mother, that they can just get on campus and just walk around, so they could call us and we can say, can't tell you, they’re like, OK fine, I’ll just pop round, and they can. So you have to wonder whether or not that’s something that some students are thinking about, ‘cause like

you said there are safe rooms here and they know that but, so they're losing some security that they have here on that move to Waterside so that, I think, might be an issue." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

But other participants viewed the openness of the campus as a positive element:

"But you see, but that is not necessarily bad actually, you know, because that can actually have, one, you will have more people going through, so it is going to be more of a public space and that sometimes can help." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"Part of me actually feels like I'm going to feel safer there in a way, although the surrounding area might not be great, actually it's almost safety in numbers, isn't it, 'cause it is going to be more compact. If you are working late or out of hours or on a Saturday, there's more likely to be more people around you, whereas here it feels like it's quite sparse." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

There was some recognition from participants that the openness of the campus and the safety of staff and students was going to require a potentially difficult balancing act:

"We are going to be nestled in between sort of two wards in Northampton that aren't particularly that sort of great, so Far Cotton and the Town Centre, and because of that there is a security review ongoing at the moment looking at access control at Waterside and that type of thing, so it won't be as open and as accessible as it is now. Now that is difficult because we are trying to create an environment that is accessible to all and that people feel comfortable coming into but there's that balance between them providing a safe environment for our staff...." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

As well as raising issues regarding the openness of the campus versus safety concerns, participants in both focus groups also discussed the location of the new campus more generally and the safety in terms of the surrounding areas and getting to and from the university:

“I don’t know what it is like. I don’t live in Northampton, I have absolutely no clue even how to get there, what it will look like, you know, I have been in Northampton a couple of times at night and I don’t feel safe being in Northampton at night. And the idea of teaching until eight o’clock in the evening, not knowing whether I have managed to park my car on campus, I have to leave... and make a decision whether I’m going to chance parking on campus or park in the car ride, so you know, and the same for our students who are here until eight o’clock at night, they all tend to be mainly women and, you know, have we taken that into consideration? How they’re actually going to get back to their car, go home? (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

A participant in the other focus group session made a similar point about the surrounding area and getting to and from the campus:

“I think my concern is not for the campus buildings and Waterside itself, but for the surrounding area and the countryside if you, if member of staff not parking on campus and parking outside and walking from Waterside to parking, so this is again, could be an issue for security to consider. So I do understand that security issues has been settled on the Waterside but what about the surrounding areas, so...?” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

The more central town centre location was also highlighted as a potential concern for participants:

“It’s closer to sort of bars and clubs and all that sort of thing, if we become a cut through for whatever it is because we are very open, then potentially we’re drawn to campus people which we wouldn’t necessarily come across here.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The final element of this theme was less about the security of staff and students in relation to the built environment, but focused on the safety of students and the accessibility of staff on the new campus when students were in crisis or needed a safe and confidential space. Concern was expressed about a) the accessibility of staff and b) the availability of confidential and safe spaces. In relation to the first of these elements, staff stated that:

“really our sole purpose is to meet with students and to, but so far, until we raised it with the Dean, that they actually hadn’t thought, well they wanted to carry our job roles over but where are we actually going to be? ‘Cause students aren’t going to want to come and see us when we’re sat in a room with 30 other or however many other tutors and staff, so yeah.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“...I can't quite see how the students who currently drop by my room or I bump into them in the open space and you have a sort of spur of the moment conversation with them, which happens quite a lot and I think that’s quite important, in my head I don’t have a picture of how that might work at Waterside, which is not to say it won't work, but that’s a concern which I’d certainly share.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

“I raised the issue well actually I do want students to be able to access, one of the things that I think the law department do best is that they’re visible, you can see your lecturers, sometimes it’s not convenient for the tutors to be like stopped if it, you know, and you just have to be strong and say, I haven’t got time, but it’s nice for the students actually to have that visibility. But in Waterside it’s going to be a non-student area so students, that’s how I’ve been told it is, students won't be able to physically access it ‘cause you’ll need a key pad or whatever, however it is done.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The second issue of the need to have accessible and confidential safe spaces at the new campus was also raised:

“...enough confidential spaces in which to do that, I mean that’s the key thing. I know there will be some spaces at Waterside for that, hopefully they’ll be enough but if not, that’s going to be problematic.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

“See also sometimes it happens in, ...a student who wants to speak to you finds it hard to actually come and seek you out, but you might have a quiet word with them at the end of a seminar or a lecture, so you’re walking along the corridor or whatever and, how’s it going and, you know, something crops up. OK, do you want to have a chat about it now? As it happens I’ve got ten minutes, you know, do you want to

have a chat about it now? Yeah, fine. At Waterside, you know, my danger is that you'll agree to do that and you'll probably then spend half an hour trying to find a space to have said chat, by which time the moment's passed." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Given the number and nature of the incidences staff were dealing with, staff felt that there was a need to ensure that there were sufficient safe spaces on campus, particularly at the new campus due to the lack of individual offices.

"We also consider our offices as being safe havens and that has been used before where students know that if they are being harassed or chased or feel threatened in any way there are certain rooms that they can go to that are safe havens. How that will work at Waterside I don't know 'cause we won't have offices, we won't have designated safe areas, ...I don't see this on a daily basis but I certainly see evidence of this on a weekly basis. (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Another participant agreed that there was a need for safe spaces generally for students:

"I think students hide from parents for various reasons, it sounds a bit silly saying that but they do. And we've had students who have not told their parents that they've failed, we've had students who have not told their parents that they've been terminated, we've got students who are hiding from parents because they've set up arranged marriages, we have a number of incidents where we have had to protect students." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Participants were also concerned about the ability of students to access members of staff quickly in a crisis, this concern was particularly expressed in the context of the new campus move:

"...the sorts of issues that I've been seeing students about, it's not the sort of thing where they can plan ahead and go, oh this are your office hours, this is when I'm going to talk to you about this huge issue that's affected me. And you know, we have the box of tissues, there's quite often floods of tears and, you know, to be able to access me or any other member of staff in that way at Waterside, I think is just a very, very different dynamic. And I'm concerned that if I, if those same

students, if we were at Waterside, I'm concerned that they wouldn't actually come and speak to me or they wouldn't be able to come and speak to me and then what would happen? You know, I wouldn't be then able to signpost them to counselling or mental health or to other areas, that's my biggest concern actually about the move to Waterside, I think." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In this theme participants considered the built environment and in particular focus was on the physical elements of the built environment which made staff feel safe. In their discussions, participants referred to safety features, such as having panic alarms, good lighting and the visibility of security staff as important. Participants also mentioned the arrangement of physical spaces such as office and meeting spaces and classrooms to allow for quick exits in cases of emergency. There was also a lot of discussion about the openness and location of the new campus and participants felt that these factors could have both positive and negative elements. Finally staff also discussed student safety and confidentiality and raised concerns about how the build environment at the new campus could facilitate safe spaces for students as well as ensuring that there were sufficient confidential spaces so that staff could have difficult discussions with students without others overhearing.

7.2 Perceptions of Prevalence and Existing Practices

During the focus group discussions, staff spoke about their perceptions of how often incidents of sexual harassment, violence and hate crimes occurred in a campus context. They also discussed their knowledge and effectiveness of current existing policies and procedures in place to deal with reported incidents at the University of Northampton.

a. Prevalence, Normative Beliefs and Responsibility

The first subordinate theme in this section focuses on the participants' perceptions of the prevalence and nature of the problems on campus. There were also discussions about the need for safe spaces given the nature of some of the issues which staff were having to deal with and in particular concerns were raised about the ability of students to access staff and appropriate support in a crisis and the need to encourage students to disclose incidents of harassment and sexual violence. Staff also recognised that there had to be

some management of expectations in terms of staff availability. The final element of this subordinate theme focused on the nature of the students at the University and the belief that the 'type' of students who attend the University of Northampton are in need of additional support and are not necessarily appropriately prepared for university life.

In general, participants expressed the view that issues of sexual and gender-based violence as well as other forms of hate crime were prevalent and increasing. One participant stated that:

"I deal with the aftermath of this and I'm seeing a rise in that type of incident because I, all the mitigating circumstances forms flow through my team, my offices, and what we're seeing is when we do the analysis at the end of the year are more issues of what appear to be hate crimes, what appear to be, you know, racist comments and also quite a noticeable rise in domestic violence, we're seeing that as a cause for mitigating circumstances are rising, that is quite noticeable."
(Female Participant Focus Group 1)

One participant also highlighted a noticeable rise in sexual harassment on campus:

"I started to notice a bit more a lot of comments, a lot of cat calling that I hadn't really been that aware of before and I have sort of picked up on that a lot, like a girl walking along and a group of lads kind of making comments to her and I think, oh that makes me quite uncomfortable for that student that's had to walk through that." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Another participant in the same focus group agreed that the number of reported incidents they were dealing with was significant:

"I haven't witnessed incidents but I've had students come to me to tell me things have happened and that's kind of been in the last two years, teaching on the framework that I'm teaching on, quite a number of students, it's very common."
(Female Participant Focus Group 1)

This was also reflected in the other focus group when a male member of staff stated that:

“I mean I’ve dealt with several, in various capacities dealt with several alleged incidents, sometimes proven incidents...” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

There were also comments made about the prevalence of incidents in halls of residence and that these were coming to light through termination appeal hearings and disciplinary panels:

“And one of the things that I do is I chair a lot of the termination appeals panels and the appeals, the disciplinary panels, and there we’re getting more and more incidents of people being excluded from halls because of behaviour, it’s not always sexual harassment but a lot of it is and a lot of it is we’ve had to move a number of students from halls to other residences because they, it’s just not safe for them to remain where they were originally placed.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Another participant in the same focus group also highlighted the role of Graduate Tutors, or similar roles, in ensuring that staff were accessible to students disclosing distressing information as academic staff could sometimes be regarded as a bit far removed from the students themselves. The availability of Graduate Tutors meant that the gap was somewhat bridged:

“...students do tend to feel that maybe because we are, I don’t know, a lot less out of university than some, or academic staff are seen as, I don’t know, there’s a barrier between academic staff and students, we’re that in between individual and students do divulge information that you definitely haven’t asked or probed for, they do feel comfortable to tell you things...” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In addition, staff acknowledged that more needed to be done in order to encourage students to disclose incidents of harassment and sexual violence as there was the feeling that this was under-reported. One member of staff articulated that students may be reluctant to report:

“But often the students will say, I don’t want to report this to the university, I just need help, I don’t want my tutors to know, I don’t, and where we’re saying, you can put in mitigating circumstances for this, I don’t want to because I don’t want

people to know that this has happened to me..." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

A male participant in the other focus group session also raised some of the barriers which need to be overcome in order for a student to disclose information as well as the time it can take to build up trust in order to get to that stage:

"I started from the perspective that I'm sitting in a room and I'm having a conversation with a student, you know, sometimes to get to that point it's taken maybe quite a few emails, it's taken probably a couple of chance encounters, so my sort of perception is that once you've reached that stage, you've probably not got the most significant hurdle out the way but you've got a significant hurdle out the way." (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

The need to encourage disclosure was mentioned by another member of staff in the second focus group:

"...I haven't experienced any, witnessed any of these issues, but it doesn't mean it doesn't happen ...we need to encourage the students to open, to facilitate space and time for them to speak and I think that maybe we are, as members of staff, we are the proper persons to speak to rather than speak to anyone else and hopefully we can do something and help them if we can." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

However, there was a recognition that there were limits as to what members of staff and the university were able to do in certain circumstances and that there had to be certain expectations which were set in relation to things such as the availability of members of staff:

"We have the issue about expectations and the lack of understanding and acknowledgement that we are not available 24/7. And yes, we do get more and more students who are demanding and are looking for an immediate response and the issue is that not all colleagues respond in the same way." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Another participant agreed, stating that:

“from my perspective and my team’s perspective, this has changed and the focus has changed and the demand has changed since fees came in, the attitude we are paying for this service, we are customers and therefore we demand a response of service. And you will get, I’m sure we’ve all experienced this, you’ll get students emailing three, four, five, six, seven times, I sent you an email yesterday morning and you still haven’t responded. And I think what we may need to do is formulate some kind of response that everybody gives.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The final aspect of this subordinate theme related to staff views regarding the nature of the students and the need for additional and appropriate support for them. Staff articulated that many students had experiences which impacted on their studies at university and the implication was that this was particularly the case with students who struggled academically. The issue of whether the students struggled academically because of the problems they were facing was not fully explored in the focus group and the connections to issues of sexual violence were also not explicitly made:

“I’d say for example my students, so they’re foundation students who typically didn’t get the grades to get into university, most, the majority of the students have got background issues going on, whether it’s abuse, whether it’s they’ve got a criminal background, whether they’re running away from a parent, there’s a lot of issues and all of that then is brought into the classroom.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The need for timely and appropriate institutional support for students was also raised by staff. There was some concern that it was not always possible to easily identify what type of support would be appropriate for students with complex needs and serious problems. In addition, the view was expressed that a lack of finances meant that the support which was needed could not be adequately provided:

“I think the issue here is though, what kind of support? Because in the classroom we are up against some very, very serious issues of, I’m very experienced and it’s

very difficult for me to focus on and determine what kind of support these students that we're working with need." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"...but not everybody at the age of 18 is ready to go to university. And so if we accept the student that indeed require extra support, we have to accept them with the support we need, but then economically we cannot provide that support, so we're not doing them a favour. (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

b. Existing Policies, Procedures and Training

The second subordinate theme in this section relates to staff knowledge of existing policies and procedures and the need for appropriate support and training to be able to deal with some of the complex and sensitive issues which students disclosed, particularly when it came to disclosures of sexual violence and harassment. The largest element of this subtheme related to the problem of staff not knowing about relevant policies and procedures and that support for students was ad hoc and based on local knowledge and informal peer support. The view from staff was that there were not adequate institutional processes to enable them to deal with disclosures effectively. Often staff did not know where or who to signpost students to and the view was expressed that students often had to disclose incidents of rape and other sexual assaults to numerous people and for different purposes. For example, disclosures had to be made to module tutors when needing extensions, personal tutors, academic advisers and Programme Leaders when asking for mitigating circumstances or deferred/repeat years and student services when accessing advice and counselling services.

The following quotations are illustrative of the discussions regarding the knowledge of existing formal institutional policies and procedures to deal with disclosures of sexual violence and harassment and the fact that staff used ad hoc local knowledge and support from immediate colleagues:

"One thing that strikes me about us discussing all of this today is that, you know, we've got an awful lot of experience between us of either being amongst other students, being student facing or dealing with students and I don't think any of us

are 100% clear on the processes at this institution, you know, so I think that's something that really needs to be addressed." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

"I don't think I would know what to explain to a new member of staff, I think that's the point really is that I don't, I know who I would probably call, but like you mentioned about calling lots of different people to find, that's probably exactly what I would do, so I'm not in a student facing necessarily role, but if it was presented to me by a member of staff I would probably have to go round the houses a little bit as to who I then needed to report that to, if I needed to report it, do I, don't I? ...I'd like to have more structure to that I think and I'd like to be able to give my team more structure to be able to say, this is what you do in that situation..." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

"...what I've been doing for the last few years is that just muddling through and every couple of years, you know, it changes a little bit, who you contact for various things so that's not particularly helpful either, but yeah, I wouldn't be able to sit down and give them clear, structured advice, because I don't think it's there, I don't think there is any clear, structured advice and I would just say the same thing as [Male Participant's name], you know, if you don't feel comfortable dealing with something then, you know, speak to me or refer them to me or, you know, I would probably take it on my shoulders myself but I don't know if that's necessarily the right thing either." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

"I moved to the university five years ago and I think that all the information I got was informally from me asking about, can you tell me where I can find the information?" (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

"But for the student that it's happened to in terms of support, it's quite ad hoc, it's quite kind of a bit from mental health, a bit from wherever they need to go external." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"I - Is anybody aware of what the official response..."

F No, we haven't...

I Would be to a student disclosing?

F We haven't got one as far as I'm aware. They may go through the, well the student who's disclosing, we have quite a few of them, we have our own way of responding to them, we would refer them to counselling, mental health, we'd give them, and they, actually the mental health advisers are good at putting students in touch with Rape Crisis and places like that. But for our own policies, as far as I'm aware, the student would go through a disciplinary policy, the student, the perpetrator, is that right or not?" (Discussion between 2 Female Participants and the Interviewer Focus Group 1)

"Yeah, I think though the situations that we've been in where students come and actually disclose to us, we've found it very difficult to cobble together what our response should be, what we can offer the student and there seems to be no real joined up process." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

In addition, participants also highlighted that they also were unsure about where relevant information was located and where they would need to look to find it:

"At the moment our details are on the internet but unless you read the Unify email, which I do because I need to promote the university or you look at the internet, you wouldn't know." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"And I, you know, put mental health wellbeing University of Northampton, Google found it for me. And when I got on the page there was really nothing..." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Staff were also concerned about not knowing where services or security facilities would be located on the new campus and the lack of communication/training about how to use some of the features as well as the knowledge of where to take students in distress.

"What worries me at Waterside is when will I get that information to know, as a lecturer on the 1st of October, where do I go and take my student to help them? Because I'm not the type of lecturer that will just send them to a room, if they disclose that information to me, I'd want to actually walk with them, make them

feel comfortable, but if I don't know where those offices are based or if they're at Newton, whether they're at Waterside, as staff we need to be aware before the students start where everyone is placed and organised." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"...what do you do with a student who suddenly appears at your door, who's you know, we've all experienced this I think, you know, very, very upset? And the response I got was take them for coffee." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Participants also discussed the location of support services at the new campus and highlighted the need for counselling, advice and disability services to be located on campus where students were.

"F In Basset Loake at the Avenue campus...

F Oh wow.

F What remains of the Avenue campus.

F So that's ridiculous.

F Yes. They're going to have a presence on campus but only in the sense that there are about six agencies who all deal frontline, face-to-face with students who are going to be sharing confidential or semi-confidential spaces for only part of each day. There's not actually going to be a permanent presence of any of the, what I would call the major agencies on, at Waterside. So, if a student really has a crisis, it's a question that, rather flippant question that was asked, what do we do? We put them on a bus and send them up to Basset Loke to Avenue campus because there may not be anybody that day from the mental health team or from Assist [inaudible] who can actually frontline, who can help." (Discussion between Female Participants Focus Group 1)

"...the concern is, at Waterside, is that possibly the people who you may have taken students to, will not be based at Waterside, Assist the mental health team, some of the other teams are going to be actually in Basset Loake..." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The final element of this subtheme related to the need to have appropriate training and support for staff dealing with disclosures. One major aspect which came through in discussions was a lack of knowledge of policies and procedures, particularly in relation to the new campus, and the perceived lack of a reporting structure and information for appropriate signposting of students. This needed to be addressed early on in terms of training for new staff and then ongoing and updated training for all staff.

“I think that what peers were saying is correct about training because I don’t think that anybody is, you can respond on a human level but not necessarily on a level where you’re trained to do so, so not really is the answer to that.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

“We certainly haven’t received any training along the lines of what you should do, how you should respond, who you should involve, the university has a sort of a clear identified route to help the student back to sort of wellbeing maybe for want of a better word and there be anything written down as to the process would actually encourage the student to actually go along.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

I Were you given any informal advice by colleagues about these kinds of circumstances?

F No, not to deal with students, only something that was to do with me and then I said, this has happened, what should I do? And that was it. But that was to do with me, not to do with a student, so not anything signposted to say...

F I think we weren’t given much information anyway...

F No, it’s kind of like on your own...

F Yes.

F Off you go, that’s it...

F We were kind of left to find, I mean we were both graduates from here so we knew stuff about the university and the services and everything but if we were actual new members of staff, first time setting in the office, then...

F Yeah...

F I think we would be lost.

F Yeah, can't have a look, contact SD Bookings, that's about it, yeah, so no."

(Discussion between Female Participants Focus Group 2)

Much of the discussion surrounded the personal tutor system and the support and training which was provided to personal academic tutors:

"I think there are pockets of brilliant support which I've come across a few personal tutors that have been brilliant and there are pockets of really good support but none of them are trained as first responders, they're good because it's their subject area often and so for those students that don't want to disclose 'cause their personal tutor's a man or don't, or feel like they'll be seen differently, I'm not sure where they would go at the moment." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"I'm their personal academic tutor, I was only, we're having training this week, Wednesday, I've been in my role for 10 weeks and I haven't had any training on being a personal academic tutor because there wasn't a need apparently for anyone to have training." (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

"And I think this lead to the training of personal tutors, for us to be able to inform students about the right direction, the right facilities available in the universities, to support them, if they raised any of these things or if they didn't, we couldn't do everything, we need to be trained, not every academic can support and give the information to students about how to deal with, so we need also to focus on training personal tutors to know how to deal with these sensitive situations with the students." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Staff also acknowledged that the quality of support students received from some personal tutors was patchy. This inconsistency in the quality of support was also partly put down to the fact that they felt that they were not provided with enough support, in the form of appropriate time, to adequately support students with complex emotional and academic needs.

“I think the personal tutor system concerns me because we get some exceptional people as personal tutors, we get some people haven’t a clue, I think it’s very hit and miss, I don’t think there’s any training.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“I think the personal tutor system as well, it’s going to be flawed because you’ll have academics who like yourself say, we don’t just deliver, we are here in another role as well, we’re more well-rounded, but then you will get some, as a student I witnessed this, academics who are just here to deliver and they don’t want to really have any pastoral care. But then you’ve also got to bear in mind that some personal tutors just do not have time, like they are literally rushing around like headless chickens trying to do everything else that’s now like the bureaucracy of paperwork and everything, that they don’t have the time for the old fashioned sit down, perhaps coffee or sit down with a cup of tea.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

However, some participants mentioned that it should be recognised that there were limitations to what personal academic tutors could, and should, do in terms of supporting students. There was a feeling that it was possible to provide generic advice and support, but that personal academic tutors should be signposting to relevant support services who were more appropriately trained to deal with disclosures of sexual violence.

“I agree to a point that there could be some training but I don’t think as academic staff, that we should be trained to be experts with, you know, mental health issues or like serious red light issues, because we can’t possibly be, you know, we can’t possibly kind of hold all those cards. But I think some over-arching training, you know, better communication, listening skills, but more importantly knowing exactly how to deal with these different types of issues.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

“I think this is a good point and this is what I meant, I don’t think that we supposed to deal with these incidents if they are serious and we haven’t time and ability to do it.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

“I just don’t think it’s fair to put somebody in that position too soon, so you know, yes, the standard stuff about, you know, careers advice and study choices, that’s fine, but the more potentially distressing stuff, I think you need to get your feet under the table for a bit and then you can start to think about things like that.

(Male Participant Focus Group 2)

In summary, this theme has highlighted staff perceptions regarding the prevalence of sexual violence and harassment on campus. This has, to some degree, mirrored the perceptions of students in relation to the frequency of such incidents. In addition, staff expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of staff and support services, particularly in relation to the move to the new campus, and the need to have appropriate safe spaces. This too, was reflected in the student focus group. Staff also felt that students needed to be encouraged to report incidents so that appropriate support could be given, although there was also acknowledgement that there needed to be a management of expectations in terms of the availability of staff and the kinds of issues which staff, particularly academic staff, would be able to provide. One of the largest elements of this theme related to staff knowledge of existing policies and procedures as well as knowing where to find relevant information for signposting purposes. Staff expressed concern that they perceived there to be a lack of formal procedures for when students made disclosures. Staff felt that most of their knowledge came from having picked things up on an ad hoc basis and they felt that ongoing training, particularly for newer members of staff and personal tutors, was necessary.

7.3 Recommendations for Future Practice

Given some of the issues which were mentioned in the above themes, it is unsurprising that many of the recommendations which staff made were closely related to the perceived shortcomings which were identified. Staff spoke at length about the need to have formal referral mechanisms, readily available information about signposting and information flow charts as well as a clear policy and procedure for dealing with emergency situations and

disclosures of sexual violence. Staff also highlighted the need for a clear policy relating to sexual misconduct of staff, due to the nature of the relationship and power dynamics between staff and students. They also recommended comprehensive and appropriate training for key staff dealing with disclosures. Staff also identified that the culture of the institution needed to change. Staff recommended that a culture of respect needed to be developed within the institution, starting from the very top of the institution. Staff also highlighted that sexual violence and harassment needed to be very explicitly mentioned in the student code as unacceptable behaviour and there was also the suggestion that the Students' Union needed to take a much more active role in developing a culture where sexual violence and harassment were not tolerated. Finally, participants recommended that support services needed to have adequate funding and resources to be able to deal with disclosures of sexual violence and harassment in a timely and appropriate manner. Staff recommended that a first responder system should be established, run by appropriately trained staff members.

a. Information and Processes

Given that much of the discussion in the focus group with staff revolved around the lack of knowledge of policies and procedures as well as the perceived paucity of information available to staff who were having to deal with disclosures of sexual violence and harassment, many of the recommendations for future practice focused on the provision of information and the need to have formal procedures in place.

One recommendation was that there should be a flow chart for staff which detailed the paths which could be followed when a student makes a disclosure. The point was also made that the information should be easily accessible and in one place:

“F I’ve quite often had to dig around quite a long time to find out who the best person is to signpost them to. And what I would find really helpful is to have, you know, one...

F A flowchart or something.

F One place with all the information in it, you know, is, are you dealing with a, you know, is it a criminal matter, is it, you know, related to this, you

know, something like that where you can easily navigate it and be signposted so that you can really support the student.

F And this is why we need a structure maybe, so all of us agree this is how, if we face something like that what we should do, so a structure can help us to, not training us but can help us to be fair in our dealing with these incidents.” (Discussion between Female Participants Focus Group 2)

Other participants agreed:

“I think the flowchart idea is a good one as long as, and I think [another participant name] said, as long as it sets out the options and doesn’t try to be too prescriptive, as in if a student says this, you do that, because there’s no one size fits all.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

“But I think there needs to be one key source of information so that we can, you know, better support them rather than spending a lot of time digging around going from one person to the other.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

A similar proposal was also made for students:

“And maybe not just for staff but maybe also like an opposite version for students, so you know, if you do choose to disclose or, you know, what are your options...” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Staff also mentioned that the centralisation of student support services was also an issue as there were not the same opportunities for building relationships with the members of student support. This meant that staff who were supporting students did not necessarily know who they were talking to or if they were talking to the same people each time. Staff felt time was wasted when they had to repeat what had happened to numerous people:

“I also think at the moment, you know, in the last few years it’s become so centralised, it’s become so impersonal though. So you know, you can't really contact an individual anymore to ask their advice, you know, you have to contact a generic email address and hope that you’re dealing with the same person, you

know, each time, who knows the issue that you're, you know, trying to resolve, so that's the other problem." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Staff also raised the need to have clear policies and procedures which outlined what would happen to the alleged perpetrators of sexual violence:

"...if a student reports an incident or a concern or whatever and that involved another student, so you've got one student making allegations against another student, again it's stating the obvious but I'm not sure that we've ticked this particular box, you have to make very sure that the procedures which then kick in actually are fair and balanced..." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Another participant in the other focus group also suggested clear policies needed to be in place so that appropriate action could be taken for inappropriate behaviour:

"Yeah, which makes it difficult I think from a policy side because if you don't set the rule that no we don't accept this then how do you investigate it, how do you hold a student to account who has been involved in that sort of behaviour?"

(Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Interestingly, one participant raised the need to have clear policies and procedures in dealing with sexual misconduct by staff. They highlighted the significance of this due to the fact that where staff had sexual relations with students, there was a power dynamic involved. This might also prevent a student from reporting issues of inappropriate behaviour by staff. Therefore, there needed to be a clear policy statement about the inappropriateness of staff-student sexual relations:

"...the idea of the power influence as well, because we're talking about these incidents between students themselves or between staff, but what about students and a member of staff? And how we protect and encourage the confidentiality of students to report it and to speak and to open and on the same time not, you know, not allowing power influence from member or staff to stop students to recording things, so to stop students to reporting things, we need also to make it clear, that ethical framework, about the relationship between staff and students,

and all about providing information and managing expectation in my point of view.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In addition to have policies and procedures and information regarding appropriate signposting of students, staff also felt that there needed to be more information for both staff and students around campus which provided details of what to do and who to contact in an emergency or crisis situation:

“So if you have a student who’s distressed, a student who really does need contact with someone, my concern always has been, is the lack of where a student would go if, you know, they needed advice immediately or guidance immediately or something happened. And I think going back to the point of what is the number, what are the services that are available if a student has an accident, you know, is attacked or one of us are attacked or whatever the situation is, it’s not very clear on our existing campuses where you go for immediate help.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

“I mean also, sorry, but also for the really serious cases, you know, what you might call the red light cases, something that gives some detailed guidance in terms of the options there, I think is useful to anybody, however experienced you may or may not be.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

In addition to having appropriate policies and information, staff also felt that there needed to be better reporting mechanisms and/or better information about reporting, such as what happens when an incident is reported. Participants suggested online reporting systems which were visible to staff and students:

“anonymous reporting system so it might be online, a bit like the kind of C-OP(?) stuff for online internet safety but, you know, so if somebody doesn’t want to report to a person but still wants somebody to deal with it or, you know, at least once to kind of open up that first channel of communication then that can sometimes be a method that is used.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

“...we need to raise awareness of the importance of reporting, both amongst the staff and student community really. And obviously that can only come once you've got an appropriate reporting mechanism... (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Staff also felt that there had to be clear messages about the meanings of terms such as consent, sexual violence, hate crime, harassment etc and that this should be communicated effectively to staff and students (maybe via induction processes for both staff and students) to enable students to recognise when such incidents have occurred and to report them:

“we need also clear information about what does or does this concept mean? Because hate crime and sexual abuse and whatever, we need to make sure that there is, good information has been sent to staff and students and international students, we have lots of international students, we have students from different cultures coming to the university, we need to make sure that those students understand the meaning of these concepts, whatever the meaning is, and we need to send these clear messages for students to say, oh this, what does it mean, hate crime? Because maybe students, international students, they, someone say something and they don't understand or recognise this as a hate crime or not, so we need to, you know, give that information.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Another participant agreed that clear messages, education and communication was important in dealing with sexual violence:

“...the importance of education and awareness, which I think is absolutely key, I mean it's easier said than done, but when I look at examples that I've come across, I mean I know 80, 90% of the time it was, without being overly charitable, but I would put it down to ignorance more so than malice on the part of the people concerned.” (Male Participant Focus Group 2)

One participant also highlighted the need for clear messages and communication, but also pointed out that the policies and procedures to deal with sexual violence and disclosures needed to be joined up and that there needed to be a co-ordinated response which was

also connected to other policies and procedures, such as those relating to engagement and retention:

“There’s so much made of how we, what strategies we can put in place to help retain students and continue to engage students and actually everything that we’re discussing today is really key to that, so I think it really flags up the need within the university’s policies and guidelines to really focus on this and make sure that the message is really clear and consistent. Because you know, if we are better equipped to support students and at Waterside we know that there are additional challenges in terms of the physical space, if we’re better able to support them then that is going to go hand in hand, or it should go hand in hand with, you know, seeing improvements in retention and engagement, so it’s in the university’s best interest definitely to focus on, you know, these sorts of areas.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In order for staff to be able to effectively signpost and support students who had experienced sexual violence or harassment and hate crimes, quite a lot of the discussion referred to the need for timely and appropriate information and training to be provided:

“I think if there is any training or guidance or anything which requires, you know, the time of staff, then thought needs to go into when best to provide that training so, which doesn’t always happen here, you know, halfway through the first term is not going to be good for anyone, whereas there are other times of year where, you know, it might be a little bit more appropriate, whether that’s, you know, September when things are a bit quieter or some point in the summer, so just a little bit more thought about, you know, when these sessions could be delivered...” (Female Participant Focus 2)

There was some disagreement as to whether everyone required the same training. One participant pointed out that certain ‘front-line’ staff, such as security, might need more in-depth and possibly slightly different training as they may be dealing with different forms of disclosure:

“I don’t think we would necessarily need training but there are certain roles that I could see absolutely would apply so residential, like security for example, that actually might need a little bit more kind of in-depth, maybe something similar to the mental health first aid training but obviously not around mental health, they don’t do that anyway, yeah.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

There were also suggestions made regarding the most effective forms of training for these types of circumstances, and one member of staff suggested that scenario, or case study training would be helpful for most staff having to deal with disclosures:

“...I still have the case studies actually, so it was an interesting day and I did learn a lot from it, how to advise the students and be confident to advise the students, because I don’t want to confuse them when they’re coming to me and asking about help and I said, oh just wait a minute I try to check or just leave me today, you know, you need to be confident to advise the students right direction, not the wrong direction as well, so you need to, you know, to respond in a serious way for the students serious incidents I think.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Some staff also raised the importance of appropriate information being provided in staff inductions when they start at the University and also the need for continuing training and information for staff:

“another place before so I tried to discover how these facilities available here. But in the induction we haven’t got any of this information, we haven’t been given information about how we can find it, so it is all about you asking informally or you searching yourself to find out.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

“No, see I’ve been here a long time, been here 16 years... I mean I know since, obviously as part of orientation you’ve got the supporting the student experience kind of course and I presume, again I don’t know ‘cause I’ve never been on it ‘cause I’m not a new member of staff, but I would expect that, this type of thing to be included in that course, so what services are there for students and, you know, where can we signpost people to and, you know, what should staff do. But that doesn’t then catch anybody that’s not a new member of staff, so what happens

with the rest of us and how are those things communicated?” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

The final aspect of this subtheme related to the role of the Students’ Union. Given the research highlights that student sporting societies (and other societies) were particularly troublesome in terms of encouraging a lad culture and where sexual harassment was rife staff felt that the Students’ Union needed to take a much more proactive role in education and promoting welfare when it came to issues of sexual violence and harassment:

“ F Well it sounds like, I mean the president of the students union, one of his responsibilities is to care for the wellbeing of students, so it sounds like it should be something added to that.

F And they get the societies and...

F Yeah, definitely. I mean they are sabbatical roles, they are paid to represent the students so they should technically do something like that.”

(Discussion between Female Participants Focus Group 2)

b. Culture

Although this subtheme was reasonably short, staff felt quite strongly that the culture and ethos of the institution needed to change in order for instances of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime to be addressed. Participants felt that cultural change needed to occur at all levels of the institution, including with management and the Students’ Union. In addition, staff suggested that the Student Code of Conduct needed to clearly state that sexual violence and harassment would not be tolerated and there needed to be a zero tolerance approach.

One participant noted that sexual misconduct/violence was omitted from the student code and suggested that this needed to be rectified in order to reflect the culture of the University and to send the right messages:

“And there’s also nothing that I’m aware of in the student code of conduct that says anything about sexual misconduct at all, you can list, it goes A to almost Z of what

you're not allowed to do and there's nothing in there about sexual misconduct."

(Female Participant Focus Group 1)

Another member of staff highlighted some of the issues which she felt were prevalent, particularly in terms of people not mentioning issues of sexual violence for fear on not being taken seriously, and advocated that there needed to be a clear zero-tolerance approach in order to encourage disclosure:

"...personally think that there does need to be a zero tolerance approach rather than a, OK this incident has happened, we'll sort it out as best we can. I think it should be clear, like if we got the students union involved, that your voice will be heard and it will be taken seriously, because stereotypically and from a female's perspective, when things happen to females, you think, oh no, people are just going to think, shush, it's not that serious, it happens all the time, you're not going to be taken that seriously..."(Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Another participant agreed that there needed to be much more discussion around these issues to draw it to people's attention and to highlight that sexual violence and harassment is an issue. She felt that by raising the profile of such issues, would provide the environment in which the culture would change:

"I think there's nothing, no messages like that on this campus but, yeah, you know, really kind of raising people's awareness that you are vulnerable, you know, when you're on your own, especially students if they've been drinking or on their own late at night, but also, yeah, creating this culture. I mean you see the effect of the, what is it the #MeToo, you know, with all these people then starting to come out and say, actually you know, I've been a victim of sexual assault or whatever. And sometimes just having a few key voices starts to really encourage other people to speak up. I don't know how you do that at university but it is powerful, that kind of culture is really powerful so..." (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

The point was made by another participant that changing physical features of the campus, in order to make it feel safer, were easier to change than the cultural aspects of the campus:

“...feeling maybe a little bit safer at Waterside because I think it has given us that blank canvas hasn’t it, to kind of factor all those things in at the design stage and work with those agencies about developing safe routes from the town centre for example. ...But certainly I think the physical environment is probably an easier solve than the cultural issues...” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

The final point in this subtheme of culture was, once again, that the Students’ Union had a large part to play in changing the culture and influencing the messages which were sent to students:

“It strikes me that the student union could play perhaps a big job in doing that and helping to support that sort of culture and sending that message out, you know. ...Because there is a real culture isn't there at the moment of, you know, reporting these sorts of incidents and it’s OK to report them and, you know, to be more open about it...” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

c. Staffing

The final subtheme for the theme of Future Recommendations related to the issue of staffing. Staff felt that there needed to be more investment in staffing, particularly in relation to student services. The recommendation was also made that there should be specifically trained first responders who were given appropriate time to deal with disclosures of sexual violence and harassment and to liaise with the appropriate services and external agencies, thereby reducing the stress and burden on the victim.

The potential of an extended role for mental health first aiders was raised by one participant:

“...the mental health aspect of it, that is being worked on by the university because we have mental health first aiders now and they’re going to be incorporating that more with students being mental health first aiders as well, so hopefully by next year there will be more of those in order to help with that situation.” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

The issue of improved mental health responses was also raised by a participant in the other focus group, although they also thought there needed to be much more resource and investment in student support services more generally:

“I do think there has been an expectation in the past that the personal tutor, you know, should be academic, pastoral, you know, supporting, I think that there’s been too much on academics’ shoulders in the past by the university of expecting us to be able to deal with those issues and perhaps not investing enough in the wider support services and supporting staff to support students to actually use them, I think that’s been the issue, I think it’s improving. I’ve definitely seen an improvement actually in mental health services but I think they could do perhaps a lot better.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

In addition to support for students, one participant made the point that due to the distressing nature of some of the disclosures, there needed to be more adequate support for staff who were having to deal with such issues:

“I was going to say I think there also needs to be support in place for staff so that it’s not, so the university doesn’t just rely on these kind of informal discussions, informal support, because yeah, sometimes you do, you know, deal with really serious incidents and you sort of do go home and it plays on your mind and, you know, that’s kind of how you deal with it. But I think that perhaps we are probably seeing an increase in reported incidents, I know I have over the last few years and I haven’t really seen much of an increase in support for staff, I mean there is a little bit, you know, with the wellbeing sessions, it’s the first time I’ve seen drop-in sessions for staff advertised, but perhaps a little bit more of that as well.” (Female Participant Focus Group 2)

Finally, there was recognition that there were some instances of good support provided at the University for students. However, it was felt that in order for the support to be effective and consistent, there should be a dedicated team of first responders who were trained to deal with disclosures and also had adequate time to do so:

“I think there are pockets of brilliant support which I’ve come across a few personal tutors that have been brilliant and there are pockets of really good support but none of them are trained as first responders...” (Female Participant Focus Group 1)

In conclusion, this theme covered a number of significant issues. Staff made recommendations in a number of areas. These can be summarised as follows;

Staff highlighted the need for easily accessible information about what to do when a student discloses sexual violence, harassment or a hate crime. A suggestion of a flow chart outlining different pathways depending on the situation was suggested. This should be located somewhere which was easily accessible to staff. A similar flow chart was also suggested for students which would be similarly accessible, outlining the various options for students and the potential pathways.

Staff suggested that there needed to be clear policies and procedures relating to disclosure which were clearly communicated to staff. It was also suggested that there should be clear policies relating to the treatment of alleged perpetrators and that there should also be a clear policy statement regarding staff/student sexual relationships.

Staff also felt that there needed to be more information around campus which highlighted what to do and who to contact in an emergency. This should be directed at both staff and students. A clear system of online reporting as well as information about what would happen when a report was made via this route, was also suggested. Although there is a mechanism for making online reports, staff were not aware of this and it was not easily accessible to either staff or students.

Staff also felt the need for guidance and definitions regarding concepts such as consent, hate crime, harassment and that this should form part of an education programme/campaign for both staff and students. Staff also suggested that any policies relating to sexual violence and harassment should be considered in light of broader policies on issues such as engagement and retention.

Participants also raised the need for there to be timely and appropriate training relating to all these issues. The training should be role specific, for example, it was felt that new staff

needed information and where to signpost and who to contact, personal academic tutors needed specific training and support on dealing with disclosures and security and residential life (for example) needed training on dealing with disclosures and potentially dealing with immediate and urgent sexual violence situations. There were also some suggestions as to the format such training could take, for example, consideration of case studies.

Staff also felt that there needed to be some work around changing the culture at the institution, which required a clear statement in the Student Code of Conduct regarding the stance of the institution in relation to incidents of sexual violence and misconduct. Staff also felt that there needed to be more high profile discussions on topics relating to sexual violence in order to challenge perceptions and to raise awareness. Staff were also very clear that there needed to be much more leadership and visibility from the Students' Union in relation to these issues.

Finally, staff also made recommendations regarding staffing and suggested that support services needed more resources and staff needed more time to be able to deal with disclosures in a timely and effective manner. One member of staff also suggested using specifically trained first responders for disclosures of sexual violence.

8. University Management Team Interviews

This section will provide an overview of the themes from the thematic analysis of the University Management Team interviews. A summary of the main and subordinate themes from this analysis can be found in Table 6.

Table 6: Main and Subordinate Themes from the University Management Team Analysis

Main Theme	Subordinate Theme
1. Representations of Space and Safety	a. Socio-cultural b. Built Environment
2. Perceptions of Prevalence and Existing Practices	a. Prevalence, Normative Beliefs and Responsibility b. Existing Policies, Procedures and Training
3. Recommendations for Future Practice	a. Information and Processes b. Staffing c. Culture of Respect

As can be seen in Table 6, the university management team also had clear representations of how socio-cultural aspects of space and features of the built environment related to their representations of space and safety. Participants also discussed the prevalence of sexual assault, violence, harassment and hate crime on campus, as well as off-campus. University managers also talked about their own and society's normative beliefs about these issues and their (and the university's) responsibilities in tackling these incidents. University managers also discussed their knowledge and experiences of working with existing policies, procedures and training, as well as their knowledge as how their staff worked with these. Finally, in their discussions about the transition to the new campus, university managers voiced their recommendations for improving available information and processes, the role of training and staffing implications and developing a culture of respect at the university. The following section will describe each of these themes in turn using illustrative quotes.

8.1 Representations of Space and Safety

This theme provides interesting insights into the ways in which space and safety were represented by the participants. It mainly focused on the a) sociocultural construction of space and the b) built environment. Each of these subthemes was linked to other subthemes which shared the same central organising concept as the main theme.

a. Socio-cultural

As will be seen, participants conceptualised space and safety as a shared concept co-constructed by the users who inhabit the campus spaces.

A culture of respect and emotional safety:

What participants had to say on the importance of co-creating spaces characterised by a culture of respect and emotional safety for their users is illustrated in the following quotes, as one explained:

“Without being conscious of any kind of threat, whether that’s verbal, physical, in any sense. A safe campus is one where you feel relaxed in order to go about whatever it is you’re doing on campus, where you feel there is respect for the other campus users, variously.” (Participant 1, Female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I don’t think it’s about the environment, the space, I think it’s about behaviour that makes it safe or not...It’s a place where all students can achieve what they come to university for, studying, having a good social life, in an environment which means they don’t feel anxious and worried about how they will undertake those activities.” (Participant 2, male, University Management Team)

For many, a safe space included the environment, but was much more than this. As another member of the university management team added:

“Fundamentally a safe campus would be a buildings and space where both staff and students feel safe, that they’re able to study, express themselves, go about their everyday business without any undue hassle, without any undue harassment, without feeling uncomfortable or disquiet in terms of just their everyday business

really, I suppose.....I think a safe campus should be fearless and I mean how, I don't know, you know, how do you sort of bring that about, but I mean it, people shouldn't feel uncomfortable going about the business of being a student or a business of being an academic member of staff in the university." (Participant 3, male, University Management Team).

Another added:

"You've got to have a sort of a culture whereby you know, whereby the pleasant social courtesies are acknowledged, you know, people do queue appropriately in the canteen, people don't push past each other, people open doors for each other, all of those low-level courtesies that I think are really quite important in setting a tone." (Participant 5, female, University Management Team).

As seen above, for Participant 1 and 5, a safe campus is perceived as a place characterised by mutual respect among campus users in their everyday encounters. Moreover, Participant 1 perceives a safe space as a space that does not threaten the emotional and physical safety of individuals. Similarly, Participant 2 clearly links safety to the behaviour of the individuals who inhabit it rather than its physical features. For this participant, a space is perceived as safe when it facilitates student's academic and social life and protects them from feeling anxious and worried for undertaking their everyday practices. In the same line of argument, Participant 3 and other participants conceptualised a safe campus as a safe 'haven' for both students and staff to undertake their everyday practices without abuse, hassle and harassment. Participant 3's conceptualisation of a 'fearless' space highlights the need of people to be able to express themselves, feel comfortable and relaxed in the space they inhabit.

Spaces of belonging:

The following examples provide interesting insights into the ways a safe space is perceived both as a place which offers a sense of belonging and a context for action and a source of identities. For example, participants explained how:

"when it comes to a university, it's broader, safety is broader than that, so it's about being safe being yourself, so if you wish to dress in a certain way or have certain

views or express your identity in certain ways, you know, it's being able to do that, to the extent that it's appropriate, you know, that it's not offensive to somebody else or dangerous to somebody else but the ability to kind of be yourself without being harassed or intimidated or you know, insulted. And we have, like the code of conduct for example talks about what's considered inappropriate clothing but apart from that I would expect, you know, if you want to wear, that's your dress or that religious dress or whatever you should be able to do that, without fear of harassed" (Participant 6, female, University Management Team).

Another added:

"For me, that's less about physical safety and more about, I don't know, I don't know what the alternative physical safety is but emotional or contributory safety, you know, so being able to say what you think from the context that you bring that information, without fear of joke or retribution in any way. You know, so for me, and I think that's true of all of my staff and all of my students, that's, well, it's not true that I have created that environment, but it's true that I would like to create that environment because we have got a very diverse group of people working here and studying here with different abilities and expectations and not necessarily a huge range of resources to draw on to make their points valid, so they're making their points valid because of who they are, not because of the support or their position or any background." (Participant 7, female, University Management Team).

As seen above, for Participant 6, a safe place should allow identities to be fully endorsed without the fear of harassment or intimidation. Similarly, for Participant 7 a safe space should offer a context of action where individuals will be able to say what they think without fear of joke or retribution and a space of belonging for diverse groups of people. We could argue here that in the same way that Bell Hooks (cited in Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 46) argued that "home is no longer one place, it is locations," a university campus could not be perceived in a linear, one-dimensional way. As other spaces, it is co-constituted by the diverse identities, backgrounds and practices of its inhabitants. According to Georgiou (2010) space also conveys social meanings and is "a context where social relations, communication and action take place and shape the meanings of identity and community."

As Silverstone (1999) argued “knowing where we are is as important as knowing who we are, and of course the two are intimately connected.”

b) Built Environment

This theme focuses on the organizational structure of a safe or unsafe space, the location and its tangible features.

Representations of the current campus:

As we will see below participants talked about their experiences in the current campus. More specifically, they talked about what constitutes safety and unsafety in a small place outside the public realm. To begin with, Participant 5 talked about the small-scale size of the current campus as a factor that facilitates social interactions and a feeling of safety:

“Very safe, very safe. Yeah, I’ve, I mean I’ve had various different number of roles, positions and I don’t think that’s changed from day one. I think part of that is about the physical space, because it’s got quite a small scale and therefore people become very familiar, very quickly. I know there’s a fresh intake of students each year but even so the scale of it means that you get to know the same faces, the same people. Generally people are friendly, in a good and appropriate way as you walk around campus, people greet each other, they’re smiling. I think all of that adds to an environment where you feel secure.” (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Similarly, Participant 7 feels more relaxed working in a campus outside of the public realm which is comprised of a smaller community of users:

“...when I’ve worked at other universities, I worked in a city centre campus previously and I was much more aware of personal security, safety of equipment, locking doors, theft, I’m much more relaxed here because we’re not on a main street, in a main city and therefore the population around us is much smaller.” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

However, when she positions herself as a younger woman she looks at the campus space through a more gendered lens. From this gendered position she argues that they are fear-

provoking areas in the current campus that could be threatening to younger women. In addition, a university's culture as an open space contributes to the construction of unsafety which is once again mitigated by the university's community of staff and students. In her own words:

“I think it's comparatively well designed, comparatively well designed. I'm not keen on, although I'm mature and strong and less bothered by these things now, but I think if I was younger and less strong and more bothered, there are areas of the campus I just wouldn't walk around at night, you know, so the walk up to the car park's not that great. However, you know, I'm big enough and ugly enough to defend myself and I think largely in this building, most people are here out of hours and so you're not on your own. It's worth not thinking too hard about just how public the campus is, because anybody has access to any aspect of the campus at any time of the day, largely, and so you're no more or less protected from your average nutter here than you are on the streets, but I think you know, the presence of our security people and the, largely, the busyness associated with lots of students and lots of staff makes it feel reasonably safe.” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

Similarly, Participant 2 acknowledges that they are fear-provoking areas in the campus which could feel threatening to people who are not familiar with it and who may be vulnerable providing more evidence on the need to contextualise space safety:

“Although it is fair to say that this campus late in the evening, by its nature, because there are lots of nooks and crannies, I can understand that that could feel quite threatening if you're not familiar with it, or if you feel that you could potentially be vulnerable. So I suppose turning that on its head, a safe campus needs to be one that's well lit, that where you are confident that there are no hiding places, those sorts of things...” (Participant 2, male, University Management Team)

Although participants chose to mainly focus on their feelings of safety associated with the current campus they have also showed awareness of potential risks:

“If we’re still talking about this campus, there’s, I feel generally very safe here, I haven’t experienced even remotely an event or situation where I would feel unsafe. That said, I don’t tend to wander around the back of the campus at night or anything like that but I can’t really put my finger on anything that would threaten that safety on this campus. I really find this a very safe place to be.” (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

Another added:

“Absolutely, it never occurred to me that it’s not safe and I quite often am here either first on my own in the morning or last at night and I’ve never once thought anything other than I’m in a safe environment [...] I’ve had no concerns, no, I mean in, OK, I don’t walk across campus on my own late at night because there’s no need to. Would I feel safe doing so? Yeah, probably, but I’m, you know, I’m old, I’ve been here years (laughs). No, we’ve got security, got policies in place for lone working so no, I’ve never had any problem. When I was teaching, I used to teach until nine o’clock at night, so I used to have to leave the building on my own at nine o’clock at night after the students, the part time evening students had gone, I just used to walk down to my car then, you know, I’ve never had any concerns.” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Representations of the new campus:

The ways participants talked about the new campus revealed more spatial complexity which was mainly associated with concerns about student and staff safety.

Inner-city campus challenges and advantages:

As we will see below participants talked about their safety concerns of the new campus which is in the public realm. For Participant 7, her main safety concern focused on the space between the campus and the town, the car parks and the campus and across campus. These spaces were perceived as fear-provoking especially at nightfall:

“So I think in terms of physical safety, we are going to be at the end of a park and a not very populated route from the main town down to the campus, that’s blindingly

obviously, you know, so there is an area of town that we have to walk through that's not busy streets, that's not highly populated and, you know, people imagine, although it's not true, that the worst things happen to people in dark parks, you know, it's not the truth but that's where people's imaginations go and so I think there are some issues about making people feel safe in that walk from town to the campus or from the car parks to the campus or across campus, given that we spend at least four months of the year, four months of an eight month year when it's dark when people arrive and dark when people leave." (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

It is interesting how Participant 7 makes a distinction of being physically safe and feeling safe. For her, it is equally important to acknowledge widely held representations of safe spaces and create a culture of feeling safe in an urban campus:

"But we are going to be in quite a different location from here, both more public but also, you know, crossing some very not busy spaces on the way to the new campus and I do wonder about my staff leaving the campus late at night, or students leaving the campus late at night, or arriving at campus late at night and their journeys to the bus or to the park and ride. I don't think we'd find, looking at crime statistics, that they were any less safe during those times but they'll certainly feel less safe during those times and that is something we need to work on." (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

Similarly, for many participants the new campus' inner-town location and its openness to the wider community were perceived as threatening. This is supported by the following quotes:

"I wouldn't call it an inner- city campus but it is closer to the town, so I don't know if that situation in terms of safety will change, it might, simply because it's more exposed, there is a policy of keeping the campus transparent and open to the community and that itself carries its own risks. So I suspect there will be, as a result of this exposure, there will be more openings or more areas in which the university is exposed to risks or even threats that we don't really see that much of on the current campuses. That's one part of it, but what I know of the Waterside Campus

on my visits to it, I recently visited again, suggests that it's going to be a safe environment but it is rather close to a lot of other things that we don't experience, certainly at Park." (Participant 8, male, University Management Team).

Another university manager added:

"if we do have an open campus that is, that has a footpath running through it, and indeed possibly a signposted walking route, rambling route through it, then that is going to be an invitation to some individuals to come onto campus to chance their arm." (Participant 2, male, University Management Team)

Similarly, one explained:

"Well it's obviously closer to the town and it's going to be a very brand new campus, so not only are you maybe more likely to get people from the town attempting to come onto the campus, you might get more people wanting to come to see what it's like, you know, visitors and I think as well because it's new and new equipment, new design, that has some risks because people might think oh there's more to steal or more to, I don't know, other things like that, and I also think the way the ethos of for example, the learning commons is it's about openness and accessibility and collaborations and shared space which are obviously very positive but the flip side is, can be more prone for, you know, people to perhaps get in where they maybe shouldn't." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team).

They continued:

"That's something that's perhaps been looked at when it comes to Waterside for example, on how we might sort of move away from that [a student only campus] a little whilst still retaining the notion of it being a sort of community space...members of the public are entitled to access the library, I think. So, yes, I mean obviously like you know, you can go, you get through the sports centre can't you, and literally just like walk off the street, unless you're challenged. I'm sure there are things we could do if we wanted to, to lessen that likelihood but I've never kind of worried I was going to be attacked or something." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team).

Others spoke about similar elements of the new campus:

“It’s close to the town centre, we may get more unwanted elements coming onto campus, that would be the only issued that I’d become particularly concerned about. I can’t see that the changes into that space will be radically different from here...[unwanted elements include] people coming on campus to commit crime, which is more prevalent in the town centre than probably it is in [previous location]” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team).

Location was important, as one added:

“I think the challenge will be because it is in the town centre, is it, going, are you all right, yeah, it is in the town centre therefore potentially you’ve got more people that could come onto campus. I mean if anything up here you get the occasional dog walker and [inaudible] you know, so you may well get, and it’s close vicinity to [name of park] where I understand ne’er-do-wells may gather. So you know, the sheer location of the campus presents a different set of challenges, so yes it does.” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Another university manager explained:

“Well exactly what I’ve said, you know, where do you get that balance? You don’t want sort of, you know, people nicking cars, I mean I’m being extreme here, driving, you know, doing doughnuts round the staff car park and all that stuff late at night and disturbing people and damaging property and upsetting everybody, so you know, we don’t want the [Waterside] campus to be a locus of criminal activity, do we, as you know, that’s for any sort of thing because that creates a really bad feeling with the town and that’s not what we want but also for individual students, they don’t feel safe and that’s really awful. So, in some ways I think it’s going to be suck it and see and just trying to get that balance of having that access and openness but also trying to keep people safe.” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team).

Another explained:

“Yeah, so it’s open but access is controlled to a degree so that people can’t come onto campus for nefarious purposes, I mean I’ve had in the past incidences of theft from office, from my office or from other people’s offices in buildings where I’ve been based so, there is that element of, it’s securing certainly the buildings as well as the wider spaces across the campus. So, it’s a difficult balance I think between being a welcoming campus and the aspiration for [new campus] to be part of the town and effectively a thoroughfare for people in the town, between [park behind campus] and the town centre and so on and the security of students and staff who are based there, so I think it’s going to be quite a difficult challenge but I know there are discussions going on with the police and so on around how we might manage that and enhance the safety and security of that campus.” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team).

Many were aware of safety plans in place for the new campus:

“it will still be, you know, a safe university with protection and all the rest of it but it’s far more exposed if you like to kind of more of a, I don't know an urban, inner city, more of a, sort of, bluntly, a gritty environment and you might get people just coming in, just willy-nilly looking around, what’s going on. So I think that’s a good thing, I mean we ought to be more in the community but of course that will then bring potentially community issues to the university which we don’t presently have here, either at [previous campus] or at [previous campus], just because of our geography and where we’re situated.... But with that opportunities, because then, being, part of the move is to be more integrated into the town, so it’s finding that balance isn’t it, between making sure there’s not an erosion of personal safety but being an accessible campus where we invite and we welcome people with an interest in education and the arts and culture to come, to see our exhibitions and all the rest of it, but in a way we don’t do so much of at the moment.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another added:

“A great place to work and study, yeah. Yeah. Well I don’t think I’ll feel any different from here, but I might be a little bit more cautious about leaving things lying around.” (Participant 2, male, University Management Team).

As seen above, many participants described the new campus as being open to the community and thus exposed to risks, threats and crime. Participants described the transition from a campus which belonged to its users, staff and students to a campus which is a space open to the wider community. Although some participants acknowledged the importance of the university to be integrated within the local community, they also pointed out that this openness and accessibility should not lead to an erosion of personal safety.

Moreover, participants talked about security as one of the most important challenges of the new urban-style campus. Some of them approached the issue of security by expressing their concerns of constructing a ‘fortress’ campus and a new security obsessed culture which might intensify people’s concerns about safety:

“I mean I don’t, I can’t imagine anyone really wants to lock everything down and have metal, you know, have gates and barriers and pointy fences all round the perimeter but who knows, I mean we’re going to have to have some of that I expect, but hopefully it won’t have the feel of a fortress with a big moat round it, it’ll feel like, you know, there are safe places, there are restricted areas, people can feel safe...” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I think that’s why the university is investing a lot in security, but I think it’s, as a new build, it is easier to design in that without making it feel oppressive because sometimes if you put in a lot of security processes, it just heightens people’s concern about, well why have people put in all these challenges and security and so on. So I think designing it in, getting that right balance between green and glass and brick and having areas of seating around, all of those things I think create a sort of space that feels like it is looked after and used and sets a tone. I think that’s what we’re aiming for.” (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Although the feeling of the ‘fortress’ campus creates concerns for some participants, Participant 11 points out that what might be perceived as oppressive by staff members could generate feelings of safety for students for whom the campus is not just a working space but also their living environment:

“All sorts of other things that, even ten years ago we would never have imagined would happen and so I do, sometimes I do think about that and I wonder how easy it would be, you know, to sort of lock down buildings and things like that. I think the new campus is going to be easier to do that but you know, again it would be a real shame if people sort of saw this kind of fortress that’s not for the likes of us you know, I think that would be a real mistake for many, many reasons. So, I don’t know how you balance that, I suppose as part of wait and see, but I quite understand that my experience and perspectives will be completely different from students who are here 24 hours a day, they live here, you know, it’s totally different for them. So I wonder if my sort of kind of perception of safety is quite, you know, it’s quite strange really compared to a student or, well just very different because I, this is my place of work and I go home at, you know, five o’clock, six o’clock, whatever it is, and I don’t sleep and live here.” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Similarly, Participant 9 talked about the university’s close collaboration with the local police to identify the necessary resources for the security of the new campus while at the same time she acknowledges that the presence of armed police in the university premises will create a culture of fear:

“Well I mean there’s lots of things going on. I mean at the moment the university’s undergoing a complete review of security on the understanding that the kind of security that we need here, is different to the kind of security we might need in a town centre campus, and a larger campus. We’re working very closely with the police in looking at how, particularly in the first five years after the location, how we work more closely with them and whether or not we need additional resources, so we have a dedicated police constable and a police team that work with the university, that’s being worked up at the moment. But also the residential life team, so it’s not just about the security. And again we’ve talked to the police about the

kind of policing because we don't want armed, not armed, we don't want uniform police officers walking round campus creating fear, so again we're working with the constabulary." (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Other participants expressed less concerns about the strengthened security in the new campus and talked about the need of new strategies that could mitigate the associated to its location risks:

"I don't see it being any, I don't think it should necessarily be any harder than it is now to find mechanisms to mitigate any risks, so you know, wear your ID card or have your security or you know, make sure everyone knows the numbers to call, sort of thing, any more than it is now." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

"I was based in [previous campus building name] for a number of years and it was very difficult not to wear your ID in [previous campus building name] because it came with the electronic keys that you needed to move from one room to another, so that meant that whilst I was based in there, this was round my neck all the time. I think if that's the approach that's taken, then that's really quite effective...I think it's going to be very important for us to all get into the habit of showing that we are a bona fide member of the university, so that we can readily identify who does work here, as opposed to who's a guest who's passing through." (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Although participants mainly expressed concerns about safety in an inner-city campus as we have seen above, they have also pointed out some advantages. The accessibility of the new campus has been highlighted by participants:

"I have to say, I do find it interesting that it's [new campus] so open, so there are very few spaces that you can't access if you were so inclined... although it's an open campus, people are quite accessible if you need support." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I’m aware that all the buildings are open and anyone can walk through but in general that, in a way I almost like that about the university, that it is open.”
(Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Participant 5 thought that an inner-town centre campus which is open to the community will encourage the university’s integration into the local community:

“I know that there’s a tension, potential tension because you know, being closer to the town is supposed to encourage town and university to become better integrated, you know, we want people to come and visit what will be a wonderful site and to take advantage of that.” (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Similarly, Participant 11 argues that a University should be open and welcoming, a resource to the local community:

“I think it has benefits and disadvantages, you know, I think it’s, I think a university should be open, I think it should be open to the community, I think it’s a resource, it’s paid for by taxpayer’s money. I think as far as we can be, we should be welcoming to people ...I still like to work in a campus where people feel they can come and walk their dogs or they can take the shortcut through to get the kids to school and that’s nice as well, because again, I don’t want it to be seen as a place that’s not for, oh that’s where other people go to, it’s nothing to do with me, if I were a person that lived in the town and didn’t know much about the university, I’d like to feel that it has a welcoming feel and that you know, there might be facilities I can use and all of that kind of stuff.” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Challenges of an open space working environment:

Participants talked about their concerns of working in an open space environment. Participant 1’s extracts below speak of the importance for staff and students of having access to privacy and confidentiality:

“Safe environment’s critical, I think safe environment, there should be more places where people can come and know that, and I’d hope there are and there probably are many places across the university around this where people can come, express concerns over something they may have experienced or they may have seen someone else experience and know that there are, you know, their anonymity is protected but also that they will get sound advice about taking things forward and know that they can perhaps get some follow up around that and I think most of the time, for students that is, colleagues who teach them coming in and doing it and this is the thing, they will see coming into your office as probably a fairly safe environment because it’s, you know, nobody can hear what’s going on, if they trust you, they’ll trust the environment in which you’re talking to them.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

The extract above talks of the importance of a safe environment where anonymity is protected for people to disclose concerns something that is ensured in the private space of an office. For Participant 1, confidentiality in the new open space should be an issue of great concern “safety in terms of confidential material, going to have to really think about that an awful lot” especially when dealing with students who are in a state of distress:

“More concern for me is dealing with students who are upset or feel unnerved in some way, be able to take them somewhere private quickly and for them to be able to access you quickly. So I think that’s, the biggest concern for me is that we can give students the same level of support that we currently do in a very different working environment, you know, a much more open one.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Moreover, participants highlighted the importance of students and staff to have immediate access when they need to disclose or deal with a distressing issue respectively:

“...there’s been many incidents where, it hasn’t been as a result of abuse, but a student has just been upset about something and what you can do is very quickly remove them into a private space to support them, and for them to gather themselves.... My worry is where does that happen, going back to Waterside, you know, that’s a different issue, we’re going to have to make sure. And the other way

is to have you know, I suppose, and again I don't know if the university does this, I'm sure various support mechanisms are in the university, have regular drop ins, but again, it's a bit like how charity groups work outside for young people, you can go in and talk to someone, know that it's contained within the space in which you're having that safe space and leave again, so you have that point of contact. We should be having and providing regular opportunities for students to do that." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

They went on to add:

"I deal with quite a lot of confidential things, so I can answer it quite freely on the phone here and you know, I'm going to have to be aware, and I will be aware that people are around me and thus you're not going to be able to have that sort of, there will be spaces for you to retire to but you're not going to be able to pick up a phone..." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another explained:

"Some of my colleagues do work in quite isolated spaces so that's one of the things that we are looking at, at the moment, and I know that one team recently got some panic alarms just because they're a frontline team, sometimes seeing students in distress or in challenging circumstances so they just felt that that would be a sensible precaution to take. So that's something we're looking at perhaps doing with some people who might see students on a one-to-one basis." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Also, adding that:

"I think for students and staff who have been based in this building, where most people have had single or double occupancy offices and have been able to negotiate sort of clear time to themselves in there, that will be a change for students, but I think it's the Newton model that we'll all have to move to and a lot more of arrangement of those meetings using online resource, as opposed to just being able to knock on the door and say are you free now? Which is, is probably unfortunate" (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

However, as a response to some of the concerns which were raised about the availability of staff and confidential spaces, some university management emphasised that in many instances, access to staff would not change at the new campus:

“[Staff will be accessed] Exactly the same way as they are now. My staff will be accessed via the student help desk which will be based in learning commons and the same staff will run that desk as run it now here, yeah, so no change, yeah”.
(Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

However, there was also some acknowledgement that there may need to be some changes in working practices, particularly for academic staff, in the ways in which they organise meetings with students and the spaces which would be available in order to discuss confidential matters. University management made some suggestions regarding how these interactions might be managed on the new campus:

“I think [students can access staff at Waterside] in a number of different ways, I think that students will be able to sort of, through a formal reception area as I understand it, be able to ask lots of questions of sort of administrative support staff who will be a sort of conduit through which students will be able to ask questions and they’ll be put in touch with the right people. I think inevitably there will still be face-to-face communication with staff and their personal students, with the learning and development teams etc., that might be more group based going forward rather than individually based. There will be lots of communication via email, digitally, over the phone and all that sort of stuff. And so I think they’ll, whilst there might be different working practices in terms of how we then set up those meetings with students, there will still be face-to-face, there will still be online, there will still be telephone communication and other communication that goes on really. I think the format, yeah, will inevitably be different, just because the physical space is going to be different. So I think because the physical space is going to be much more open, then I think that will lend itself to, we will have to work differently in terms of the way in which we communicate with students.” (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

University management provided reassurance that appropriate confidential spaces would be available at the new campus:

“I’m quite heavily involved, well two of my colleagues are chairing a group looking at confidential meeting spaces and the use of those and confidential working spaces and those sorts of things and they have a plan around how to make sure spaces are available for students who wish to disclose and whilst it, you know, not everyone will have their own office, there are still confidential spaces and we know that students don’t always wait for a confidential space to disclose anyway, so they will sometimes just disclose to somebody who’s listening in a different type of space, it’s then being able to find somewhere for that follow up conversation. So yes, I know people are quite concerned about that but I actually think we have a good plan in place and I don’t necessarily see that being an issue”. (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

“...I think the new campus has the facilities and the spaces to enable any individual, regardless of their role, to disclose and report issues like the ones you exemplified, to others in a confidential, in a safe environment. The fact that it is, that the campus has more open spaces and more agile working practices does not mean that any of that would prevent anyone from disclosing information to others in a confidential manner. There are confidential spaces for that to happen and absolutely there is no doubt in my mind that when that information needs to be shared or disclosed confidentially to a colleague or to a senior person or to anyone else, that can happen in the environment where it needs to happen.” (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

The extracts above provide interesting insights into the ways in which the open space environment of the new campus was perceived as restricting students for making disclosures and preventing staff for effective and immediate responses.

Finally, for Participant 7, the lack of permanence of personal physical space is another challenge of the open space working environment as it creates concerns about the safety of colleagues:

“There’s some stuff about the, I think for me, about the lack of permanence of, there’s something for me around the fact that people don’t have offices that makes it harder to keep tabs on where people are. So if somebody’s sitting in their office, you know they’re there, you know they’re safe, you know where to find them. If I can’t find a member of staff on the new campus, should I be worried? So there’s some stuff I think for managers to understand and learn about what it is to manage people who don’t have a permanent physical space and if they’re not there, wherever that might be, what concern level should we have for people. So I think there’s a broader issue there.” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

In this theme participants represented space and safety in a variety of ways. They talked about the sociocultural construction of space viewing safety as a result of social relations within a specific context. In this way, participants valued social spaces which perpetuate a culture of respect and emotional safety and allow a sense of belonging, a context for action and a source of identities. With respect to the build environment, participants talked about their transition from a campus located outside the public realm -which offered them a sense of belonging to a small community that facilitated social interactions and a feeling of safety- to an inner-town centre campus which is open to the local community something that was perceived as threatening and at the same time an opportunity for the university to be fully integrated within the wider community. In this new urban-style campus, security was perceived as one of the most important challenges that generated fears of safety and at the same time a fear of creating a ‘fortress’ campus and a new security obsessed culture which might intensify people’s concerns about safety. The other main challenge focused on the lack of permanent physical space in which confidentiality and anonymity could be ensured and the existence of an open space working environment which was perceived as restricting effective disclosures by students and effective responses by staff members.

8.2 Perceptions of Prevalence and Existing Practices

As with data from staff and student focus groups, university management also spent a significant amount of time discussing the prevalence of sexual violence on campus. Their views around the prevalence were closely connected to their beliefs about the ‘type’ of

students who were likely to engage in this kind of behaviour and perceptions regarding notions of responsibility. There was a distinct difference in the perceptions of senior management regarding prevalence when compared to staff and student perceptions, as senior management appeared to suggest these were less prevalent issues than other concerns. Another area which courted much discussion was that of the policies and procedures which were in place to deal with incidents of sexual violence. Senior management made reference to policies and procedures, but many were not often able to identify specific existing procedures.

a) Prevalence, Normative Beliefs and Responsibility

A number of senior managers identified that they did not feel that the issue of sexual violence on campus was a major problem and often senior managers identified the issue of prevalence with whether they had personal experience of it, or dealing with students who had experienced it. In addition, one white male senior manager quipped about not having experienced racial or sexual harassment, before stating that he thought that the low number of disclosures was down to the fact that incidents of this nature did not occur. A number of managers also thought that the issues were exaggerated and that due to social media and campaigning around these issues, that these 'drove' behaviour in relation to reporting:

“My sense of contact with people around this is that it's, from my perspective, when people, it's fairly irregular. I suppose the one thing not surprisingly that has come up in social media more and more, but that's universal, both in terms of what people put out there but how they respond to messages that are out there and I think we are dealing more and more with people who feel that social media has been used in a, you know, less than respectful way if you like. But I can't categorically say I think, because I don't know how I'd measure it, I can only measure it from my personal experience and my experience is, thankfully, that very rarely do these cases come up.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I don’t see that, I’m not seeing that [sexually inappropriate behaviour], no, I’m not seeing that at all. I mean people go silly in the first week of term and this consent issue is a challenge, but I’m not seeing many cases coming through where people are feeling that...We occasionally get a case where a student may feel a boyfriend that they’ve got rid of is behaving inappropriately to them and harassing them and sort of stalking them on social media and that kind of thing... a few students who are frightened of some of their, men that they’re involved in....But this is tiny numbers, do not want this blown out of all proportion, I might get one or two cases a year so it’s, out of 10,000 students it’s very small...” (Participant 2, male, University Management Team)

Another explained:

“Well I’d like to see the evidence that it’s even happening, so, and I’m not convinced that it is, so that again, without sounding complacent, so you know, I’d be reluctant to sort of start putting a whole bunch of bureaucratic machinery in place for a problem that don’t exist or is marginal....Certainly in a resource constrained environment and also, you don’t want to sort of drive a behaviour in a particular direction, you know, by perhaps you know, creating an artificial impression of what, of a problem that doesn’t exist, in a large scale, I mean of course there will also be issues that need to be resolved, absolutely not being complacent about that but again, it’s a balance, isn’t it, between that and having a full out kind of campaign that sort of raises awareness but not much like...” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

This participant reflected on incidents involving themselves, adding:

“Participant 4: What, give me grief? (laughs). I’ve had a lot of that, yeah, but how are you, no I’ve had any, I mean I haven’t had any sexual abuse towards me...”

Interviewer: Disclosures.

Participant 4: No, or racial stuff, no nothing.

Interviewer: But have you had students come up to you saying I have been a victim of, let's say, hate crime or anything like that.

Participant 4: No, nothing.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's fine. Why do you think that might be? Do you think maybe students aren't reporting to staff?

Participant 4: I think it's because it doesn't happen very often" (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

There was limited acknowledgement that there may be issues in some areas but, on the whole, these tended to be rare and that other issues and complaints from students were far more common. As one university manager explained:

"...But not many, not many at all. Yeah, which to me, is I mean I think I get far more complaints about you know, I don't feel I've been treated fairly around my assessment, than about harassment." (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

"I've been part of panels, chairing a few and a member of panels in other cases where these behaviours have been taken further, either by students themselves bringing cases against other students or in relation to disciplinary procedures, so I've seen that angle of it, yes. If you ask me about witnessing verbal abuse or physical abuse or sexual, no, but I have had multiple cases in these scenarios and panels where I've read a lot of what's happened or what allegedly happened and I've had the chance to hear both sides of, or multiple sides of the same story. So yes, they do happen, the halls of residence are a particular location but that might also be true on the new campus, and generally in very open spaces like the [communal area] here, the common issues that we encounter have to do with anti-social, inappropriate, loud behaviour rather than the types of things that you're talking about." (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

A number of managers did acknowledge that they may be unaware of the number of complaints and issues. This was attributed to incidents being dealt with informally and possibly accessing services which do not necessarily collect data. This meant that it was recognised that managers do not necessarily get the full picture. For example, participants said:

“Now there may be cases that get sorted out further down the chain, complaint chain if you see what I mean, they might not come up to the top.” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

Another agreed, adding:

“...but I don’t know how much goes hidden, isn’t responded to in some way or students just deal with it in their own way, or maybe they use the services that we have but we don’t know.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another university manager explained how they had some of the formal data, but this did not obtain all types of on-campus incidents:

“Well we have the formal data but that’s, and that tends to be where, if you like, more severe instances are reported and that’s, I’ve not seen an increase. You know, when you’ve got this amount of people living in a community together, you’re going to have something and I’ve not seen a massive increase there, but of course what that doesn’t capture is, that doesn’t necessarily capture all levels of harassment. You know, we haven’t got a complete picture, we only see the formal stuff, you know, people don’t always report things, however easy you try and make it, they don’t always report things formally.” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

One manager recognised that the lack of information regarding disclosures which made their way up to his level was of concern. He felt that it was important that he knew about the numbers of disclosures which his staff were having to deal with:

“Yeah, I suspect I’ve lived a very sheltered life ‘cause actually it’s rarely brought to my attention, if I’m being honest. Hardly ever. Yeah. I’m struggling to recall the last

time anybody disclosed to me harassment. I think, I'm aware that there is harassment of students in halls that's brought to our attention...I think it often gets reported to academic staff as opposed to the [Faculty lead] or to senior management, but certainly I've had discussions with staff around what our response should be if people are disclosing and how we might work collaboratively...I think I'm a bit distanced from that if I'm being honest, I think it would only really come to my attention if it was being escalated, so I mean I suspect what I would call sort of frontline academic staff, there may be a number of disclosures made to them that they may be responding to, dealing with, referring on, giving advice, whatever, but I think it's quite rare, if at all, that it gets escalated to me...Yeah, so there's some, there would be some disquiet for me about that in that a) I wouldn't necessarily know what the extent of this type of behaviour is or how many disclosures people might be dealing with or managing with, and secondly, I wouldn't know whether people were responding appropriately actually." (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

There was also a perception from some that due to the nature of universities as liberal and tolerant places, that incidents of sexual violence and harassment would be lower than in other 'real world' situations. For example:

"...universities are incredibly benign and tolerant and so they should be, it's a place to come and learn, study, do research. You know, I've experienced one or two instances over the years but nothing like what you get in a, you know, I've worked in factories and transport and retail, you know, where there's a constant stream of abuse....whereas in universities, I've never seen anything approaching what it's like in the so-called real world outside. And I think if you look at a lot of the statistics about kind of harassment in universities and reported cases, they are small, I mean the numbers, any case is a case too many but if you kind of integrate them, the numbers are kind of often integrated over five years so they look bigger, if you sort of break it down year by year by incident, by the number of students in universities, I think the number of instances in university campuses is less than in society in general." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

They went on to add:

“Compared to, you know, what you see on a Friday night in most pubs, it’s bugger all really.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another explained:

“Yeah, well they’re bound to, we have combined staff and student headcount of something like 16,000 individuals between the two campuses, the law of averages says that these incidences are going to occur, you would hope that it would be much less than in the wider population because of the types of people who are involved in working at and attending universities” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Others reflected on specific situations where incidents may occur in a university context, as one explained:

“...what’s interesting about my area probably in this context is field trips, we take the residential field trips, right, so you know, my background is geology but any area, it might be the same for environmental sciences, I guess, or geography... Yeah conference, yeah, I’ve never seen a conference thing actually, interesting, but on field trips when it is a quite close relationship, you’re all staying in the same hotel aren’t you, well you are, I mean, and it could be two weeks, these trips are long, you’re travelling half way round the world, you know, so there is opportunity there for inappropriateness. But having said that, you know, I’ve only ever seen one really blatant, unacceptable thing that was, you know, unpleasant.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Some university managers suggested that the specific student profile at this institution lead certain to be more susceptible to being victims of harassment. As one explained:

“I think from an harassment viewpoint, if we take just a sort of town and gown approach, because we’re going to be effectively in the centre of town, there’s going to be a lot of residents of students on site and adjacent to the site in St. John’s, I think there is potentially an increased risk of harassment of our students by

individuals in the community who might not be well disposed towards them, so there is a potential risk there... OK, just because they're students or possibly because they're particular groups of students so it could be because they're international students, it could be because they're BAME students, it could be because they're LGBT students and are behaving or have dressed in a particular way that singles them out as being a member of those categories and I think there is that risk, because the East Midlands is a known area for relatively high, and I do mean relatively high, incidents of far right sympathies and views, it's not high by any means, but it's higher than the national average, and we are a largely white, relatively small market town in the centre of England so anybody who looks a bit different is likely to stand out " (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Staff also spoke at length about their normative beliefs in relation to these issues, as well as cultural or societal norms around sexual violence, harassment, assault and hate crime. For example, one added:

"...this is I'm sure the first project that we've had looking at it and partly it's driven by the media in general isn't it, you know, there's a whole bunch, it's almost this sort of, what's that bloke, the Hollywood guy, you know, all the Me Too stuff, there's a whole, there is a kind of media circus, I don't mean that in a nasty way, around this and it's becoming massively, you know, reportable and so people are sort of hold up a mirror to themselves, which is probably not a bad thing, to be fair, you know. But whether, you know, but what worries me slightly about some of these sort of media driven things, although there is truth to it, absolutely, people start searching for things that aren't there, you know, so it goes, spills too far in one direction and you become slightly self-obsessed with an organisation." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

In contrast, others felt that these issues had always been present, but that the recent focus on these issues actually allowed them to be acknowledged by society. This meant that we could move to start addressing these prevailing problems:

"Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. I mean on a personal level I don't think actually anything's really changed, what's unacceptable now in my view was unacceptable

25 years ago, it's just that the mechanism if you like or the environment within which we live probably didn't encourage or enable people to disclose. But you know, it hasn't become right, it wasn't right back then" (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

For many participants, how all parties involved perceive these incidents was important. For example, one university manager explained:

"Now, that is not to be confused with, I guess, I imagine this is where it gets quite difficult because what would constitute abuse to one person is just banter to somebody else, right, and so I think that, within that there's this whole perception about, clearly there is a legal line which you can overstep.... different cultures will have different, you know, ways and different backgrounds, different class, people speak to each other very different ways so kind of being.... It's, I mean you can't be everywhere all of the time, but just again, thinking, comparing, you know, my life in general with, when I'm here at work, I've not seen any, what I would call, I mean hate crime's an interesting one isn't it, because what is it? You know, is it just someone's opinion, so if I say to you, you know, you're white, I don't like you, is that a hate crime? Maybe it is, if you think it is, and you report it to the police, then it'll be a statistic, won't it?" (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

They went on to add:

"And the point about universities, it does tie into somehow the notion of free speech, you know, if people disagree with people that's fine, you know, I don't have a problem with that at all, you know, a lot of disagreement goes on all the time, and if you happen to disagree with someone who's a person of colour or a female or a transgender person, then that's tough, you just disagree with them, you know, but that's what I mean, where does that become, or how is that interpreted, that disagreement? If that's misinterpreted, either, you know, just through over-sensitivity on the part of the receiver or sometimes in order to be malicious. You know, so how do you guard against those things, they're as important to me as guarding against what I would call, you know, genuine nastiness and unacceptable behaviour." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

What is interesting here, is the differentiation this participant makes between “genuine nastiness” and the possibility of ‘false’ allegations where behaviour is “misinterpreted”.

Another participant also felt perception of behaviour was important:

“...so it’s how an individual perceives that behaviour more than is it happening, so yeah, students are probably rude to each other, the same as they’ve always been, but I think there are some elements in our student body who can be quite aggressive. And the other thing I perceive is the way some male students behave to female students which we wouldn’t have seen in the past.” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

University managers had different perceptions about responsibility about these issues. For example, one explained how a university is very much a smaller replicate of society, so these issues are bound to be present:

“But I think one has to accept that a university population is going to in many respects mirror the general society and therefore one can expect the same level of harassment and bullying and perhaps hate crime and sexual harassment that exists.” (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

This comment seems to contradict views by other participants (Participant 4) that universities are, by their nature, benign and tolerant and that incidents such as these were therefore less likely to occur.

Some university managers discussed the university’s responsibility around these issues and where this might begin and end. As one participant explained:

“We also sometimes get students reporting things when they’re on placement...they’ve observed behaviours and obviously we would expect them to report them to us or to their employer...Of course many times they feel they can’t raise those things because they’re in a position of relative weakness, you know, the placement’s being offered, they’re a kind of guest, they have to kind of accept what’s going on, fit in and all of that stuff, it’s very interesting. But we would expect them and we would strongly encourage them to report any kind of behaviour that we,

that they consider, we will explain what that might look like and we do quite a lot around that for preparation of placement...those conversations are really difficult because obviously we're talking about employers and our employers provide us placements and you know, often they will be very defensive and so you've got to have evidence" (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Another explained that there are limitations to what the university can do and what they can do in their own role:

"If a student tells me there's something going on but they won't name the person, it's very difficult for me to act, 'cause what action can I take if I don't know who it is? And if it's somebody who isn't a student, that's also difficult, unless you can support the student to take action for themselves through the appropriate bodies...Yeah, and we're good at that and I think our staff are very supportive of people in that position and very caring and concerned about anybody who finds themselves in that situation, but there are some things we can't do. I cannot investigate a rape claim for example and I'm not going to get into that position." (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

This approach is concerning as it seems to suggest a reluctance to use university policies and procedures to investigate incidents internally, alongside any external investigation.

Other discussed where and when these incidents should be reported externally, for example, to the police. As one explained:

"It depends on the severity of the case. I mean if a student came to me and said that they had been raped, then you have to encourage them to go to the police, so you would do that. ... But again, or if something that's just happened and it is severe, then that person needs to report it to the police and it's about not just saying to them, go and report it to the police, it's about supporting them in that process as well." (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“One of the issues we get sometimes is students thinking we can be the police, we can’t, obviously, we’re not in that position so if for example a student sort of says they’ve been assaulted or something, we have to look at it in terms of our code of conduct, so obviously an assault is outside, is something that is not acceptable in the code of conduct, so, but we couldn’t find them guilty of rape, for example, because we aren’t a court of law...sanction them accordingly but we couldn’t ever say they had raped somebody, you know, officially in a disciplinary outcome or something. So, I think that can be quite confusing...what we can do as a university, as opposed to what a police investigation can do.” (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Another said:

“...we’d really encourage them to go to the police or take it further in whatever way, you know, if they didn’t want to then what right do we have to sort of really, really push that, because for them, that might be more upsetting than going through the ordeal itself” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

The tendency to focus on encouraging students who have made disclosures to report these to police seems to absolve the university of any responsibility.

Many university managers were aware of the issues of challenges with encouraging students to report to the policed. As one explained:

“If sometimes, and I’m talking this is particularly about rape claims I’ve had where the student has come to me six months after the event, hasn’t gone to the police, then it’s very difficult to act ‘cause it’s one person’s word against another.” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

This was also dependent on the time of crime, as one university manager mentioned:

“Hate crime would be, the police log it don’t they, as a crime, we can’t log something as a crime I wouldn’t have thought because we’re not an organisation to make that call...but amongst the student body, again it’s a sort of a matter for the student union really.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Again, this response is concerning as it pushes the responsibility onto the Students' Union and also implies that where there is a reported hate incident, the university are not in a position to take action.

Others described how certain types of individuals may be more likely to be involved in these types of behaviours. For example:

“There’s something about the whole educational thing, you know, you are perhaps more acutely aware, you probably have a bit more self-appreciation, a bit more self-understanding and maybe a bit more emotional intelligence which is a useful thing to have as well, so you don’t say things unnecessarily inappropriate. I don’t want that to sound elitist or snooty, right, I’m not saying people who leave university obviously.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another added:

“We have more BAME students now than we did 25 years ago, we draw students from a wider area, I think there are more incidences of violence and that some of those arise from students from quite deprived backgrounds in London joining the university.... Certainly there is anecdotal evidence amongst staff that there is an increase in the level of violence and level of threat from students from very deprived backgrounds, of whatever ethnic makeup but from deprived backgrounds.” Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

This is also evidenced by the following discussion between the interviewer and another participant:

“Interviewer: Right, why do you think that is, a certain profile that you’re...
Participant 8: Yes, low entry point, low UCAS points on entry, people who are not prepared to, willing to be in university or people who shouldn’t be in university in the first place, who really don’t meet the criteria but they’ve been recruited because of a marketing push. They are here, I can tell pretty much who they are by walking out the office when it’s busy here. They’re just procrastinating, they don’t understand

what they should be doing, they cannot prioritise, they cannot study, some of them, from evidence from other groups of colleagues who work with them on a daily basis, they cannot write never mind add up, so should they be in university? Probably not. When they are here, they cannot cope, very easily they cannot cope with the first ten minutes of a lecture or a seminar. What do they use their time for? Well, you can see them online, watching, buying on Amazon, on eBay or whatever, anything except doing academic work. That moves onto, well they use this space here as a restaurant, they bring food here, and that becomes a bit of a café, like an internet café and sometimes things escalate and we have the problems that I described to you in my previous answer. So, not a pattern, it hasn't got any better or any worse but it's how it is here, given the profile of students we get and I repeat this is opinion, I cannot really evidence that but I do know what profile we get, I do know that admissions offer unconditional offers to students left, right and centre on the basis of predicted grades, even if those predicted grades are awful and that's the kind of people we get, as a result we get those problems. ...Get the right students in, it's very straightforward. Yes, it sounds elitist, but you can't have it both ways. If you have, if you want to attract people to university who are not prepared to do a university degree, then you've got to put a scaffold in place that costs you millions. Some of that we already do, at our cost, and we can feel the cost and we cannot always feel the benefit. That is the obvious reason why we're getting those, so to prevent that, maybe you need to shrink, consolidate and then grow in order to have the right type of target audience for the course a university offers or at least a university that has a remote pride in itself offers. And then a lot of these issues will disappear, simply because the nature of the problem isn't there, the people who bring the problems to these

buildings wouldn't be here." (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

In the comments which were expressed above by some members of the senior management team, there were clearly racialised assumptions about students as well as assumptions based on socio-economic status/class. The implications of what senior managers were saying about the 'type' of students who were more likely to engage in violence and other behaviours, has clear implications in the way in which these issues might be dealt with at the university and there would be concerns that the strategies employed could have racist outcomes. This is something which needs to be addressed urgently within the university management team.

Some felt that different approaches should be adopted with different students to ensure a fully inclusive approach to tackling these issues. As one participant explained:

"I think we are doing quite a lot of work with students who are perhaps a bit more vulnerable, to try and get them to understand what is and isn't acceptable behaviour so every year we get, you know, some students who perhaps have got sort of disabilities who perhaps, they need more support in understanding you can't do that, that's not acceptable, that might be quite, you know, upsetting for some students or disturbing, and we do have policies in place that can help to support students in understanding that and not just immediately throwing them out or things, whilst obviously getting the balance to make sure that they aren't doing something that's unacceptable." Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Again, there is an assumption here that disabled students may be less able to understand what is and isn't acceptable behaviour, which again, is concerning. There does not seem to be any evidence to support the contention that disabled students are less able to distinguish what is and isn't appropriate behaviour.

For some university managers, hate crime and sexual violence were not a priority at this time, or other issues took more precedence. For example, Participant 1 explained:

“I can say student behaviour seems to have been slightly more disruptive over the last two years as reported in various committees, but that can be anything from just being noisy to destructive, you know, that kind of thing” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“Well I’ve seen an increase in mental health issues, I’ve seen a definite increase there, so at the moment, because we have seen that increase and that demand from students, the university are looking at putting extra resources for staff and students in supporting mental health wellbeing, because we’ve seen that...”(Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Some distinguished between sexual harassment and assault from other types of crimes. For example, participants said:

“Well, the biggest challenge that we’ll have actually will be, probably will be general crime, campus safety, crime safety.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I think theft is something that we need to be, of which we need to be cognisant, the risk of theft...there does seem to be an increase in violence or threatening behaviour within the university over the last couple of years.” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Others explained that many of these incidents happened together, for example:

“So I don’t know, because I’m kind of mixing it up with sort of a drug, the increase in drugs that goes on and the increase in knife crime that goes on that are not necessarily hate and are not necessarily sexual, so there is an increase in student inappropriate behaviour in halls but how much of that is down to sexual violence and hate crime, I don’t know. I haven’t heard that much hate crime...” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

b) Existing Policies, Procedures and Training

University managers spoke about the lack of existing policies, reporting procedures and training. When some university managers reflected on their experiences of reporting, these were often vaguely described and involved a range of different services and informal reporting procedures. Many felt a little detached from these processes and, due to their roles, had not been involved in them. For example, one participant explained:

“I don’t think our ability to provide support for students has caught up with the needs of some of our students.” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Another added that often these support processes were quite long-winded and may put students off of reporting. For them, it would be better if staff dealt with these issues directly:

“[...] we’re terrible at this here, is to say oh, right I know what kind of problem that is, you need to speak to so-and-so, and then you point the person across the campus to the other side of town and by the time the student has got there, all the resolve that it took them to raise the issue with you has gone, so they’ve talked themselves out of, this isn’t important, this isn’t going to be taken seriously, I just have to suck it up and let it go, it will pass, I’ll start not attending lectures, no one will notice as long as I submit my assignments and so on and so forth. I think the main piece of advice that I would say is that you deal with what is presented, even if you have to say to the student, hold, I need to take advice, you don’t let them out of your sight until you have sought and found that advice and connected the person directly to the individual that can take whatever issue they’re dealing with forward.” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“I had reports that in some cases students who need help with X, Y or Z have one or two months of a waiting list to get to the right help. That’s not really good, that’s not acceptable...” (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

For many university managers, these were complex problems requiring complex solutions. As one explained:

“There is no recipe, we can’t really say oh, we have to have this exact procedure applying to each and every, because it’s very much a case of assessing each situation on its merits...” (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

Another university manager said:

“I’ve experienced that, so the student that was sexually assaulted at one stage for example did not want to contact the police, didn’t feel ready to do that, but did it a period of time down the line, had decided that they wanted, that was the right thing for that individual to do and really, you know, it’s, you’re there to listen, you’re there to support, you’re there to guide them in terms of the options that are available to them, I’d argue both within the institution and outside...So you tend to rely on the sort of [student information point] sort of support mechanisms there, other wider bodies like the chaplaincy if it’s appropriate and so forth, you know.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another said that, regardless of support services, students may report in many different ways, including informal structures of reporting:

“With, wearing my [position] hat on, you know, the type of information that I have seen suggests that they tend to go to their peers, sometimes the personal academic tutor, sometimes they pick one of their tutors that they feel closest to regardless of whether they are their [personal academic tutor] or not. Or they simply write an email to student matters or actually sometimes they write an email to people like [director of student services] or [vice chancellor], with a description of what happened and why it’s bothering them. That’s what I’ve seen and this is easily documentable because when the cases are brought forward, you get copies of all of that so you can see who they’ve been sharing it with. That’s a standard behaviour I’ve encountered. In addition, they tend to share it with people close to them in their families or their circles of friends outside the university, so we’ve also had evidence of emails sent by parents of students to people in positions of authority here, so I’ve also seen that. Nothing surprising there, nothing too spectacular but those are the sort of mechanisms that people use, they do that...” (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

Another participant explained that more work needs to be done to ensure all staff are aware of these processes:

“I wouldn’t be confident that all of them [necessary procedures] were [in place], I know some of them are very good and obviously the mental health team, the counselling team, the disability team will be, the student support officers will. I would highly doubt that every single PAT maybe would know what to do if somebody came and disclosed something of that nature, but you see I think that some of our student support mechanisms are sort of everyone and then obviously that’s quite challenging to know that everybody is able to cope with that. I would take a guess that the specialist support teams would know what to do, and the ones I just named definitely would, and where to send students for support” (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Some members of university management who were involved in developing policies and procedures and other members who had experience of reporting or disclosure were aware of these processes. For example, one added:

“...but we’ve got the personal academic tutor system at the university and that’s, looking at how to best to make that work, but that would be a key place to come. When I was a personal tutor, you know, for many years, you know, that would be the, a place to come, on that kind of matter, one place to come and say look, I’m having problems.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

They added:

“Well the student services would be the, within the student services the appropriate place to take that conversation forward, either in confidence or not, but it would be taken absolutely seriously, I mean it’s unacceptable if that were to happen so depending on the nature of the allegation, it could quickly become a criminal investigation, couldn’t it?” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another manager explained:

“At the moment our sexual violence policy for example is embedded within the disciplinary policy and it’s, yes, I know it’s a disciplinary policy but if somebody’s done that, you know, you disclose and then it gets routed through, you know, the student might go to disciplinary as an outcome from a complaint for example, and we’ve got the bullying and harassment policy that’s all about what to do for bullying and harassment. You know, if somebody doesn’t know that policy in detail, they might not know where to route people, you know, make a complaint, that complaint might lead to disciplinary action...And that’s actually why we redid the bullying and harassment policy quite substantially a couple of years ago to try and make that clearer, but not everybody knows every policy.” (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

Another explained that internal processes are in place:

“...if someone comes up and makes a complaint about another student’s behaviour towards them in relation to perhaps hate crime, then again there’s, the process in place is that it will be investigated, again we have internal processes for investigation. Similarly with staff, we have internal processes for complaints about sexual misconduct, whatever. So it’s a mixture, we have internal processes but again sometimes it doesn’t need a process, it needs that individual to be signposted for support.” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Many discussed how these issues were dealt with through the existing harassment and bullying policies and processes:

“I mean we do have a process, I mean one of the things that we do have is an online reporting process for harassment and I mean, so that would cover anybody that wants to, they’re concerned about harassment or bullying and that contains various forms so sexual harassment would be just one of those categories. So for those people that would prefer to, if you like, sit back, feel safe, and not interact with people, you can do it online, and that is a mechanism and I think the university, it’s on the student hub under student support, and that says very clearly you know, you will be taken seriously and this will be investigated. So I think that’s an assurance in

there and there's assurances about confidential at that point. So that is a way of doing it..." (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Another corroborated this, adding:

"If the policy is clear and the process and guidelines are clear and there's a harassment and bullying form that's online, the student submits, then it comes through to us and we would look into it, so clarity in how students can gain access to that process and policy is important. It's also important that staff in the student union, they may well be the person that's disclosed to, a tutor may be disclosed to, as I said earlier they will pick the phone up and seek help and advice in that situation, if it comes to me I will know what to do with it, yeah." Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

Others provided an insight into reporting mechanisms in place for hate crimes. In contrast to staff and student perceptions about the difficulty of finding this information, university managers knew exactly where these mechanisms were:

"Interviewer: Yeah. In terms of hate crime, is there any particular avenues for reporting hate crime, specifically, compared to other crimes...

Participant 9: It's the same...

Interviewer: It's the same process.

Participant 9: They're all dealt with the same, yeah. I think the thinking behind that was very much students need clear, simple processes. You can't, you know, if it's sexual press here, if it's hate, press here, because it's all done electronically, so that was devised, one method of reporting, it was really simple and to be honest it's only the first steps, it only asks for really obvious information because of course then there's the follow up.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's just a quick report...

Participant 9: Yeah, so we can catch it and support them as soon as we get it.

Interviewer: And that's on the website?

Participant 9: Yeah, link on the student portal, and staff portal, yeah."

This university manager went on to add:

"I receive the confidential disclosure forms that get completed. So the way it works at the moment is a student or a member of staff can fill in a harassment reporting form and it comes to [director of human resources] and [director of student and academic services] who then deals with the student related ones and [director of human resources] then deal with the staff related ones." (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Another participant explained that student-facing staff are more aware of these policies than university managers because they dealt with these issues in practice:

"Participant 8: ...it means knowing where to look, knowing who to ask. So, if that were to happen, you would assess the situation on its merits and you would establish the extent to which I can do something at one level to, if nothing else, put the person at ease and establish who needs to intervene to really get to the bottom of it and that, I feel reasonably prepared to do that, to identify where the sort of help can be.

Interviewer: Is that because of your understanding of the university and networks or is it because there's like clear policy in place?

Participant 8: It's more the former, it's my, it's knowing the ropes, it's knowing who to ask. The policy, in a situation like that, the last thing you want to do is wait a minute, you're in distress, but wait a minute, I'm going to have a look at the policy.... a lot of very useful, practical knowledge exists behind the scenes. Individuals who do not hold positions of authority know a heck of a lot about who, where, when, how and they've got this practical, wonderful practical sense of, if you like, this pragmatism that helps you deal with a situation of stress in an

efficient manner with, always with wellbeing of the person in mind.”

(Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

University managers were aware that student facing staff worked very hard to address these issues. As one added:

“on the very positive side, I hear stories weekly I would say of, through my subject leaders of personal tutors who’ve really gone the extra mile, they’ve helped students in extremis, you know, they’ve done everything they humanly possibly could so those students obviously do know where to go and they have got help and they’ve, you know, they’re better for it and they’ve been able to get out of whatever difficult they’re in....we don’t hear about students who have got major, major problems and they’re going no one’s helping me, why isn’t anyone helping me? Quite the opposite.” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Many University management team were aware that training was either non-existent, that they were not aware of training, or that it could be improved further. For example, one university manager who was asked if they were aware of training responded:

“I’ll be absolutely honest, no [does not know what training exists for staff on dealing with disclosures]” (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

Another added:

“Interviewer: And in terms of sort of training for, which would obviously be aimed at staff, what is there and what isn’t there at the moment that would be appropriate?

Participant 7: I don’t know, I can’t confidently say what there is, I can’t confidently say what there is. I suspect there’s not very much, I suspect a lot of the information is given to staff in their first week here during, first weeks here during induction. I don’t think there is annual updating or refreshers or anything.” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

Others felt that this was for student-facing staff to know and not university managers, as they dealt with this on a regular basis. As one participant explained:

“...you only learn how to be a counsellor by training to be a counsellor so actually you need to rehearse some of these scenarios probably through the training to be able to manage situations like that”. (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

Some were uncertain about the format that this training should take, as one participant explained:

“...should we be training staff what to do in the event that a student comes to them with, or should we just be ensuring that they are clearly able to signpost a student to the help that’s available? I guess that’s the question.” (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Others felt that this was the role of certain teams within the university. As mentioned by one university manager:

“I don’t know. I don’t know the answer to that [what staff training is there] because that would be a HR matter, yeah. They probably don’t need to respond to that disclosure themselves, they will need to put it into the process so someone who picks this up investigates it and deals with it. ...I don’t know what goes on in HR as part of the induction process for staff, so is this if they find themselves, somebody discloses to them or...? Yeah, it’s probably all, part wrapped up in the complaints procedure, but I don’t know exactly how that goes through in induction. I suspect in most cases if somebody, in reality if somebody discloses something to a member of staff, they will discuss it with their line manager and raise it up the line....” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

Another added:

“Participant 9: ...obviously through HR, we train line managers and the training that we give to line managers is very much case study based, sorry scenario based....”

Interviewer: So they all have like specific training on disclosure situations, is it disclosure or is it more about the subject areas of, say hate crime and...?

Participant 9: They don't, well, we don't have specific training about, that's what I was trying to say, when you're trying to get through, when you're doing management training, then you use scenarios as the vehicle for your training. As I said at the moment we don't use disclosure or what to do in the event of disclosure, we don't actually use that as a case study" (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

8.3 Recommendations for Future Practice

This theme focuses on the recommendations which came out of the interviews with members of the UMT. The main areas where recommendations were made were in relation to the information which was provided and processes at the institution which needed to be put in place or amended, issues around staffing and having specialist staff who were available to advise on issues relating to sexual violence and the need for appropriate training of staff as well as needed to develop the culture at the institution which embedded notions of respect.

a) Information and Processes

This aspect of the sub theme related primarily to the both the type of information which needed to be provided to staff and students as well as the effective communication of this information.

A number of participants highlighted the need to have readily available and easily accessible information and guidance in relation to the provision of support, both by the institution and external agencies. This information should clearly indicate the support which could be provided by the University and where referrals to external agencies needed to be made:

"I think there has to be very clear guidelines on where an issue probably should be handled by an external agency, where we've, beyond our capacity..." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another participant agreed that the main issue needed to be appropriate signposting:

“You just need to tell someone, you know, it’s about the signposting thing, I don’t, not quite sure, I mean if, I suppose if your child has a go at you, you know, what training do you get as a parent or the bus driver says, sorry get off, you know, you walk or something, you find that... I don’t know, I think there’s a danger in kind of going too far, kind of mollycoddling staff and kind of almost treating them as victims before anything’s happened, I think I’d be against that.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another participant agreed that there should be information and guidance regarding what a student could expect to happen if they disclosed an incident, but also signposting information for staff in these circumstances. He also stated that this information should be clearly and readily available on the University website.

“We used to have, on the, certainly on the staff web pages, there was a side panel that said student in distress? Here’s what to do. And I know a lot of people found that very useful because they knew it was there and they might not follow it through sort of routinely to see, OK, if X happens, this is what I should do, but they knew that if X did happen, all they had to do was find a machine and click on the link and it would guide them as to where to go and I think that level of signposting is, it was very welcome and it’s something that we’ve lost, so I think if we could re-establish that, then that would be incredibly useful.” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

This was echoed by another participant who also felt that some kind of flow chart outlining the various options and processes on the website would be helpful:

“I would expect perhaps, I think something like some web resources or something that would be a, both for students and staff, you know, what to do if this happens, here are the, here is the support we provide, here is the way the policy works, you know, explaining that a bit more and then routing people to whichever route they need to go down and you know, here’s what happens if you want to phone the

police, here's what happens if you don't" (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

This was supported by another participant:

"Where do you find, what's the one spot on the website you'd go to, and how, I think perhaps it's about signposting, you know, if people have an issue, and they're uncertain, that's not good, you know, they need to be able to have access to the right route to disclosure instantly, so I think if we can do some tidying, if that's not clear, then we need to do some tidying up around that." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another participant made a similar point and in addition highlighted the need for the information to be communicated to students in a number of ways. They also made the point that there needed to be clear policies in relation to the processes when a student discloses an incident of sexual violence:

"Yeah, so definitely some fairly standard written information or information in various different communicative forms to students that outlines if they have concerns what they can do, who they can go to...Signposting, and how they can disclose. I think again important to provide to students clarity around what happens next...I think that should be enshrined within policy. But more than that, that actually there should be again a set of communications that a) highlights it b) provides the information about, you know, about what to do. Yeah, but to have that then definitely embedded within the policies that the university adheres to and works with would be important." (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

Members of the University Management Team also highlighted that many of the disclosures were dealt in an ad hoc way and was based on the local knowledge of staff. Informal processes were often used to deal with situations:

"...because I've been here for a very long time, I can usually pick up the phone to the right person and get the right answer very quickly..." (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

“I will be honest and say I’ve relied on knowing that certain people have specialisms so I knew for example a colleague that worked in policing had certain experience with certain areas and so I was able, I didn’t say this to the student straight away, but able to speak to that individual and say look, I’ve got someone who’s gone through this, you’re in a much better, I knew it was their particular field that they’d worked on in the police before they’d come into this line and said look, I would appreciate some support in this and that individual was brilliant and in the end met the student as well which helped, but I was lucky to know. (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

The same participant went on to state that she did not know whether there were any formal processes or guidance and that this was something which maybe needed to be considered:

“Are there guidelines? I’m going to be honest and say I’d have to go and have another look to see if there were. The one, I did deal with one serious issue, a sexual assault but of course I used my local knowledge to do that, in that instance and had a pretty clear sense of what course of action the victim could take but I wanted that clarified before I gave that advice and interestingly I went to someone I knew, knew about it as opposed to policy.” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another participant also indicated that he was unsure of what the processes/policies and procedures were in relation to students, but did mention that the Students’ Union should have their own policies. In addition, he also felt that any disclosures which were made which involved staff, should be dealt with via a grievance:

“So the student union really should have a, I mean I don’t know if the student unions have policies up and down the country for that kind of thing. Certainly there is for staff, you know, staff HR policies around that, if you didn’t like what somebody said to you, you could just take out a grievance....I only know the staff ones, I don’t know what we have for students. In terms of staff it would be, well a grievance would be one way forward, the grievance policy. I mean the first, we don’t want to start, grievances can often be closed down earlier through discussion so if it’s a staff member...” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Although Students' Unions should have their own policies and procedures, ultimately it is the institution who would be responsible for dealing appropriately with instances of disclosures. It is therefore concerning that there appears to be some abdication of institutional responsibility here. In addition, there seems to be a lack of understanding regarding the impact and nature of disclosures of sexual violence, as a grievance and informal discussion would not be appropriate in many circumstances where disclosures involving staff have been made. Therefore some clarity in relation to appropriate processes is needed.

Other participants expressed that they thought the policies/procedures and processes were fine, although they needed to be advertised and communicated better:

“I don't think so, no [there is anything else we could do]. I think the only thing that I think we could do better is flag it up better to students, a) that we don't tolerate it and b) what you do if it happens, it's there but it's probably perhaps not as clear.”
(Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

Another member of the University Management Team also expressed the view that they thought that the culture of the University and the processes allowed for disclosures to take place. However, he did also recognise that due to his management position, he might be a bit far removed from the reality on the ground:

“Yeah, I think it's a fairly open, I think we're got a fairly open culture that would allow people to disclose, but again, you know, I'm so many steps removed from what I would call the day-to-day business end of the work that goes on in the university that I might be living in a false, under a false sense of security, yeah.” (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

The issue of resourcing was raised by members of the University Management Team. The point was made that there were many competing interests and that therefore it was important to consider the resourcing implications:

““I think a lot of it comes down to resources of course, so you've got to, it's what's the biggest, what are the biggest priorities and if this is considered a priority then what do we do this instead of perhaps something else that we could equally argue

was important, you know, I don't know, cyber security or that sort of thing, you know, don't be a victim of fraud, which we've also had." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

However, despite the feeling that there may be difficulties in resourcing effective responses to disclosures of sexual violence, the same participant made some suggestions as to mechanisms which could be implemented if resources were available. The primary suggestion was in relation to the introduction of first responders, which was also mentioned by some staff members in the staff focus groups:

"I think where resources, and one thing that we were looking at, at one point, was whether we could have sort of champions around this area so you know, it wasn't related to roles, so a bit like first aiders, you know, do you have 12 sexual violence champions around the university who are first responders if somebody has disclosed. Obviously that has financial implications but I know that was something that another university had done or rape crisis perhaps had recommended was a good mechanism, so and effectively finding people with the skills rather than people doing roles that would normally lead to that. So, that's something maybe we could look at if resources were available." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

The primary recommendations to come out of this theme were in relation to having adequate signposting information which was readily available and communicated and that there needed to be appropriate policies and processes in place for dealing with disclosures which did not just rely on ad hoc or local knowledge. Again, effective communication of this information to staff was also recommended. The final aspect to this subtheme related to that of resources. The point was made that resourcing may be an issue given competing priorities, although the suggestion of introducing first responders was made if resources were available.

b) Staffing

This sub-theme incorporates issues such as the availability of training for members of staff to be able to deal with disclosures effectively as well as the format and content which

training could take in order to be effective and reach as many members of staff as possible. There was also a recognition that training might have to be tailored for different members of staff, depending on their roles within the institution. Participants made some concrete suggestions in terms of what training could be introduced and in what format.

In this element of the subtheme participants focused on the issue of appropriate training for staff. Some of the University Management Team indicated that they were not aware of what training was in place for staff in order to support them effectively when disclosures were made. This indicates that senior management need to be made aware of any staff development opportunities which are available, both for themselves and for the staff they manage.

“Interviewer: OK next question, so are you aware what training the university provides to support staff when disclosures are made to them?”

Participant 4: No.” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Another participant had a similar response:

“Interviewer: Yeah, fantastic. Do you know what training the university provides to support staff with disclosures?”

Participant 10: No I don’t and that was, that’s one of the questions where I felt, well I could go and find out but I genuinely don’t know the answer to that...” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

There was also some misunderstanding from some participants regarding the nature of the training and who should receive the training, as one participant seemed to indicate that the suggestion was that victims should be trained. The participant stated that:

“Interviewer: So what would staff need from training that could make them feel more supported and effective in responding to disclosures?”

Participant 4: I don’t know, because I’ve never had any training in it myself, so, I haven’t the faintest idea. I mean I guess it’s common sense isn’t it really? I mean these are grown-ups, right, so you know, like if you, if I felt that interview had gone, or you felt, you know, I’d been

inappropriate to you, I'm sure you would, would you need training to know that, you know, I'd insulted you? I don't know what the training is..." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Other participants expressed that they thought that there should be training for all staff who may have to deal with disclosures and there was a general belief that there could be more training which was provided:

"Could there be more training on how to handling things like that? Yeah, of course there could, yeah.... Now I don't think that has to necessarily only be student support people, I think there are people across the university could be trained in that kind of thing, but they've got to be trained.... It doesn't mean that staff within the university couldn't be trained to take on this role, that they would deal with people probably that they're not going to come into regular contact with. Because to suggest that staff, you know, nine times out of ten I would argue that staff are the first port of call for anything, so it wouldn't hurt us all to do more training around support, advice, listening and so forth. So yeah, I think that's a big challenge.... It's not regular enough. I think we should probably be doing it, you know, every couple of years just because you forget and that's natural in various senses. I had some training, I don't remember the last time I went to training session on, I don't think it was specifically around disclosure, I think it was more wider student issues in that sense..." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

The point was also made that if staff have specific roles where issues of sexual violence and harassment might be raised, there needed to be additional and more specific training for these roles in order to support staff in making decision. This was particularly raised in the context of chairs of panels, such as grievances, disciplinaries and termination appeal panels:

"You can be asked to chair panels of, around staff complaints and so forth actually without any real training, you know, just relying on your reviewing evidence and looking at evidence but I think there could be more in place to support you through that process, you know." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another participant agreed that a 'one size fits all' training would probably not be appropriate:

“And then probably different levels of training for different people of course. There might be groups of staff that need more detailed training than that, but my academics are broadly first response aren't they?” (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

Another member of the University Management Team agreed, suggesting that all staff should have some basic training about the legal position and their responsibilities, although student support would require more in-depth training:

“...we all have duty of care collectively, you would expect to have training that just makes it quite clear what legal requirements on you are, what the expectations are, the route in which you should direct students to go and how you yourself in that role could be supported. So I think that's pretty basic. If we were talking about the kind of training for people that were in the student support centre doing this triage function, then I think it's a different level of staff development.” (Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

Some of the participants also made suggestions as to content of the training around the disclosure of sexual violence and harassment:

“[talking about type of training] so how to reassure, what to explain to the student about what needs to happen next if they're to be supported and the ability to be able to state simply to the student, this is what's going to happen next, OK, you've told me, you've agreed that you want me to help you and to access support from within the university, this is what I'm going to do, this is where I'm going to take you and this is what we can expect to happen next from there and then somebody else may have to explain to you the further steps that go on from there. But to give that reassurance so that nothing comes as a surprise or certainly nothing comes as a shock to the student in terms of the outcomes that flow from their disclosure.” (Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

Other participants also made specific suggestions about what such training could look like and specifically mentioned the use of role play and creating an online resource:

“Participant 8: To raise awareness across the board, you could call this training but you could call it awareness raising and frankly, in situations like that, there are techniques that seem to work. There’s the old tried and test role play technique, you play a 45 second video clip, done by actors, that illustrates a situation like that. That speaks more than a thousand hours of training and you can have a battery of 20 mini role plays of half a minute each, just to capture the bit where it can go wrong. It’s widely used in coaching and mentoring but it’s also used in other contexts, it does, without being too brutal about it, no blood, no knives, no nothing, it’s just the dialogue being recorded, where did, at which point did it go wrong? That alone, in my experience, helps a lot. So that’s one idea.

Interviewer: Yeah, so that could be introduced. You don’t know, you’re not aware that any of that sort of type of role play or type of situation occurs at the moment around issues like disclosure or the experience you had, or...?

Participant 8: I’m not aware, certainly the experience I have, I haven’t seen anything before or since really and I’m not aware of the existence of any sort of role play resource that could address things of the nature of disclosure of the types of abuse or violence that is the subject of this research...

Interviewer: But it could be a beneficial addition to...

Participant 8: I would argue so, I would say that it’s actually a marginal cost, in relation to the benefit it can bring in terms of awareness raising, it could be easily done through self-study, you can, in the way that we do many other things through packages that we, you know, from fire safety to bribery and anything in between, you can have a short piece

on that, you can do it in face-to-face mode, and it's not that, I don't think it's that difficult if you have the right people involved, the people who know what they're doing when dealing with such difficult and emotionally charged situations." (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

Another member of the University Management Team suggested that incorporating training into staff development days could be an effective way of delivering training of this nature as there would be a captive audience:

“Interviewer: OK. And what, if anything, what types of training do you think would be effective?”

Participant 7: OK, well we do regular staff development days here in the faculty, so we get about a 70% attendance rate at those and I would suggest that taking the training to that forum would be more effective than sending that forum to training and I would look forward to including something on this agenda in one of those training days and you get 75% of the staff sitting down and listening, so something short, sharp, a direct instructive which explains to my staff what they need to do if any of these situations arise. And then they've heard it and then something to follow up which gives them something written or virtual about the course of action that they need to take or who they need to contact and how they need to respond to reports. ...so something very short, 45 minutes to an hour, here's what you're looking for, here's how you respond and have a go at categorising a few things that have happened already. And I suspect that will be enough to make the agenda stick in people's minds and be able to respond more effectively. Doesn't need to be cumbersome. I do fear the cumbersome training session because after the first 20 minutes, you know, largely you've lost people. If it's something that can be done in 45, needs to be done in 45 minutes." (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

The primary recommendations to come out of this sub-theme relate to; ensuring that senior managers are aware of the training which is available for them and their staff to guarantee appropriate staff development opportunities are taken up, some members of the University Management Team felt that training should be available for all staff, but that this should be tailored depending on the roles staff had within the institution and the extent to which they had to deal with issues relating to disclosures, management also made suggestions about the format of the training, for example, the use of role play, online training and delivering training during compulsory staff development days.

c) Culture of Respect

The final area where the University Management Team made recommendations, was around the issue of developing the culture at the University. It was suggested by participants that there needed to be a culture where disclosures were encouraged and where victims of sexual violence and harassment felt that they could make a disclosure and it would be dealt with appropriately. Management indicated that one aspect of developing this culture was to ensure zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour and that a culture of respect should be engendered and effectively communicated to all students and staff.

A number of University Management Team members highlighted that there needed to be a culture of respect on campus and that this was achieved, in part, through having a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence. Respect and zero-tolerance often were mentioned in tandem and it was also acknowledged by some that there were problems regarding attitudes to women on campus:

“...students sign a contract when they come here about respecting other colleagues and university ways of working and so forth and I think that’s good... It’s zero tolerance, kind of thing to use a police type phrase, I think and zero-tolerance comes from backing it up and being very clear to all people who work here that there are processes and where you feel you’ve experienced something as a result of hate crime or whatever those issues and you know, matching words with deeds. If we have zero tolerance then we must take action where it’s, and be

seen to be taking action where things happen...” (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

“We need to be absolutely clear that we don’t tolerate it. We need to get a message out that it’s not acceptable behaviour in this environment. I don’t think that will stop it but it might make some people think twice. I do think there is some cultural issues here whereby some men think it’s OK to behave in a way that perhaps we wouldn’t to women and that needs to be understood.” (Participant 2, female, University Management Team)

“I think safer space is more about a culture, isn't it? It’s more about, you know, a common set of behaviours and attitudes and values that need to be demonstrated, displayed, encouraged. Well I think one of the things that’s important is that when unacceptable behaviour is demonstrated that it’s sanctioned and seen to be sanctioned, you know, because otherwise it sort of indicates that actually we tolerate it and actually we shouldn’t tolerate it. So in the same way as you now see there’s a no, you know, no tolerance to violence against staff in the NHS, actually there should be no tolerance to unacceptable behaviour in, across these dimensions and, you know, we should be seen to be, students and staff should see that it’s being tackled.” (Participant 3, male, University Management Team)

“But zero tolerance matched with, as I said, we touched on this, a really more positive messages how do we develop a culture whereby people are tolerant...” (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

Some participants focused on the importance of developing a positive and respectful culture across the institution:

“Try and point out the benefits to the whole community of being respectful to each other and polite and, but you’ve got to model that as well. I think, you know, we need to do this with everybody, not just academics, not just tutors, it’s got to be, you know, how you speak to everybody... I’m not saying I’m perfect but I always say hello to people and smile at people in the corridor...people have got to see that demonstrated I think and that’s down the cleaners, the security people,

the people on the desk, the receptionists...everybody's got to do this...So it's got to be a whole sort of culture of being polite and respectful really...most of our courses are quite small, and it's difficult when you've got loads of numbers, but I think, I do like to think that everybody feels it's their responsibility to genuinely get to know the students, not to be their friends but to show an interest in them and communicate to them again that you give a damn about them, you do notice if they're not there, you ask them if they're OK, you do try and get to know them as people, not just bodies that come in the room and you know...And hopefully if you get that right, that's another way of, you know, reinforcing a sort of positive message" (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

Some members of the University Management Team felt that the institution could do more in relation to sending out key messages about what behaviour is acceptable:

"Interviewer: OK. In terms of what the university could do in terms of prevention of these types of incidents and behaviours, is there anything you think needs to be done from that perspective, rather than from the reporting side?

Participant 9: How can you prevent in the first place? I mean do the, I mean, you see this sort of zero tolerance but if we adopted a zero tolerance and promoted that, would that make a difference? So there might be a comms piece around that. Do you make it clear to students that they'd be thrown out of, is their conduct linked to their studies? I don't know, do we make it clear that if they are found to have committed a hate crime that they'll be, I think we do, the student policy, the student code of conduct, so I guess, yeah, the student code, how clear, could we better communicate the student code, do we actually know for certain the students read the code of conduct?

Interviewer: Is it communicated in any other way than they have to read it and sign it, is it sort of a part of fresher's week or anything, or...?

Participant 9: I don't know, I don't know would be the answer to that one, I'm afraid. I suspect not, but I don't know, I don't know." (Participant 9, female, University Management Team)

Other participants highlighted the importance of diversity and ensuring that these messages are reiterated across the institution.

"What I think we could do more about is celebrate that, so you send that positive message out but with that becomes a what is acceptable and what's not acceptable kind of thing and I would like to see us do more of that.... I think putting out positive messages all the time, sort of celebrating diversity in various senses, celebrating respect in various ways. ...so it's kind of, for me, an everyday thing that if we just keep reiterating that's important to us as an institution, and students see that and making sure everyone has a voice and they're allowed to have that voice, it's not to curb discussion or debate but to encourage respect and I think that's really important." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Some participants provided suggestions as to how and when these messages could be communicated to students:

"We can always do more, yeah, so you can always do more... I think it's probably got to be a number of things, it's not going to be one thing that we just do more of and suddenly all these things are going to go away. I do think we probably need to do more perhaps before the students come to university, perhaps at the open days, you know we tend not to talk about this kind of thing at open days because it could be seen as negative, you know, we're expecting you to be naughty so this going, all the things we're going to tell you that you mustn't do, so I think it would have to be done in a very careful way. But yeah, I'm sure there is more we can do about, you know, this is the sort of, these are the ways we expect you to behave, you know, we expect you to treat everybody with respect, be polite, treat people how you'd like to be treated, you know, don't make loads of noise, don't cause trouble, you know, but it's how you kind of make that into a positive. And I think it is a very positive message because who wants to live amongst other people that

are noisy, disrespectful, rude, violent” (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

One suggestion was that induction and Welcome Week were important points where these messages could be communicated to students and that more needed to be done to do this effectively:

“...So I think there probably is a job of work to be done around induction, maybe even pre-induction, around explaining to students that university is a very diverse environment, that they may well encounter views that make them feel uncomfortable but equally they are empowered to challenge those views and to explain their own views which in turn may make other people feel uncomfortable.”
(Participant 10, male, University Management Team)

One participant highlighted that the tone was often set in Welcome Week and that the focus on the drinking culture was problematic and that this might need to be reconsidered:

“I actually think there’s a massive problem with welcome week. You do need some kind of induction, of course you do, but a lot of universities, they’re not even having welcome week any more, without having all this rubbish about going to nightclubs and getting off your face, you know, great big massive jugs of blue cocktail that make you chuck up...I got chatting to a couple of mature students at the beginning of their course and they said this old welcome week business, it’s just irrelevant to us, we want to just crack on with our studies, we don’t want to talk about this, that and the other, we don’t want to have vouchers for nightclubs or free pizza, we just want to get on with the study, that’s what we’re here for. So I think we really do have to reconfigure...you do need induction, you do need to do the health and safety bit and how to operate a fire extinguisher if you live in a, you know, halls and blah, blah, blah, so there’s a place for all that stuff, but I just think it’s too much based around you know, the notion of the sort of stereotypical 18-year-old student who likes to get, go out and get drunk and you know, they’re not interested in anything else. I mean not all young people like getting drunk and you know, some people don’t drink alcohol for a whole number of reasons, which is

fine, but I imagine if you don't drink alcohol and you don't like drinking, you probably have quite a boring time in welcome week, I don't know. So, I think we just need to rethink that and I think that would be a really good opportunity to sort of stress those expectations" (Participant 11, female, University Management Team)

However, the point was also made that the Students' Union also had a role to play in ensuring these messages reached students:

"I'm asking the student unions to think about putting on a sort of more celebrating message about diversity, respect and so forth, because it's as important it comes from them as it is from us in that way, you know." (Participant 1, female, University Management Team)

Another participant mentioned the role of the Students' Union, but also the institution more broadly, when it came to getting messages across. It was suggested that there needed to be more targeted campaigns relating to some of these issues. However, it was also highlighted that there needed to be investment from the institution in appointing someone to lead on some of these initiatives:

"I suppose we could do more campaigns, like the students' union could run some more campaigns perhaps, to sort of you know, I know they do the I Heart Consent and we often try to do one at the start of the year about you know, safety and security and those sorts of things...you know, thinking about it, I don't think we do much of that, again I think just because we haven't got anybody who would really lead on that sort of thing, but it would be something to look at, perhaps, you know, highlight it, flag, identifying some of the big issues like racial discrimination or transgender issues at the moment are obviously quite topical, or sexual you know, violence, so running some sort of targeted campaigns. I think it would only work combined with the SU, but yeah, thinking about it, that could be something that we might want to consider." (Participant 6, female, University Management Team)

The final element of this subtheme relating to developing a culture of respect, focuses on the issue of disclosure and reporting. The culture of the institution was viewed as key in encouraging people to make disclosures:

“Interviewer: What would you expect the university to provide in order to help with effective disclosures, which you’ve kind of already gone through in some detail, but if there was a sort of, just a very basic message of what the university should absolutely be providing, if nothing else?”

Participant 5: In terms of disclosure?

Interviewer: Disclosures, yeah.

Participant 5: My, I think this is a cultural question, so I think this is about the way, this is about the way in which we inducts students into what it is to be a university student here and our kind of values and the fact that, I mean we’ve just done the refresh strategy which is all about being super-supportive and that it’s always important to share, so that we know, so that we can act, if it’s within our jurisdiction to act, I mean the most extreme ends of these, we would not act at all because they are matters of criminality and you will, you would support in order that they can take the right reporting route. But yeah I mean that sort of, that culture of support, that culture of openness, and probably I think in the current climate, sharing those values as students coming in so that we all feel really comfortable to just raise those issues in a proper and courteous way to anybody that we see is not behaving appropriately or you know, so almost you know, disclosure is just one part of it. I think it’s much more about having you know, developing as part of say a programme team identity or a tutorial group identity, a culture of we support each other, we have some shared values of about being supportive and caring and I think if you can get that operating in a sort of group way, then I think you would end up getting fewer incidents where

people step over a boundary of what's appropriate or not."

(Participant 5, female, University Management Team)

There was some acknowledgement from management that there needed to be some work in developing a culture at the university where disclosures were encouraged and where the formal process of complaint were used:

"Well I think we do very well about, we do reasonably well, as any university would about publishing the routes to complaints or the routes to reporting any other incident but there's some work to be done, I think, in making students and staff comfortable in engaging with that process. ...there's work to be done in making individuals who have things happen to them more comfortable with invoking those formal procedures." (Participant 7, female, University Management Team)

One participant highlighted that there had not been any specific campaigns or attempts to encourage disclosure of sexual violence:

"Interviewer: Do you feel that the university culture encourages disclosure?"

Participant 4: I think it's probably neutral on it really, I mean I'm not sure, I can't think, that we've had any campaigns out there to sort of say, you know, things." (Participant 4, male, University Management Team)

However, it was clear from the management interviews that one element in terms of encouraging disclosures and creating a culture where this was possible, was missing from the discourse, that of ensuring the victim or complainant was believed. This is a significant omission and is one which needs to be addressed if a culture where disclosure can occur is to be developed. It was unfortunate that one participant's view reflected how much work still needs to be done in this area:

"I think the university does encourage disclosure, the university does encourage students to report things in a way that they're comfortable with and following processes that can lead to a satisfactory resolution for them, that said, because of that culture of encouragement, having been on panels again, I can see the level of wrong accusations affecting others that really shouldn't be involved in the first

place, I can also see that, so I think all of this culture has to be, what's the word, balanced, tempered with a level of, by all means talk, by all means disclose and report but by all means make sure that you're telling the truth otherwise you're going to find yourself in a difficult position." (Participant 8, male, University Management Team)

The main recommendations from this final subtheme related to the development of a culture of respect, where disclosures were encouraged. Hand in had with this, participants felt that there needed to be clear messages around zero tolerance and what was regarded as appropriate behaviour. Suggestions were made regarding how these messages could be effectively delivered to staff and students, including the use of induction and welcome week as well as working with the Students' Union. However, one key aspect of developing a culture where disclosures were encouraged was not addressed by members of the University Management Team. The issue of ensuring that when disclosures of sexual violence, harassment or any other hate crime/incident is made, the default position is that the complainant needs to be believed. As part of the overall recommendations, it is suggested that this element is addressed and that this message is also communicated to staff and students. There is clearly still some work to be done around this message given the view expressed by at least one member of the University Management Team.

Overall, there were a number of recommendations which were made by the University Management Team. These recommendations have been incorporated into the final recommendations for this report and can be found in sections 9 and 10 of this report.

9. Discussion and Recommendations

This section will provide a discussion of the findings for this project, as well as an overview of recommendations, based on the evidence from the literature review, analysis of existing university policies and procedures, interviews with the University Management Team, staff focus groups, student focus groups and the student photovoice sessions. These recommendations have been discussed and agreed both with staff, students and members of university support teams involved within this project.

Prevalence of sexual violence, assault, harassment and hate crime

Sexual violence, assault and harassment is prevalent at the university, just as it is across other higher education establishments. Many students had experienced incidents themselves, or had observed them happening to friends, or in their roles working for the university or Students' Union. For students, more serious incidences such as rape were less prevalent, but still occurred on campus. Unwanted touching and groping was part of a normal night out and most students had experienced hurtful comments directed at them. Students spoke at length about the far-reaching impact that these behaviours had on victims. Many felt these behaviours were normative within higher education, but that it was the university's responsibility to address them, by sanctioning or taking action against perpetrators. Student-facing staff also spoke at length about their experiences in dealing with sexual harassment, violence and assault, suggesting they are prevalent within the current student population. This included a range of incidents causing students distress and influenced their studies. Many of these issues were coming through academic processes, such as those involving extenuating circumstances, or in staff Personal Tutor roles. While many staff had seen a rise in racist comments, hate crime was not discussed as much by staff.

In contrast, university managers were not affected by these issues themselves, expressing how they felt very safe on campus and that other issues were more prevalent or pressing (e.g. drugs, mental health, violent crime and student complaints). Some university managers expressed how these issues did not occur on existing campuses and had formal figures suggesting sexual violence and hate crime incidents were minimal, or less prevalent on campus than within society. Some university managers were concerned that they were

not aware if student-facing staff dealt with these incidents, as they did not have access to this information. The responsibility of universities in dealing with these issues appeared to vary depending on which members of the university management team were spoken to. Some felt that universities could do very little, others felt it was for the police to deal with, or not under their remit. Given staff and student accounts, as well as the statistics on prevalence, it is absolutely essential that the university is seen to take action in this area. The university needs to not only have a clear message that they do not tolerate these types of behaviours, but cross-university action needs to involve the collection of accurate prevalence data. This must be communicated to university managers on a regular basis through a focused working group at the highest institutional level. This will ensure that inclusive and appropriate policies and procedures are developed which are based on accurate staff, student experiences.

Changing Normative Beliefs

Students were aware of the gendered nature of sexual violence, as well as how victim blaming was common and prevented disclosure. Older students were happy to respond when others acted inappropriately towards them, but younger students viewed these types of behaviours as part of the university culture, which they felt further enabled perpetrators. Most students had adopted strategies on a night out to protect themselves, or were prevented from participating in university clubs and societies due to their fears. Speaking from their experiences in dealing with these incidents, staff talked about how certain types of students required additional support, based on their prior educational attainment and pre-university experiences, which might have influenced students' perception of norms. University managers were explicit in suggesting that problems may be due to factors such as the race or socio-economic backgrounds of students. Some managers felt that these issues were important and recent media concern had highlighted an ongoing need for cultural change. Others felt these issues had been exaggerated by the media and the risk of false claims made by victims meant these issues were challenging for universities to deal with. Worryingly, some managers also discussed differences in how students perceived these types of behaviours – some as sexual harassment and others as 'banter'.

There is a strong need for developing university and students' union based initiatives which build staff, students' and managers' confidence and awareness, while changing inaccurate normative beliefs. This should include bystander and implicit bias training, addressing prevalent sexism, sex role stereotypes and sexual prejudice. For students, it is recommended these are embedded into orientation and induction activities, within the cross-subject curricula, as well as being available throughout term through various related university campaigns. For staff, this should be present in Personal Tutor training, induction and ongoing professional development workshops. In order to further engender institutional cultural change (see *Knowledge and Awareness* below) and to further support staff in dealing with these issues, work must also be done to raise awareness within the university Management of these issues. This should include tackling negative or discriminatory assumptions about the role of BAME and low-SES students that might be held, whilst providing insights from existing research and evidence in this area.

Increasing Knowledge and Awareness

Students had a good level of knowledge about sexual harassment, assault, violence and hate crime due to in-class discussions and an existing I Heart Consent initiative. However, due to the limited sample size and possible sampling bias, it was unclear whether this is common among the student population. Many staff members were aware of these initiatives and had a good level of knowledge and awareness due to their first-hand experiences in dealing with them. It is recommended that the university also works with the Students' Union on a cross-university campaign which focuses on developing respect, empathy, openness and awareness among staff and students. This campaign about conduct needs to be clearly communicated as part of the university's identity, at orientation weeks and throughout the year to increase confidence and empower staff and students to challenge behaviour that is not okay. Initiatives such as I Heart Consent should be continued and supported by university management, because they are valued by staff, students and increase awareness in areas students are unclear about, such as consent and the law.

Students felt there was no reputational risk to the university in being seen to take action and it was important that they were seen to take these issues seriously. Students also felt that Fresher's week events should be reconsidered, particularly those taking place in the

evening, as they further promote 'lad-culture', excess and intoxication. Students wanted more for mature students and non-drinkers and should be involved in developing these. In addition to this, many staff members suggested that student and staff codes of conduct are updated to include issues around sexual harassment, assault, violence and hate crime. For many staff members, managing student expectations and developing an ethical framework between staff and students was also important, particularly in relation to placement work or other activities such as trips.

Disclosure, Reporting Mechanisms and Procedures

Students had poor knowledge about disclosure and were not aware of reporting mechanisms. Despite their experiences, many students had not reported. Those that had reported to a personal academic tutor, but some found them unapproachable. Others did not want to embarrass themselves, thought they would not be believed or that nothing would be done. Existing pastoral processes must be developed, and a joined-up approach is needed between existing support services. In particular, students felt there was a need for staff training, particularly pastoral staff, in dealing with disclosures. This should include a specialised trained individual or team to deal specifically with disclosures of this kind. For students, existing policies and procedures had to be updated. While they were aware of general support, none were aware of policies and procedures related to these issues. Students found policy documents inaccessible and that these issues were low priority in the move to the new campus. Staff dealt with incidents in a range of ways and many were unaware of formal procedures or policies for reporting. Many relied on local knowledge and ad hoc support from colleagues and other university teams. For staff, Personal Tutor and induction training was limited and policy information on these areas was inaccessible or did not exist.

University managers involved in developing policies referred to specific policies, but suggested these issues were embedded in other policies and more work needed to be done. Other university managers were vague in describing where policies or procedural guidance was located. Staff wanted an online anonymous reporting mechanism which would prevent victims from coming in to re-tell their stories, be influenced by power and aid reporting. University managers described how this mechanism existed, but staff were unsure how to

find it. There is an urgent need for signposting to clear, accessible policies and procedures for students. Students recommended that student-facing, accessible information on policies is provided in a variety of forms and located where students will be looking for it. These documents need to be clear guidance for staff on processes, outcomes and also when external agencies like the police might get involved. It is recommended that the online, anonymised reporting mechanism is accessible and available for student reporting at any time of the day. This will also help improve the university's ability to collect more accurate information about the prevalence of these issues.

Security Measures and Procedures in the Campus Transition

Students felt that it was the university's responsibility to provide them with a safe campus space. Many had experienced incidences of robbery, crime and vandalism on campus when living in halls and many were dissatisfied with security measures on the existing campuses. Students and staff wanted to see improvements in CCTV, lighting, number of security personnel, response to incidences and increased patrols at the new campus, in halls of residence and at Students' Union events. Other measures included safe evening spaces, street wardens and initiatives protecting staff going home from working late. Staff also mentioned panic alarms, accessible classroom layouts and confidential, safe spaces with clear panels and exits. In addition to this, students wanted reassurance about the security measures at the new campus, particularly in relation to the openness and accessibility of the new campus space to non-university staff and students. It is strongly recommended that there is a focus on the safety measures related to existing halls of residence after the campus move, whilst maintaining students' privacy.

As many university managers were aware of security provisions on the new campus, most did not have concerns, only that members of the public might damage the campus when it moves to the new town centre location. University managers were proud that the campus would now be a community resource which is open to all and were aware of new security measures (e.g. ID cards), investments in security and a recent security review. Managers were mainly concerned about getting the balance right between being an open, public space and a 'fortress', as well as confidentiality in open offices. While these were concerns for staff, staff were more concerned about students accessing them and having confidential

spaces to discuss issues with students. More work should be done to reassure staff and students about the new town-centre location, as well as communicating staff from university managers to staff and students.

Partnership Working within the Local Community

For students and staff, the town centre location of the new campus was a concern due to their knowledge of violence and other criminal incidences within the town and county, particularly in the evening. It is important that the University continues to promote the new campus and area in which it is located to students and to work with local councils, police, licensing authorities and other organisations in building a collaborative partnership which focuses on tackling issues within the town centre nightlife economy. Students were also concerned about sharing their space with non-student space occupants, which is not surprising, but more could be done to integrate students in the local community, possibly by hosting events during induction and Fresher's week within the town centre. By involving local businesses, valuable partnerships could be built between students and may have implications for their future employability and outreach within the local area.

9.1 Actions for Future Consideration

These recommended actions have been collated from examples of best practice which have been shared with the project team in events such as the 'Combatting Violence Against Women and Harassment on Campus' Westminster Briefing on the 25th October 2017 and the HEFCE Student Safeguarding Catalyst Project Conference held on the 20th February 2018. It is considered that these actions should also be adopted by the University of Northampton and some of these also overlap with some of the recommendations which have arisen directly from the research data for this project.

The following best practice initiatives have been identified:

- Anonymous reporting of incidents of sexual violence and harassment (via dedicated app and/or section on the University website) to capture accurate data and target preventative measures according to findings.

- Consent and bystander campaigns and training for staff and students, with buy-in at senior management level and working in partnership with the Student Union, Student Services and Faculties.
- Ensuring there are effective partnerships with external agencies, such as the Police, Rape Crisis, local Sexual Assault Referral Centres and other local agencies as appropriate.
- Compulsory disclosure training for all front-line staff. This includes Personal Academic Tutors as well as staff on helpdesks/receptions and staff in Student Services.
- Appointing dedicated case managers within Student Services to support students and liaise with key teams, both internally and externally to the university to reduce repeat retelling of traumatic incidents.
- Setting up a Safeguarding Advisory Group which includes colleagues from Mental Health/Counselling, Health & Safety and Student Welfare to carry out risk assessments when implementing safeguarding measures.

9.2. Concluding Points

A Briefing Note (See Appendix 8) was produced based on our literature review, analysis of police data and findings of this project. This was sent to the University Management Team in April 2018. This Briefing Note highlighted some of the key challenges faced within this project, recommendations by the project team and the proposal that a Working Group was constructed to oversee continued action in this area (See Appendix 9 for Working Group Terms of Reference). This would ensure the university is focused on addressing these crucial issues, whilst helping with the implementation of the current project deliverables once data collection had been completed. This would also enhance partnership working, ensure incidences are reported and that data was collected. The university did not initially see the need for this group, but after a campaign involving a local union, the university agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at these issues and develop new policies and procedures in-line with our recommendations. The New Spaces final report was sent to HEFCE in September 2018 when the project was completed.

10. Summary of Recommendations

Raising Awareness

1. Joint university and Students' Union campaign focusing on respect and awareness. Introduced in Welcome Week and ongoing throughout year. Particular focus on sports clubs and societies within the Students' Union. Campaign clearly marketed on all sites, with dedicated webpages, branding and social media presence.
2. Joint university and Students' Union campaign focusing on challenging victim blaming and encouraging people to disclose incidents.
3. Ongoing or continuation of existing consent related initiative and academic interventions focusing on increasing awareness, confidence building and training in areas such as bystander awareness, exploring when consent may be withdrawn and implicit bias. Initiatives should involve the Students' Union Welfare Officer, where possible, with support from university staff and marketing by the university.
4. Continue to ensure sexual violence, assault and hate crime is embedded across subjects within the curriculum, linking to real world problems and Changemaker.
5. Involving students in developing Fresher's week activities, whilst tackling existing notions of lad-culture, intoxication and excess. Including events for mature students and non-drinkers.
6. Partnership working to tackle the issues in point 5 above, ensuring students and staff work with local councils, police, licensing authorities and other organisations. Also involving students and hosting events to build on the relationship between the student community of practice and local community.
7. Have a clear section relating to sexual assault and harassment on the university website and Student Hub containing all information required for reporting incidents, what will happen following a report and support and referral mechanisms.
8. Training for University Management Team and other key staff to address racial and other biases/assumptions regarding the student population.

Providing Support:

9. Joined up approach required to identify communication channels and processes of referral, as well as ongoing wellbeing or support following disclosure. Work required

to ensure disclosures are handled sensitively and effectively by Faculties, staff, student services, mental health teams, Students' Union and external agencies (e.g. Northampton Police, Northampton Rape Crisis, Serenity).

10. A dedicated, specialised individual focusing on disclosures and referrals, or case managers to support students and liaise within key teams, both internally and externally to reduce repetitive telling of traumatic incident.
11. Ensure Personal Academic Tutors are given sufficient time allocation to deal with disclosures effectively.
12. Compulsory disclosure training for Personal Academic Tutors and other frontline staff dealing with disclosure. This should be built into the ongoing development of the Personal Academic Tutor role as well as some student roles, such as student representatives. Consider using staff development days within Faculties as a means to deliver training.
13. Frontline student services, such as mental health and counselling, should be adequately resourced to provide support for students disclosing incidents of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime.
14. Support for staff which recognises the impact of dealing with disclosures and distressing information. Available support should be communicated widely.

Policies and Procedures

15. Work required to review and update existing policies and codes of conduct to include sexual violence, assault, misconduct and hate crime.
16. Ensuring policies are clearly available online, particularly in the campus move. Also, the production of accessible documents for staff and students which outline key aspects of policies and guidance. This includes a signposting document or web-based resource outlining what happens following disclosure and involved parties. Policies must involve student-student as well as staff-student conduct.
17. Policies and procedures to clearly state that complainants will be believed.
18. Implementation of an online, anonymous reporting mechanism for internal anonymous reporting and disclosure.

19. Develop processes and procedures for collecting information and data regarding disclosures of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime, whether formal or informal disclosures, as well as ensuring preventative measures can be targeted according to findings.
20. Developing an action plan to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, s149 Equality Act 2010, using data collected as per point 18 above to inform SMART objectives in dealing with sexual violence, harassment and hate crime on campus. This should include issues relating to both staff and students.
21. Ensure that policies and procedures clearly state that the university can investigate complaints and disclosures of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime whether or not the matter has been reported to the police. This needs to be effectively communicated to staff and students.
22. Establish a policy framework which clearly identifies the rights of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
23. Creating clear referral processes where reports can be made externally to the police, Rape Crisis or local sexual assault referral centres.
24. Appointing and training specialised investigators for incidents involving sexual violence who understand the issues and impact of trauma.
25. Providing staff and students with information about changes to processes within the new campus move.
26. A Sexual Violence working group and/ or Safeguarding advisory group should be created to address these crucial issues, enhance partnership working and recording of incidences. Terms of reference for this working group have been developed and can be found in Appendix 9. This will ensure the recommendations contained in this report are implemented and will aid the longevity of the work around these issues. This should include colleagues from this project, mental health, counselling, health and safety, student welfare and will involve carrying out risk assessments when implementing safeguarding measures.

Safe Spaces/Security

27. Due to existing incidences within the local area, the movement of the new campus to this area and existing issues at halls of residences, an urgent review of security measures on all campuses and halls of residence is required. This must involve security processes, police presence on campus, increasing of security personnel, responses to incidences, as well as measures such as lighting and CCTV. These measures should extend to all halls of residence as well.
28. Increasing safety measures during the night time within social spaces, such as including safe spaces, street wardens and other measures to protect staff and students, in both the week and weekend. It is recommended that local partnership between those involved in the nightlife economy (e.g. paramedics, police, local proprietors, business owners), University Safety/ Welfare teams the Students' Union is established. Social media campaigns between the Police, Students' Union and University should be established on safety initiatives, night out and staying safe tips.
29. Increasing security features in areas where staff meet students, such as panic alarms. Consider the layout of these rooms to ensure that staff can leave in an emergency situation. Consider other safety features, such as removing locks from doors and ensuring there are panels in doors.
30. Clear signage around campus to indicate who to contact in an emergency.
31. Providing staff and students with information about improved security measures and procedures, including information about campus accessibility to members of the public, within the new campus move.
32. Ensuring security measures and responses are proportionate and necessary and do not interfere with the right to privacy.
33. Consider 'student only' spaces on campus and to provide safe spaces where students can talk to staff they trust without the fear of being judged.

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Data Protection Act 1998

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Notes/Main issues from ‘Combatting Violence Against Women and Harassment on Campus’ event hosted by Westminster Briefing 25th October 2017

The day was split into three sections, which shall now be outlined in turn due to their relevance of the current project:-

Section 1: Context, Guidelines and Developing an Institution-Wide Approach

Section 2: Building External Relationships and Preventing Incidents

Section 3: Improving Reporting, Recording and Support Processes and Training Students and Staff

Section 1: Context, Guidelines and Developing an Institution-Wide Approach

Speaker: Nicola Bradfield, Legal Services, University of Coventry

Nicola outlined the University of Coventry’s Guidance on handling alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence, as per the Changing the Culture Taskforce recommendation.

Key challenges raised were:-

1. How universities should interact with the criminal process (a move away from the Zellick report).
2. How to identify duties and obligations to students involved.
3. How to balance the different rights and interest of the students involved.

Universities have limited powers to investigate reported incidents, which means that there is a lower burden of proof and lesser sanctions can be imposed. Where criminal investigations can result in a prison sentence, the maximum sanction a University can impose is expulsion. Coventry University recognises that the criminal process must take precedence, however also note that the University’s disciplinary procedures must also allow them to impose precautionary measures on the accused student pending the outcome of the criminal and/or disciplinary process. It was recommended that precautionary measures must be reasonable, proportionate and necessary. They should not be a punishment and if possible should not block access to learning. These measures are decided on a case-by-case

basis, assessing the risk of any measures imposed on both the accused and the reporting student, with safeguards put in place where relevant. Universities should agree measures with the students involved and 'contracts' should be signed. It is also important to note that these are not intended to be sanctions. The University of Coventry's new guidance aims to focus on a clear distinction between the criminal and disciplinary process. One way they are doing this is by avoiding using legal jargon (e.g. 'perpetrator', 'victim') and instead reflecting the internal disciplinary language (e.g. reporting student, accused student, sanctions). It was also recommended that universities only deal with disciplinary breaches and not criminal offences. In addition to this, it may also be necessary to work in partnership with the local police force or seek guidance from a solicitor to ensure that the university does not act in a way that could jeopardise the criminal process. Recommendations should be incorporated into the first-responder training (for example, whether/how to note take in such incidents; where info should be circulated/stored).

The University of Coventry acknowledge that in order for students to understand their duties and obligations, the University's stance on sexual violence must be clearly defined in the Student Code of Conduct. This is now widely available and clearly sets out expectations of student behaviour. Although it can be difficult to define, in the University of Coventry's case, they impose a zero-tolerance policy to these types of behaviours. The University of Coventry also aims to recognise the potential impact of incidents on the students involved, both academic and wellbeing, so have created a new framework which aims to uphold the rights of both the reporting and accused student and support them throughout the process. This includes the development of a new case management system, appointment of case managers to coordinate support and provide guidance and a revision of the disciplinary policy and procedure made available to students and staff. One key point was to develop processes which avoid re-reporting (via case-management) which means that the reporting student does not have to disclose details of the alleged incident to numerous people for different purposes. As a result, reporting students are offered 4 options at an early stage:

- Reporting the incident to the police and following legal procedures.
- Referring to local Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) to gather evidence.

- Addressing internally via University disciplinary procedures (therefore investigating sexual misconduct as per Code of Conduct, NOT rape/sexual assault).
- Take no action.

It is recommended that each avenue should be explored fully and students are made aware of the possible outcomes of their decision and the support available. The University of Coventry has also ensured that the appointment of Case Managers and the new referral process have been communicated to all staff and students. The ways in which communication have taken place include:

- Advertising at Fresher's week and throughout the year, as well as compulsory training for all staff.
- Making training available in different areas - from legal issues to soft skill response training.
- Involvement by the Student Union Welfare Team.

Section 2: Building External Relationships and Preventing Incidents

Speakers: Ruth Wood, Student Communications Manager & Katie Latchford, Community Liaison Manager, Canterbury Christchurch University.

Canterbury Christ Church University have identified that the key to preventing incidents of sexual violence and harassment occurring is to address the culture and student behaviour, using an integrated approach, combining strategy, policy, training, intervention, support and communication. This approach was introduced not only across the whole University, but also in partnership with external agencies.

Internally, the Student Union (SU) developed the 'Expect Respect' campaign and introduced a pledge to support the campaign. Senior management and the Vice Chancellor publicly endorsed the campaign in a video, which also involved the Student Union President and officers. More information can be seen here - <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/expect-respect/expect-respect.aspx>. In partnership with the police, this campaign was then rolled out across the city, with posters displayed on all public university bus routes. The SU identified the top 5 student venues (bars and clubs) that were visited by students in the city centre and worked with them to roll out the campaign.

Canterbury Christ Church University has a number of campuses across Kent and Medway and their student body utilises the city centre and night-time economy. The journey between campuses and student areas of the city at night was an area of focus for their prevention campaigns. Together with the Local Government and Police, the university published a guide to 'Staying Safe in the City', including maps of safe routes home, indicating well-lit areas. Street Marshals are available on popular student nights to help students get home safely, in a joint project with Kent University. The University meets regularly with the local Police to monitor safety of students and identify potential risk areas.

Speaker: Dr John Sharp- Director of Student Services (UEA)

Following the publication of 'Changing the Culture', UEA proposed the establishment of an Implementation Group to meet the aims of the UUK Taskforce. Dr Sharp discussed recommendations 13 and 14, which involved:

- Building and maintaining partnerships with local specialist services to ensure consistent referral pathways for students.
- Establishing and maintaining strong links with the local police and NHS in order to develop and maintain a strategic partnership to prevent and respond to violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting students.

In order to achieve this, the group agreed that they would embed early partnership working in order to gain a deeper understanding and wider contextual knowledge, in order to reach into the wider community and strengthen credibility, enhance networking opportunities and shared practice, while ensuring initiatives have maximum impact.

The group consisted of:

- Internal partners – such as the Students' Union and Communications Team.
- External affiliated- involving the Medical Centre, validated colleges and Research institutes.
- External Public Sector – such as Local Council, Police, NHS and SARC
- External Commercial – including Transport companies, taxi companies and others involved within the night time economy.

It was recommended that each partnership should have a clear function, whether this be advocacy, joint campaigning, intercommunity action, bringing in expertise, providing training or acting as a referral route. UEA recognised that external agencies were already performing well in the area, so there was no need to duplicate efforts. They advised that Universities make good use of existing local and regional networks (i.e. Community Safety Partnership Groups) but also help partners to achieve their priorities.

Section 3: Improving Reporting, Recording and Support Processes and Training Students and Staff

Speakers: Geraldine Dufour, Head of Counselling and Sarah d'Ambrumenil, Head of Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, University of Cambridge.

The University of Cambridge has focused its use of catalyst funding on improving support and raising awareness of students and staff about procedures and help available. The University introduced the following initiatives:

- Students' Union led consent workshops.
- Consent Matters - compulsory online course.
- Good Lad workshops - for sports teams and societies.
- Bystander Intervention Initiative - piloted in a number of Colleges.
- Staff training on disclosure (in partnership with Rape Crisis Centre).
- University Sexual Harassment & Assault Advisor.

The 'Breaking the Silence' campaign was launched in October 2017 outlining the University's zero tolerance approach to harassment. In this session they also linked to their anonymous reporting tool, signpost to support (counselling), and policies and procedures for staff and students regarding what to do if an incident occurs. Step-by-step guidance is available to people who have recently been sexually assaulted, including what they should do if they want to report now, report later and how to ensure their personal safety. Guidance for staff on dealing with disclosures can be found on the webpages. A Sexual Harassment and Assault Advisor works within the counselling service, which links directly to local agencies.

The University has mechanisms for students and staff to report incidents both anonymously and formally. The anonymous tool is located on the webpages as stated previously. This is available to all staff, students and visitors to the university to register that an incident has taken place when they do not wish to report it formally. This allows the University to monitor the number of reports and yields useful data about why people do not wish to use formal procedures. It also enables them to monitor the effectiveness of their campaigns and identify risk areas. The anonymous reporting tool highlighted perceived barriers to reporting:

- 52% felt nothing would be done if they made a complaint
- 42% felt worried that they would be called a trouble maker
- 46% felt worried that the perpetrator would retaliate
- 46% felt there would be repercussions in their social circle

The data gathered also captures information about whether the incident was based on a particular characteristic (e.g. race, gender, and sexual orientation etc), where the incident took place and whether the perpetrator was a student, staff, known to the victim or a stranger. The University has implemented a Procedure for Handling Student Cases of Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. A number of key principles were agreed:

- If the complainant reports to the Police any investigation at the University is put on hold- the University is clear with the complainant and respondent about potential future police action.
- The specialist procedure is another option for a complainant- it does not prohibit the student from using the formal disciplinary procedure.
- The procedure does not make any findings or impose any sanctions- it allows for an investigation to take place and for actions to be proposed to both the complainant and respondent student.
- There is no requirement for the complainant and respondent to engage with the investigation- it will take place with or without engagement.
- In agreeing to proposed actions, the respondent does not have to admit or deny any wrongdoing.

The University has investigated a handful of cases using this procedure and have been able to identify two themes emerging: firstly, that reports are usually of incident that have taken place between two students in private who are in a relationship or known to each other; and secondly that it is not uncommon for one or both students involved to have ongoing mental health difficulties prior to the incident taking place. During the investigation, students are signposted to external organisations for support, such as Rape Crisis, Glebe House (for 'offender' counselling) or the rape investigation team/ Police.

Speakers: Claire Slater, Head of Student Support and Dr Kelly Prince, Serious Incident Case Officer, Keele University

Keele University has issued a statement outlining their commitment to providing wrap-around care and support for survivors by establishing a team of knowledgeable staff who can appropriately respond, support and refer students to external agencies. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Team was established, along with the role of Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO). Current members of staff volunteered to undertake this alongside their current roles. Comprehensive training was delivered by Lime Culture, in partnership with the local SARC, specialist counsellors and police. This model is now being replicated across the sector.

The SVLO provides:

- Adjustments and Support: emotional support, practical support, academic adjustments, accommodation options, financial support, equipment, security, parking.
- Immediate and Ongoing Care: Students work with one identified caseworker. Referral to counselling/ medical services, assessing self-care resources, safety planning, external referral to SARC, police etc.
- Assistance with reporting and complaints procedure- support in making informed decisions and understanding possible outcomes should the student choose to report formally to the University or Police.
- Provision of Information: up-to-date information in relation to the issue.
- Partnership working: Maintaining links with external partnerships to constantly monitor and improve service, agreeing referral pathways and facilitating access to

services accompanying students to initial meetings, paying for taxis, booking rooms on campus for external agencies.

- Maintaining statistics- annual data on disclosures, reports and outcomes.

The Serious Case Officer role is HEFCE funded and is responsible for carrying out investigations and managing student expectations.

Key investigative responsibilities:

- Taking initial statements
- Interviews
- Witness statements
- Social media
- Any other evidence
- Report based on evidence- non adversarial approach
- Training provided by Intersol global

The Case Officer will deal with accused students and provide guidance or both reporting and accused students. Their role is impartial. Both Keele University and the University of Cambridge advise that all staff who are involved in this process (including panels reviewing incidents) receive specialist training in the area, including risks of re-traumatisation.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET -STAFF

Research Project: New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate

Dear Staff member,

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The University of Northampton (UON) is preparing a major campus move - the Waterside Development. Whilst there are many advantages to this move, there are inevitable implications in terms of how students will access staff for more private discussions. This will inevitably impact how and when disclosures of experiences of abuse, harassment and violence may occur. In addition, the move to a city centre campus raises new concerns about ways of keeping students and staff safe, and managing the risk of interpersonal violence and exposure to crime. There is therefore a need to enhance and extend existing safeguarding policies and practices to ensure that we take into account the new context, and to provide specific guidance for staff and students about particular forms of disclosure. The project's aim is to build a strong, collective understanding of the importance of disclosure and responses to disclosure, between academic staff, administration and management, and the student union and other student organisations.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you agree to take part in the study, but then decide to withdraw, then that is fine. Simply tell the researcher (we will provide researcher's detail) and we will take your name off our list. During and after the focus groups, it will not be possible for participants to withdraw their data, and the participants will be reminded beforehand that due to the nature of the group discussion, once the focus group has been completed, data cannot be withdrawn.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be asked to participate in a focus group. Each focus group will consist of staff members at the University of Northampton who will be asked to discuss various issues such as their views and opinions about the scale, nature and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime in the University of Northampton campuses, their own representations of the above types of behavior and their recommendations for effective ways to disclosures. You can expect the group to be approximately 8-10 people and it will take around an hour and half. A qualified researcher of the project team, will lead the discussion in each focus group and will guide you through the various issues we want to explore. There are no right or wrong answers in a discussion of this kind – we are simply interested in your opinions. The focus groups will be arranged at a convenient time and place for the people involved. We are happy to run them during the day or early evening, depending on people's preferences.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? (where appropriate)

The issues which will be discussed could be of a sensitive nature and may cause discomfort or distress to you. However, the aim of the project is **NOT** to discuss individual instances of sexual violence or/hate crime and therefore this will not be the aim of the questions asked in the focus groups. However, discussions relating to these issues may be a trigger for people who have experienced such violence in the past. Therefore, focus group moderators will make you aware of the support mechanisms which would be offered to you, if needed, in the form of Northampton Rape Crisis and Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council as well as on campus support services.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The project will enable a clearer pathway of policy-led support for students who disclose experiences of violence/hate crime to staff, or to peers. This will provide a robust safety net in which student safeguarding will be better supported, ensuring an appropriate response from the university community to student disclosures. The work will lead to a clear, shared statement about what harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence entails, and a shared safeguarding procedure, reflecting legal guidance, statutory obligations and student values. The development of existing and new policies will give students accessible and clear reporting procedures for when this type of behaviour occurs and will ensure that staff have been appropriately trained to sensitively respond to such disclosures.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential?

Any data you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998. The focus groups will be tape-recorded and transcribed. Participants in the focus group will not be identified and the data will be anonymised. It is unlikely that participants will be recognised via the data due to the large numbers of staff and students at the institution. Any references to specific people or incidents will also be anonymised. We will also not name you or other people in any of our reports or publications. In addition, all members of the focus group will be asked to respect the confidentiality of their fellow participants. In our reports and publications, we will use quotes from the focus groups to help illustrate the points that are being made. Some of these quotes may come from you. We will not use any quotes that might reveal who you are or the identity of other people. All tape recordings will be destroyed once transcripts have been made and checked. The data which has been collected and transcriptions will be saved in password protected folders on the University systems. Data will be destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 after the end of the research .

What will happen to the results of the research study?

We will tape-record each focus group. The recordings will then be transcribed. Our analysis will involve identifying common patterns in what people have said. Once we have done this, we intend to produce a short report on the findings that we will submit to our funders. We will also send you a copy of the short report. We also intend to publish the findings of our study to relevant peer-reviewed academic journals.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). As part of the project we are working with Northampton Rape Crisis, Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council and the University of Northampton's Student Union.

Research team: Dr Melanie Crofts (Project Leader), Dr Kimberley Hill, Dr Evangelia Prokopiou, Professor Jane Callaghan and Sarah Armstrong-Hallam.

Who has approved this study?

This research has been approved by the FBL Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you are interested in participating in the focus group or if you have any questions, please contact xxxxx (Researcher's email/phone number will be provided). You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact Marcella Daye, Chair of the FBL REC who reviewed the project (email: Marcella.Daye@northampton.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.

September 1st 2017

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - STUDENTS

Research Project: New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate

Dear student,

You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a student at The University of Northampton. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The University of Northampton (UON) is preparing a major campus move - the Waterside Development. Whilst there are many advantages to this move, there are inevitable implications in terms of how students will access staff for more private discussions. This will inevitably impact how and when disclosures of experiences of abuse, harassment and violence may occur. In addition, the move to a city centre campus raises new concerns about ways of keeping students and staff safe, and managing the risk of interpersonal violence and exposure to crime. There is therefore a need to enhance and extend existing safeguarding policies and practices to ensure that we take into account the new context, and to provide specific guidance for staff and students about particular forms of disclosure. The aim of this study is to understand your perceptions of campus safety and issues related to consent, sexual violence and hate, as well as your knowledge and understanding of disclosure and responses to disclosure, between academic staff, administration and management, and the student union and other student organisations.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be asked to participate in a focus group, which consists of a structured discussion with other students around this topic. Each focus group will consist of students at the University of Northampton who will be asked to discuss various issues such as their views and opinions about the scale, nature and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime in the University of Northampton campuses, their own representations of the above types of behaviour and their recommendations for effective ways to disclosures. You can expect the group to be approximately 8-10 people and it will take around an hour and half. A qualified researcher of the project team, will lead the discussion in each focus group and will guide you through the various issues we want to explore. There are no right or wrong answers in a discussion of this kind – we are simply interested in your opinions. The focus groups will be arranged at a convenient time and place for the people involved. We are happy to run them during the day or early evening, depending on people's preferences.

After the focus group discussion has taken place, you will be asked to produce a map of what you think a safe new campus should look like. Maps of the new Waterside campus may be provided to help you with this process. Once again, there are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to be good at drawing to complete this task. This should also take no longer than 45 minutes.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you agree to take part in the study, but then decide to withdraw, then that is fine. Simply tell the researcher (we will provide

researcher's detail) and we will take your name off our list. During and after the focus groups, it will not be possible for participants to withdraw their data, and the participants will be reminded beforehand that due to the nature of the group discussion, once the focus group has been completed, data cannot be withdrawn.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? (where appropriate)

The issues which will be discussed could be of a sensitive nature and may cause discomfort or distress to you. However, the aim of the project is **NOT** to discuss individual instances of sexual violence or/hate crime and therefore this will not be the aim of the questions asked in the focus groups. However, you might find that discussions relating to these issues are a trigger for people who have experienced such violence in the past and that you wish not to take part. Therefore, focus group moderators will make you aware of the support mechanisms which would be offered to you, if needed, in the form of Northampton Rape Crisis and Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council as well as on campus support services.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The project will enable a clearer pathway of policy-led support for students who disclose experiences of violence/hate crime to staff, or to peers and how staff deal with these disclosures. This will provide a robust safety net in which student safeguarding will be better supported, ensuring an appropriate response from the university community to student disclosures. The work will lead to a clear, shared statement about what harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence entails, and a shared safeguarding procedure, reflecting legal guidance, statutory obligations and student values. The development of existing and new policies will give students and staff accessible and clear reporting procedures for when this type of behaviour occurs and will ensure that staff have been appropriately trained to sensitively respond to such disclosures.

Will my information in this study be kept confidential?

Any data you provide will be treated in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998. The focus groups will be tape-recorded and transcribed. Participants in the focus group will not be identified and the data will be fully anonymised. We will endeavour to ensure that participants of the focus groups will not be identifiable, but confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed in focus group research. Any references to specific people or incidents will also be fully anonymised. We will also not name you or other people in any of our reports or publications. In addition, all members of the focus group will be asked to respect the confidentiality of their fellow participants. In our reports and publications, we will use quotes from the focus groups to help illustrate the points that are being made. Some of these quotes may come from you. We will not use any quotes that might reveal who you are or the identity of other people. All tape recordings will be destroyed once transcripts have been made and checked. The data which has been collected and transcriptions will be saved in password protected folders on the University systems. Data will be destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 after the end of the research.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

We will tape-record each focus group and these recordings will then be transcribed for analysis. Our analysis will involve identifying common patterns in what people have said. Once we have done this, we intend to produce a short report on the findings that we will submit to our funders. We will also send you a copy of the short report if you wish. We also intend to publish the findings of our study to relevant peer-reviewed academic journals. Anonymised quotes, pictures and findings may be used in reports, conferences, publications, training manuals and other research dissemination.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). As part of the project we are working with Northampton Rape Crisis, Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council and the University of Northampton's Student Union.

Research team:

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Who has approved this study?

This research has been approved by the FBL Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you are interested in participating in the focus group or if you have any questions, please contact any of the researchers above by email. You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

STAGE 2 OF RESEARCH - Photovoice

We are asking all participants who took part in this research if they would be interested in taking part in Stage 2. Participation in the next stage of research is **entirely optional**.

This will involve you using your own portable image capturing device (phone/ camera/ tablet) to take photographs of the campus space. If you do not have an image capturing device you will be provided with a disposable camera. You will then take part in a second focus group session with other students to discuss the photographs you have taken.

You will be given full guidance during this second stage of research, in terms of the legal and other obligations of taking photographs in public spaces. All photographs will be fully de-identified before the focus groups are conducted. During this session, your responses will be recorded and you will work with other students to discuss the photographs you have taken.

If you would like to **take part** in this stage of research, please indicate this on your Consent Form by **ticking the appropriate box**.

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact Marcella Daye, Chair of the FBL REC who reviewed the project (email: Marcella.Daye@northampton.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.

September 1st 2017

University of Northampton - Faculty of Business and Law

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

PROJECT TITLE: New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate

Please tick or initial

- ❖ I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me and/or I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records.
- ❖ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that if I decide at any time before the research data collection that I no longer wish to participate in the focus group, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. I understand that due to the nature of the focus group discussion that it may not be possible to withdraw my data during or after taking part.
- ❖ I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- ❖ I consent for my participation to be audio-recorded and for the use of anonymised quotes or photographs taken by me may be used in reports, publications, conferences, training manuals and other outputs from this research. If I would like to receive a copy of the final report, I will email the lead investigator.
- ❖ I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of myself or any individual in the reports on the project by the researchers. I also agree to adhere to focus group conduct and not disclose information from others. However, I understand that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed in focus group research.
- ❖ I confirm that the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks of the proposed research have been carefully explained to me by the researcher.
- ❖ I consent to my information being anonymously stored for use in future research.

Participant's Statement: I [ADD NAME] _____ agree that

The research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed:

Date: _____

*****Consent for Stage 2 of Research (OPTIONAL):**

- ❖ I wish to participate in Stage 2 of this research, which includes taking photographs of on-campus spaces and engaging in a second focus group with others.

University of Northampton - Faculty of Business and Law

CONSENT FORM FOR STAFF

PROJECT TITLE: New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate

Please tick or initial

- ❖ I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me and/or I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records.
- ❖ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that if I decide at any time before the research data collection that I no longer wish to participate in the focus group, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. I understand that due to the nature of the focus group discussion that it may not be possible to withdraw my data during or after taking part.
- ❖ I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- ❖ I consent for my participation to be audio-recorded and for the use of anonymised quotes or photographs taken by me may be used in reports, publications, conferences, training manuals and other outputs from this research. If I would like to receive a copy of the final report, I will email the lead investigator.
- ❖ I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of myself or any individual in the reports on the project by the researchers. I also agree to adhere to focus group conduct and not disclose information from others. However, I understand that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed in focus group research.
- ❖ I confirm that the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks of the proposed research have been carefully explained to me by the researcher.
- ❖ I consent to my information being anonymously stored for use in future research.

Participant's Statement: I [ADD NAME] _____ agree that

The research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed:

Date: _____

Student Focus Group Interview Schedule

Task 1:

In this focus group you will discuss your views and opinions about the scale, nature and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime in the University of Northampton campuses. You will also be asked to discuss your own representations of the above types of behaviour and recommend effective ways to disclosures.

[Establishing a bit of rapport: welcome them, asking about why they volunteered for the research etc]

Part 1 – Questions exploring student perceptions of campus spaces and the new campus context

1. This place comprises your campus space; how do you feel about the setting of the campus generally? (Prompts: how do you feel living/ studying here?)
2. What does a safe campus means to you? Do you feel that this campus is a safe space? (Prompts: What makes it safe? What makes it less safe? Which areas do feel most safe/ unsafe within? What time of day do you feel safest/ unsafe?)
3. Are you aware where the new campus will be located? What are the challenges of this new campus context? How do you imagine the new campus environment?
4. Will you feel safe in the new campus? How safe do you feel in Northampton town center generally? How does this compare to the existing campus in terms of accessing staff and other resources? (Prompts: What time of day do you feel safest in town? How do you think you will access staff and support services in the new campus?)

Part 2- Questions exploring the knowledge of consent, harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime, as well as existing reporting practices

Consent and Sexual Violence:

1. What does consent mean to you? (Prompts: in the context of consent, what does 'yes' mean to you? What does 'no' mean to you? What does silence mean? Where did you learn about consent (e.g. school etc.))
2. How do you think consent is perceived by the wider society? By your friends and peers? What do you think are the long-term consequences of non-consensual advances/contact?
3. Are you aware of what constitutes a sexual offence or what amounts to sexual violence? How do you feel about these behaviours?
4. When you hear the word sexual violence who do you imagine as the victim and who the perpetrator? (Prompts: do you think certain myths exist around these areas? Why? How can we prevent them?)
5. Do you think sexual violence occurs in the campuses of the University of Northampton?

Hate Crime and Harassment:

1. Do you know what constitutes a hate crime, or what amounts to harassment? (Prompt: How did you learn this (e.g. school/ peers etc.))
2. Do you think hate crime occurs in the campuses of the University of Northampton? (Prompt: Could you please tell me who you think could be a victim of hate crime on campus and why?)

3. If you ever felt threatened by harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence or hate crime where would be the first place you would go? (Prompt: why/ why not? Where would you go if these services were unavailable? Who would you confide in? Why/ why not?)

Report and Support:

1. If a friend or fellow student told you they had been a victim of sexual violence on campus what would you do? Where would you go? What would you say? How would you feel?
2. What type of incidents would you report? (Prompt: would this be different for sexual violence, harassment and hate crimes?)
3. Are you aware of what support is provided via the University with regards to sexual violence? Are support services and staff generally accessible? Are you aware of what support is provided via external organisations?

Part 3- Recommendations

1. Do you think the University culture currently encourages disclosure? What could be in place to provide better support mechanisms? Or to increase awareness about such offences and how to prevent/report them (for example, awareness campaigns etc.)?
2. What do you think we need as a University community to do in order to prevent harassment, sexual violence and hate violence and create safe spaces at the new Waterside campus?
3. You had the chance in the last hour and a half to talk about safeguarding students from violence and hate in the University context. Has this changed how you look at them? If yes, how?

Task 2:

After the focus group discussion has taken place, you will be asked to produce a map of what you think a safe new campus should look like. Maps of the new Waterside campus may be provided to help you with this process. Once again, there are no right or wrong answers and you do not have to be good at drawing to complete this task.

Appendix 7 – Staff Interview Schedule

Staff Focus Group Interview Schedule

Task 1: In this focus group you will discuss your views and opinions about the scale, nature and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime in the University of Northampton campuses. You will also be asked to discuss your own representations of the above types of behaviour and recommend effective ways to disclosures.

[Establishing a bit of rapport: welcome them, asking about why they volunteered for the research...]

Part 1- Questions exploring staff representations of harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime and safe spaces

1. This place comprises your professional space; how do you feel working in here? How do you feel about the setting of the campus?
2. What does a safe campus means to you? Do you feel that this campus is a safe space? (prompt: What makes it safe? What makes it less safe?)
3. What are the challenges of the new campus context? How do you imagine the new campus environment? Will you feel safe in the new campus? (prompts: How do you think you will be accessed by the students in the new campus)
4. Have you ever witnessed harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime? How do you feel about these types of behavior? Do you think that they occur in the campuses of the University of Northampton?

Part 2- Questions exploring the scale, nature, and impact of existing practices of reporting harassment, sexual abuse, sexual violence and hate crime

5. Could you recall of any experiences of disclosure you had at the University of Northampton and talk about the following: How was the disclosure set up on that occasions? Would you please describe this process to me? (how they have approached you? what did you say? How did you feel? Would you have liked to have done anything differently? did you feel you gave the appropriate information and support?)

[if they answer no to the above question: ask them why they think they never had such an experience? Do they feel they are accessible to students? Do they feel the University culture encourage disclosure? Then ask them to imagine.....Imagine that a student told you that she has been the victim of sexual violence in campus. What would you do? What would you say? How would you feel? how you could respond effectively to the disclosure?]

6. If you are preparing a new member of staff for a disclosure session what three pieces of advice would you give to help with that experience?

Part 3- Recommendations

7. What would you expect the University to provide to help with effective disclosures in campus? (help the staff, the students, facilitate the process)
8. What would you need from training that could make you feel supported and effective to respond to disclosures?
9. What do you think we need as a University community to do in order to prevent harassment, sexual violence and hate violence and create safe spaces?
10. You had the chance in the last hour and a half to talk about safeguarding students from violence and hate in the University context. Has this changed how you look at them? If yes, how?

Appendix 8 – Project Briefing Note

Subject: Sexual violence, harassment and hate crime on campus

Briefer: HEFCE New Spaces Project Team, Student Services

Background: Sexual violence, harassment and hate crime is prevalent within HE, including at The University of Northampton (UoN).

Evidence: Police data has recorded the following offences on both campuses -
March 2017 – March 2018

9 Recorded Offences:

6 Sexual Offences Other – these offences include, Sexual Assault and Voyeurism

2 Stalking/Harassment

1 Rape

March 2016 – March 2017

4 Recorded Offences:

1 Sexual Offence Other

1 Stalking/Harassment

2 Rape

March 2015 – March 2016

2 Recorded Offences:

1 Sexual Offence Other

1 Stalking/Harassment

Under-reporting is common, with estimates suggesting only 20% of actual cases are recorded, so actual likelihood is much higher.

Research conducted during UoN's 2016 'I Heart Consent' initiative (N = 171) suggested:

25.73% of students experienced unwelcome sexual advances (12.28% directed at others)

25.15% sexual comments (32.75% directed at others)

10.53% verbal harassment (23.39% directed at others)

8.77% group intimidation (16.37% directed at others)

45.03% had not experienced sexual violence, harassment or hate crime

64.91% did not know where to seek advice, but many approached a PAT/ trusted tutor.

Most students would not report these incidences due to confidence issues, safety concerns, not being believed, limited faith in existing UoN reporting mechanisms. Findings suggested consent is poorly understood by students, particularly when alcohol and the law is involved. 'I Heart Consent' week is valued by students as changes the normative culture of consent within HE, increases knowledge and provides vital information about support services.

Action Taken: Funding awarded by HEFCE for New Spaces Project.

Student-led, cross-disciplinary project focused on understanding student and staff perceptions of sexual violence, harassment and hate crime through in-depth focus groups, interviews and visual methods. Also focused on perceptions of existing campus space and new Waterside campus, knowledge of existing policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms.

Recommendations:

Final report and recommendations currently being compiled. Key issues raised by students and staff around: lack of knowledge of, or no reporting mechanisms for these issues; no visible action/ identity taken by UoN to address issues; concerns with location, physical properties of new Waterside campus and existing campus safety issues; prevalence of incidences within county; senior management staff unaware, as often dealt with by student-facing staff and students (e.g. Faculty Reps, SU bar staff); need for policies and procedures to include staff-student and staff-staff conduct.

Key Issues and Challenges:

Working Group (See Appendix 1 for Terms of Reference) proposed for implementing HEFCE project recommendations proposed to address these crucial issues, enhance partnership working, recording of incidences and ensure that UoN is focused on addressing these issues, as many HEIs are. UoN does not see need for this group at this time.

The [UoN Student Code of Conduct](#) does not list sexual violence as an unacceptable behaviour and does not include a definition of sexual misconduct, therefore the University's stance and commitment to tackling sexual misconduct is unclear.

Work required by Student Services and other teams to ensure that disclosures of sexual violence are handled sensitively and efficiently. This may include the development and implementation of processes that pay particular attention to safeguarding, informing students of their reporting options (i.e. anonymous reporting, internally via University mechanisms or externally to the police or local Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC)), academic interventions/ support and ongoing wellbeing support. Any development in this area will need to be clearly communicated University-wide so that all staff members are aware of how to refer and signpost students reporting sexual violence to appropriate support. Internal support required here – recommendations to apply for Chancellor's Fund/ Changemaker money to support a student in helping to implement. All processes need to be tied up across the university and across teams.

Guidance from the Mental Health Team and external agencies is required (Northampton Police, Northampton Rape Crisis, Serenity) to facilitate appropriate referrals, inform best practice and provide training to front line staff.

Longevity and support of 'I Heart Consent' week, particularly as gaining momentum and international interest from other HEIs. Despite initial support, UoN does not have resources to run this centrally. Support for existing staff involved in week and potential role for SU and new Welfare Officer. Hashtag, logo, support from across university in promoting and getting involved in week.

Guidance through staff training and teaching scholarship (e.g. PAT training, especially with new PAT systems).

Distribution of 'I Heart Consent' video and construction of other videos and clear UoN identity through marketing/ website/ SU events and premises around these issues

Longevity of the work around these issues following completion of project in July.

Terms of Reference for the Gender-based Violence Working Group



The Gender-based Violence Working Group (“the Working Group”) has a lead role in implementing a University-wide policy and referral process to respond to and support students and staff reporting gender based violence, hate, harassment and related incidences. The group will consider current policies in light of the [Universities UK’s ‘Changing the Culture’ Taskforce](#) and recommendation from the HEFCE funded “New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate” project. The group will comprise of both staff (academic and professional services) and student representatives from across the University.

Glossary of Terms:

Gender-based Violence: Violence that is directed against a person based on their gender.

Gender-based Hate: The term 'hate incident' can be used to describe a range of behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's gender.

Gender-based Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a person’s gender which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.

Sexual Misconduct: Any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. Often this will involve an abuse of power and trust.

Equality Analysis: A way of considering the effect of policies, actions or services on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.

Vulnerable Individuals: Those who are or may be in need of support due to mental health issues or may be unable to take care of or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation or may pose a risk to others.

The membership of the Group shall be constituted as follows:

A representative from each Faculty and identified Professional Services Departments should attend meetings and should act as a conduit between the Group and the Faculty or Department. Representatives from appropriate external agencies will be invited to attend meetings in an

advisory capacity. The Chair shall be the Deputy Director of SAS and Director of HR on a yearly rotational basis.

Membership shall be comprised of:

Chair: Deputy Director of SAS/Director of HR

Representatives from each Faculty/Department:

UMT Member

Deputy Dean/Student Experience Officer

Kimberley Hill- or another HEFCE 'New Spaces' Project Advisor

Human Resources

Head of Student Services

Counselling and Mental Health Team

Residential Life

Student Matters Office

Student Support Officer

UCU

Unison

Health, Safety & Environment Manager

Student Union President

Student Voice Manager

Welfare Officer (SU)

Women's Officer (SU)

LGBTQ Officer (SU)

Marketing & PR

External membership:

Rape Crisis Northamptonshire

Serenity

Northamptonshire Police

Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council

VOICE

Objectives:

- To influence a change in culture and to implement preventative measures on campus.
- To identify best practice in responding to disclosures across the University sector and obtain advice and recommendations from external agencies (Police, SARC, Rape Crisis, NREC, VOICE) in the area of gender-based violence, hate and harassment.

- To work with services and academic faculties in the University and external partners to promote and develop support systems and services for students, staff and other users reporting gender based violence, hate and harassment and sexual misconduct.
- To develop and monitor the University policies and procedures for students and staff disclosures of gender based violence, hate and harassment and sexual misconduct and the application of current policies and procedures (e.g. Bullying and Harassment Policy, Safeguarding Policy).
- To keep any policy amendments under review, including undertaking an Equality Analysis on any new policy or procedure.
- To develop, implement and monitor (e.g. number, nature, processing and outcome) an institution-wide confidential process for reporting incidents of gender based violence, hate and harassment and sexual misconduct and to encourage reporting.
- To embed support and identify appropriate referral routes for all students and staff reporting gender based violence, hate and harassment and sexual misconduct.
- To report and make recommendations regularly to the Student Experience Committee, Inclusive Student Experience Group and Staff Equality Forum and to report to other University groups and committees as appropriate.

Mode of Operation:

- The Group shall meet 6 times a year on a bi-termly basis.

The Group reports to:

- The Student Experience Committee
- Inclusive Student Experience Group
- Staff Equality Forum

Please cite as:

Crofts, M., Hill, K.M., Prokopiou, E., Barrick, R., Callaghan, J., & Armstrong-Hallam, S. (2018). *New Spaces: Safeguarding Students from Violence and Hate*. Report produced for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) [September 2018].