

Sexual Violence and Harassment, Prevention & Response Committee *Updates Bulletin*

06

JULY 2025



Pictured:
University of Galway Staff & Students Promoting Go Purple Day | Galway May 2025.

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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.

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Sexual Violence and Harassment,
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SPEAKOUT / National Office Visit

SVHPR Team met with the National Speak Out Office in June, represented by Gillian Connolly (Administrator) and Elaine Mears (Speak Out Lead). The meeting served as both an introductory session and an opportunity to review institutional needs, following a needs assessment we had submitted earlier in the year.



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.

National Engagement with Cuan

Over the summer, representatives from the national network of Sexual Violence and Harassment Managers met with Cuan, the statutory agency under the Department of Justice responsible for addressing domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV).

Cuan is leading on the Third National Strategy for Zero Tolerance to DSGBV and highlighted that actions relating to higher education institutions are embedded within their implementation plan. These actions are to be delivered through the HEA in collaboration with institutions.



Cuan expressed strong interest in our work and are keen to improve communication and collaboration.

As a first step, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the national Practitioners Network (currently including our team) will be added to their national campaign mailing lists and invited to future briefings.

They are also co-funding a national awareness campaign being developed by the Practitioners Network and welcomed opportunities for further partnership.

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for August at Cuan's offices in Dublin. This marks a positive step in building national alignment and visibility for SVH prevention and response work across the higher education sector.

Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions Practitioner Network & Cuan, Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency

Active* Champions

In 2024–25, 14 student Active* Champions were recruited to support SVH awareness initiatives, with funding from Active* Consent enabling a shift from the previous year's unpaid volunteer model to paid positions.

Key successes included:

- Clear role assignments (e.g. workshop delivery, creative content)
- Safer recruitment via screening and interview processes
- Production of outreach materials (e.g. stickers, posters, trainings)
-

Goals not yet achieved include a tiered system (e.g. senior/junior champions), which is being explored for 2025–26. Returning champions will mentor new recruits to strengthen continuity and support.

Planned developments for 2025–26 include:

- Disclosure training for all champions to ensure preparedness and student safety
- Recognition via the University Skills Passport, digital badges, and President's Award
- Expansion of the paid programme to Shannon College.

A detailed programme report was submitted to the Active* Consent team in May.



ENLIGHT 2025 Inclusion Award

The Active Champions won the Enlight 2025 Inclusion Award, placing first among submissions from multiple universities. Their entry highlighted creative SVH initiatives including support cards for student events, stickers, folders, and a popular spinning wheel game used at campus events. Their focus on practical, student-friendly resources was key to their success.



The award recognised work completed between January and April 2025. One champion will be selected to represent the team at the awards ceremony in Sweden (Uppsala).

The achievement has been acknowledged by the University's Interim President, and efforts are underway, alongside the ENLIGHT team, to host a local celebration for all champions.



Thanks to continued funding from Active* Consent team, we are supporting the rollout of the Champions programme for the next two academic years. Recruitment for 2025–26 has now closed, with over 50 applications received. Five or six champions are returning from last year, and new recruits will begin training in early September.

Go Purple Day

An Garda Síochána's national day for domestic abuse awareness

In May, we marked Go Purple Day, a national initiative led by An Garda Síochána in collaboration with domestic violence support services across Ireland. The day aims to raise awareness and show solidarity with those affected by domestic violence.

At the university, we participated by 'repainting' the Big Yellow Thing to purple. Active* Champions, staff members, the Chaplaincy Office, and local Gardaí, with photos and informal outreach as part of the day.



Domestic Violence Leave Policy

In May 2021, the University of Galway became the first Higher Education Institution in Ireland to launch a Domestic Violence Leave Policy. The policy was formally launched on Wednesday, 26 May by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science at the time, Simon Harris.

The policy provides paid leave for staff members who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence or abuse. It is designed to offer time away from work in a structured and supportive environment, allowing individuals to seek the assistance they need.

[*Policy available here*](#)

SVHPR Practitioners Self Care Day

This year, the University of Galway had the pleasure of hosting the first-ever national Self-Care Day for the Sexual Violence and Harassment (SVH) Practitioners Network—a new annual initiative designed to support the wellbeing of those working in this space across the higher education sector.

The purpose of the day was to connect colleagues working in what can often be isolating roles, to encourage shared learning, support, and wellbeing.

The event was very well received, and the intention is to make this an annual in-person event hosted by a different institution each year.



SVHPR Interns

Over May, June, and July, four former Active* Champions joined the team as summer interns. Drawing on their deep engagement with the programme, they developed several impactful student-led initiatives, including:

- An implementation framework for being an Active Champion at University of Galway
- A social media campaign and strategy for the Champions programme
- A forthcoming student legal guide (title pending) offering practical information on sexual violence and harassment laws and supports in Ireland



Pictured : Majo & Chekka, SVHPR Interns, Attending the 2025 Annual Health Promotion Conference: "From Awareness to Action: Advancing Sexual Health Promotion."

This work is currently under review by internal and external partners, with a formal launch planned for autumn 2025. The interns' contributions have been exceptional, highlighting the power of peer-led initiatives. Their insight and creativity have strengthened the programme and reinforced the importance of centring student voices in SVH awareness and education.

There is growing momentum across campuses nationally, with Active Champions now also in place at UL and Mary I, and plans to build a national peer network underway. Feedback consistently shows that peer-led education is far more impactful for students, and we are proud of the leadership shown by our Galway cohort.

Student Orientation 2025

We're pleased to confirm that the SVH team will again present during the centralised student induction in September 2025, delivering a 10-minute introduction to our programme, followed by a 20-minute Active* Consent session.



We're also contributing to Fáilte Fest and other welcome week activities in collaboration with Student Services and the Societies Office, enhancing visibility and engagement opportunities for both the SVH programme and Active* Champions.

Additionally, we will be embedded in PGR and international student orientations, with plans to integrate our new video once finalised.

Many thanks to Student Services & Socs & Orientation teams for supporting our inclusion across these key student engagement events.

EQUITAS Conference 2025 / Maynooth

Members of the EDI team attended the Equitas Conference this year, where one of the standout moments was the keynote address from Sinéad Burke, whose powerful contribution helped frame Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as an interconnected and holistic endeavour. A key takeaway was the importance of embedding sexual violence and harassment (SVH) work within the broader EDI landscape, rather than treating it as a standalone issue.



It was encouraging to see SVH explicitly featured in the conference's main plenary on ending sexual violence and harassment, reinforcing its relevance within national conversations on inclusion.

Several valuable workshops also took place, including:

- Bystander intervention and allyship in RCSI
- Facilitation skills to support EDI interventions, led by Clarissa from Active* Consent

The conference fostered a spirit of collaboration and shared learning, which mirrors the approach seen across the SVH practitioner community. Unlike other higher education spaces that can be competitive, this field continues to promote partnership-based, supportive practices, something that was evident throughout the event.

Galway Night Time Economy

Galway City now has a dedicated Night-Time Economy Advisor working full-time, supported by a Stakeholder Advisory Forum. The Students' Union has historically participated in this forum. However, due to the annual changeover of SU representatives, the group requested a more consistent university staff presence. As such, Niamh Kavanagh will now represent the University on the Advisory Forum over the coming years to ensure continuity and strengthen our engagement.

The forum brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including An Garda Síochána, venue owners, cultural organisations and representatives from sexual violence prevention teams. One of their key initiatives is the "Safe and Sound" Night-Time Economy Campaign, which aims to promote safer nights out for all.

The campaign has created a suite of social media assets, and we're encouraging both the University and Students' Union to help amplify the messaging by sharing these on their platforms.

We aim to coordinate closely with the Students' Union before each forum meeting to ensure your priorities and concerns are raised. Please feel free to share key points you'd like me to bring forward. We'll continue to provide updates as the forum's work progresses.



Available Training

NEW!

STAFF

Staff eLearning Programme: Trauma-Informed Institution

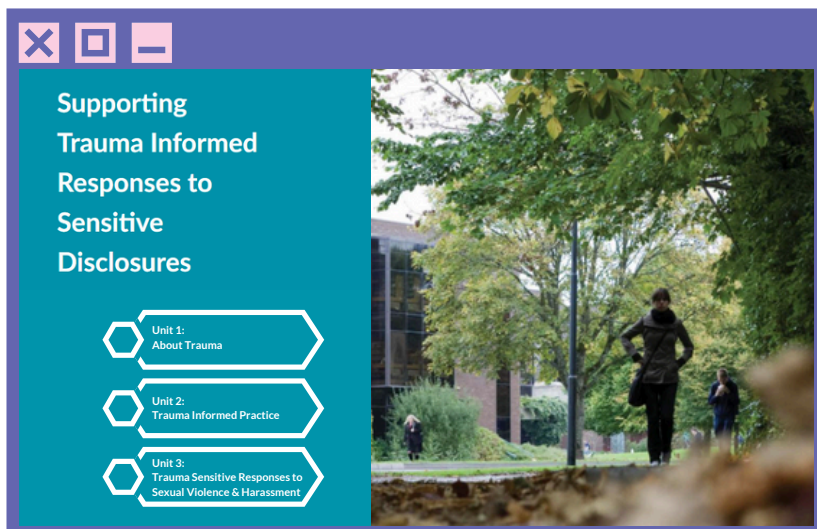
Now available on Canvas.

START NOW

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.



STUDENT

Sexual Violence and Harassment:
How to Support Yourself and your Peers eLearning
Module

Now available on ConsentHub.ie

START NOW

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

Learning Outcomes:

- This module aims to address gaps in knowledge reported by students in that survey on issues related to consent, sexual violence and harassment.
- The module provides users with practical and introductory skills in supporting friends who disclose negative sexual experiences and how to safely intervene when faced with a developing negative situation amongst their peer groups and communities.





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
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**Niamh
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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.**

