



#CombatMisconduct

A toolkit for vice-chancellors, principals and senior leaders tackling sexual misconduct, harassment and hate incidents in higher education



THE UK FUND FOR
WOMEN AND GIRLS

Acknowledgments

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Foreword by Donna Covey CBE, Chief Executive of AVA

This report comes at a pivotal moment for the national debate about violence against women and girls. Sexual violence and harassment are common across society – in workplaces, on the streets and in our homes. Universities are not exempt from this, and the debate on sexual misconduct in Universities needs to take place in the context of this wider debate.

At AVA, we are delighted that funding from Rosa and our partnership with UUK and NUS has allowed us to take the lessons of our award-winning whole school approach to healthy relationships and apply them to the higher education sector. Survivors' stories that emerge daily, from our own work and that of campaigns like Everyone's Invited are a constant reminder of the scale of the task. Senior leaders are at the heart of effective change, and we welcome the passion and commitment to change of the senior leaders interviewed in creating this toolkit. It is through campaigners and leaders working side by side, with different perspectives on a common goal, that we can deliver real change and make our universities a safe place for everyone, free of sexual misconduct and other forms of hate, abuse and harassment.

This toolkit is a supportive and practical resource for leaders looking to drive change in their universities. It sits along other resources produced as part of the Combat Misconduct initiative, and other guidance produced by our partners and individual universities.

There is an African proverb that says "If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

For women and girls to achieve their full potential, they need to feel safe in places of learning. By working together to combat misconduct, we are all contributing to this vital goal.

Foreword by Professor Steven West CBE, DL, President of Universities UK

Tackling all forms of sexual misconduct, harassment and hate is a priority for UK universities and has been for many years.

Five years ago, UUK's pivotal 'Changing the Culture' report recommended a whole institution approach to tackling all forms of harassment and hate. A firm and sustained commitment from senior leaders was deemed essential to achieving this.

University leaders have long recognised the role and responsibility they must play in ensuring their institutions tackle this important issue, which spans across wider society.

Since that initial report in 2016, significant progress has been made including further guidance on tackling racial harassment, online harassment, and antisemitism. But more can and must be done.

This toolkit aims to support university leaders in their efforts to identify, embed and improve strategic actions to tackle all forms of harassment and hate.

It is not designed to be prescriptive but to capture the approaches and reflections of a diverse group of university leaders on what has worked for them including how they have overcome the inherent challenges of achieving a sustainable shift in institutional culture.

The toolkit identifies nine recommended actions for university leaders from setting the tone for culture change to practising inclusive leadership. Some institutions may already be doing all these things, others some of them. The toolkit provides a means of reviewing institutional approaches, reflecting on how efforts may be further enhanced and providing leaders with renewed impetus to tackle this issue.

Finally, although I recognise the critical role I and my colleagues have in tackling this agenda we cannot do this alone. A university's culture must be shaped by all of its members and building cultures of cohesion and respect must be everyone's responsibility. It is only then can we expect to see a real impact on the safety, health and wellbeing of all those studying and working in higher education.

My thanks to AVA for developing this important resource with support from UUK and the NUS and to the nine vice-chancellors and principals who have shared their insights for the benefit of their peers.

Sara, Khan, Vice President Liberation and Equality, NUS

This report could not be timelier. Collectively, we have seen how sexual violence and harassment is woven into our society at a personal, interpersonal, and structural level. More topically, we have seen institutions like the police and universities enact this same harm and enable the culture(s) of violence. The failure of universities to adequately respond to sexual violence and harassment is a systemic failure within UK higher education.

NUS has been leading on tackling sexual violence and misconduct for 10 years, with our 'Hidden Marks' report being released in 2011. We are delighted to be working with AVA and UUK on taking a whole provider approach to tackling sexual violence, misconduct and hate in higher education and society. We did not do this alone; our work is amplifying the relentless work of student survivors and activists. It has come as a result of Students' Unions, staff and senior leadership teams across the UK being committed to implementing the changes.

Vice-chancellors set the precedence of a university. They have the power to implement structural change in the policy, culture and behaviour of staff and students. We need to see a culture shift in higher education, with accountability and transformative justice at its heart. We need to believe survivors instead of putting them on trial, and we need person-centred, trauma-centred approach to supporting them. We need safe, inclusive, and tailored support for people of colour, LGBT+, trans, and disabled survivors.

NUS welcome this toolkit as call to action. A practical, necessary, and urgent resource for leaders ready to change the cultures of universities not only on their doorstep, but nationwide. What makes this toolkit so pivotal, is the encouragement and best practice shared from other leaders in the sector to make change. Activist, organiser, and abolitionist Mariame Kaba says "everything worthwhile is done with others". We believe this toolkit, teamed with the work of senior leaders across the country will set a new precedent for universities, student wellbeing and experience. Collectively, we can address the root causes of harm and violence. Together, we can make universities a safe place for everyone, free of sexual misconduct and other forms of hate, abuse, and harassment.

Contents

About this toolkit	page 5
Navigating the toolkit	page 6
Nine practical steps	pages 7 – 8
Section 1: What motivates vice-chancellors and principals to address misconduct, harassment and hate?	pages 9 – 12
Personal drivers	page 9
Institutional drivers and benefits	page 10
External drivers	page 11
Section 2: Getting ready for change	pages 13 – 21
A whole institution approach	page 13
Gathering evidence on misconduct, harassment and hate in institutions	page 13
<i>Practice example: safe evidence-gathering with survivors</i>	page 14
Involving governing bodies	page 15
Developing skilled staff teams	page 16
<i>Practice example: recruiting for diversity</i>	page 17
Working with students, survivors and specialist organisations	page 19
<i>Practice example: finding local and national specialist services</i>	page 20
Working with other vice-chancellors and Universities UK	page 21
Section 3: Setting priorities for change	pages 22 – 24
Prioritising work on misconduct, harassment and hate	page 22
<i>Practice example: finding local and national specialist services</i>	page 22
Communicating priorities	page 23
Section 4: Leading change	pages 25 – 28
Report and support	page 25
<i>Practice example: partnering with a specialist service to support students</i>	page 26
Education, training and campaigns	page 27
Policies and procedures	page 27
Risks and challenges	page 28
Section 5: Embedding change	pages 29 – 30
Review and evaluation	page 29
<i>Practice example: Combat Misconduct impact matrix</i>	page 29
Further resources	page 31
Further guidance	page 31
Annexe 1: Research methodology	page 32

About this toolkit

This toolkit offers practical support for vice-chancellors, principal and senior leaders who are developing strategies to address sexual misconduct, harassment and hate incidents at university. This document provides practical case studies and recommendations for change, and highlights the benefits of this work for institutions and all members of the university community.

Leadership is a fundamental part of promoting a meaningful culture shift to effectively prevent and address harassment and hate incidents in higher education. Universities UK research shows that where the strategic responsibility for managing this agenda rests personally with the vice-chancellor or a member of the senior executive team, quicker progress is made across the institution.¹ Phipps' 2016 research at Imperial College London also highlighted the significant role that leaders and senior managers can play in enabling transformative change by tackling perceived behavioural norms and conventions.²

2019 research from UUK found that half of universities report that the vice-chancellor or a member of the senior executive team holds strategic ownership for tackling sexual violence, harassment, and hate.³ With that knowledge, we have set out to produce a peer-to-peer tool that will offer insight into the personal values, motivations and institutional drivers that have prompted vice-chancellors to demonstrate strong leadership in tackling this agenda, in order to support other leaders to do the same.

On the basis of interviews with nine vice-chancellors, this toolkit sets out the motivations and actions taken by vice-chancellors and principals committed to tackling sexual violence and all forms of harassment in their institutions. The toolkit directly quotes vice-chancellors wherever possible to illustrate their commitment and recommendations for other university senior leadership teams embarking on a similar journey.⁴

This publication is timely given the mounting focus on tackling violence and harassment in higher education and throughout broader society. The 2019 report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that racial harassment is a common experience in higher education settings, and that shortfalls in institutional responses were compounding harm to students.⁵ Recent reporting on the experiences of young people via the Everyone's Invited online platform have highlighted the urgency of tackling sexual misconduct.

University leaders are not alone in their efforts to tackle these issues, which are deep rooted and widespread. By looking beyond higher education to global social movements, forming partnerships with agencies that specialise in responding to violence and hate, and by supporting each other, vice-chancellors can succeed in creating safer universities for staff and students. We hope this resource will provide a motivational and practical resource for vice-chancellors and principals tackling this critical agenda.

www.avaproject.org.uk/combatisconduct

1. UUK. (2018). Changing the Culture: two years on. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/changing-culture-two-years>

2. Phipps, A., McDonnell, L. and Taylor, J. (2016). A Review of Imperial College's Institutional Culture and Its Impact on Gender Equality. Available at: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/staff/public/Institutional-culture-and-gender-equality.pdf>

3. UUK. (2018). Changing the Culture: Two years on.

4. For more information about the research methodology, see Appendix 1.

5. EHRC. (2019). Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged. Available at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged-executive-summary.pdf>

Navigating this toolkit

This toolkit provides information for vice-chancellors and senior leaders planning and undertaking work to tackle all forms of misconduct, harassment and hate. The promising practice presented in the toolkit is based on our interviews with nine vice-chancellors, where relevant also drawing on findings from the Universities UK Changing the Culture taskforce on sexual misconduct and violence against women⁶ and guidance on tackling racial harassment in higher education.⁷

The toolkit presents nine key steps that vice-chancellors and senior leaders can take to drive forward their work on sexual misconduct, harassment and hate, and five main sections:

- **Section 1** shares insight from vice-chancellors about what motivates them, including personal, institutional and external drivers.
- **Section 2** includes guidance for vice-chancellors building their case for change and preparing governing bodies, senior leadership and staff for new ways of working.
- **Section 3** covers approaches to setting and communicating priorities for change, and some common pitfalls.
- **Section 4** gives examples of areas of work where vice-chancellors have made progress as part of their strategy to tackle harassment.
- **Section 5** provides guidance on embedding and sustaining change over time.

Key terms:

This toolkit uses the term **‘sexual misconduct’** in line with the Pinsent Masons Guidance, to cover all sex related offences, harassment and anti-social behaviour.⁸

For the purposes of this report when we talk about **incidents of ‘hate’**, we include any harassment or crime motivated by hate based on an individual or group’s identity. This can include, but is not limited to, their race, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability.

6. UUK. (2016). Changing the Culture. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/changing-culture>

7. UUK. (2020). Tackling Racial Harassment in Higher Education. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/tackling-racial-harassment-higher>

8. Pinsent Masons & UUK. (2016). Guidance For Higher Education Institutions: how to handle alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence. Available at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/student-services/Pinsent%20Masons%20Guidance.pdf>

Nine practical steps

These nine steps are also available in a summary quick guide format, available [here](#).

Universities strive to be places where tolerance, dignity and respect are cherished, and senior leaders in higher education do their best to ensure the safety of all members of the university community. These practical steps are based on advice and insights from interviews with nine vice-chancellors and principals and broader recommendations from Universities UK. Although the steps below highlight the important role of senior leaders in delivering change, leaders cannot do this alone. A university's culture is shaped by all of its members, and building cultures of cohesion and respect is everyone's responsibility.

To effectively tackle harassment, hate and sexual misconduct, vice-chancellors, principals and senior leaders will:

1. Publicly acknowledge that sexual harassment, misconduct and all forms of hate exist in universities, as they do throughout society. This can be achieved by:

- Publicly committing to prioritise this work.
- Ensuring that ownership, scrutiny and accountability for progress in this area are visibly held by the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Team.
- Building the business case to explain the benefits of taking active steps to address harassment, and the risk and cost of inaction.
- Committing to provide resources to drive organisational change.

2. Set the tone for culture change, shaping what is expected, accepted and applauded in the institution by:

- Highlighting the importance and value the university places on the safety and wellbeing of staff and students in missions, value statements, and institutional strategies and policies.
- Modelling a culture of respect, equality and fairness.
- Setting expectations of students and staff behaviour, and challenging behaviour that does not uphold the organisation's values
- Being proactive and clear in communicating the processes for students and staff to incidents and seek support.
- Communicating actions taken to eradicate harassment to the broader university community.

3. Adopt a whole university approach, by:

- Embedding the responsibility to eliminate harassment into the university's culture, knowledge and practice.
- Ensuring that the institution has robust policies in place that clearly address harassment, sexual misconduct and hate incidents and offer immediate protection, support and guidance for those affected.
- Embedding policies into institutional governance and reporting structures, to support sustainability and consistency by ensuring the agenda is addressed in a cross-cutting way across the university.

4. Get others on board - addressing harassment requires all members of the university community to play their part. Vice-chancellors and principals can encourage this by:

- Working with the student body, including the students' union, to raise awareness and actively participate in creating culture change across the whole university.
- Empowering students and staff to speak out and to take part in training to tackle unacceptable behaviours.

5. Seek support from the governing body, by ensuring they have permanent oversight for addressing the agenda and monitoring institutional progress. This can be achieved by:

- Providing governing bodies with information and evidence on the university's commitment to tackling harassment.
- Reporting on trends and types of cases, and the impact of policies on the student/staff experience.

6. Invest in learning and professional development on harassment, sexual misconduct and all forms of hate for the vice chancellor and senior team, by:

- Learning from people with lived experience within and beyond the senior team, including those that experience multiple and overlapping forms of harassment.
- Building partnerships with specialist sexual violence, domestic abuse and hate crime agencies.
- Considering how a leader may bring their own biases to areas such as strategy, implementation and recruitment.

7. Capture and publish data and evidence on the impact of harassment and hate as a basis for action, by:

- Drawing on the broader national and local evidence base on gender-based violence and other forms of hate to guide the institutional response, even if data specific to the particular institution is difficult to collect
- Working closely with students and staff who have experienced harassment to gather evidence, including those with protected characteristics. For more information, see AVA's Quick Guide to consulting with students and survivors [link to follow]
- Using this evidence to assist with prioritising, decision-making and evidence-based policy and practice
- Publishing evidence about the institution's progress in reducing the impact of harassment and hate to inform the wider university community.

8. Practise inclusive leadership and create a safe team environment where all employees can speak up, be heard, and feel welcome, by:

- Actively recruiting and embracing the input of staff whose backgrounds or expertise differ from their own,
- Fostering collaboration amongst a diverse staff team by asking questions of all members of the team, facilitating constructive debate, giving actionable feedback, and acting upon the advice of staff from a diverse range of backgrounds.

9. Recognise the mental health impact of sexual misconduct, harassment and all forms of hate upon those who are directly impacted, as well as staff and students working to support victims and improve institutional responses, by:

- Recognising the impact on the health of academic, professional services and other support staff and students' union officers who are most likely to receive reports and disclosures
- Investing in support and education to build an understanding of trauma among staff and university counselling services, so that disclosures are responded to safely and effectively.

It is important to acknowledge that efforts to address harassment in isolation are not enough. Violence, harassment and hate in universities is rooted in deeply embedded institutional and social norms. Broader action to address social, institutional and structural factors that underpin disadvantage and inequalities will also be also required.

Section 1: What motivates vice-chancellors and principals to address misconduct, harassment and hate?

Leading culture change across institutions is challenging work that requires commitment, courage and drive from senior leaders. Data from interviews suggests vice-chancellors taking the lead on this work draw on personal, institutional and external drivers to motivate their work to address misconduct, harassment and hate.

Personal drivers

Vice-chancellors leading culture change are strongly motivated by **personal values of justice, fairness and equality**.

“I want the organisation to reflect my values, and my values are about fairness, equality of opportunity and the best support I can provide for everybody which is to fulfil their own ambition and their full potential.”

Leaders in higher education also draw on their own **life experiences and professional background as motivation to lead change**.

“I think vice-chancellors’ engagement is perhaps dependent on their own experience in life [...] we are all shaped by our own upbringing, we’re all shaped by what we’ve experienced.”

Motivating others to drive change may mean tapping into the different personal drivers that motivate them, based on their own personal and professional experience. Some senior leaders will themselves have experienced harassment or hate based on their identity, while others can better understand these experiences by learning from colleagues, students and staff with lived experiences.

Key questions:

- Why do you believe it is essential to address harassment and create a culture where any form of harassment is not tolerated? What are the benefits this delivers?
- What personal and professional experiences can you draw on to motivate your own work to tackle harassment?
- Does your senior team have similar motivations? Do their individual experiences motivate them in different ways?
- How can senior teams work with students and staff to tackle harassment and reflect the values the institution should hold?

Institutional drivers and benefits

Vice-chancellors view tackling harassment as **central to their overall vision** for the universities as institutions. These leaders see the role of universities as places of opportunity where students can achieve their full potential, and recognise that this vision is directly hindered by misconduct, harassment and hate.

“In short, harassment of any kind is unacceptable and it’s my job as vice-chancellor to oversee an educational culture and institution where everyone is treated equally, and fairly, and has an equal chance of success and realising their potential.”

“I think if you don’t get that right [tackling harassment] I think there’s actually a serious question of whether you are actually a university.”

Vice-chancellors recognise the profound impact that harassment has on students and staff who experience it, in many cases causing lasting harm to their mental health and preventing them from enjoying the full potential offered by university life. Harassment and hate incidents not only affect those directly experiencing them, but also the wider university community.

Tackling harassment has potential to improve **performance and productivity** of staff and students by creating a more diverse, inclusive and in result safer university environment.

“I think vice-chancellors’ engagement is perhaps dependent on their own experience in life [...] we are all shaped by our own upbringing, we’re all shaped by what we’ve experienced.”

For leaders in higher education, tackling harassment can help facilitate the role of universities as **sites for debate, discussion and challenge**. By creating a more diverse, inclusive and safer environment, people from a range of different backgrounds and cultures can speak up, be heard and feel welcome.

“[To] frame a university as the place it should be, to include things that people will feel challenged by and sometimes may feel uncomfortable with, you’ve got to make the space to do that, the safe space, and that means you’ve got to rule out the things which are simply unacceptable.”

Finally, harassment cases risk damaging the reputation of the university, whereas fostering an inclusive culture can have **reputational benefits** and improve **student and staff satisfaction**.

“There’s reputational gain to be a university that has a reputation for being an inclusive university.”

Key questions:

- How could a safer university for students and staff contribute to your overall vision for the institution? How do we achieve this? What institutional changes are needed to make this happen?
- Which institutional drivers could be most important in motivating change for different teams and departments across the university?

External drivers

External drivers also play a role in motivating vice-chancellors to lead culture change at universities. Universities operate in the context of **political and economic pressures and global social movements**, which have an impact on students, staff and institutions as a whole. University leaders are looking beyond higher education to understand how to best address harassment at their institutions.

"Black Lives Matter I think prompted all of us to take stock [...] looking at how we can take clear and deliberate further steps around racial discrimination and racial harassment."

Media coverage of high-profile harassment cases can also be a driver for change. Vice-chancellors were clear that the potential for negative press coverage should not deter leaders from bringing work to tackle harassment to light. Universities have an opportunity and responsibility to demonstrate progress on tackling harassment to current and prospective students who may be concerned about stories in the press. For example, universities should regularly highlight the reporting and support services for students, particularly at the start of the new academic year.

"We're a prominent university, we're very much in the public eye, we're frequently misrepresented [...] you've got to rise above that."

"Making our key audiences like potential applicants, school students, parents [and] teachers know that this won't be tolerated and if their son or daughter came here they will have a safe working environment here."

Regulatory and compliance measures are another consideration for vice-chancellors. Although not yet part of the regulatory framework in England, several vice-chancellors referred to the Office for Student Statement of Expectations published in 2021 which invites universities to update their systems, policies and procedures to address harassment.⁹

However, university leaders reported that compliance approaches would not create sustained change without strong leadership and action, driven by personal and institutional values.

"There's no point in having all this compliance and instruments if the senior leadership at these organisations don't believe it or don't actively support it."

"If the OFS was to disappear overnight [...] would we stop doing this stuff? No - because we know why we're doing it, because it's the right thing to do and because it will make us a better university."

Key questions:

- Is your university's response to misconduct, harassment and hate driven mainly by regulation and compliance, or by personal and institutional values?
- How can your university meet your compliance and regulatory duties in a way that best reflects your values as an institution?
- What are the risks and costs of not addressing these issues?

Section 2: Getting ready for change

A whole institution approach

The Universities UK Changing the Culture taskforce guidance to address racial harassment and staff-to-student sexual misconduct,¹⁰ ¹¹ advocate for an institution-wide approach, drawing together activities and teams across all functions of the university. Leading collaboratively helps to build trust among staff and students in preparation for changes in culture, policies and processes.

“It’s got to be a whole institution approach rather than an apparent enthusiasm of the vice-chancellor or an expression of the vice-chancellor’s particular moral hierarchy.”

Gathering evidence on misconduct, harassment and hate in institutions

Evidence gathering is part of the core values of universities as research institutions. While data collection is an important part of tackling harassment and misconduct, vice-chancellors caution against spending too much time perfecting data collection methods at the expense of other action. Leaders in higher education also draw on their own life experiences and professional background as motivation to lead change.

“We should be a bit like a beacon of light, actually opening up dark corners wherever we go, and that’s the basis of universities. It’s to open up that knowledge, it’s to ask the questions nobody else will ask.”

“Stop counting things and start doing something different. Academia gets stuck in measuring stuff [...] Of course, we need some data, but let’s do some different things, let’s tackle this in a different way and let’s have some actions.”

Leaders are using a range of formal and informal methods of gathering information to understand the current situation at their institutions, support decision-making, and evaluate progress. These range from commissioned academic research, case reviews and surveys to informal conversations with students and colleagues.

However, challenges understanding students’ day-to-day experience remain for many university senior leaders.

“What I still don’t have a really good feel of is what it’s like actually on the ground, and what really happens.”

“[I] work in a space where the students are working and come in earwiggling and watching how it is for them. But I stand out like a sore thumb.”

Given the barriers to reporting sexual violence and harassment across all parts of society, it is likely that the data available to university executive teams does not reflect the lived reality of harassment and misconduct for staff and students. A lack of data is unlikely to point to a lack of incidents.

Practice example: safe evidence-gathering with survivors

AVA's quick guide to consulting with students and survivors highlights key principles for safe consultation:

Authentic: Actively and meaningfully include students in the consultation process, and ask students what things would make their participation more comfortable.

Safe: Be sure to get informed consent, understand and follow safeguarding policies and promote self-care practice for students and facilitators.

Empathetic: Focus on the strengths and ideas of students and not just negative experiences. Compensate students and survivors for their time.

Transparent: Communicate clearly and consistently about how information will be used, and make boundaries and limitations clear.

Realistic: Start planning student and survivor engagement early on in the process, to allow time for flexibility and the unexpected.

For further guidance on consulting safely with students, including survivors of gender-based violence, see AVA's quick guide.¹²

As part of the Combat Misconduct project, AVA engaged with survivors at partner universities and students' unions to gather evidence about their experiences of sexual misconduct, reporting, support and investigations before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. For more information about our support for universities consulting students and survivors, contact combatmisconduct@avaproject.org.uk.

Questions to ask:

- What progress has been made in adopting an institution-wide approach to tackling harassment and hate?
- What evidence does your institution already have on staff and student experiences of misconduct, harassment and hate? What are the gaps?
- How could your institution safely gather evidence directly from survivors?
- Which groups of survivors do you hear from least often? How could you engage and support them?

Involving government bodies

Universities are required by law to comply with equality and diversity legislation and governing bodies are legally responsible for ensuring the institution's compliance. This includes assuring arrangements are in place to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, promote and inclusive culture and that adequate provision has been made for the welfare of students and staff.¹³

The Changing the Culture framework recommends that universities provide their governing bodies with regular reports setting out their progress towards adopting a cross-institution approach to tackling harassment. Evidence suggests that leaders are using regular reporting not only as a way to keep governing bodies informed, but also as a tool to change perspectives, offer challenges to the university and encourage progress.

"There are a few members of the council who are very very interested [...] there are others beginning to get more engaged because this is something that I keep talking about."

Work to tackle harassment and campaigns to encourage students and staff to report incidents of harassment is likely to result in an increase in incidents reported. This should initially be seen as a positive development, with students feeling confident to report; however, this could lead to interest from journalists. Preparing your governing body for such developments is therefore critical and can have important benefits.

A supportive relationship will help the Executive Team manage any negative feedback and yield useful information and different perspectives from outside the higher education sector, and minimise resistance to change. Outlining the short-term risks and long-term benefits of tackling harassment can help mitigate concerns about reputational risk.

"I knew why [there was a rise in reported cases] but it didn't stop us getting bad headlines and the governing bodies became queasy, but I had warned them to be prepared for this."

Where governing bodies fall behind university senior leadership in gender and racial diversity, vice-chancellors are taking steps to persuade governing bodies to prioritise diversity in recruitment and attend training to improve their understanding of a diverse student and staff body and the governing body's equality and diversity responsibilities.¹⁴

"I will be asking the chair of council to tell the governing body, and she's already agreed, that they all need to do ally training for racial harassment, so they understand better."

In April 2021 the Committee of University Chairs (CUC)¹⁵ held an event on addressing harassment. On behalf of UUK, this included a presentation by Professor Dame Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool on the importance of executive teams and chairs working together to tackle this agenda. Following this event, CUC agreed to develop practical briefing on the role of chairs in taking this agenda forward.

Questions to ask:

- How could you work collaboratively with your governing body to address harassment and misconduct at your institution?
- How does your governing body reflect your current and intended student and staff mix, local community and wider society?
- What skills and perspectives from your governing body could support your work to tackle harassment? Do they have the range of skills to challenge your thinking?
- What do members of the governing body need to fulfil their roles? For example, revised induction or mentoring, focused agendas and briefings and methods for informal connectivity?¹⁶
- Does your governing body have sight of your institution's approach to addressing this agenda? What reports are received and how frequently? Has the governing body approved additional resources to tackle these issues?

Developing skilled staff teams

Reviewing the skills, experience and diversity of senior executive teams is an important step in preparing for change. The makeup of senior teams is seen by vice-chancellors as an important tool in communicating their values and vision for the university as well as building skills and expertise for culture change.

"The people you appoint, the people who are part of my team, signals to staff what kind of values I have."

14. See section 4.4, element 4 in The Higher Education Code of Governance, Committee of University Chairs (CUC), September 2020. See section 35 in the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance, 2017

15. The CUC is the representative body for the Chairs of UK universities.

16. See article Valuing diversity starts with governing bodies by Victoria Holbrook, Assistant Director, Governance at Advance HE, 2020 and further information on Advance HE website The value of a diverse governing body.

Vice-chancellors shared that their institutions had made progress on gender equality on the senior team, but racial disparities in pay and opportunities persisted. Black and minoritised people are still underrepresented in academic and senior management posts compared to diversity of the rest of the staff and student population, and vice-chancellors are keen to address this.

“We’ve done quite well on gender [in senior leadership], we’ve done hopelessly badly on race. That’s our current emphasis.”

“We’ve had good numbers of applications for academic posts, but for whatever reason, that doesn’t turn out to the shortlist [...] We’re going to audit selection panels and recruitment processes to look at why it is these choices were made [...] because, you know, that just smacks of a degree of institutional racism.”

Practice example: recruiting for diversity

Advance HE figures show¹⁷ that in 2019/20 just 18% of university academics were from Black and minority ethnic groups, and 82% of university academics were white. Figures from HESA¹⁸ show that in 2018–2019 there were only 1 or 2 Black senior members of staff across British universities, out of the 535 senior staff members employed across these institutions.

Universities UK, in their report addressing racial harassment in higher education¹⁹, highlight that increasing the recruitment levels and positions of seniority amongst Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff is crucial in increasing levels of diversity of staff across the institutions. They suggest that active effort here is crucial to enact change across all levels of the institution, and ensure the staff body reflects the student and wider population.

For practical tips on how to get started, Advance HE has a helpful Race Equality Charter to help improve the representation and success of Black and minoritised staff and students at university: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter#enquire>

Alongside institutions’ own initiatives, Universities UK and the NUS²⁰ have guidance on widening access to recruitment for Black and minoritised students.

A second important step in preparing staff teams for change is to embed culture change through people management practice, at senior level and throughout institutions.

17. Advance HE. (2021). Equality in Higher Education: statistical report 2021. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2021>

18. HESA. (2020). Higher Education Staff Statistics: UK, 2018/19. Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/23-01-2020/sb256-higher-education-staff-statistics>

19. UUK. (2020). Tackling Racial Harassment in Higher Education. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/tackling-racial-harassment-in-higher-education.pdf>

20. UUK and NUS. (2019). Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #closingthegap. UUK and NUS. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf>

"When you're appraising Vice Provosts and Deans there's a whole section about equality and diversity and commitment to that cause, and people are asked to report what they've done on an annual basis to improve things in their part of the institution."

Impactful education can help to inform and motivate staff teams. Vice-chancellors have had success commissioning training from specialist anti-violence services like Rape Crisis, which leave a lasting impression on staff and senior teams.

"The trainer turned to all of us and said - I'd like you all to turn to the person on your left and describe your last consensual sexual experience. Everyone [was] looking at their feet, myself included [...] now, imagine if you've been in a rape situation, you're deeply embarrassed and you're really worried about retaliation and all sorts of issues - imagine what it's like to be quizzed about what just happened. So the trainer made the point rather brilliantly. It will last with me forever actually."

Finally, vice-chancellors are clear about the importance of taking consistent action where staff act inappropriately or cause harm to colleagues and students, particularly when senior managers or academics bringing in significant research funding are implicated in harassment or misconduct cases. Leadership in this area sends a powerful signal to staff teams, even if the results of HR processes cannot be disclosed directly.

"When people talk in their coffee rooms about these things they will know they are not being tolerated in the university anymore."

Questions to ask:

- How is your leadership commitment made visible and communicated to other levels of management?
- In what ways could you ensure that the senior management at your institution team reflects your values and vision for the institution?
- What practical steps could be taken to improve the levels of diversity throughout staff teams in the institution? Do the recruitment practices prioritise this outcome? Are there lessons to be learned from the diversity of students' unions?
- In your capacity as a leader, how do you communicate to staff and students that this is a priority area for the institution and that harmful and inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated? How could this be strengthened?

Working with students, survivors and specialist organisations

Building trusted relationships with students is a crucial part of a whole-institution approach to tackling harassment. Collaboration is most effective when it extends throughout all aspects of universities' work to tackle harassment, including joint working to gather evidence and design change processes and interventions.

“Close working relationships with students over these sets of issues is obviously fundamentally important.”

Vice-chancellors can bring students on board by building working relationships with students' unions and creating opportunities for officers and other students to help design and review the process itself, rather than just asking unions to communicate with students on the university's behalf. Students' unions can assist with gathering information, sharing campaigns and coordinating training for students.

Strong relationships with students' unions and student representative bodies can also help to protect the university's reputation.

“Reports were published [...] other newspapers had done an FOI. I knew why it was, but that didn't stop us getting a lot of bad headlines [...] But fortunately, and this is an important point - because everything was in partnership with the student body - the students' union was straight in to say, “No, this is reflecting that the university's creating a safe environment to report. People have been able to report so we can then tackle it.”

While students' unions can play a vital role, Changing the Culture cautions that positive action for students cannot be limited to initiatives by the students' union. Vice-chancellors that cultivate a meaningful two-way relationship with students' unions and provide appropriate resources to support their work are likely to have the most productive relationship, and avoid burnout for officers and activists working with students experiencing harassment.

The Changing the Culture framework also emphasises the need for universities to work closely with **specialist service providers**, particularly in addressing sexual misconduct and harassment. Specialist services can provide expertise to support safe work with students and survivors, as well as improving the quality of university policies and processes and ensuring that students and staff receive timely practical and emotional support. As resources in the third sector are limited, these partnerships should be adequately resourced to ensure they are sustainable.

Setting aside resources to commission training and consultancy from local specialist charities can also provide them with an additional funding source in a precarious funding environment, in turn ensuring that their support is available in future for staff and students who need them. Vice-chancellors can also draw on the expertise of local and national organisations working with survivors from minoritised groups to ensure that the needs of staff and students are met.

Questions to ask:

- Is the students' union prioritising work with students to tackle sexual harassment, misconduct and hate? How can you work together with sabbatical officers?
- Are students from a range of different backgrounds, including survivors of harassment and hate, involved in developing the university's response?
- Do you know which specialist services for survivors of sexual violence and hate are working in your area? Does the university have contact with them?

Practice example: finding local and national specialist services

Directories of services specialising in gender-based violence, harassment and hate can help you to identify local partnership opportunities, or find safe and suitable services for particular groups of students and staff.

- **Rape Crisis** has a search tool to help you find your local sexual violence service: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/>
- **The Survivors Trust** has a map of local rape, sexual violence and child sexual abuse services: <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/find-support>
- **AVA** has a list of national domestic and sexual violence specialist services: <https://avaproject.org.uk/need-help/>
- **Imkaan** has a directory of organisations that support Black and minoritised women and girls, migrant women or women with insecure immigration status experiencing violence and abuse: <https://www.imkaan.org.uk/get-help>
- **Galop** provides national support and helplines for LGBT+ people experiencing violence, abuse and hate: <https://galop.org.uk/get-help/>
- **National Sexual Violence Helpline**
0808 802 9999 | 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm every day
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**
0808 2000 247 | 24 hour helpline
- **Men's Advice Line**
0808 8010327 | Mon-Fri 9am-8pm

Working with vice-chancellors and Universities UK

Peer-to-peer learning and discussion with other vice-chancellors can be a useful tool in preparing for change and reviewing progress. Discussing challenging issues in an informal context can support leaders to be more comfortable talking about difficult and sensitive issues publicly. UUK supports this by creating informal spaces for vice-chancellors to come together and share knowledge and concerns.

“I think what you can do is to create this safe space where vice-chancellors can come and have an honest conversation without feeling their knuckles will be rapped.”

As a collective voice for universities, Universities UK will continue to help set the context for change by influencing government; other policy makers and communicating with the media on behalf of the sector. Vice-chancellors can make use of strong relationships with Ministers and opportunities for collective influencing provided by UUK, both in challenging policy and communicating positive progress on the sector's behalf.

Questions to ask:

- How could you work with other vice-chancellors to help meet your vision for your university?
- What areas of learning do you think you could develop with your peers? What knowledge and experience do you have that you think your peers could benefit from?
- What can UUK do to support you personally in taking ownership of this agenda?

Section 3: Setting priorities for change

Prioritising work on misconduct, harassment and hate

Tackling misconduct, harassment and hate using a whole-institution approach requires long-term commitment and investment from vice-chancellors and senior executive teams. To keep momentum and ensure sustainability, it is important that tackling harassment remains **a strategic and personal priority for vice-chancellors**.

Given the scale of work needed, setting clear priorities within the broader scope of work to tackle harassment is a necessary and challenging part of leading change. Taking a collaborative approach early in this process can help build trust and working relationships with staff and students, and help to manage expectations about the pace of change.

A common challenge with setting priorities comes with allocating resources to focus on supporting a particular group of students and staff. Vice-chancellors noted that good progress had been made on tackling sexual harassment and gender inequality, but less progress had been made on racism and racial inequality, attracting criticism from students and staff.

The risks with this approach can be managed by using the principles of intersectionality to understand how experiences of harassment and hate motivated by different forms of discrimination overlap for many staff and students. For example, work to tackle racial harassment and hate incidents cannot sit separately from work on gender inequality and sexual misconduct, because the misconduct and harassment Black and minoritised women face can be both misogynistic and racist. This recognises that efforts to address harassment in isolation is not enough. Violence, harassment and hate in universities is rooted in deeply embedded institutional and social norms, and therefore action to address social, institutional and structural factors that underpin disadvantage and inequalities is also required.

Effective work to tackle sexual misconduct must incorporate anti-racist approaches and work to ensure systems and resources are widely accessible. Vice-chancellors can draw upon published research and expertise from a wide range of specialist anti-violence charities supporting Black and minoritised, migrant, LGBT+ and disabled survivors to support their work.

Practice example: considering intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw which highlights the need for an approach that accounts for overlapping systems of oppression which disadvantage particular individuals as a result of the spaces they occupy in hierarchies of power.

The University of York has published guidance on developing an intersectional approach to training on sexual harassment, violence and hate crime, available on the OfS website.

This continues on the next page.

The guidance provides information on the various intersectional barriers to disclosures of sexual violence and bystander intervention, and how trainers can address these. For example, issues of shared vulnerability might arise in bystander intervention, where a person intervening may be hurt if they share an aspect of their identity with the victim (eg being Asian, or trans).

Questions to ask:

- What would a collaborative approach to tackling sexual harassment look like at your institution?
- What steps toward an intersectional approach to tackling harassment could be taken at your institution? How could an intersectional understanding of inequalities be achieved and embedded?
- How are you addressing the social, institutional and structural factors that underpin disadvantage and inequalities?

Communicating priorities

Once your institution's priorities have been agreed, communicating clearly about your plans to tackle harassment is essential. Vice-chancellors and senior teams have an important role in setting the tone, taking ownership of problems and demonstrating willingness to reflect and change.

“It's key that the leader has to be talking about these issues in all sorts of forums, with the students, with the staff, with the governing body, and owning the problem of putting in place teams and work streams to address these issues”

“Culture change does involve a collective community effort, but the person at the top has got to really provide the oomf, not just the person [at the top], the top team has got to provide that oomf.”

Effective open communication is likely to involve challenging traditional university hierarchies to reach the widest possible audience across the institutions. Some vice-chancellors have worked hard to cultivate a sense of approachability and create more open spaces for discussion.

This has generated dialogue and information that would otherwise have been unavailable to vice-chancellors and senior teams.

“To be open [...] to be comfortable to stop and have five minute conversations with colleagues and for them to feel that they can raise almost any question with you in a respectful way.”

“[We] started having open conversations about race in the organisation as opposed to muttering it.”

Demonstrating visible leadership in the early stages of work to tackle harassment may mean being willing to openly acknowledge mistakes and be challenged as work progresses. While uncomfortable, responding to criticism is an essential part of learning for any organisation or leader.

“Be prepared to make some mistakes. Let’s not get embarrassed by that because everyone knows that we’re doing this for the right reasons.”

Ensuring that the institution's priorities are communicated effectively across the institution is critical. There are many ways and channels an institution's priorities and plans for tackling harassment can be distributed. Alongside messages on an institution's website and intranet this could include a short video, interview on the campus radio or podcast featuring a message from the vice-chancellor.

Questions to ask:

- Which staff at your institution know about your priorities for tackling harassment? Which staff don't know, and how can you reach them? How can you communicate your priorities in an accessible way?
- If students were looking for information on your priorities for tackling harassment, where could they find it?

Section 4: Leading change

Vice-chancellors shared promising practice, risks and challenges across a number of areas of work to tackle harassment, including report and support systems, education, policies and procedures.

Report and support

Many institutions have made considerable progress improving reporting and support mechanisms for students, in line with recommendations from the Changing the Culture taskforce. Given that harassment, misconduct and hate are common in all parts of society, the number of reports is likely to increase with the introduction of a safer and clearer reporting system.

"The reports go up considerably, but it's not because the incidents have necessarily gone up - it's because you've got a place where people trust and feel safe and feel they'll be heard and believed if they report."

Many institutions offer an anonymous reporting option, using anonymous reports as a key source of evidence for targeted interventions in particular university departments.

"With the anonymous ones, we basically look for patterns. Let's say department X has twice as many anonymous reports of sexual harassment compared to department Y, then we would look at department X and try and understand what's going on in that environment."

While reporting mechanisms are important, support systems for reporting students are even more crucial. Not every student experiencing harassment will wish to make a formal complaint or be part of an investigations process, but readily available emotional, practical and support will help support better mental health and continued involvement in university life for reporting students and staff. These principles are also important to consider for staff reporting harassment to management or HR.

Practice example: partnering with a specialist service to support students

The Universities UK Changing the Culture taskforce²¹ guidance identifies partnerships between universities and external support agencies as a valuable way for universities to meet the needs of students affected by sexual misconduct, and enhance the support provided to students by the university.

Sometimes, universities may lack the specific knowledge to support students effectively. By referring students to a partner agency through a systematic and established referral route, they can ensure students have access to the specialist support they need.

For an effective relationship with an external agency, universities should monitor any barriers to accessing services students face, and invest resources to ensure the relationship is sustainable.

For example, partnering with your local Rape Crisis service is a good way to ensure survivors of sexual misconduct are able to access the specialist support they need. Find your local Rape Crisis service below:

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rape-crisis-centre/>

Questions to ask:

- If a student needed to report an incident of sexual misconduct at your institution, how would they know where to go? Is this clearly communicated in public and social media channels?
- If they wanted to report a racist, homophobic or other hate incident, would the process be clear and accessible?
- Would a staff member who needed to report an incident of sexual harassment, misconduct or hate know where to go, and what response they would receive?
- If a staff member heard a distressing disclosure unexpectedly, who could they consult for advice and support? Would support be easily accessible?

Education, training and campaigns

Vice-chancellors have a vital leadership role in making sure senior colleagues and members of the governing body attend appropriate training. Vice-chancellors we spoke to had invested in training aimed at preventing and raising awareness of the nature of harassment among staff, supporting colleagues to 'draw the line' in the correct place.

"Training people to understand the more covert forms of harassment, we call them microaggressions in the face of racism [...] overt forms are the tip of the iceberg."

"It's been really good to discuss whether it's a good idea to invite your PhD student to your house for a supervision, for example, and at what point does that become a problem [...] what about when you go down the pub together, what is reasonable and what isn't?"

Just as important as prevention is training staff to detect and respond to forms of harassment, violence and abuse that are perpetrated deliberately and with intent. Evidence shows that deliberate incidents of violence, harassment and hate are common in university settings, as they are in wider society. For example, NUS research has shown that women students report a wide range of experiences, from 'everyday' verbal and non-verbal harassment, to stalking, physical and sexual assault.^{22 23} It is crucial that training on misconduct, harassment and hate provides students and staff with the tools to respond to incidents of this nature.

Questions to ask:

- Do members of your board and senior leadership team attend training on misconduct, harassment and hate?
- Does your training cover what to do if staff are aware of deliberate incidents of violence, abuse and harassment?

Policies and procedures

University policies and procedures can support university leaders to communicate their values and aims as well as supporting improved practice. Clear, specific and accessible policies signal to the entire university community that harassment is unacceptable.

Institutions are demonstrating positive practice by involving staff and students and particularly survivors and students' unions in devising and reviewing policies. Involving staff and students in policy development will help leaders ensure that policies respond to the needs of each section of the university community.

22. Although NUS research shows that more women students experience harassment, men and those who identify as non-binary or genderfluid also experience harassment, see ManKind Initiative, Respect UK and Galop.

23. NUS. (2011) Hidden Marks: a study of women students' experiences of harassment, stalking, violence and sexual assault. Available at: <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/hidden-marks-a-study-of-women-students-experiences-of-harassment-stalking-violence-and-sexual-assault>

“Getting students and staff to be co-designers of policy in practice, co-designers and co-produce frameworks and actions which, you know, I think is having the greatest impact because everyone’s engaged.”

Institutions can follow best practice when developing and refreshing policies by ensuring they name and define the problems they aim to address, take a comprehensive and practical approach, and clearly define the actions that will be taken. Some institutions are developing specific policies for sexual harassment, beyond their broader grievance, complaints or dignity and respect policies. Policies should assign responsibility for each action to individuals or teams and have clear mechanisms for implementation and measuring progress.

Risk and challenges

Having the right policies and practices in place is, however, not enough; universities need to shift institutional culture. Changing culture around harassment and misconduct is a challenging task for university leaders, which involves addressing embedded cultural norms and exposing institutions to criticism and resistance:

“Things that are perhaps embedded in the infrastructure and culture of your institutions [...] need to be deconstructed and tackled.”

“I want to put us above our parapet and if there’s a backlash we need to face it.”

A major risk identified was the pace of change. Constraints on time and resources have meant that progress can at times be slow, leading to frustration and fatigue among staff and students.

“This stuff never goes far enough or fast enough for anyone, particularly if you’re the leader of a big institution – you’d like all this sorted out tomorrow, but these are deep deep cultural issues and you have to go in for the long haul.”

Clear communication, realistic and inclusive priority-setting and preparation work with governing bodies and staff teams will support leaders to overcome these challenges. As staff and student bodies change, consistent leadership from vice-chancellors is essential for progress to continue over time.

Question to ask:

- What are the risks and costs of not addressing sexual misconduct, harassment and hate?

Section 5: Embedding change

Changing culture, policy and practice around sexual harassment, misconduct and hate is a long-term project that requires consistent and sustained attention from senior leaders. Vice-chancellors will need to consider how to embed culture change into institutional systems and processes to ensure its longevity. This can be supported by publishing clear action plans and regular updates, and by embedding tackling harassment into organisational risk registers.

Broad involvement across different parts of the institution can also support sustainable change, as organisational knowledge is shared.

"I think we've got it to the point where we have such a head of steam and have so many people involved now that it can't possibly go backward."

Review and evaluation

As well as gathering evidence to inform strategic planning and decision making, vice-chancellors can embed effective data collection practices in order to monitor progress over time and keep students, staff, governing bodies and regulators informed.

Practice example: Combat Misconduct impact matrix

AVA, working in partnership with Universities UK and NUS, has developed an online matrix tool to support universities to tackle and prevent sexual misconduct. Informed through consultation with AVA's partner universities, Universities UK's Changing the Culture report, and OfS's Statement of Expectations, the tool supports universities to track their progress towards established sector standards in tackling sexual misconduct.

The tool includes a self-assessment section and tailored recommendations to support institutions to further improve their practice. The tool is designed to be used regularly so progress can be monitored over time.

For more information about the Combat Misconduct impact matrix tool, visit www.avaproject.org.uk/combatisconduct/

Questions to ask:

- How have changes made affected the institution? Have there been changes to the organisational structure?
- What have you done personally to lead change? What has worked well? Are there actions that you have taken that have not been so successful and did you meet any challenges or resistances that may have led to a less successful outcome?
- What are the next steps and priorities for the university in this area?

Further resources

Guidance from UUK

- Changing the Culture (2016) – this is a strategic framework specifically developed to support universities to tackle all forms of harassment occurring between students and is based on a whole institution approach and multi-agency approach
- Guidance on tackling alleged student misconduct which may also constitute a criminal offence (2016)
- Reviewing sector progress in tackling harassment and sharing effective practice; Changing the Culture One Year On (2017)
- Reviewing sector progress in tackling harassment and sharing effective practice in Changing the Culture Two Years On (2019)
- Guidance supporting universities to address and prevent online harassment: Tackling Online Harassment and Promoting Online Welfare (2021)
- Briefings on responding to domestic violence digital/technology mediated abuse in higher education during Covid-19: Beginning the Conversation and Continuing the Conversation.
- Recommendations from UUK and NUS for higher education institutions on closing the attainment gap between Black and minoritised and white students: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #closingthegap (2019)
- Case studies and practical steps to address the intersection of sexual violence, alcohol and drugs at universities: The intersection of sexual violence, alcohol and drugs at universities and colleges (2021)

Further guidance

- The Office for Students statement of expectations provides a set of recommendations to support higher education providers in England develop and implement effective systems, policies and processes to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and sexual misconduct. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/prevent-and-address-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct/statement-of-expectations/>
- The resource below is a review from University of Nottingham's Vice Chancellor, Professor Shearer West, which addresses and provides recommendations on increasing diversity in recruitment practices. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/edi/documents/18.10.17-diversity-in-recruitment-report-final.pdf>

Annexe 1: Research methodology

AVA conducted semi-structured virtual interviews with nine vice-chancellors who were nominated by UUK as leading the sector in tackling harassment and inequality at their universities. These interviews were then carefully transcribed and analysed, forming the guidance and insight in this report.

The vice-chancellors interviewed were based at universities in Wales, Scotland, and across the south east, Midlands, and east of England. The demographic of vice-chancellors interviewed consisted of four women and five men.

This brief research focussed on a small sample of vice-chancellors and is not intended to be representative of broader trends in the higher education sector. By selecting vice-chancellors known to be leaders in the field, we were able to gain rich insights that we hope will support senior leadership teams to make progress.

About AVA

AVA is a feminist organisation committed to creating a world without gender-based violence and abuse. Our mission is to work with survivors to end gender-based violence by championing evidence-based change. We are a national charity, independent and particularly recognized for our specialist expertise in multiple disadvantage and children and young people's work. Our core work includes training, policy, research, and consultancy. AVA's work focusses on whole-organisational models for tackling domestic and sexual abuse including our highly regarded whole school approach, which we draw upon in our work with universities.

About Combat Misconduct

AVA worked in partnership with Universities UK and NUS on our Combat Misconduct project to improve responses to sexual violence, harassment and misconduct across the higher education sector. The project ran from 2019 to 2021 and was made possible by support from Rosa's Justice and Equality Fund. For more information about Combat Misconduct, visit www.avaproject.org.uk/combatisconduct.

About Universities UK

Universities UK is the collective voice of 140 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its mission is to create the conditions for UK universities to be the best in the world; maximising their positive impact locally, nationally and globally. Universities UK acts on behalf of universities, represented by their heads of institution. www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

About NUS UK

The National Union of Students (NUS) is a confederation of 600 student's unions across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Through our members we represent, campaign on behalf of and support the interests of more than seven million students.

Working with more than 95 per cent of all higher and further education students' unions across the UK our main purpose is to defend, promote and extend the rights of students to make a real difference to their educational experience. Our goal is a country where everyone can access and thrive in education regardless of their background, and a society where students are valued as active citizens.

As education policy is devolved in the UK, we deliver our democratic and student voice activities through NUS UK and our nation-based teams in NUS Scotland, NUS Wales and NUS-USI.

Through our teams in NUS Services and NUS Charity we help member students' unions develop and build effective students' unions for all learners. Working with commercial partners, such as Endsleigh and OneVoice, we ensure students' money is reinvested back in the student movement. Our charity partner SOS UK delivers our award-winning sustainability campaigns, including Green Impact, Student Switch Off and Divert-Invest. www.nus.org.uk

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