**\*\*Content warning – describes gender-based violence\*\***

**16 Days – Tackling Gender-Based Violence, 25 November 2021**

Dear Colleagues/Students

Today is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and also the launch of this year’s [16 Days of Activism](https://16dayscampaign.org/) - the global campaign calling for the elimination of gender-based violence (GBV).

This is the 30th year of the campaign, launched by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, which runs each year between the 25 November and 10 December (International Human Rights Day). The colour orange is used by the campaign to represent a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls.

As part of 16 Days, we will be highlighting a number of important areas linked to GBV and the steps that are being taken across the UK, and inside the University, to support victims of violence and specifically the campaign to end violence against women and girls.

We know that the University still has much to do in order to fully support our staff and students who have been victim to sexual misconduct, especially with regards to violence against women and girls, and we are committed to learning and continually reviewing and updating our approaches in this area.

At its meeting earlier this week, the University Governing body, Court, was updated on our recently approved [GBV Policy](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/gender-based-and-sexual-violence-14079), which outlines the position the University will take when supporting victims of GBV in our community. This policy has been produced in consultation with staff, students, Aberdeen University Students’ Association, campus trade unions and has had input from external organisations with expertise in GBV.

Flowing from the Policy, the Addressing GBV & Sexual Harassment Strategy Group has created an [action plan](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/gender-based-and-sexual-violence-14079) outlining the strategic and operational priorities that it will be progressing this academic year, focused on improving the support available for survivors and reinforcing our position against perpetrators of abuse in our community.

Throughout all this work we will continue to engage with external organisations focused on combatting GBV and supporting victims, and we will be sharing more details on the work of our Strategy Group as the year progresses.

As part of 16 Days, we are asking all staff and students to undertake a short, online, training course on GBV to enable better understanding of the impact it can have on members of our community and the ways that we can help support victims of abuse. Online training modules are available for both staff and students (via our Staff online learning portal or MyAberdeen & MyMBChB) and have been produced in collaboration with experts on GBV. We look forward to sharing options for more in-depth training for staff in the coming months.

Over the coming 16 days we will provide information on a range of topics linked to GBV and the role we can all play in helping to combat GBV and support those who are victims of abuse. Look out for this content on our social media feeds, eZines and on our website. This in itself may cause some members of our community to seek support and discuss situations from their own lives. We want to remind you that support is available for [staff and students who need it.](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/gender-based-and-sexual-violence-14079#panel14087)

16 Days gives us an opportunity to continue the conversation on GBV at the University and to revisit our programme of work, highlighted in the action plan above, that will become our focus over the coming 12 months.

Best wishes

Tracey & Nick

**Tracey Slaven & Nick Edwards**