

# Student Survivor Support: The #StandByMe Manifesto



NUS Women's campaign with Rape Crisis England & Wales launched the #StandByMe on 25 November 2015, calling for institutions to reject the 1994 Zellick guidelines. In April 2016 we launched #StandByMe consultation to collect students' unions views of what should be in place to support student survivors of sexual violence.

We have combined the results of the consultation into a short manifesto which outlines our recommendations to the UUK Taskforce looking at harassment, violence and hate crime in higher education. We also hope this manifesto will be a useful tool for students' unions to improve support for survivors on their campus.

1. Institutions<sup>1</sup> and students' unions should work together to develop evidence based and intersectional strategies to combat sexual violence on campus.
2. Institutions should uphold their duty of care towards student survivors whether or not they choose to report to the police.
3. Institutions and students' unions should have a joint zero tolerance policy on sexual violence.
4. Institutions should outline possible punishments associated with breaching zero tolerance policies within staff and student handbooks and student and staff codes of conduct.
5. Institutions should have a centralised system to record the amount of formal and anonymous reports of sexual violence. They should also record dropout rates in relation to sexual violence. Annual reports should be produced on this data.
6. Institutions and students' unions should identify a member of staff or staff team to take responsibility for ensuring sexual violence policies and procedures are up to date and communicated throughout the educational community.
7. Institutions and students' unions should work together to adopt prevention programmes that cover sexual consent, sexual violence and how to be an active bystander. These programmes should be embedded in student and staff induction.
8. Student-facing staff should receive appropriate 'disclosure' training and be able to signpost survivors to appropriate and timely support services.

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<sup>1</sup> By 'Institutions' we refer to all higher education institutions in the UK.

9. Students who want to report should have access to a trained advisor whose role is to support students who have experienced sexual violence through the university reporting process and signpost them to relevant pastoral, academic and legal support.
10. All students should have access to a robust reporting system which provides them with multiple options, including how to report to the Police, the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), or within the institution.
11. All institutions complaints and disciplinary teams should include trained individuals to investigate incidents of sexual violence in a range of circumstances, including when students do and do not want to go to the police.
12. When information is shared between different organisations such as the police and the institution, this should always be with the consent of the survivor.
13. In instances where internal investigation and disciplinary procedures are used, institutions should ensure that these procedures centre on the needs and welfare of the student survivor as much as possible.
14. Institutions should consider a range of options both during and after any investigation and disciplinary procedure to ensure the safety of the student survivor. This may include limiting the alleged perpetrator's access to the institution or the temporary suspension of the alleged perpetrator.
15. Institutions should be able to conduct investigations of sexual violence using the civil standard of proof ("balance of probability") rather than the criminal standard ("beyond reasonable doubt").
16. Institutions should ensure that students who want to report to the police have access to an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and should liaise with their local Rape crisis centre or specialist sexual violence services to ensure best practice.
17. There should be clear guidance created on what actions by the institution may interfere with cases which have been reported to the Police.
18. Students should have access to specialist counselling, either in-house or via partnerships set up with local organisations such as a Rape Crisis centre.
19. Institutions should provide academic support to student survivors who need it, including allowing survivors to apply for extenuating circumstances and reasonable adjustments for assessed work.
20. Institutions that manage their student accommodation should ensure accommodation contracts reflect their harassment and assault policies and clearly outline a zero tolerance approach to all harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and violence. Contracts should outline how students who breach these policies will be removed from their accommodation.