

SCP005- Sexual Harassment Policy

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This Council Notes

The NUS Hidden Marks campaign found that:

- 68% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment while at university or college
- 16% of respondents experienced unwanted kissing, touching or molesting during their time as a student
- The perpetrators were usually students in most categories (except physical violence)
- Just 4% of female students who had been seriously sexually assaulted had reported it to their university. And only 10% told the police.
- Half of those who didn't report the incident said it was because they felt embarrassed or ashamed, while 43% said they thought they would be blamed for it

The Union's recent research found some students at the University of Northampton have experienced forms of sexual harassment.

This Council Believes

1. There is no legal definition of sexual harassment. This is because a range of different laws cover different aspects of sexual harassment. A full explanation of the law relating to sexual harassment can be read in the 'law' section of the Hidden Marks website – www.hiddenmarks.org.uk.
2. Sexual Harassment can be defined as:
 - For the purposes of the Hidden Marks report, the NUS drew up a definition of sexual harassment, using meanings used by a range of parties. This has been accepted by experts to be an appropriate definition and includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviour
 - Sexual comments that make you feel uncomfortable (including verbally, over the Internet or via text message)
 - Wolf whistling, catcalling or making sexual noises
 - Questions about your sex or romantic life when it's clearly none of the questioner's business
 - Someone exposing their sexual organs to you when you didn't agree
 - Groping, pinching or smacking your body, such as your bottom or breasts, when you didn't agree
 - Someone lifting up your skirt or top in public without your consent
3. The following behaviours are unacceptable:
 - Unwanted sexual comments, including comments about someone's body or private life
 - Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendoes, and offensive gestures
 - Wolf whistling, catcalling or offensive sexual noises
 - Groping, pinching or smacking someone's body
 - Moving or grabbing someone's clothes without agreement
 - Exposure of sexual organs without consent
4. Objectification and stereotyping of any person does lead to a culture of sexual harassment

5. The levels of reported harassment, partially that of sexual harassment severely under-represents the true number of incidents due to normalisation of harassment, embarrassment of the individual and fear of repercussions.
6. We should be a leading organisation on fighting sexual harassment by building upon current policies referring to harassment.
7. The students' union has a core value to be inclusive which we can contribute to by striving to eliminate harassment and sexist behaviours.
8. That this policy should be inclusive of all students and not just limited to women.

This Council Resolves

1. To take a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment in the union in accordance to the above definition of sexual harassment, ensuring all staff are aware and confident in both the policy and implementation.
2. To promote the union's stance on sexual harassment through a publicity campaign.
3. To work with the University to ensure that it always has an appropriate and credible sexual harassment policy with consideration being made to the content of the hidden marks report.
4. To maintain a professional and credible complaints procedure in the union.
5. See SCP005-Appendix 1 for full policy

SCP005- Appendix 1 (Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure)

Policy Statement

The Students' Union should be a safe space for students to relax and unwind along with fellow students and friends. The Students' Union has a duty to provide this safe space for all students to feel welcoming and included and to provide the additional support a student may require. The Students' Union identifies that all individuals that encompass its diverse membership deserve to be treated as equally and as well as one another.

Our priority in all of our venues is and always will be the safety and experience of our members, staff and visitors, which we believe sets us apart from other venues. We haven't implemented this policy because there are particular problems around these issues in our venues, but because culturally there are behaviours and trends we can no longer ignore, and will always strive to continue to develop the safety of our venues.

The Students' Union requires all members to comply with the following policy and procedure.

Background

A report was conducted in January 2017 looking into sexual harassment as an issue in Northampton and further reaching areas.

Across the UK, 65% of women and 35% of men reported as being abused. In London, 45% of women aged between 18-34 years old were abused (Gov, 2015). Looking at Northampton data, sexual abuse is reported monthly, usually it takes place in public places but non-crowded as for example parks. In 2014/2015 it was third worst town/city nationally for rape, with 51 in 100,000 people, showing a 71% increase. The number in 2016 shows a two-fold increase from 2011 in victims of sexual abuse (Jones, 2016)

Being asked about additional comments, people said that they would like more security around the unit and some control over social media as it is widely used for harassment. Some respondents saw it as an assault that comes to hurt both women and men. Zero tolerance behavioural change need to be implied (non-acceptance of antisocial behaviour, typically by strict and uncompromising application of the law). Education and extra training would be desirable. Also, this is a complex issue that needs to be developed in a wider range of equation and addressed on a larger scale, national or either international.

Definitions

Sexual Harassment is considered as any of the following

- Unwanted sexual comments, including comments about someone's body or private life
- Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendoes, and offensive gestures
- Wolf whistling, catcalling or offensive sexual noises
- Groping, pinching or smacking someone's body
- Moving or grabbing someone's clothes without agreement
- Exposure of sexual organs without consent
- Entering the opposite sex's toilet

Roles and Responsibilities

- Enterprise manager to oversee any and all complaints made to Union staff members or through the designated email address (su.advice@northampton.ac.uk)
- All staff to prioritise students coming to them with sexual harassment complaints and to train the student staff in a similar manner.
- Enterprise manager to conduct an investigation into alleged sexual harassment complaints and to pass onto police services when appropriate.
- All staff to make sure an appropriate level of anonymity and professionalism is employed when dealing with complaints and issues of this nature
- Senior managers to make sure staff members are trained appropriately and regularly to ensure the correct support is provided to students

Aims

- To ensure all students have an enjoyable and positive experience in all of our venues without being objectivised or harassed.
- That the Students Union has a clear message that such behaviours are not appropriate, not only in our venues but in modern society
- To instil long term behavioural change amongst students of the University through a series of promotions and marketing campaigns based around student safety and safe drinking habits.
- A healthy relationship between the Students Union and local support services, eg. Northampton Rape Crisis.

Who the Policy applies to

- All University of Northampton Students
- Visitors to the University of Northampton Students Union venues
- Union staff members when on campus and seeing students in a University Environment

Breaches of Policy

- All breaches of policy will be investigated by the Enterprise manager of UNSU, maintaining anonymity where required.
- The student or community member that the report is accusing can be banned from attending SU events and venues until the completion of the investigation if the enterprise manager decides that is an appropriate action
- If the party is found guilty then they can be punished in line with the severity of their offence. This can range from a simple discussion with the Enterprise manager to a ban from all SU venues, all UNSU activities (sports, societies and volunteering projects) and UNSU branded events
- If the case is severe enough, then the Enterprise manager will refer it to the police for further investigation.
- Any student reporting a complaint will be referred to Student Services and to other services such as Northampton Rape Crisis for any additional support required.