

Sexual Violence and Harassment, Prevention & Response Committee Updates Bulletin

08

APRIL 2026



Photo from the Reclaim the River event on 16 April 2026, featuring Active* Champions, the SVHPR team, the Active* Consent team, staff, students and dogs supporting the event.

BULLETIN UPDATES:

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 - a. Institutional Response Readiness
 - b. Education Updates
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3. Active* Champions
 - a. Reclaim the River
 - b. Outreach
 - c. Celebrations
 - d. Recruiting AY26/27
4. ToolIntoYou Guest Visit,
5. GO PURPLE DAY
6. Further Training

SUPPORTS

[A list of supports available to staff & students can be accessed here.](#)

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

Contact Us

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Sexual Violence and Harassment,
Prevention & Response Team

Institutional Response Readiness

The Committee discussed a recent incident reported at another Irish university to assess institutional preparedness. A subgroup supported the development of an all-staff communication providing clear guidance on responding to such incidents, which was progressed via senior management.

An all-staff and student email from the President was subsequently issued. The message reaffirmed the University's commitment to preventing and responding to sexual violence and harassment, including intimate image abuse. It noted that such behaviour is a criminal offence under Coco's Law and a breach of University policy.

Staff and students were reminded not to forward harmful content and to report incidents to IT Services. A range of confidential reporting options and support services is available.

Creating a safe and respectful university environment is a shared responsibility, and staff are encouraged to complete training on trauma-informed responses.

Education Updates Transition to Practice / Pre Placement Training

The SVHPR team continues to deliver tailored training sessions for medical, health, and placement-based students. Sessions range from short pre-placement briefings (10–15 minutes) for Erasmus and placement students, to more in-depth 1- and 2-hour workshops for Medical students.

Training covers key areas including awareness of sexual violence and harassment, consent and digital intimacy, relevant legislation, recognising and responding to disclosures, and signposting to University and national support services.

Sessions also address professional responsibilities on placement and promote respectful and safe practice. Students are reminded that further specialist training is required for managing disclosures and safeguarding responsibilities.



To book a session or learn more, please contact: rebecca.connolly@universityofgalway.ie

Student Feedback

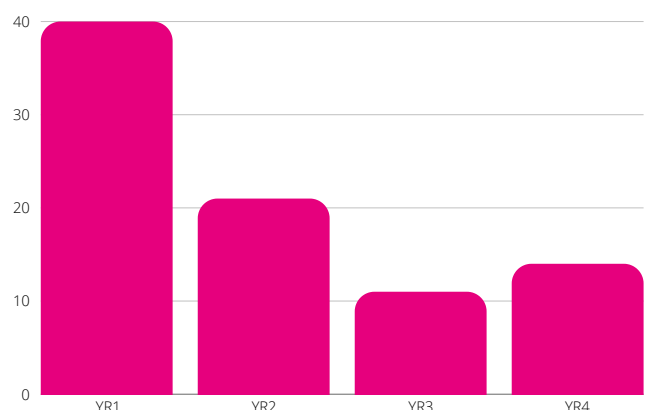
Was there any topic or information that you found most useful/interesting during the session?

- Information on SATU's and also the locations of services.
- How to react and respond when a client or peer discloses information

Is there anything else you would like to comment on?

- For this session to be delivered earlier. We are close to graduating and finding out how the college can support us after being here near to 4 years
- Info could be given to first years and then fourth years again

If you could choose, when should this information session be given? [#86 responses]



National Surveys / Frameworks

The revised national framework (HEA) was reviewed.

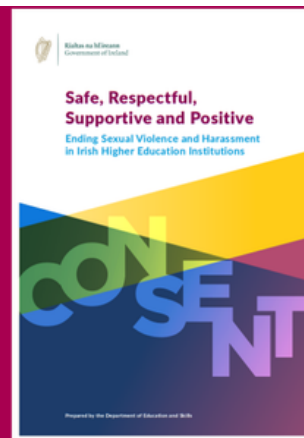
Key updates include:

- Whole-institution approach
- Expanded scope (staff and students)
- Increased leadership accountability
- Stronger reporting and evaluation requirements
- Emphasis on trauma-informed, survivor-centred practice

Committee feedback highlighted:

- Concerns regarding reduced ambition and missing elements (e.g. image-based abuse)
- Significant responsibility placed on institutions
- Opportunity for the University to exceed minimum standards
- Need for adequate resources and senior leadership support

A consolidated institutional response was submitted.



Current National Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions: Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive – Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions Available here

Cyber-located Sexual Violence in Ireland— Preliminary Results of Women’s Experiences

Lorraine Hayman, Centre for Global Women’s Studies, University of Galway, February 2026.

This doctoral research, funded by Research Ireland, Post-Graduate Scholarship, examines how women living in Ireland experience Cyber-located Sexual Violence (CLSV), including the types, the harms it results in, and how they respond. This overview document presents the findings from a quantitative questionnaire conducted in October 2023 to which 281 women who had experienced CLSV responded.

[Explore the research findings here.](#)

LORRAINE HAYMAN, CENTRE FOR GLOBAL WOMEN’S STUDIES
University of Galway, February 2026

Cyber-located Sexual Violence in Ireland— Preliminary Results of Women’s Experiences

Overview

This doctoral research, funded by Research Ireland, Post-Graduate Scholarship, examines how women living in Ireland experience Cyber-located Sexual Violence (CLSV), including the types, the harms it results in, and how they respond. This overview document presents the findings from a quantitative questionnaire conducted in October 2023 to which 281 women who had experienced CLSV responded.

The Types of CLSV

CLSV is multimodal, existing across text-based, image-based, and video/voice-note forms.

Text-based: 64% experienced someone sending them unwanted sexually explicit comments, threats, and requests; primarily experienced by direct message (DM) on social media by 78% of the women who reported this text-based behaviour.

Image-based: 17% reported someone threatening that if they do not send a private intimate image to another person, there will be a negative consequence for not complying referred to as sextortion; 56% reported someone creating a private, intimate image without consent, and 11% reported someone sharing a private, intimate image without consent.

Cyberflashing: 87% of those aged 18-24 experienced cyberflashing by DMs on social media. 64% aged 25-34, 40% aged 35-44, and 33% aged 45-54 (χ² (3, n = 281) = 56.07, p < .001, Cramer’s V = .447).

Video/voice-note unwanted sexualised comments, threats, and requests: 52% of those aged 18-24 experienced it, 54% aged 25-34, 18% aged 35-44, and 17% aged 45-54 (χ² (3, n = 281) = 21.17, p < .001, Cramer’s V = .274).

Repeated behaviours: 43% repeatedly received unwanted sexual comments, threats, and requests by DMs on social media, 40% experienced repeated cyberflashing by DMs on social media, and 20% experienced repeated video and voice note abuse by DMs on social media.

The Harms of CLSV

CLSV harms some women in ways that damage their sense of self and reflects a fracture of ‘before CLSV’ and ‘after CLSV’, which speaks to CLSV being understood and experienced as embodied sexual violence.

Interpersonal harm: 44% of the women reported that they feel more negative about their body and appearance because of CLSV, suggesting that experiencing CLSV has damaged they way they think about, and likely speak to, themselves. Also, 42% of the women said ‘CLSV had a negative impact’ on their mental health, 20% blame themselves, and 18% think others blame them for being targeted. Harm to mental health was particularly reported by the women who experienced image-based CLSV.

Sexual & Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response: A Delphi Survey of knowledge and skills concerning Bystander Intervention, Consent, and Disclosure Response for Higher Education staff.

University of Galway, in partnership with several higher education institutions, Atlantic Technological University, Mary Immaculate College, Maynooth University, Technological University Dublin, and University of Limerick, is leading a Delphi Survey to identify the key knowledge and skills staff need in Bystander Intervention, Consent, and Disclosure Response.

This research, aligned with priorities set by the Higher Education Authority, brings together expert insights to inform the development of effective staff training and support resources.

The findings will contribute to a shared model for empowering staff to play an active role in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence across the sector.





MEAS

MEAS is a Gender Based Violence (GBV) Prevention leadership programme for men in Higher Education in Ireland who want to make a real, practical difference.

The MEAS project is a collaboration between 10 Higher Education Institutes in Ireland which is being led by Atlantic Technological University and which is co-funded by the HEA under the EDI Enhancement Fund. The University of Galway is delighted to be a partner and really appreciate the involvement of 13 men including students and staff from across the University.

National surveys for staff & students of Higher Education Institutions in Ireland

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has launched national surveys for staff and students of higher education institutions in Ireland to monitor experiences related to sexual violence and harassment, and to obtain the perspectives of staff and students on related issues such as campus safety and available supports.

The survey does not ask for any identifying information and your responses are strictly confidential and anonymous. The data is collected by the HEA.

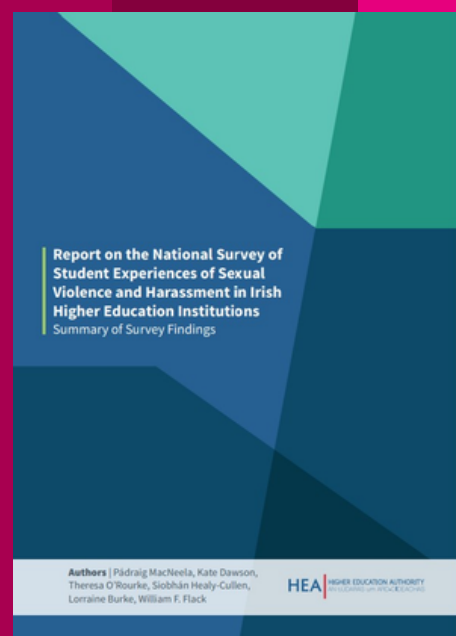
These important surveys will generate crucial data that will be used to enhance the national response to sexual violence and harassment and to inform policy and practice. This is the second iteration of these surveys, which were first conducted with staff and students in 2021. The findings of the 2021 surveys informed policy developments and targeted interventions.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff and students is a priority, and no matter your prior experience, I would encourage you to participate and to have your voice heard.

The survey will remain open for responses until Friday 8 May at 5pm.

Staff & Students can participate via the link from The Presidents / Dean of Students Email April 2026. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact EDIsurveys@hea.ie

Previous: National surveys for staff & students of Higher Education Institutions in Ireland can be found here:



Active* Champions

Reclaim the River

On 16 April, the University community came together for Reclaim the River, a walk organised by Active* Champions to mark Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Inspired by global



Reclaim the Night movements, the event aimed to raise awareness and promote safer, more inclusive public spaces.

Despite heavy rain, the event saw a strong turnout of staff, students, families, and even pets, highlighting a shared commitment to community and solidarity. Participants gathered at the Hardiman Library and walked along the river path, many bringing banners and messages of support.

The event concluded with refreshments and the opportunity to engage with support resources, fostering connection and continued awareness across campus.



Active* Champions | Outreach

The Active* Champions continued their outreach activities throughout Semester 2, maintaining a strong presence at student balls, awards ceremonies, and the LGBTQ+ Ally Programme launch.

Their visibility across campus supports broader culture change objectives and contributes positively to university events. The Champions provide an accessible point of engagement for both staff and students, offering informal support and signposting to relevant services where needed.



Active* Champions

Celebration AY 2526

The SVHPR Team, alongside our partners in the Active* Consent team, were delighted to celebrate the Active* Champions.

The Champions are a group we are immensely proud of and grateful for. Their dedication to making campus a safer, more informed, and respectful place is truly inspiring.

Through peer-led workshops, facilitated campus conversations, outreach events, and their leadership in promoting a culture of respect and communication at the University of Galway, they continue to make a meaningful impact.



[Click here if you're interested in being an Active* Champion in AY 26-27](#)



SPEAKOUT

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

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

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

SAFEZONE APP

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

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

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

The app is now available to download from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Too Into You

The Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention & Response Team was proud to welcome the Too Into You (Women's Aid Ireland) project to the University of Galway campus with an interactive information stall.



Students and staff were invited to drop by to:

- Learn what healthy relationships look like
- Identify red flags (including coercive control)
- Explore tips on setting boundaries
- Pick up free resources and speak with the team

The event highlighted that 1 in 5 young women in Ireland aged 18–25 have experienced abuse from a partner or ex, underlining the importance of awareness.

There was no sign-up required, attendees were encouraged to drop in, have a chat, and take away useful information.

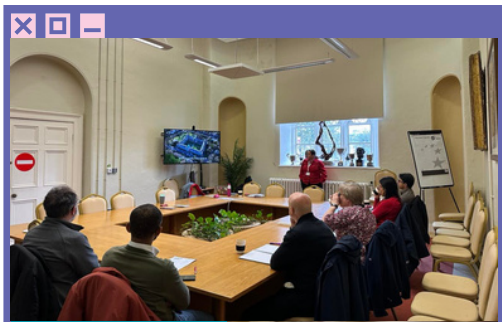
Available Training

STAFF

Information Session for Staff on the Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Programme of Work.

We invite you to join a focused 1-hour information session introducing the University of Galway Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVH) Prevention and Response Programme of Work and the team leading this important area.

This session will help you build confidence and understanding in responding appropriately and compassionately when SVH-related issues arise in your work.



What the session covers:

- Meet the SVH Prevention and Response team
- Overview of the SVH Programme of Work
- Understanding Sexual Violence and Harassment in the higher education context
- The current policy landscape
- What we mean by Sexual Violence and Harassment
- The impact of trauma on individuals
- How to support a student or colleague who discloses SVH
- How to signpost yourself or others to appropriate supports

Session aim:

To equip staff with a clear understanding of SVH, its impact, and the supports available, and to strengthen confidence in responding appropriately and directing people to help.

Contact esvh@universityofgalway.ie to arrange the 1hr session for your School / College / Team / Unit.

NEW!

Staff Bystander Intervention

Now available on Canvas.

This is a module designed to provide training and other resources on how to step in, speak up and support others in situations of sexual violence and harassment.

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise inappropriate or harmful behaviour and understand the impact of sexual violence.
2. Appreciate the role and responsibility of a bystander in promoting safety and respect.
3. Apply safe and effective strategies to intervene or seek help.
4. Contribute to a campus culture of consent, respect, and active citizenship.



STAFF

Staff eLearning Programme: Trauma-Informed Institution

Now available on Canvas.

This short module takes approximately **30 minutes** to complete.

Learning Outcomes:

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





Go Purple Day!

MAY 15TH 2026

Go Purple Day 2026 will take place on May 15th, raising awareness about domestic abuse and showing visible solidarity with those affected across Ireland. This national initiative is led by An Garda Síochána, in partnership with domestic abuse support services, and encourages individuals and community groups to take part by wearing purple.

The University of Galway is proud to support Go Purple Day on an annual basis, and we actively encourage participation across our campus community. Even small actions can make a meaningful impact, such as wearing purple, sharing awareness information online, or hosting a simple information display, helping to highlight domestic abuse and the range of supports available across Ireland.

If your College / School / Team / Unit wishes to take part this year, we would be very happy to support the initiative by providing Go Purple materials, ideas, and guidance to help mark the day in a visible and meaningful way.

Email esvh@universityofgalway.ie to be involved.



Scan here to get support or learn more.





Ending Sexual Violence & Harassment

At the University of Galway, we recognise that sexual violence and harassment, including, but not limited to, rape, sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and relationship abuse, are serious issues that affect university communities.

The Sexual Violence and Harassment, Prevention & Response team, Niamh & Rebecca are committed to creating a safer environment in which to live, work, and study. We believe that every student has the right to feel safe, respected, and supported.

Our free services include:



**Confidential
Triage
Meetings**



**Support
Options**



**Reporting
Options**



**Training &
Education**



**Get Involved:
Advocacy &
Allyship**



**Advice & Support
for: Clubs,
Societies, Class
Reps & Managers**



Rebecca
Connolly

Niamh
Kavanagh

Sexual Violence and Harassment,
Prevention & Response Team

As we welcome you to our university community, we want you to know, ending sexual violence is everyone's responsibility, and support is always available.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or harassment, recently or in the past, or you are worried about your own behaviour, we are here to support you.

**Scan here to get
support or learn
more.**

