

Stand up for Student Survivors (#StandByMe)

Council notes:

1. 1 in 7 women students (14%) has been the victim of serious sexual assault or serious physical violence while at university or college.
2. The NUS Lad Culture Audit report revealed that there's lack of clarity around the complaints and disciplinary procedures in universities across the country.
3. In the NUS 2015 Lad Culture and sexism survey 61% of students stated that they were not made aware of any codes of conduct and 66% stated they were not aware of the procedure to report these incidents.
4. The Zellick Report was created in 1994 to give guidance to universities about how to deal with sexual assault cases. It tells universities not to investigate cases and not to go through disciplinary procedures until the victim has reported the incident to the police.
5. Evidence shows that 82% of rapes are never reported to the police and of these, only 1 in 5 result in court proceedings. For the few cases that do enter the court system, the average length of the court process is 1 year and 4 months from report to verdict – at which point many victims may no longer be studying at the university. This means in practice, the majority of victims of sexual violence would see no action taken by their university.
6. NUS has launched a campaign called #StandByMe which calls for the repeal of the Zellick guidelines and for a public consultation which listens to the student movement and specialist services in order to develop new reporting and disciplinary guidelines, including guidance on survivor support.
7. Support services for victims of sexual violence are facing significant funding shortfalls. Rape Crisis centres will have no central government funding confirmed beyond March 2016.

Council believes:

1. The quality of university reporting procedures and support services are inconsistent and inadequate and are not well understood by students.
2. The Zellick report is out of date and needs to be revised to take into account developments in our understanding of sexual violence and to incorporate equality legislation.
3. Universities should have accessible reporting procedures for sexual assault, which are well promoted and provide access to specialist support for victims during their time at university.
4. Rape Crisis Centres provide vital support services for survivors of sexual assault. The cuts to Rape Crisis centres and other support services are fatal and we are significantly concerned that support for survivors of sexual violence is becoming rapidly non-existent without sufficient Government funding.

This Council resolves:

1. To support and raise awareness for NUS' #StandByMe campaign, calling for better support for all survivors on campus and sustainable funding for specialist support services across the country.
2. To call for the repeal of the Zellick guidelines and for a public consultation to develop new reporting and disciplinary guidelines and survivor support.
3. To lobby the Vice Chancellor to support the statement and call for change at a national level,
4. To lobby the Vice Chancellor to reject the guidelines set out by the Zellick report for use at Lincoln and to draw up new guidelines for the university which support students who have become victims of sexual assault while at University.
5. To look into forming/strengthening partnerships with local support services for victims of sexual violence.
6. This will be actioned by the Student Leaders and Women's Officer.

NUS: <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/5-reasons-why-we-should-scrap-the-zellick-report-standbyme>

Proposed by:

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