

Lad Culture Audit Report

**A look into the findings from our
audit of higher education
institutions and students' unions
work on lad culture**

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Findings	11
Discussion	18
Recommendations	23
Appendix	25

Foreword

For the past decade the presence of lad culture in higher education has been a prominent issue for students and staff. As a result of research, awareness raising campaigning and coverage in the media, the demand to develop effective policies and practices to combat lad culture has risen.

Dismantling lad culture and working towards creating an inclusive culture on campuses and improving retention of students is a fundamental part of the NUS Women's Campaign's work on ending sexual harassment and violence against women in education. As a culture that encompasses multiple discriminatory and harmful behaviours, lad culture is a complex problem and therefore needs a multiple angled national and local strategy.

The findings in this report are the result of a collective effort from students' unions and institutions across the UK, coming together to contribute information in order to create an overview of what is in place at universities to tackle lad culture and sexual harassment. The recommendations that have been formed from this analysis are the next step in creating a much need national framework for universities.

We're looking forward to working with our nine pilot unions and external organisations to develop guidance and resources to support the higher education sector to create happier and safer campuses.

Susuana Amoah
NUS National Women's Officer

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This report presents the results from the Lad Culture audit conducted between December 2014 and February 2015. It provides an analysis of existing policies, training, education and support services in place within SUs and institutions to tackle lad culture. The findings are based on the thirty five SUs that responded to the survey and the twenty SUs that sent through supporting policy documents for the audit.

The aim of this report is to understand what, if anything, is being done to tackle lad culture. It seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in current policies, to examine the quality of care given to victims and to find examples of good practice. It also recommends ways of supporting students' unions (SUs) and higher education institutions (HEIs) in addressing lad culture.

Key findings

Policy

- A high proportion of students' union (SU) respondents had general equality and diversity (E&D) and bullying and harassment policies, although these were not always relevant to tackling lad culture and did not always clearly define what is meant by sexual harassment and assault.
- Both SUs and institutions were shown to have 'gaps' in policy that specifically target lad culture.
- Just over half of institutions (51%) had a formal policy on sexual harassment and only 1 in 10 had a policy that covers the display of sexist and discriminatory material.
- Less than half of SUs had a safe space policy (42%), dignity at work (39%) or alcohol abuse programme (35%).
- There was lack of clarity around the complaints and disciplinary procedures for victims of sexual harassment and assault.
- Complaints and disciplinary procedures were largely inappropriate and unsuitable for victims of sexual harassment. Victims of bullying and harassment are encouraged to resolve the matter 'informally' first by talking to the perpetrator.
- There is a lack of promotion of policy by both SUs and HEIs.
- Overall, SUs had more policy which was relevant to lad culture compared to HEIs.

Training and Education

- The existence of training and education programmes on lad culture was shown to be minimal.
- Only 1 in 10 SUs provide training on lad culture (11%) and only a third run (sexual) consent workshops (32%).
- Only 6% of institutions have included consent in their curriculum.

Victim support programmes

- All SUs and 94% of institutions were reported to provide counselling services.
- Support meetings groups were broadly missing. 11% of SUs provided this service compared to 3% of institutions.
- Less than half of SUs provided third party crime reporting (41%) or had partnerships with feminist / survivor organisations (41%).

Introduction

In 2013 NUS launched '[That's what she said: Women students' experiences of "lad culture" in higher education](#)'. This looked at the negative impact of lad culture in universities in the UK and created the impetus for work on how to tackle lad culture and what strategies would be effective.

Introduction

In 2013 NUS launched [‘That’s what she said: Women students’ experiences of “lad culture” in higher education’](#). This looked at the negative impact of lad culture in universities in the UK and created the impetus for work on how to tackle lad culture and what strategies would be effective.

To take this forward a ‘National Strategy Team: Lad Culture’ (NSTLC) was formed. The team is made up of representatives from NUS and educational and external organisations with a vested interest in tackling lad culture. The team created the following objectives:

- To support SUs and institutions to map what lad culture current responses look like in their environment.
- To facilitate the development and implementation of resources to tackle lad culture.
- To empower educational communities to lead their own institutional changes.

To achieve the first objective, the Strategy Team created and launched the Lad Culture Audit in December 2014. The audit acted as a tool to enable students’ unions to fully understand how they are currently dealing with lad culture on campus.

This report presents the results from the Lad Culture Audit. It provides an analysis of existing policies, training, education and support services in place within SUs and institutions.

Background

The audit builds upon a number of NUS research reports on lad culture as well as research into women’s experience of sexual harassment and violence in higher education.

The report [‘That’s what she said: Women’s experiences of lad culture in higher education’](#) remains pivotal for shaping our understanding of sexism and sexual harassment on campus. The report showed women defined lad culture primarily as a group or ‘pack’ mentality residing in activities such as sport, heavy alcohol consumption and ‘banter’ which was often sexist, misogynistic, or homophobic. It was also thought to be sexualized and to involve the objectification of women. At its extreme, lad culture was thought to promote rape-supportive attitudes, sexual harassment and violence - first highlighted within NUS’ [Hidden Marks](#)’ report.

‘Hidden Marks’ research showed that 1 in 7 women had experienced a serious physical or sexual assault during their time as a student and 68% had been victim of one or more kinds of sexual harassment on campus. Other NUS research on lad culture has shown that 37% of women students have faced unwelcome sexual advances while at university while more than 60% of students have heard rape jokes on campus. Students have also reported that lad culture, alongside supporting sexist ideas, also endorsed a range of discriminatory views including classism, racism, LGBT+phobia and ableism - all in the name of a joke, or ‘banter’.

In October 2013, NUS launched a call for evidence to gather further information about experiences of lad culture. The findings broadly reflected the results of the ‘That’s what she said’ report where respondents broadly defined lad culture as being prevalent within the behaviour of sports teams, in nights out or through the selling of certain media. The

consultation also asked respondents to describe a number of actions and activities they had developed to tackle 'lad culture.' SUs reported implementing zero tolerance policies (as recommended by NUS' 'Hidden Marks' report), increasing regulation of union-affiliated clubs and societies or providing training in order to tackle lad culture. The consultation also asked respondents for recommendations for universities and other higher education institutions. Responses included institutions creating zero tolerance policies, improved procedures for dealing with complaints and incidents associated with lad culture, and incorporating issues of lad culture into the curriculum.

The culmination of this work resulted in the hosting of [a Lad Culture in Higher Education national summit](#) in February 2014. The summit looked at how to address lad culture, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss solutions and best practice. Both the findings from NUS' research into lad culture and the outcome of the summit led to the launch of the national strategy team.

Methodology

A survey was developed by the strategy team and NUS liberation staff together, and tested twice in team meetings before being sent to students. It was sent to all SUs' presidents and women's officers, publicised on NUS Connect, and promoted by the National Women's Officer from December 2014 to February 2015. In addition to the online survey, participants were asked to fill out a form with an overview of their policies and to provide supporting evidence such as a copy of the policy, a relevant link, or campaign's material. SUs were asked to answer for themselves and their institution, although these two components have been analysed separately. The questionnaire is provided as an appendix to this report.

In total, thirty five SUs replied to the survey but only twenty sent the supporting documents. Therefore, the quantitative data are based on the sample of thirty five, and the qualitative policy analysis on the sample of twenty who sent all the required evidence.

Policies were evaluated according to five criteria:

- **Clarity of the policy:** the policy mentions key words such as 'sexual harassment', 'sexism' or lad culture, contains clear guidelines about expected behaviours and values, as well as a clear process to act on it.
- **Accessibility:** the policy is easy to find, available in different formats, and actively promoted by the union or the institution.
- **Attribution of responsibility:** the policy mentions what to do in different circumstances, who to report incidents to and who is responsible for implementing relevant actions, including what victims support programmes are in place.
- **Development programme:** the policy is accompanied by a development or training programme for relevant people such as staff members or heads of student societies.
- **Outcome:** the respondent is able to mention an example of how the policy was implemented, or of a campaign that was launched to make the policy effective.

Unions and institutions were scored separately on a scale of 1 to 5:

- **1** = absence of any relevant policy
- **2** = at least one criterion included, even if it is vague or not clear enough with some minimal acknowledgment of lad culture
- **3** = two to three criteria are included in the policy but some important elements are missing to make it effective
- **4** = three to four criteria are included; very good policy but no clear outcome or idea of how this is implemented; lack of a concrete example or campaign
- **5** = all criteria are included; best practice policy.

Our analysis is entirely based on the documents respondents have sent us and might not accurately reflect the work they or their institution do. This report mostly looks at policies and how robust they are and does not capture elements of campaigning or more informal work that might happen at grassroots level. We believe however, that policies provide a formal framework for unions and institutions to tackle lad culture and they therefore represent an important step in this process. We also sought to capture some elements of the training and campaigning in place within SUs and institutions through the criteria 'development of programme' and 'outcome.'

Findings

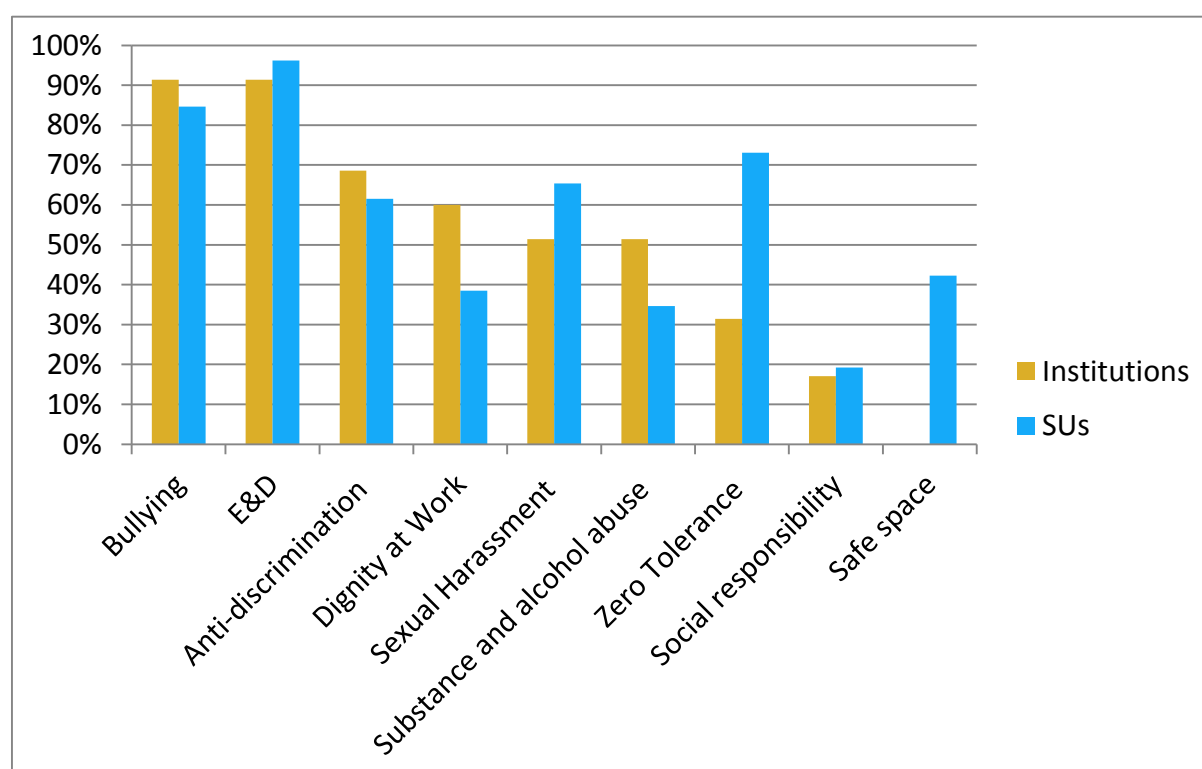
Policy

NUS defines lad culture as a group or 'pack' mentality residing in activities such as sport, heavy alcohol consumption and 'banter' which was often sexist, misogynistic, racist or homophobic. It was also thought to be sexualized and to involve the objectification of women. For the purpose of this audit, we consider policies that encompass or explicitly mention elements that can be part of lad culture, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape. A policy that clearly deals with at least one of these aspects will be considered to be addressing and seeking to tackle lad culture on campus.

[In the UK](#), sexual harassment covers any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a woman's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for her. A good policy needs to demonstrate understanding of this and directly address sexual harassment in its diverse forms. Policies that we considered relevant in this context were dignity at work, equality and diversity, alcohol and substance abuse, violence and harassment, bullying and safe spaces.

The results from the survey showed that SUs and institutions had very similar policies in place with regards to equality and diversity and bullying or anti-discrimination policy. However, SUs were better at integrating lad culture into their policies. For example, twice as many SUs had zero tolerance policies compared to institutions (73% compared to 31%). They also had more policies on sexual harassment (65% compared to 51%) as well as more policies that covered the display of sexist and discriminatory material (48% compared to 11%). However, less than half of SUs had a safe space policy (42%), dignity at work (39%) or an alcohol abuse programme (35%). Some SUs also reported that they relied on their institution's bullying and harassment and workers' protection policies rather than developing their own.

Figure 1: Types of policies in place within SUs and institutions



Clarity of policy

Students' Unions

The qualitative analysis of the policies sent through showed there was little evidence of SUs using the term lad culture in policy or referencing it as a specific social and cultural phenomenon that needs to be tackled. Only one SU had a separate policy on 'anti lad culture' which gave information on what lad culture was and how the SU would address it through a number of campaigns, training and awareness raising initiatives.

Despite this, the majority of equality and diversity policies submitted highlighted SUs' broad commitment to challenging forms of discrimination and harassment. For example, policies would highlight the SUs' opposition to discrimination on the grounds of particular distinctions, largely based on the protected characteristics outlined by the [Equality Act 2010](#), including discrimination on the grounds of gender or sex and sexual orientation. Bullying and harassment policies and dignity at work policies similarly highlighted the values highlighted within equality and diversity policy.

In the majority of these policies, detailed definitions and examples of sexual harassment or sexual assault were limited or absent:

Example:

[Union] is committed to eliminating unfair discrimination and the promotion of Equality of Opportunity. [Union] will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment, be it written, verbal or visual, on the grounds of gender, race, colour, disability, ethnic or socio-economic background, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, political persuasion, health status, marital status or any other relevant distinction (*Equality and Diversity policy*).

Overall, while these equality and diversity policies were useful for broadly outlining the SU's visions, values and aims to combat discrimination they were much less useful at highlighting an active commitment to challenge lad culture specifically. Moreover, without clear definitions of behaviour linked to lad culture, including definitions of sexual harassment and sexual assault, there can be little understanding of how the SU will prevent or stop this behaviour in practice, nor does it promote a greater awareness of these issues amongst SU staff and students.

Zero Tolerance and Safe Space Policies

In addition to equality and diversity policies, a third of SUs (7 out of 20) that participated in the qualitative analysis sent through their zero tolerance policy. In these policies there was a clear definition of sexual harassment using NUS' [Hidden Marks](#) report, including information around how sexual harassment might manifest itself through particular behaviours and in particular contexts such as in bars and clubs.

In all of the zero tolerance policies there was a clear statement that sexual harassment would not be tolerated by the union, that no student 'should have to "put up" with sexual harassment' and that actions would be taken to ensure all students can enjoy the union spaces, events and activities without experiencing sexual harassment. It was often written that perpetrators of sexual harassment would be 'stopped and disciplined for their actions.' However, only a third of these policies adequately signposted their SU's or institution's complaints and disciplinary procedures.

Far fewer SUs reported to have safe space policies than zero tolerance (only 42%, although 67% of SUs reported to have safe spaces to support victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault). However, the safe space policies analysed showed that these could be a valuable means to bolster the values of the SU to create an inclusive and supportive space for all students. Safe space policies would typically cover meetings, activities and events run in the SU including events organised by clubs and societies. Unlike zero tolerance policies, safe space policies did not reference gender discrimination and harassment specifically but outlined, as general equality and diversity policies did, how intimidation or harassment on the grounds of gender or gender identity is unacceptable.

Media and advertisement

Only 48% of SUs in the survey reported to have a policy that covered the display of sexist and discriminatory material. This may indicate many SUs are doing little to combat media/advertising which may endorse lad culture behaviour and further work should be done to ensure SUs have policies in place.

The qualitative analysis showed that where there were policies on media and advertisement, these tended to be integrated within existing zero tolerance and equality and diversity policies, although two SUs had separate policies addressing this issue. Relevant policies generally condemned media which might be viewed as sexist, objectifying, offensive or discriminatory and stated the SU would try to regulate or ban such types of media or advertisement.

Examples:

'All communications must avoid stereotypical, sexist, racist, ageist, heterosexist or otherwise discriminatory images or language. [SU] will not allow any external advertising that contravenes the spirit or specifics of this policy to be associated with [SU] or displayed within [SU] premises.' (*Equality and Diversity policy*)

'The Women's Officer and Communications Department [...] screen the images and phrases used in promotional material for events such as [...] club nights and Freshers' events' (*Zero Tolerance policy*)

'Union communication guidelines ensure the publicity does not contain the following:

Images that objectify a specific gender

Heteronormative images or text

Images or text that focus on or promote excessive drinking

Images or text that focus on or promote drug use

Swearing or discriminatory language

Abbreviations or expressions that could be misleading

Any vetoed products or reference to those products

Text that could be libellous or defamatory

Images or text that actively promotes violence or extreme hatred against individuals or groups, on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, age, veteran status, or sexual orientation' (*Zero tolerance policy*)

Institutions

In looking at the clarity of institutions' policy, there was no evidence to show that the term lad culture was being used or that institutions were outlining ways in which they would seek to address it. We received one document which was produced in response to an incident of lad culture on campus using the term 'laddism' but this report had not been translated into policy at the time of writing.

Like SUs, the institutions' values, ethos and expected behaviour were outlined within equality and diversity, and bullying and harassment policies. Within these policies institutions stated they would seek to ensure the university is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment and how students and staff breaching this policy would be subject to disciplinary procedures. In equality and diversity policies specifically, discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender were stated as unacceptable.

On the whole these policies remained general, with sexual harassment or sexist behaviour included within broad definitions of bullying, harassment or discrimination -

Definition of bullying:

'Coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political, religious or trade union groups etc.' (*Dignity and Respect Policy*)

There were two examples of where sexual harassment was defined more clearly:

'Sexual harassment can take the form of ridicule, sexually provocative remarks or jokes, offensive comments about dress or appearance, the display or distribution of sexually explicit material, unwelcome sexual advances or physical contact, demands for sexual favours or assault.' (*Student harassment and bullying policy*)

'Examples of behaviour which may amount to harassment under this Policy include (but are not limited to) the following: unwanted physical contact, ranging from an invasion of space to an assault, including all forms of sexual harassment, including:

- i. inappropriate body language
- ii. sexually explicit remarks or innuendoes
- iii. unwanted sexual advances and touching' (*University Policy and Procedure on Harassment*)

We were also sent through four equality plans or frameworks which supported the general values and mission of the Equality and Diversity policy. In one equality plan, there was a Gender Equality Mission Statement in which the institution commits to:

'promoting gender diversity, equality of opportunity and eliminating all unfair discrimination. The University is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of sex/gender, perceived sex/gender or because of association with a person of a different sex/gender.'

There was only one policy sent through on zero tolerance towards sexual harassment (compared to seven from SUs). Within other policies there was no evidence to suggest the language of zero tolerance was being used. We also found no relevant policies on regulating media and advertisement on campus which could promote lad culture.

Accessibility and promotion of policy

Students' unions

Almost 92% of SU policy was reported to be available online. Far fewer SUs reported they promoted their policies through other methods or mediums. Only 1 in 10 included relevant policies in their freshers' welcome pack and only 1 in 4 promoted their policies through freshers' week activities.

Table 1: Promotion of policies

SUs	
Online	91.7%
'Visibly exposed'	33.3%
Freshers' week activities	25.0%
Freshers' welcome pack	12.5%

The qualitative analysis revealed a lack of detailed information or practical guidance on how the policy would be promoted. There was a particular lack of information in policy on how students or staff would be made aware of the complaints procedures or support programmes in place for those who have faced sexual harassment or assault. While we did receive a few examples of policy which gave further information around policy dissemination (such as through leaflets or through freshers' packs), the vast majority of information tended to be vague:

'all staff and student staff and students will be made aware of this policy and how to implement it' (*Equality and Diversity policy*)

'[the policy] will be made available to all Union members and staff. All Union staff, officers, volunteers, students attending Union meetings and events, and student members must be made aware of the expectation that they will support and abide by the policy' (*Equality and Diversity policy*).

In general, promotion of policies seemed to be an issue for unions. Some respondents pointed out that students have no interest in 'dry' documents, and that without institutional support it is hard to effectively promote those policies and procedures. Others highlighted the high turnover of sabbatical officers and students, which makes it hard to ensure continuity in knowledge.

Institutions

The majority of institutions' policy was reported to be online (94%) – similar to the results on the promotion of SU policy. However, only 6% of SUs reported that their institutional policies were 'visibly exposed'. This result is concerning and shows institutions may be doing very little to ensure students and staff are aware of policies in place.

There was little guidance within policies on how the information should be promoted. We found some examples of how institutions would promote their equality and diversity policy. For instance, through promoting relevant information through university news, staff briefings and student newsletters. However, the results from the survey show that very few institutions were communicating policy through obvious routes, such as through student handbooks (18%) or through the student induction processes (24%). These findings indicate there is still much more that institutions could be doing to raise awareness about the policy and procedures in place to tackle lad culture.

Table 2: Promotion of policies

Institutions	
Online	93.9%
Students' handbook	18.2%
Induction	24.2%
'Visibly exposed'	6.1%

In comparing how SUs and institutions promote policy (see table 3), we can see both do poorly at including policies in student packs, with SUs doing worse than institutions in this area. However, institution's policy was viewed by respondents to be significantly less visible than SU policy, perhaps indicating that institutions need to do more in promoting policies than SUs.

Table 3: Comparing SUs and Institutions promotion of policies

Promotion of policies			
Institutions		SUs	
Online	93.9%	Online	91.7%
Students' handbook	18.2%	Freshers' welcome pack	12.5%
Induction	24.2%	Freshers' week activities	25.0%
'Visibly exposed'	6.1%	'Visibly exposed'	33.3%

Attribution of responsibility

The complaints procedure

Students' Unions

We received 15 out of a total of 40 policy documents (38%) which contained information on the complaints procedure and how incidents of discrimination and harassment would be addressed through disciplinary procedures. As well as specific complaints and disciplinary policy sent through, policy documents outlining this information, included:

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- SU bylaws
- SU Staff Handbook

All SUs had separate complaints and disciplinary procedures in place depending if the complaint was about a student or a SU member of staff (including student staff).¹ Within these procedures, employees and students were recommended to try to resolve the issue 'informally first.' If, having followed the informal procedure the complainant believed his or her concerns had not been properly addressed, a formal complaint could be made to a relevant member of staff such as line managers, sabbatical officers or the chief executives.

It was recognised in the majority of the complaints procedures that some complaints should not be made informally:

'You are encouraged to resolve a situation of bullying or harassment informally, by talking directly, politely and unambiguously to the person concerned. However, if this is not possible, or is inappropriate, or does not have the desired effect, then you should make a formal complaint' (*Staff Handbook*)

'If [it] is too difficult or embarrassing for an employee to [complain informally] on his or her own, the employee should seek support from a HR Staff Adviser, trade union representative or independent senior manager who will provide confidential advice and guidance to workers who believe they have been bullied or harassed. There are certain instances of bullying that might be so severe as to warrant the by-passing of informal resolution, such as if a serious incident occurs.' (*Bullying and Harassment Policy*)

The policies were not explicit about the circumstances in which it would be inappropriate to follow this approach, such as in cases of serious sexual assault and violence. There was also an absence of information on what to do if someone reports sexual harassment, assault and violence and how the complainant might need to be treated differently with particular support processes in place.

In only one SU policy was it noted that in a case of sexual harassment it may be appropriate for the complaints procedure to be conducted by a worker of the same sex as the complainant. Within two zero tolerance policies it was noted that the complaints procedure may need to be adapted or changed in order to comply with the policy:

¹ These procedures are separate from the institution's disciplinary and complaints procedures.

'[The SU will] confirm or adjust our current disciplinary and complaints procedures so they are in line with the Zero Tolerance policy' (*Zero tolerance policy*)

'[The SU will] adopt a 'zero tolerance to sexual harassment' policy in principle, and look into how this could be implemented in line with legal requirements. For example giving staff and student staff the ability to remove any person accused of sexual harassment from the premises if alerted to by the victim' (*Zero tolerance policy*).

For those SUs that had safe space policies, immediate actions were outlined in addition to the standard disciplinary procedures for how to deal with someone who is causing someone to feel intimidated or harassed. This may be a useful supporting mechanism for people who have experienced sexism or sexual harassment within the SU:

'Any member of [SU] staff or elected-representatives may immediately act upon a complaint through a number of ways including:

- a. Giving the complainant a platform to express their complaint.
- b. Reiterate the Safe Space and Zero Tolerance policies and issue them with a warning that they can be asked to leave an event.
- c. Ask any speakers or students complained against to leave.
- d. Work with any security put in place to remove speakers/attendees.
- e. Make SU staff and/or elected representatives aware of any complaint or incident that has violated the policy' (*Safe Space policy*)

Institutions

Institutions, like SUs, had separate processes in place for students and staff. In some institutions there were also separate procedures in place for students and staff depending on the nature of the complaint. For example, in one institution there were different student complaints procedures depending on whether the student complaint related to a member of staff, college service or faculty or whether it concerned another student. Similarly in some institutions staff would have different complaints procedures to follow depending on whether they were complaining about other member of staff or they were complaining about a student.

We only received one policy on how staff should handle sexual harassment complaints specifically. The complaints procedure most commonly outlined for staff and students was very similar to the procedure outlined within SU complaints and disciplinary procedures - to resolve cases of harassment or bullying 'informally' before making a formal complaint:

'If you are experiencing behaviour by a fellow student that upsets you or causes you offence that you believe to be bullying or harassment you are encouraged to attempt to resolve the matter informally at the earliest opportunity with the individual concerned as it is often the case that the alleged harasser is not aware of the impact of his or her behaviour. Having a direct conversation when you can make this clear will give them the opportunity to change their behaviour towards you.' (*Policy and procedure for students reporting bullying and harassment*)

'Speaking to the person who is causing you distress is always an informal option and an approach preferred by many in delicate circumstances. This is because sometimes individuals are genuinely not aware of the offensive effect of their behaviour and will naturally stop when it is brought to their attention. It is your personal choice whether you

wish to directly express how a colleague's conduct is perceived by you. In doing so however, you may also have to anticipate that the other person(s) may not agree with your interpretation.' (*HR Policy on Bullying and Harassment at work*)

As with the SU policies highlighted above, these examples do not provide information on when an 'informal' approach would be *inappropriate*. Clearly for cases of serious sexual harassment and assault, advising people to try first an informal approach can be problematic: it tends to minimise the impact of the offence and pushes the victim to have a direct confrontation with her/his aggressor. In many cases, the intervention of a third person and the protection of the victim would be necessary. It also does not guarantee a victims' safety and assumes the behaviour of the offender will be changed simply by having an informal chat. More broadly these policies do not seem to provide suitable guidance for anyone who has experienced persistent discrimination or bullying. As one policy notes:

'as bullying and harassment may be connected to power it might require very assertive action for someone to rebut the alleged harasser' (*Guidance for student facing discrimination bullying or harassment*).

Yet not everyone can be 'very assertive' and will need further support. There is also a danger these policies place responsibility to deal with such cases primarily on the victim rather than the institution. This may be exacerbated if the institution fails to provide clear or sufficient information on the victim support programmes available if an informal approach has failed (see below).

Victim support programmes

Students' Unions

There was little information about support programmes for victims of sexual harassment or assault within the policies received. However, the findings from the survey show SUs did signpost or deliver a range of services to support victims. For example, 100% of SUs reported that they signposted to counselling services and the majority of SUs reported that they would signpost to police services (85%). 67% of SUs reported they had a safe space for victims and 52% reported that they had a partnership with local services (52%).

On other measures SUs did less well: less than half provided third party crime reporting (41%) and/or had partnerships with feminist / survivor organisations (41%). Only 11% of SUs reported that they had support meeting groups in place.

Table 4: Existing support for victims of harassment

SUs	
Signposting to counselling	100.0%
Signposting to police	85.2%
Safe Space	66.7%
Partnership with local services	51.9%
Partnership with feminist/survivor organisations	40.7%
Third party reporting crime	40.7%
Support meeting groups	11.1%

Institutions

As table 5 shows, almost all institutions (94%) were reported to provide counselling services. A significant proportion signposted to the police (72%) and provided access to health and NHS services (69%). However, signposting and developing partnerships with other local services could be higher and support meeting groups seems to be practically non-existent. Here, a partnership with SUs to implement safe spaces and support groups could be explored in order to improve services for victims.

Table 5: Existing support for victims of harassment

Institutions	
Counselling	93.8%
Signposting to police	71.9%
Access to health services/NHS	68.8%
Clear reporting procedure	46.9%
Partnership with local services	46.9%
Support meeting groups	3.1%

The qualitative analysis of policy revealed other sources of help. Students were directed towards personal tutors or postgraduate supervisors, heads of school or hall wardens for support. Students' union services were also referenced such as signposting to the students' welfare or advice services or directing students to elected officers or harassment advisors. Broader support also included signposting to counselling services. For staff, policies often cited a range of support services: human resources team, trade unions, line managers and harassment advisors. Further sources of help included university counselling services and staff support networks (including in some institutions women's staff networks), heads of 'diversity teams' (where they existed) and adviser networks.

The majority of contacts and services highlighted provided generalist rather than specialist support to handle cases of sexual harassment or assault. Only within the one staff policy received on how to handle sexual harassment complaints gave information about where students and staff could seek support and advice (including, significantly, the police) as well as links to specialist support services, such as local sexual abuse and rape crisis centres, and sexual assault referral centres.

In many cases policies identified a range of support services for students but this might not always be helpful for directing people towards the most suitable form of support or identifying a clear first point of contact. It was particularly difficult to disaggregate the support systems in place and who to seek advice and help from in policies which covered the harassment and complaints procedure for *both* staff and students. Indeed, many students reported that they did not think the complaints procedure was very clear. The multiple forms of help identified within policy documents may be one contributing factor to this lack of clarity.

Training and education

Students' Unions

In the audit form SUs were asked whether they provided training on lad culture or delivered consent workshops. Out of the 20 unions which sent through policy, less than half reported having either lad culture training (36%) or consent workshops (36%). The results of the broader survey showed an even lower proportion of unions delivering training on lad culture (11%).

The majority of policies we received did not provide detailed information around what training would be provided to staff and/or students. Where training was mentioned it tended to be in reference to equality and diversity training for staff. There was much less evidence of what SUs were doing to raise awareness of lad culture behaviour to the student body as a whole, apart from the relatively low number of unions delivering lad culture or consent workshops.

Beyond equality and diversity training there were a few examples (below) of unions' intentions to deliver training around zero tolerance and safe space, including in one example, training in how to address complaints of sexual harassment:

'All staff will be required to partake in equality and diversity training [...] Part of the responsibility of organised student groups is that at least one member of its governing committee attends equality and diversity training organised by [Union] on an annual basis.' (*Equality and Diversity Policy*)

'Student activity group Presidents will receive specific training on [union] safe space policy at the start of each academic year or when they are elected. These presidents have the responsibility to ensure this policy is enacted at their event..' (*Safe Space Policy*)

'In order to enforce the policy, Union members and staff at the Union are supported in understanding the issues [of zero tolerance] in order to raise awareness about them and to respond sensitively to first disclosure. The Union must have a rolling (annual) training programme for frontline staff, who are most likely to be first responders. Their line managers are able to guide the victim through the complaints programme, refer to appropriate services on and off campus, and respond appropriately. The first responder should help the student make an informed choice, and not make the choice for them. There will be training at the annual activities conference that incorporate the zero tolerance policy for both societies and sports clubs (*zero tolerance policy*).

Institutions

Only 12.5% of SUs reported that there was training in place for students on lad culture, with only 22% reporting that their institution delivered lad culture presentations to students. We also asked SUs whether their institution provided training around consent in the curriculum; 88% said 'no' and only 6% said 'yes'. Shockingly, 78% of SUs also reported

there was *no* active process for educating students about policies and procedures related to lad culture.

Table 5: Education of students about lad culture policies

Institution	No. of institutions
Provided copies of policies	4 (12.5%)
Provided copies of procedures	2 (6.3%)
Training	4 (12.5)
Presentations	7 (21.9%)
No active process	25 (78.1%)

Institutions provided student officers with more training than any other group, although the proportion of institutions that delivered this training was still only 62%. Second highest was student union staff (50%) while training to academic staff was 41% and non-academic staff 35%. Worryingly, an even smaller proportion of institutions were reported to deliver training to presidents of sport's clubs and presidents of societies (29% and 27% respectively). This is despite the findings from 'That's what She Said' which shows these are the people who would benefit most from such training given the prevalence of lad culture within sports clubs and at social events.

Where training was provided to the groups identified in the survey, 89% of SUs reported that this included equality and diversity training. Far fewer groups were trained on issues very relevant to lad culture. For instance, only 29% of SUs reported staff, student officers or presidents of sports clubs and societies were trained on zero tolerance. Just over half of respondents reported that these groups got training on sexual harassment.

Table 6: Training delivered by institutions

Training delivered to staff/ student groups	
SU officers	61.8%
SU staff	50.0%
Academic staff	41.2%
Non-Academic staff	38.2%
Student staff	35.3%
Presidents of sports clubs	29.4%
Presidents of societies	26.5%

Table 7: Types of training delivered

What are these groups trained on?	
Bullying	57.1%
Sexual harassment	53.6%
Anti-discrimination	53.6%
Dignity at work	39.3%
E&D	89.3%
Substance and alcohol abuse	21.4%
Social responsibility	0%
Zero tolerance	28.6%

The qualitative analysis showed equality and diversity training was the training most referred to in policy and this training was most commonly delivered to staff. There was less evidence on how institutions rolled out equality and diversity training to student union staff, societies and sports clubs as well as students more broadly. There was feedback from one SU that their institution delivered training to clubs and societies online through their equal opportunities programme. In one institution's strategic equality plan there was also information on how the institution would train sabbatical officers annually in addition to the equality training delivered to staff.

How equality and diversity training was delivered varied according to the institution and it was not clear what level of training this would involve. For example, in some institutions' policies it was outlined how equality and diversity training would be delivered online for all new staff or through the induction period. At other institutions, staff training provided on equality and diversity was more likely to depend on their role within the institution or personal interest:

'the University is committed [...] to ensure that every member of staff undertakes equality and diversity training that is *appropriate to their role* within the University [...] staff can complete an online equality e-learning package, available following a request to a Department or College.' (*Online Equality and Diversity training*)

Further information is needed about these equality and diversity training programmes in order to assess how well they address elements of 'lad culture.'

Outcome

Students' Unions

Although the outcome of a policy is hard to evaluate based only on the policy document, there were a number of innovative campaigns and other initiatives run by SUs to implement policies relevant to tackling lad culture which were reported on the online survey. Further qualitative research would be needed to capture the work unions do at the local level and the impact these campaigns might have on students. However, some unions were able to show evidence of engagement with issues of lad culture and harassment, and provided some very good examples of local initiatives.

Case study: Exeter

Campaign: Never Okay campaign against sexual harassment

How it was implemented: Information was given about sexual harassment online. The campaign encouraged people to sign the Never OK pledge and challenge sexual harassment. The campaign also gave information online for how to get support and how to share your story. There was also a 'never ok' live debate.

Outcome: Increased awareness around issues of sexual harassment and the structures in place to support victims of sexual harassment.

Case Study: UCL

Campaign: Zero tolerance

How it was implemented: Clubs and societies were asked to pledge support for the zero tolerance campaign.

Outcome: 160 clubs signed and were promoted as having done so by the unions during freshers' week. Awareness was also raised within the university and a wide number of actors who are in direct contact with students were engaged.

Case study: Oxford

Campaign: Sexual Consent Workshops

How was it implemented: In 2014 Freshers' Week, OUSU's Sexual Consent Workshops ran for undergraduate freshers at all 30 of the Oxford colleges which admit undergraduates. In over 20 colleges, the workshops were compulsory. Workshops were also held for graduate freshers at 10 colleges. The workshops lasted for one hour, and took place in groups of about 10 students. All facilitators were trained by OUSU, by the Vice-President (Women), the Graduate Women's Officer, or the Women's Campaign Officer. Generally, trained peers from the relevant college facilitated workshops, though OUSU can also provide 'top-up'

facilitators from other colleges. All materials for the OUSU Sexual Consent Workshops were written by OUSU Vice-Presidents (Women), in collaboration with OSARCC (Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre). They have also helped other student unions to set up similar projects, and have provided resources to other women's officers.

Outcome: Around 4000 new students were reached and taught about sexual consent.

Case study: Bristol

Campaign: Take Pride in UBU

Implementation: Take Pride in UBU was an evidence-based campaign, using NUS' 'Out in Sports' report. It involved the nomination of Equality Officers who were trained and then responsible for implementing zero tolerance policy within sports clubs and societies throughout the year. There was also an accreditation scheme for clubs which followed the equality and diversity criteria set up by the union.

Outcome:

Ten clubs accredited so far, with an equality officer in place. There have also been seven training sessions and events organised over the year.

Institutions

Unlike students' unions, institutions are not campaigning or membership-based organisations. We therefore used the information provided on the institution's training programmes and existing support services for victims of harassment to measure the 'outcome' and how effectively institutions' policies were being implemented.

As shown above, while a high proportion of institutions were shown to provide counselling services and signpost to the police, there was definitely room to improve partnerships with local services and to create support meeting groups. There was also serious gaps in the level of training programmes delivered to staff and students on lad culture and within the curriculum more broadly.

We also found some policies which referred to publicity events arranged by the institution which may have helped to tackle lad culture. For example, in one policy there was reference to how the institution had supported and promoted International Women's Day. The same institution also had a dignity and respect poster campaign. Another institution had proposed to do a publicity campaign around how to deal with complaints of harassment (although it is unclear whether or not this had been implemented).

We hope to collect more detailed examples of how training programmes have been implemented and what support services are in place within the pilot phase of this project to better measure the 'outcome' of policies.

Discussion

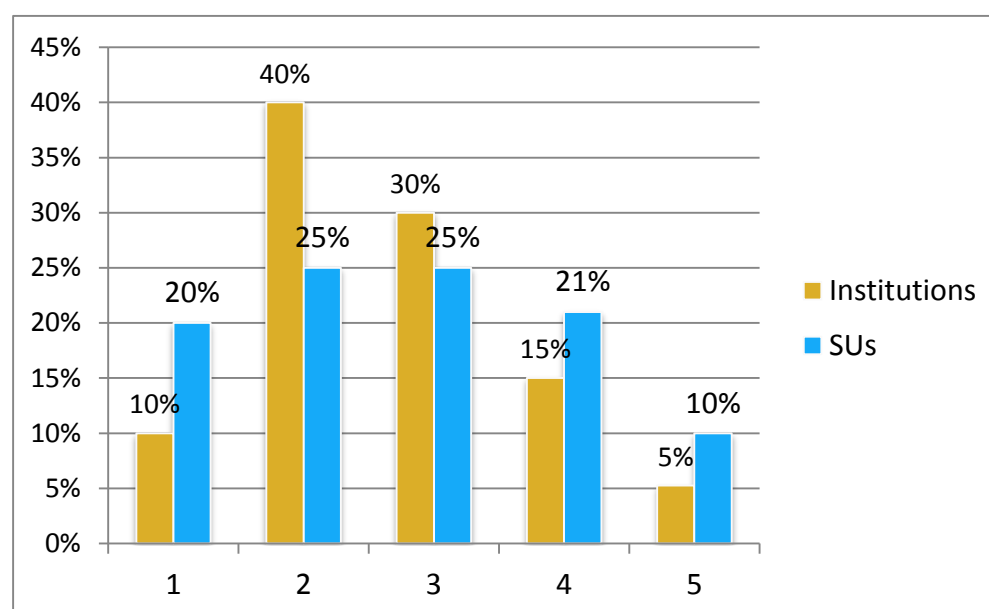
A comparison of students' unions and institutions' policies

Comparing SUs and institutions

Individual SUs and institutions were ranked on a scale of one (worst) to five (best) depending on how well they met the five criteria outlined in the methodology section.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that students' unions did slightly better than institutions with an average score of 2.75 compared to 2.65 for institutions (figure 3). However, unions were more dispersed than institutions with higher scores at the top and bottom end of the scoring grid. Institutions were more concentrated around scores of 2 and 3 and had fewer outliers. This shows the difficulty of adopting a 'one size fits all' approach to tackling lad culture because of the diversity of situations locally and the difference in performance by SUs and institutions to tackle lad culture effectively.

Figure 2: Ranking of SUs and Institutions



The results from the survey also showed that both SUs and institutions had very similar policies in place in terms of equality and diversity, bullying and anti-discrimination policy (see figure 1). However, there were some clear differences that showed, on the whole, SUs are doing more to address lad culture in higher education than institutions.

Most significant was the fact that twice as many SUs were reported to have zero tolerance policies towards sexual harassment compared to institutions. As NUS' 'Hidden Marks' report explains, these policies are key for tackling sexual harassment and sexual violence connected to lad culture as they clearly define what sexual harassment is and send out a strong message that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

In addition to zero tolerance policies, a greater number of SUs were reported to have a policy around sexual harassment (65%) compared to institutions (51%) and they were much more likely to have a policy that covers the display of sexist and discriminatory material (48% compared to only 11% of institutions.) This was also reflected in the qualitative analysis which identified SU policy seeking to regulate media that might be viewed as sexist, objectifying, offensive or discriminatory. No such equivalent information was found within institutional policy.

While institutions did have policies in place that could address lad culture- namely equality and diversity and bullying and harassment policy, the analysis of these policies showed that they only briefly covered gender related issues, with little clarity given to defining or addressing sexist behaviour or sexual harassment. This is discussed in more detail below.

Within both SU and institution policy however, there were clearly missed opportunities to further tackle 'lad culture.' The audit has shown the term lad culture is not commonly used or defined in policy with only one SU having a specific 'anti-lad culture' policy in place. In addition, only 51% of institutions and 35% of SU's were reported to have substance and alcohol abuse policy. The few alcohol and drugs policies which were sent through (six in total, four from institutions and two from SUs) did not appear to have any relevance to tackling lad culture. For example, there was no information about the impact of alcohol on fuelling sexual harassment and assault and means to address this.

In terms of the support services and programmes in place for victims of sexual violence or harassment, both SU's and institutions performed similarly, with SUs doing marginally better: 100% of SUs were reported to signpost to counselling services compared to 94% of institutions reported to have counselling services. Signposting to police was also high but could be higher (85% for SU and 72% for institutions). A much lower percentage of SUs and institutions were reported to have partnerships with third parties to support victims (52% and 47% respectively). An extremely small proportion of SUs and institutions provided support groups, although again, SUs were more likely to provide this service (11% of SUs compared to only 3% of institutions.)

Signposting to support services and programmes in place for staff/ students who have faced harassment and bullying were also particularly poor. Institutions' policy was marginally better at highlighting a range of services and support networks for those who have experienced bullying or harassment (particularly for staff) even if these services tended to be generalist rather than specific services for victims of sexual violence.

A common problem affecting reporting incidents of sexual harassment and assault in both SUs and institutions was around clarity. Less than half of SUs (47%) reported their institution had a clear reporting procedure and only 41% of SUs said they had a third party crime reporting process in place. Indeed, the qualitative analysis shows that both SU and institution complaints policy wasn't always accessible, appropriate or easy to navigate for victims of sexual assault or violence.

Of significant concern was the lack of activity by either body to promote and embed policies relevant to tackle lad culture (see table 3). Respondents claimed that SU policy was more visibly exposed compared to institutions' (33% compared to 6%) but arguably both these figures are far too low in order to have a real impact on raising awareness of lad culture. While over 90% of SU and institutional policies were reported to be available online, only 25% of SUs promoted policy through fresher's week activities and a similar proportion of institutions (24%) promoted policy through the induction process. Only 18% of institutions were reported to promote policy through student handbooks and fewer SUs (13%) were reported to promote policy through fresher's welcome packs. Poor promotion of policy was accompanied by minimal training delivered to staff and students on lad culture either by the SU or the institution.

Most Frequent Problems

Most respondents reported a difficulty in finding information from their institution when completing this survey, and more generally, to find the relevant policy when they needed it. While institutions seem to do well at putting their policies online, without clear signposting or advertising, students might not know where to look for them or under which category they are displayed.

There is also a lack of specificity; the majority of equality and diversity policies as well as complaints and reporting procedures are extremely vague and only rarely mention lad culture or 'sexual harassment'. The numerous contacts provided which staff or students could go to when they have suffered from an aggression or sexual harassment also contributes to making procedures unclear.

Finally, students' unions reported the following challenges in the implementation of policies:

- The lack of knowledge/training for both sabbatical officers and their staff
- The lack of resources to take on training and develop policy
- A real difficulty in making policy interesting to students, and raising awareness on documents often considered as 'dry'
- The relationship between autonomous liberation campaigns and unions' policies and actions; whose role is it to combat lad culture?
- The fact that liberation officers are often part-time, and therefore limited in time and resources they can allocate to lad culture campaigns
- The high turnover of students and sabbatical officers means that there is a loss of knowledge from one year to another and a constant need to re-do the same campaigns and trainings

"It's difficult to implement a lot of these policies in practice because staff are often confused around what to do if a student makes a complaint against another student for harassment or discrimination." (Respondent to the survey)

"They are dry and we believe that it is important for students to buy into them, and understand them, and how it affects their behaviour. This is sometimes problematic, as it involves a cultural change." (Respondent to the survey)

"All of the policies bar the zero tolerance policy and the publicity materials are actually institutional policies that apply to staff and student activity at the union. Therefore we don't have direct jurisdiction over them." (Respondent to the survey)

Quality of policies

The research findings show that institutions and SUs have a wide range of policies in place that could be used to tackle 'lad culture.' Equality and diversity and bullying and harassment policies are key examples of how a positive ethos and value system can be promoted to address behaviours such as sexual harassment and assault. However, presently, the majority of policies remain generalist rather than specific to lad culture where sexual harassment and assault isn't defined clearly or at all.

The key question is therefore whether information on lad culture should be incorporated into these existing policies or whether a separate policy is needed. A separate policy may enable the SU or institution to implement a targeted approach to tackle lad culture. However, it may also mean lad culture strategies become disconnected from initiatives to increase equality and diversity more broadly. This is important given that lad culture

impacts not just on women (although they are disproportionately affected) but on anyone who is impacted by the sexist and homophobic behaviour that can accompany 'lad culture.'

Further consideration also needs to be given to the quality of the complaints and disciplinary procedures in place to respond to cases of sexual harassment and assault. The current information on how to deal with discrimination, bullying and harassment (either by staff or students) where the complainant is encouraged to resolve the matter 'informally' first is clearly inappropriate for victims of sexual violence. Similarly, the policies received included very little information on the specific support services available for victims of sexual harassment or assault or how a first point of contact should respond to such cases.

In addition, it remains unclear how cross-institutional policies were to address lad culture. For instance, some SUs reported that they predominately relied on their institution's policies (such as equality and diversity or bullying and harassment policy) rather than creating their own. While this isn't necessarily problematic, it will undoubtedly remain important for SUs and their partner institution to work collaboratively to create policy to tackle lad culture and to ensure policy is embedded across their university. Further research is needed in order to understand how this can take place, including examples of where effective cross-institutional policy has already been implemented.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Policy

- 1) There is currently a disparity between what SUs and institutions are doing to address lad culture - with SUs more likely to have relevant policies. This needs to be addressed by SUs and institutions working together to further identify and address gaps in policy provision and to develop comprehensive cross- institutional policy that can tackle lad culture.
- 2) Institutions and SUs should consider how policy on lad culture can be integrated within a range of existing policy, including equality and diversity policy and bullying and harassment policy. These policies should clearly define and give examples of sexist behaviour and discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and violence and how this behaviour will not be tolerated.
- 3) Institutions and SUs should work to develop their complaints and disciplinary policy so they adequately address cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence. Policy should clearly outline:
 - A clear definition of sexual harassment;
 - A first point of contact to report an incident at the university;
 - Information on further points of contact outside the university, including signposting to the local police;
 - Information on specialist and non-specialist support services available at the university and in the local area.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) should produce guidance to support this process.

- 4) Institutions and SUs need to actively promote policies that address lad culture through routes such as freshers' packs and student handbooks and set out a clear plan for doing so.
- 5) SUs and institutions should look at how to highlight lad culture related behaviour within policies on alcohol and drug use.

Training and Education

- 1) Institutions should embed information on lad culture throughout student orientation and within the curriculum.
- 2) Institutions and SUs should consider how education on lad culture can be integrated within a range of existing workshops, including equality and diversity training and consent workshops. Institutions need to fully resource and implement these. Targeted training should be developed for presidents of sports clubs and societies in particular.
- 3) Institutions should ensure staff (academic and non-academic) are trained on lad culture.
- 4) SUs should ensure there is training on lad culture for students' union staff (elected and non-elected).

5) SUs should engage with their student welfare and advice services to ensure they have the necessary training to support victims of sexual harassment and violence.

6) Institutions should engage with their counselling services and staff designed to deal with equality and diversity issues (such as harassment advisors) to see how trained they are to respond appropriately to cases of sexual harassment and violence.

Victim Support programmes

1) Institutions should ensure there are clear care pathways into specialised support for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

2) SUs and institutions should have clear signposting to local police stations, sexual health services, counselling and other services available for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

3) SUs and institutions should seek to improve links with third party organisations which can provide support to victims.

4) Support groups organised by institutions are currently non-existent. Institutions should partner with SUs to implement safe spaces and support groups to improve the support services available to victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

5) Student union women's officers are often a first point of advice and support for women students in relation to incidents of sexual harassment. Having a well-supported women's officer within students' union structures, as well as student women's groups, provides a further level of peer support on campus.

In addition, NUS recommends that:

As there continues to be a lack of cohesive and effective response to tackling lad culture within higher education, it is vital that Universities UK and other relevant organisations work together to develop national guidance on how universities can develop preventative and responsive measures to tackle lad culture.

Appendix

Lad Culture Audit Guidance Form

Policy evaluation is the most important aspect of this audit on lad culture, and it complements the online survey. It is essential that you provide us with the content of the policies and procedures you mention in the survey so that we can assess their effectiveness.

Please attach supporting evidence for all the items you tick, such as copy of the policy, job description, link to the relevant web page, etc.

Tips and Guidance

How to find all these documents:

1. Print the questionnaire and the guidance form, cross items as you find the relevant documents.
2. Check your institution website. There must be an ethics or an 'about' section with general information on the university's values.
3. **Talk to staff.** Here are some key members of staff at your university who should be able to help:
 - Department/school secretary or administrative assistant
 - Equality and Diversity Officer
 - Human Resources
 - Staff union (UCU, Unison, etc)

All this information should be public or easily available; there are not confidential data about the institution and therefore there is no reason why staff wouldn't help you in accessing them.

4. Talk to **staff representatives** before starting, they might be interested in taking part in the audit and supporting you with filling out the survey.
5. For policies and procedures internal to your union, just ask a member of staff.
6. Collect all the required documents, scan them if they are not available online or just copy the url in this form where appropriate.
7. Complete the online survey.
8. Send this completed form and the documents you have collected to:
ladculture@nus.org.uk

Institution:**Name:****Union:****Email address:****Institutions**

Your institution has policy on lad culture: (tick as appropriate)

Bullying, harassment and victimisation	
Sexual harassment and assault	
Anti-discrimination	
Dignity at work	
Equality and Diversity	
Substance and alcohol abuse	
Social responsibility policy	
Zero tolerance policy	

Your institution has policy on sexist media and/or advertising:

Yes	
No	

Your institution has training schemes for: (tick as appropriate)

Academic staff	
Non-academic staff	
Student union staff	
Student staff (bar, library, etc.)	
Student union officers	
President/head of sports clubs	
President/head of clubs and societies	
Students	

Your institution provides support to victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault: (tick as appropriate)

Clear reporting procedure	
Counselling services	
Support meeting groups	
Partnership with local services	
Sign-posting to the local police station	
Access to health services/NHS	

Students' Union

Your students' union has policy on lad culture: (tick as appropriate)

Bullying, harassment and victimisation	
Sexual harassment and assault	
Anti-discrimination	
Dignity at work	
Equality and Diversity	
Substance and alcohol abuse	
Social responsibility policy	
Zero tolerance policy	
Safe space	

Your students' union has policy on sexist media and/or advertising:

Yes	
No	

Your students' union provides training on lad culture:

Yes	
No	

Your students' union runs consent workshops:

Yes	
No	

Your students' union provides support to victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault:
(tick as appropriate)

Third party reporting crime	
Support meeting groups	
Safe space	
Partnership with local services – please specify	
Partnership with feminist/survivor organisations (Refuge, Rape Crisis, etc.)	
Sign-posting to counselling services	
Sign-posting to the local police station	

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