Our Aim

The University of Stirling, as a leading global academic institution is committed to taking all steps within its power to prevent, tackle and respond appropriately and supportively to incidences of sexual violence or misconduct\(^1\) affecting our students, staff and those who use our facilities and services.

As an employer, educator, and a powerful agent in nurturing the leaders and influencers of our future society, we understand the importance of our role in preventing and tackling sexual misconduct. We do not tolerate any forms of sexual harassment or violence, and will not hesitate to utilise our staff and student disciplinary procedures in response to perpetrators of these offences.

The University values a multi-agency approach based on strong partnerships internally and with local and national agencies. Of particular importance is a robust collaboration with the University of Stirling Students’ Union. The Students’ Union is deeply committed to preventing and tackling sexual violence and misconduct, and this strategy is owned jointly by the University and the Students’ Union\(^2\).

Whoever you are, whatever your role, ask yourself

#IsThisOk?

If it’s not okay take action.

\(^1\) Refer to appendix 1 for definition of sexual violence and misconduct

\(^2\) The strategy was developed with input from Police Scotland (Violence Reduction Unit, National Rape Task Force and the Forth Valley Division), Rape Crisis Forth Valley, Stirling & District Women’s Aid, Zero Tolerance, Stirling Council and NHS Forth Valley), and drew on research carried out by University of Stirling MSc student, Neill Clarke.
Strategic Outcomes

We will:

1. Foster a culture where sexual violence, harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct are not tolerated and are actively challenged.

2. Ensure that our staff and students are clear about their options and receive appropriate support if they are a victim-survivor of sexual misconduct.

3. Ensure University staff and Students’ Union officers are clear about how to respond to and support students or colleagues if they have been affected by sexual violence or misconduct.

4. Improve our knowledge and understanding about the prevalence of – and impact of our work to prevent and tackle – sexual misconduct in our community.
We will: Foster a culture where sexual violence, harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct are not tolerated and are actively challenged.

Indicators of success:

• Increased awareness by staff and students of the consequences of perpetrating sexual misconduct, how to report incidents, and how to access support

• Long term reduction in the number of reported incidents of sexual violence and misconduct by staff and students

• Evidence of increased willingness to report incidents

We will achieve this by:

• Demonstrating clear senior leadership commitment to preventing and tackling sexual violence, harassment and misconduct

• Launching a campaign – linked to the One Stirling initiative – which demonstrates the University’s commitment to preventing and tackling sexual misconduct

• Launching an institution-wide pledge campaign aimed at promoting respect and challenging unacceptable conduct, to which all staff and students will be encouraged to sign up

• Providing opportunities to discuss gender-based violence and the causes and consequences of sexual violence and misconduct in our academic curriculum

• Training a group of staff/student officers to roll out training for the student body

• Thereafter, introducing training for our current and future student body on respect, consent, bystander intervention and the consequences of sexual violence and misconduct

• Requiring all current and future staff to undertake training to raise awareness of sexual violence and misconduct

• Encouraging a culture whereby staff and students feel empowered and confident to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour

• Ensuring the University’s and Students’ Union policies and procedures, for staff and students, clarify the expectations of our community in relation to appropriate sexual conduct and the consequences of perpetrating sexual misconduct

• Ensuring the protocols that will be followed following an allegation of sexual violence or misconduct are published on the University’s website

• Ensuring that the University and Students’ Union’s codes of conduct, disciplinary procedures and protocols are made clear to staff and students before they accept a contract or place respectively at the University

Targets/Milestones:

• Statements of commitment by University and Students’ Union leaders published by spring 2017

• Dedicated microsite including key information about sexual misconduct, reporting, support and effective response - launched by January 2017

• University-wide awareness-raising campaign launched by spring 2017

• Associated pledge campaign launched by autumn semester 2017/18

• Trainers in place in advance of 2017/18 semester

• From autumn 2017/18, training rolled out to new students and student members of a club or society affiliated with the Students’ Union

• University and Students’ Union policies and procedures reviewed by start of 2017/18 semester

• Protocols published on University website by end Spring 2017 and updated as required to reflect changes to underpinning documents thereafter

• References to all relevant codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures integrated into joining instructions/contracts by spring 2017

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1 Metrics to evaluate this outcome will be developed as part of the evaluation framework for this strategy

2 Metrics to evaluate this outcome will be explored in the first year of the strategy implementation; see strategic outcome 5 (“increased knowledge”) for more detail

3 Centred around proactive and positive messaging through a range of media and associated training & awareness-raising activities referred to elsewhere in this strategy

4 Targets on training to be determined in the first year of the strategy implementation; see strategic outcome 3 for more detail
We will:
Ensure that our staff and students are clear about their options and receive appropriate support if they are a victim-survivor of sexual misconduct.

Indicators of success:

- Evaluation data indicates that the significant majority of staff and students are aware of options, reporting protocols and support available if they are a victim-survivor of sexual misconduct.

**Targets/milestones**

- Dedicated microsite – including information about options and support pathways - published by spring 2017
- Initial online reporting mechanism established by spring 2017
- Exploration of systemised tool to commence in 2017
- On-campus drop in clinic with Rape Crisis Scotland piloted in from December 2016 and recommendations for future partnership approach produced thereafter
- Network of Sexual Misconduct Advisers established and trained in advance of 2017/18 semester
- Information Sharing Protocols with Police Scotland and Rape Crisis Forth Valley established during 2016/17
- Regular meetings and dialogue with partner agencies during strategy implementation period

**We will achieve this by:**

- Publishing information on the University’s ‘preventing and tackling sexual misconduct’ web-pages about the options available to victim-survivors, including reporting options and support referral pathways
- Creating and publicising an on-line reporting tool which will enable anonymous as well as named reporting
- Providing counselling and mental health support from qualified, trained professionals to those affected by sexual misconduct
- Establishing a network of Sexual Misconduct Advisers who will be trained to support staff or students who have been affected by sexual violence or misconduct
- Strengthening partnerships with local and national support agencies to establish robust collaborations and referral pathways

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7 Metrics to evaluate this outcome will be explored in the first year of the strategy implementation; see strategic outcome 5 (“increased knowledge”) for more detail
We will:

Ensure University staff and Students’ Union officers are clear about how to respond to and support students or colleagues if they have been affected by sexual violence or misconduct.

Indicators of success:

- Evaluation data indicates that the significant majority of staff and Students’ Union officers are clear and confident about what to do if they receive a disclosure*
- Absence of complaints about the handling of disclosures by the University

We will achieve this by

- Introducing awareness raising training for all current and future University and Students’ Union staff on how to respond appropriately – and protocols to follow - if they receive a disclosure of sexual violence or misconduct
- Introducing in-depth training for a small team of Sexual Misconduct Advisers whose role it will be to support staff or students who have been affected by sexual violence or misconduct
- Providing clear information on the University’s website about how to respond effectively to a disclosure, and the appropriate referral pathways
- Providing debrief/aftercare support for staff involved in traumatic incidents or affected by receipt of a disclosure

Targets/milestones

- From spring 2017, all new staff and Students’ Union officers required to undertake training on responding appropriately to disclosures of sexual violence or misconduct as part of induction within 4 weeks of start date
- From autumn 2017/18, training rolled out to University and Students’ Union staff, and Students’ Union officers9
- Clear information available on the microsite about the fundamentals of responding to disclosures
- Debrief protocols and aftercare referral pathways in place
- Small number of staff trained in trauma debrief support by autumn 2017

* Metrics to evaluate this outcome will be explored in the first year of the strategy implementation; see strategic outcome 5 (“increased knowledge”) for more detail

9 Targets on training to be determined in the first year of the strategy implementation
We will:

Improve our knowledge and understanding about the prevalence of – and impact of our work to prevent and tackle – sexual misconduct in our community.

Indicators of success:

- Data returned from evaluation framework increases intelligence of prevalence, perceptions, experiences of sexual misconduct, and awareness of mechanisms by staff/students on how to report and access support.

We will achieve this by:

- Framework established to evaluate the impact of this strategy
- Conducting academic research into the experiences of first responders and those affected by sexual violence and misconduct at the University of Stirling
- Collaborating with other Scottish HEIs to gather intelligence about the prevalence and impact of sexual violence and misconduct in the Scottish university sector
- Introducing a centralised system to record reported incidents of sexual violence or misconduct at the University of Stirling
- Exploring methods to assess awareness, for students and staff, of how to report, access support, and respond to disclosures.
- Reporting trends at least annually to the University’s senior management team and the University and Students’ Union governing bodies
- Continuing to monitor the perceptions of staff and students regarding their experiences of harassment at the University

Targets/milestones:

- Evaluation framework created by summer 2017
- Research complete and findings published by spring 2018
- Joint research proposals agreed during 2017/18
- Centralised reporting & recording protocol in place by spring 2017
- Methods to increase understanding of staff awareness and perceptions agreed and developed during the first year of implementation
- Annual reports to governing bodies established from autumn 2017

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10 It is recognised that, on the way to a long term reduction in sexual violence and misconduct, reported incidents are likely to increase in the initial years of strategy implementation. That in itself indicates a culture which enables reporting and supports victim-survivors, and should be regarded as a positive impact of this strategy.
Appendix 1

Definition of sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct covers a broad range of inappropriate, unwanted behaviours of a sexual nature. This includes any type of sexual violence including rape and sexual assault, and extends to sexual harassment, unwanted touching, stalking, abusive or degrading remarks, online sexual abuse, comments or innuendo. It can relate to a one-off incident or be ongoing, and can include physical, verbal, non-verbal behaviours including online activity e.g. social media posts. It can occur whether or not the individuals are in a relationship and can occur towards persons of the same or opposite sex, or those who are transgender.

Whilst detailing all the behaviour covered by this definition would be impossible, the common thread is conduct of a sexual nature carried out without consent (“free agreement”) and which violates the dignity of another person or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the recipient, regardless of whether or not such conduct or behaviours amount to a criminal offence.

This strategy encompasses sexual violence and misconduct affecting men and women. However, it is recognised that sexual violence is largely a gendered crime, with women comprising the vast majority of victims, and men the vast majority of perpetrators, although at least 8% of rape survivors are male (Stern Review, 2010). A key element of the longer term strategy is education about the causes of sexual violence and other forms of violence against women (VAW), and exploration of the links to wider issues of gender equality.

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