

kNOWMORE!

NUS-USI Student Consent Survey

**NUS-USI survey executive summary and
recommendations on non-consensual sexual
experiences of students in Northern Ireland.**

***Content Warning:** You may find some of the content of this report upsetting. Please do not hesitate to contact the organisations below if you feel distressed or want to talk to someone.

NEXUS NI - Website: <http://www.nexusni.org/>
Contact number: 028 9032 6803

24hr Helpline - 24 hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline:
0808 802 1414

ROWAN - Website: <http://therowan.net/>
Contact number: 0800 389 4424

Lifeline – Website: <http://www.lifelinehelpline.info/>
Contact number: 0808 808 8000

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Foreword

BY Olivia Potter-Hughes
NUS-USI President 2017-19



I want to start by thanking Jessica Elder, former NUS-USI Welfare Officer for envisioning this research and creating the survey, and the Advisory Committee of academics, student representatives, NGO and charity organisations who shaped, formed, monitored and ensured the survey was as inclusive and representative as possible.

A massive thank you to everyone who took part in this survey. The questions were at times potentially very triggering and I am eternally grateful to every person who took the time to fill it out. I also wish to take this opportunity to praise those at Queen's University who created the ground-breaking Score survey which inspired and led to the creation of this survey.

Non-consensual sexual experiences are matters of massive concern for both students and wider society and this is reflected in the fact that more than 2,200 students across Northern Ireland completed our kNow MORE survey between December 2018 and February 2019. This survey was the first of its kind to include all further education institutes across NI and the first to include sixteen year olds and over within that group.

One of the key aims of this survey was to understand where investment and services should be directed to have the most impact and deliver the highest level of support for people who have experienced non-consensual sexual behaviour.

We hope that this research sparks action from government and from education institutions to deliver additional support and services for people who have experienced sexual violence, and to deliver additional resources to promote consent in wider society and on campus.

We hope that this research will also encourage government and schools to review their relationship and sex education (RSE) programmes to ensure that the information provided puts consent at the centre of provision and that all RSE delivered in schools is

inclusive and comprehensive. If young people are provided with information in RSE in schools regarding consent, this would be a positive and pro-active measure and an early intervention which could help prevent some incidents of sexual violence further down the line.

We hope that the survey findings will help higher and further education institutions and student's unions across the country to create a sexual violence policy with clear pathways within the college or university for student reporting. It will also give us a platform to develop toolkits for educational campaigns & policies.

We also believe that legislation on rape in Northern Ireland, the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 doesn't accurately deliver a full definition of rape and this therefore means that some who commit what could be seen as rape, are tried for a lesser offence of sexual assault.

Sexual violence is an issue that must be systematically addressed and prevented in a joined-up way across government from the Department of Education, to the Department for the Economy, Department of Health and the Executive Office here. This is a cross-cutting issue and requires urgent and decisive action that is co-ordinated across departments in a pro-active and coherent way to achieve tangible outcomes in addressing this deeply distressing matter.

Students here and around the world have constantly and consistently pointed the way towards a better future, and have successfully campaigned to deliver it. NUS-USI wants to see this report spark action from government, and we will utilise the strong evidence base this survey provides to campaign robustly to deliver the vitally important progress needed to address sexual assault.



Executive Summary

This report contains many deeply disturbing findings of the upsetting extent of sexual violence that unfortunately are not a shock to sexual violence support organisations and campaigners across the country. It is staggering to hear that 28% of students surveyed had experienced some degree of unwanted sexual behaviour during their time at university or college. Of these, only 5% who had told someone about their experiences had formally reported, it with 76% believing it wasn't serious enough to report.

5%, (over 100 students) had experienced attempted rape and 5% had been raped. Of those who had experienced rape only 3 in 10 (30%) had sought treatment regarding sexual health or emergency contraception. Only 15% of those who told someone about their experiences formally reported the incident. Of those who didn't formally report the incident over half (57%) didn't want to think about it anymore and 54% felt ashamed or embarrassed about the incident. Overall 1 in 10 (10%) had another student confide in them about being raped.

There is a significant disparity between the views of non-victims of this type of behaviour and those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour. Amongst those who had never experienced rape, the majority (93%) believed that our definition was considered to be rape. However, amongst those who had experienced these behaviours only half (46%) considered this as rape. The majority (92%) of those who had not experienced behaviours of someone carrying out attempted rape, considered our definition to be attempted rape. However, only 1 in 3 (35%) of those who had experienced these behaviours considered themselves to have experienced attempted rape.

These troubling disparities clearly illustrate the need for drastic and immediate reform to Relationship Sex Education in Northern Ireland. It is imperative that we tackle the culture of shame, stigma and victim blaming in Northern Ireland, and significantly improve resources given to specialised services to support victims.

28% of respondents to the survey had experienced another student confiding in them about having received some form of unwanted sexual behaviour. Over half (56%) of those who had been sexually assaulted told someone else about the experience. 9 in 10 (90%) had told a friend about the incident. 1 in 10 (10%) respondents had another student confided in them about an attempted rape and almost half (47%) of those

experiencing being raped told someone about their experience with friends being the main group of people confided in (80%).

The extent of under reporting occurs due to not considering the assault to be serious enough and the number of survivors confiding in friends highlights how imperative it is that students receive more education on responding to sexual violence and understanding it, so we can help our friends and family if they ever experience sexual violence. This can be done through reform to Relationship Sex Education and the implementation of consent classes across all institutions.

Additionally, disabled students are significantly more likely to have experienced rape on more than three occasions and therefore be at risk of being in a situation of ongoing sexual abuse. Specific measures must be taken to address this. It is important to consider the accessibility of victim support services themselves and the materials provided by services. In order to help prevent this specific form of sexual violence the sexuality of disabled people should be openly acknowledged and discussed in good quality, accessible Relationship Sex Education at a school level as well as in consent training on campus.

Full recommendations available on page 20:

1. Government and schools must review their relationship and sex education (RSE).
2. Government and education institutions must deliver additional support and services for victims/survivors.
3. Existing support services should be better promoted and resourced by government and education institutions.
4. Provision must be provided for training for staff on addressing sexual violence at tertiary education institutions.
5. The legal definition of rape must be amended.
6. Additional resources must be delivered to promote consent in wider society and on campus.
7. Victim-blaming must be stopped and the attitudes of wider society need to be addressed.

Research Findings

*The term 'unwanted' in this situation means non-consensual, meaning that you have not agreed or have not had the freedom or capacity to agree to the experience.

Sexual Harassment - Unwanted sexual behaviour

Summary

The survey has found that there are around 1 in 3 students in Northern Ireland, responding to our survey, who are being harassed to some degree. A quarter (23%) have experienced unwanted verbal comments of a sexual nature and 15% have experienced unwanted sexual comments via media.

Only 5% of those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, and told someone about it, formally reported the incident. The main reasons for not formally reporting what had happened to them was a feeling that it wasn't serious enough (76%) or it wasn't felt to be a crime (41%).

Overall experiences

Overall, 1 in 3 had experienced some degree of unwanted sexual behaviour with a quarter (23%) experiencing unwanted verbal comments of a sexual nature and 15% receiving unwanted sexual comments via media.

Of those who had experienced these behaviors, unwanted verbal comments are significantly more likely to be experienced amongst HE students, trans and non-binary students and disabled students.

Unwanted sexual comments are most likely to be experienced by women, trans and non-binary students.

Unwanted genital exposure is most likely to be experienced by women.

Other students' experiences

28% of respondents had another student confide in them about having received some form of unwanted sexual behaviour.

Respondents who had another student confide in them that they had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour were significantly more likely to be women and lesbians.

Sexual harassment

Amongst those who had not experienced any unwanted sexual behaviour 8 in 10 (79%) considered comments of a sexual nature or exposure to sexual gestures or photographs/videos to be sexual harassment.

Respondents who were HE students and women were more likely than average to consider these sorts of experiences to be sexual harassment.

However, of those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour only half (50%) considered themselves to have been sexually harassed.

Women are significantly more likely than men (and other gender types) to have been sexually harassed.

Men are significantly less likely than women, or other gender groups, to not report their experiences.

Person(s) responsible

Over half of those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour (56%) had been harassed by a stranger. 1 in 5 (19%) had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour from an acquaintance and 10% by a friend.

A quarter (23%) were sexually harassed by someone who was connected to their institution.

Care experienced students were significantly more likely than those who weren't care experienced to have been sexually harassed by someone connected to their institution.

Where behaviour occurred

17% experienced unwanted sexual behaviour on college/university property.

Of the majority who's experience of unwanted sexual behaviour happened elsewhere a third (35%) occurred in a public club or pub. 1 in 5 (21%) were harassed on the street.

Those who experienced sexual harassment on college/university property were significantly more likely to be men, those aged 30+ and care experienced students.

Those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour in a public pub or club were most likely to be HE students and 23-29 year olds.

Talking about experiences

Over half (55%) of those experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour told someone else that this had happened to them.

Men are significantly less likely than women, or other gender groups, to not report their experiences of unwanted sexual behaviour

Disabled students are most likely to have told family, counselling services and organisations/ charities about their experiences.

Of those who did tell somebody about what had happened to them the majority (90%) told friends about it.

4 in 10 (41%), however, did not tell anyone about their experience.

The main reason for not telling anyone about their experience was because they didn't think it was serious enough (67%). 1 in 3 (30%) didn't feel it was a crime. Other reasons for not reporting the incident included not wanting to think about it anymore (22%), feeling ashamed/embarrassed (21%) and not wanting anyone else to know (20%).

Disabled students are most likely to have not told anyone about their experience because they felt ashamed or embarrassed, didn't think they would be believed or didn't want the person who did it to them to get into trouble.

Formally reporting experiences

Only 5% of those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour, and told someone about it, formally reported the incident.

As was seen with reasons for not telling anyone about the incident the main reasons for not formally reporting it were because they didn't think it was serious enough (76%), they didn't feel it was a crime (41%), they didn't want to think about it anymore (21%) and they felt ashamed/embarrassed (20%).

Disabled students are most likely to have not formally reported the incident because they didn't think they would be believed or didn't want to have to think about it anymore.

Frequency of experiencing unwanted sexual behaviour

2 in 3 respondents (63%) who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour had this occur to them more than once whilst they were at their current college/university.

Those who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour on 2 occasions were significantly more likely to be pansexual.

Those who had experienced these behaviours on more than 3 occasions were significantly more likely to be disabled students.

Sexual Assault - Unwanted kissing

1 in 8 (12%) respondents reported that they had experienced unwanted kissing with strangers being the main offenders of this unwanted behaviour. There is disparity in the proportion of victims of unwanted kissing perceiving this type of behaviour to be sexual assault, compared to other peoples' perceptions of this type of behaviour, with 4 in 10 victims and 7 in 10 non-victims believing this behaviour to be sexual assault.

Only 6% who had experienced unwanted kissing formally reported the incident. Of those who didn't formally report the incident 7 in 10 (69%) didn't feel it was serious enough and almost half (45%) didn't feel it was a crime.

Overall experiences

1 in 8 (12%) respondents had experienced unwanted kissing during their time at college/university.

Those who have experienced unwanted kissing are significantly more likely to be women and lesbians.

Other students' experiences

Almost 1 in 5 (18%) had another student confide in them that they too had experienced unwanted kissing.

Women and lesbians are significantly more likely to have another student confide in them that they too have experienced unwanted kissing.

Kissing as sexual assault

7 in 10 (71%) of those who had never experienced unwanted kissing considered this behaviour to be sexual assault

Women, those aged 23-29 and gay students are most likely to consider unwanted kissing to be sexual assault.

However, only 4 in 10 (40%) of those who had experienced unwanted kissing feel that they have been sexually assaulted.

Men are significantly more likely than women and other gender groups to not consider themselves to have been sexually assaulted when experiencing unwanted kissing.

Person(s) responsible

4 in 10 (41%) of those who had experienced unwanted kissing had a stranger do this to them. A quarter had been kissed by an acquaintance (25%) and 18% by a friend.

1 in 3 (35%) of those who had experienced unwanted kissing had a person who do this to them who was connected to their institution.

Where experience took place

16% who had experienced unwanted kissing experienced this on college/university grounds. 6 in 10 (59%) had been kissed unwillingly in a public pub or club.

Men are significantly more likely to have had their experience of unwanted kissing occur on college/university property.

HE students are most likely to have experienced unwanted kissing in a public pub or club.

Talking about experiences

Half (50%) of those who had been kissed unwillingly had told someone that this had happened to them. 9 in 10 (90%) had told a friend about their experience.

Just over half (56%) did not tell anyone about their experience because they didn't think it was serious enough. 1 in 3 (34%) didn't feel it was a crime and a third (29%) felt ashamed/embarrassed about the experience.

Formally reporting experiences

Only 6% who had experienced unwanted kissing formally reported the incident.

Of those who did not formally report their experience of unwanted kissing 7 in 10 (69%) didn't feel it was serious enough and almost half (45%) didn't feel it was a crime.

Frequency of experiencing unwanted kissing

Just over half (55%) of those who had experienced unwanted kissing had this happen to them more than once.

Sexual Assault - Unwanted touching

Summary

1 in 4 respondents had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature, in particular being touched inappropriately. Amongst those who had not experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature the majority (87%) considered this type of behaviour to be sexual assault, however, just under half (45%) of those who had actually experienced unwanted touching of this kind believed they had been sexually assaulted.

Only 4% of those who had been touched unwillingly had formally reported the incident with the main reason for not reporting it being that they didn't feel it was serious enough (73%).

Overall experiences

Overall 20% had been touched inappropriately (e.g. pinched, groped, slapped), 8% had been touched in their private areas and 6% had experienced unwanted exposure of their body.

Inappropriate touching was significantly more likely to be experienced by women.

Unwanted touching of private areas was most likely to have been experienced by disabled students.

Women and lesbians were significantly more likely than other groups to have experienced unwanted exposure of their body.

Other students' experiences

1 in 5 (21%) had another student confide in them that they had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature.

Women and lesbians are significantly more likely than other demographic groups to have another student confide in them that they had been touched in this way.

Unwanted touching as sexual assault

Amongst those who had not experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature the majority (87%) felt that this type of behaviour was sexual assault.

Women and over 18 year olds are significantly more likely than other groups to consider unwanted touching to be sexual assault.

Just under half (45%) of those who had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature believed they had been sexually assaulted.

Of those respondents experiencing unwanted touching women and disabled students are most likely to feel they have been sexually assaulted.

Person(s) responsible

Over half (57%) of those who had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature had been touched by a stranger. 18% had been touched by an acquaintance.

Strangers are more likely to have assaulted 23-29 year olds with FE students being most likely to be assaulted by a friend.

Over a quarter (28%) were assaulted by someone connected to their institution.

Where behaviour occurred

16% of those who had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature experienced the incident on college/university grounds. Of those who had experienced the incident at another place 7 in 10 (70%) happened in a public bar or club.

HE students, men and 18-29 year olds experienced this in a public pub or club.

Talking about experience

Over half (56%) of those who had been touched in a sexual way told someone else about the experience. 9 in 10 (90%) had told a friend about the incident.

HE students are significantly more likely than FE students to tell somebody about their experience of unwanted touching. 23-29 year olds were most likely to have told a friend about their experience.

The main reason for not reporting the incident was because they didn't think it was serious enough (59%). 1 in 3 (31%) didn't feel it was a crime and a quarter (27%) didn't tell anyone about their experience because they didn't want to think about it anymore.

Those who felt they didn't think the incident was serious enough to tell anybody else about it were significantly more likely to be 18-22 year olds.

FE students were significantly more likely than HE students to not tell anyone because think they would be believed.

Formally reporting of incident

Only 4% of those who had been touched unwillingly formally reported the incident.

As seen previously the main reason for not formally reporting the incident was because they didn't feel it was serious enough (73%).

Frequency of experiencing unwanted touching

2 in 3 (63%) of those who had experienced any unwanted touching of a sexual nature had had similar experiences on more than one occasion.

***CONTENT WARNING: The following questions are at times graphic in nature.**

Attempted rape

Summary

Overall 5% of respondents had experienced unwanted touching where someone tried to force themselves on them in a sexual way. However, 2 in 3 didn't believe that what had happened to them was considered to be attempted rape.

Of those experiencing attempted rape only 1 in 5 had sought treatment regarding sexual health or emergency contraception.

Only 1 in 10 (11%) incidents of attempted rape were formally reported. Of those who did not formally report their experience 57% didn't feel it was serious enough and 56% didn't want to think about it anymore. Feeling ashamed/embarrassed (51%) and feeling that they wouldn't be believed (47%) were also reasons for not formally reporting what had happened to them.

Overall experience

5% of respondents had experienced attempted rape during their time as a student.

Of those who had experienced attempted rape it was women and disabled students who were most likely to have experienced this.

Treatment sought

Of those who had experienced attempted rape only 1 in 5 (19%) had sought treatment regarding sexual health or emergency contraception. The main places where treatment was sought were a sexual health clinic or their GP.

Experience considered as attempted rape

The majority (92%) of those who had not experienced an unwanted sexual experience where someone attempted to insert their finger(s), genitals, or an object into their mouth, anus or vagina during their time at their current university or college, considered these behaviours to be attempted rape

However, only 1 in 3 (35%) of those who had experienced an unwanted sexual experience where someone attempted to insert their finger(s), genitals, or an object into their mouth, anus or vagina during their time at university or college considered themselves to have experienced attempted rape.

Other students' experiences

1 in 10 (10%) respondents had another student confide in them about an attempted rape.

Women and disabled students are significantly more likely than other groups to have had another student confide in them about an attempted rape.

Person(s) responsible

1 in 4 (24%) of those who had experienced attempted rape had an acquaintance do this to them, a similar proportion (23%) had a friend had attempt to rape them.

1 in 3 (37%) experienced attempted rape by someone who was connected to their institution.

Where incident took place

A fifth (20%) experienced attempted rape take place on college/university grounds. 1 in 4 (38%) had their experience in privately rented accommodation.

Talking about experiences

Nearly half (46%) of those who had experienced attempted rape told someone about their experience. Friends were the main people who were confided in (79%).

The main reasons for not telling anyone about their experiences were because they felt ashamed or embarrassed (47%), they didn't want anyone to know (42%) and they didn't want to think about it anymore (40%).

Formally reporting incident

Only 1 in 10 (11%) incidents of attempted rape were formally reported.

Of those who did not formally report their experience of attempted rape, 57% didn't feel it was serious enough and 56% didn't want to think about it anymore. Feeling ashamed/embarrassed (51%) and feeling that they wouldn't be believed (47%) were also reasons for not formally reporting what had happened to them.

Frequency of experiencing attempted rape

Of those who had experienced attempted rape, 4 in 10 (43%) experienced attempted rape on more than one occasion.

Rape

Summary

5% of respondents were raped, of these only 3 in 10 had sought treatment regarding sexual health or emergency contraception. Half of those who had experienced such behaviour believed they had been raped.

Overall 1 in 10 (10%) had another student confide in them about being raped.

Only 15% of those who told someone about their experiences formally reported the incident. Of those who didn't formally report the incident over half (57%) didn't want to think about it anymore and 54% felt ashamed or embarrassed about the incident.

Overall experiences

5% of respondents had an unwanted sexual experience where someone inserted their finger(s), genitals, or an object into their mouth, anus or vagina during their time at their current university or college.

Women, disabled students, trans and non-binary students are significantly more likely than other demographic groups to have been raped whilst at university/college.

Treatment sought

Of those who had been raped only 3 in 10 (30%) had sought treatment regarding sexual health or emergency contraception. The majority of these went to a sexual health clinic for treatment.

Women are significantly more likely than men to seek treatment after being raped.

Did respondents consider incident to be rape?

Amongst those who had never experienced rape the majority (93%) believed that if someone had an unwanted sexual experience where someone inserted their finger(s), genitals, or an object into your mouth, anus, or vagina this was considered to be rape.

Other students' experiences

Overall 1 in 10 (10%) had another student confide in them about being raped.

Person(s) responsible

Of those who had experienced rape, strangers (24%), friends (22%) and a previous romantic partner (21%) were the main descriptions of people who had done this to them.

HE students are significantly more likely than FE students to have been raped by an acquaintance.

3 in 10 (36%) people were raped by a person connected to their college or university.

Where incident took place

1 in 5 (20%) rape incidents occurred on college/university property and 58% occurred in privately rented accommodation.

Talking about experience

Almost half (47%) of those experiencing being raped told someone about their experience with friends being the main group of people confided in (80%).

The main reasons for not telling anyone about their experience was because they didn't want to think about it anymore (55%), they felt ashamed/embarrassed (55%), they didn't want anyone else to know (50%) and they didn't feel it was serious enough to report (47%), or that it was their fault (46%).

Women are significantly more likely than men to not tell anybody about being raped because they felt ashamed or embarrassed.

Formally reporting incident

15% of those who told someone about their experiences formally reported the incident.

Of those who didn't formally report the incident over half (57%) didn't want to think about it anymore and 54% felt ashamed or embarrassed about the incident.

Frequency of experiencing rape

4 in 10 (43%) respondents who had been raped had similar experiences on more than one occasion.

Disabled students are significantly more likely to have been raped on more than three occasions.

Feelings about these experiences

Whilst 1 in 3 respondents (36%) had no feelings as a result of any of the experiences discussed throughout the questionnaire half experienced anxiety (49%). 1 in 3 (35%) avoided social events as a result of the experience.

Disabled students are significantly more likely to have experienced: Considering dropping out of University/College; Missing class; Decreased academic performance; Feeling unsafe at University/College; Feeling depressed; Feeling anxious; Considering suicide; Attempting suicide; Considering self-harm; Self-harming; Avoiding social events; Distancing themselves from others and/or Excessively using legal or illegal drugs or alcohol as a result of being raped.

Women are significantly more likely than men and other gender identities to have felt anxious, avoided social events, missed class and felt unsafe at college/university as a result of being raped.

16-17 year olds are more likely than other age groups to have considered self-harm or suicide as a result being raped.

If you found any content of this report upsetting. Please do not hesitate to contact these organisations if you feel distressed or want to talk to someone.

NEXUS NI: 028 9032 6803

24 hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline: 0808 802 1414

ROWAN: 0800 389 4424

Lifeline: 0808 808 8000

Creating a safer environment

Summary

Campaigns raising awareness of the issues and staff training on sexual violence were mentioned by half of students responding to the survey as ways to help create a safer environment for students at college/university. 48% called for training for all staff in the topic of sexual violence.

There was also a call for more accessible ways to report unwanted sexual experiences, as well as having a designated member of staff who was trained to deal with acts of sexual violence.

Over 3 in 5 (62%) believed that if there was better relationship and sex education training in secondary schools, this would help to create a safer society. Half (54%) wanted to see more awareness of support services that are available to them.

Disabled students, women and FE students are significantly more likely to recommend all the following actions :

- Better relationship and sex education in secondary school (RSE)
- Public Campaigns to raise awareness and educate
- Leaflets/posters around campus
- Education on consent and the law
- Consent Workshops on campus
- More accessible ways for experiences to be reported
- More awareness of support available
- A Designated staff member experienced in the topic of sexual violence
- Training for all staff in the topic of sexual violence
- More investment into specialist support services eg. Nexus/Rowan/Rape Crisis services/24hr helpline
- More information on how to report to the police
- Reforms to the criminal justice system
- More responsible media coverage.

People aged over 30 would also like more awareness campaigns of the issues and more leaflets around campus and more public campaigns to raise awareness and educate on consent.

Recommendations

We believe that this report and the shocking findings contained within it provide a clear evidence base for the need for government to act immediately to tackle unwanted sexual behaviour. Here are NUS-USI's recommendations following on from the findings contained within this report:

1. Government and schools to review their relationship and sex education (RSE) programmes to ensure that the information provided puts consent at the centre of provision and that all RSE delivered in schools is, inclusive, comprehensive and standardised. 62% of survey respondents wanted to see better RSE to help create a safer environment. There is no uniform pattern to the provision of RSE in schools in Northern Ireland and very little published research in this area.

This echoes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)'s reasoning for rejecting the argument made by NI representatives that our current system allows for more flexibility in teaching RSE. CEDAW has called for consistent, mandatory RSE in their concluding observations and specifically mentioned Northern Ireland. Therefore our recommendation regarding mandatory RSE based on consent is in line with human rights requirements.

2. Government and education institutions must deliver additional support and services for victims/survivors, including additional funding to provide specific support, such as the option of home visits from specialised services for disabled people. Students have called for more accessible ways to report non-consensual sexual experiences and disabled students are particularly at risk.
3. Existing specialised support services such as Nexus NI, the Rowan, Women's Aid, the Rainbow Project and the Men's Advisory Project should be better promoted and resourced by government and education institutions. 54% of survey respondents wished to see improved awareness of support services available and we urgently need adequately resourced rape crisis support services for victims and survivors of rape and sexual abuse, along with clear information about where victims can get the help they need.
4. The provision of training to be provided by recognised experts in the field for staff on addressing sexual violence at tertiary education institutions (higher and further

education institutions). 48% of respondents to the survey want to see this delivered, as well as well as having a designated member of staff who was trained to deal with acts of sexual violence. A dedicated staff member is essential to create a clear pathway for victims to receive support.

5. The legal definition of rape must be amended beyond penile penetration. We believe that legislation of rape in Northern Ireland, the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, does not accurately deliver a full definition of rape. Not only does this facilitate rapists being tried for lesser sentences, retraumatizing victims/survivors in the process, it is also not inclusive of gender or sexual orientation.
6. Additional resources are delivered to promote consent in wider society and on campus. 50% of respondents want to see campaigns raising awareness of creating a safe environment for students. Initiatives such as PSNI, Nexus, the Public Prosecution Service, Ulster and Queen's students' union's No Grey Zone campaign to raise awareness of what sexual assault is and what sexual consent is are good examples of how this work can be carried out and student-led.
7. Victim-blaming must be stopped and the attitudes of wider society need to be addressed. Conversations in wider society can be supported through targeted campaigns and the wider media. This can only be achieved responsibly through adequate resources from government and an immediate end to irresponsible media coverage.

This recommendation is in line with the findings of the preliminary Gillen Review (an independent review of the arrangements to deliver justice in serious sexual offence commissioned by The Criminal Justice Board) which recommends measures to combat rape myths and stereotypes in NI. NUS-USI has already made contact with the Gillen Review implementation team and will ensure that the Department of Justice is made aware of all of our recommendations and the underlying data.

We at NUS-USI would like to thank the students of Northern Ireland for their tremendous courage and initiative in driving for change within in the area of sexual violence. These

statistics are not just numbers. They are people's lives, their experiences, and they must not be ignored.

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