**Minutes from ‘Addressing GBV and Sexual Harassment Strategy Group Meeting’**

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| *Subject*: GBV and Sexual Harassment | *Date:* 12/06/23 |
| *Location:* Microsoft Teams | *Time:* 11:00 – 12:30 |

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| *Chair:* Nick Edwards *- NGE* | *Clerk:* Lisa Kilgour - *LK* | *Minute Taker:* Iona Rae - *IR* |

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| *Attendees* | *Apologies* |
| Jemma Murdoch *(JM)* | Anna Shea  |
| Vice President for Welfare – Sai *(AUSAVP)* | Isla Callander  |
| Janine Chalmers *(JC)* | Fiona Smith |
| Lindsey Hamilton *(LH)* |  |
| Keith Campbell *(KC)* |  |
| Jennifer Phillips *(JP)* |  |
| Melanie McCann *(MM)* |  |
| Rebekah Walker *(RW)* |  |
| Iona Greig (*IG*) |  |
| Owen Cox *(OC)* |  |
| Keith Campbell (*KC)* |  |
| Laura Benvie (LB) |  |
| Gemma Tyler (*GT*) |  |
| Aileen Forbes (*AF*) |  |
| Laura Benvie (*LB*) |  |
| Karen Scaife (*KS*) |  |
| Aileen Forbes *(AF – Manager at Grampian Women’s Aid)* |  |

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| *Speaker* | *Agenda Item* | *Points* | *Action* |
| *AF* | **1** *Guest Slot: Women’s Aid*  | * Strategy Group introductions
* Women’s Aid supports women and children in a very diverse and inclusive way – anything goes. Criteria for support is anyone who has experienced violence by an intimate partner or ex-partner.
* Anyone can refer to Women’s Aid via phone, social media, email, website etc. The referral process is accessible to all and is victim led.
* Women’s Aid offer trauma based, emotional support to victim survivors and signposting to relevant areas of specialism.
* Childrens service is also available to those who need it – it is largely a prescriptive process with the support lasting 12-14 weeks.
* Reporting to the police is not mandatory. Women’s Aid will not force victim survivors to do this.
* They can also support women to stay in their relationships if they want to, it is up to the woman with the help of safety planning.
* Those with concerns for a friend, or family member can also engage with Women’s Aid.
* DSDAS (*Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland*) Right to Ask, working with Claire’s Law – a woman can ask police about a partner’s past history. Women’s Aid can support this process as it has potential to be traumatic.
* Women’s Aid approach is very sensitive and led by the person accessing their service. You can have one appointment, engage fully for a year, or off and on.
* There are never any questions about the past – every contact is treated as new to avoid re-traumatisation.
* Appointments can happen anywhere a victim survivor feels safe.
* Women’s Aid are not legally trained and cannot offer any legal advice. Some solicitors in the local area do pro bono work for clients. This can be done completely anonymously.
* Police can do safe and well checks if immediate risk presents.
* Contingency Plan of Contact is one of the first steps that is taken in an initial appointment so that contact can be established in any given situation.
* Partnership working - a member of the Women’s Aid team are always willing to come and engage with students or take calls if necessary.
* Duty Staff (Lesley and Yvonne) take the calls – there is no switchboard or receptionist.

*NGE* – asks about the scale of the organisation in Aberdeen and the size of the team. * Waiting list for allocated support – typically a couple of weeks.
* Duty Team support can be accessed at any time and calls are triaged.
* 6 support works (including Duty Team), with 3 key workers on the Children’s service. Childrens service is currently closed to referrals due to long waiting lists.
* The Woman’s Aid premises is secure and mostly operates as a women’s only space. There are no logos in the building.
* Women’s Aid are willing to do hypothetical scenarios to help ensure practice within UoA staff.
* Last financial year, Women’s Aid support 1,200 women in Aberdeen and the Shire.

*LK* – asks about Transgender inclusion within the service:* Refuge accommodation is likened to an Air B&B property.
* Individual properties mean that all women can feel supported and safe when accessing support.

*KS* – asks about RGU and NESCOL partnerships during welcome weeks etc.:* Women’s Aid can work with UoA to do whatever works best for our institution.
* Stalls are tailored to the institution and are appropriate to the student population. It is important to break down the stigma of accessing support and the routes available.
* Men can also be victims of domestic abuse. Women’s Aid do not support men, but they can signpost them to the relevant service.

*\*End of Questions\*** Whenever you are offering support just remember that you must be equipped to deal with the consequences and the next steps.
* *NGE* talks about educating men about what is and isn’t okay in a healthy relationship.
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| *NGE* | **2***Convener’s Update* | \*Not discussed as the updates will provided throughout the meeting. \* |   |
| *NGE* | **3***Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on 30/03/23* | * Minutes approved from 30/03/2023.
* *NGE* and *LK* to visit new Rape Crisis Grampian’s new offices.
* Online Reporting Tool changes are currently being updated.
* Trade Union sources of support are going to be looked in to by *IG* to ensure UoA website links to them also.
 | *IG* look into Trade Union sources of support. |
| *NGE and JC* | **4***Perceptions of safety in Aberdeen* | * *JC* provided the paper attached in the Agenda from the Press and Journal.
* Scope for partnership working with different groups in the city to combat GBV.
* Findings in the article are shocking and the level of fear that both men and women are experiencing in Aberdeen is high.
* *NGE* has reached out the Aberdeen City Council and is awaiting response.
* *LB* – notes the large presence of tourists from cruise ships in the Old Aberdeen area: could work be done with Aberdeen Inspire to holistically look at the city as a whole?
* *JM* notices the shift in the atmosphere in the town centre since the pandemic.
* *LK* – finds the statistic that ¾ of gay people do not feel safe waiting for a taxi’s at night concerning. Promotion of services to students might make people feel safer (Ask Angela, student card taxi offer, safezone etc.)
* *MM* – some of the narratives for Aberdeen in the social media can be scary and intimidating for students. How can the University respond to those concerns?
* *KC* – a lot of the comments focus on the city centre rather than Old Aberdeen. There are limitations with messaging as we want students to feel safe everywhere, not just where there is branding.
* *KS* – questions whether a round table with NESCOL and RGU about what their current practice is. Student led social media campaign might be the most effective approach to tailor the support specifically. *NGE* has a meeting with the Governors of NESCOL and RGU next week and will bring it up there.
* *AUSAVP* – raises concerns about student led social media campaign as there are a large volume of international students and their different backgrounds and beliefs. This area is often stigmatised greatly in some cultures, and some people might not feel comfortable engaging.
* *KS* – pick up the ‘Community Champion’ work again and refocus it to this specific area. Tailored content for new international students to show what is an is not okay in the UK and our institution.
 | *NGE* to meet with NESCOL and RGU next week. *NGE* to get back in touch with the Council.*KS* to look in the Community Champion Project. *NGE* and *KS* to schedule a meeting to look at meaningful changes that can be made to help international students.  |
| *AUSAVP* | **5***Fitness to Practice Guidance Review* | * AUSA Advice has noticed an increase in Fitness to Practice cases and how that relates to GBV. Is there a way to make the process more trauma informed?
* *NGE* advises that the policy will be looked at in greater detail in the coming year.
* *LK* talks about the sending out of the evidence binder to the student - timings of these emails are often at the end of the day and contain difficult information to process. The meetings are called ‘panel meetings’ which adds to the intensity as well as the interview style set up. Drugs and Alcohol might be used as a coping mechanism, but that breaches the Fitness to Practice policy.
 | *AUSAVP* to send strategy group papers outlining concerns as well as examples of cases.*NGE* to have a discussion with Colin and Rhona from the medical school about making potential changes to the policy. *LK* to add this topic to the Agenda at the next meeting to rediscuss.  |
| *NGE* | **6***Charter Progress* | * First draft submission to be submitted in July.
* Final draft to be submitted in August.
* Site visit will be rescheduled too early August. **(Please note that the visit on the 11th July is cancelled.)**
* Our submission with be assessed at the end of the year with the verdict in 2024.
* *LK* – LISTEN Update. 153 staff members are currently trained. First Practitioner meeting was a huge success. The aim will be to have 4 of those annually.
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|  | **7***Action Plan* | *N/A due to timing issues.* |  |
| *NGE* | **8***AOCB* | * Discipline Code of Conduct will be released on the 1st of August. The TFG work has concluded.
* Guest speaker slot works well – in future meetings will be extended to 2 hours to allow for adequate time to discuss the other agenda items.
 | *LK* to extend meeting slots to 2 hours going forward.  |
|  | **9***Date of Next Meeting – TBC (awaiting EDIC dates)* | *N/A* |  |

**Useful Links:**

Grampian Women’s Aid **-** [Home | Grampian Womens Aid (grampian-womens-aid.com)](http://grampian-womens-aid.com/)

**Breakdown of Action Points**

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| *Action Point(s)* | *Person(s) Responsible* | *Deadline* |
| Look into Trade Union sources of support. | Iona Greig  | N/A |
| Meeting with NESCOL and RGU – discuss safety concerns on campus | Nick Edwards | Week beginning 19th June  |
| Reach out to Aberdeen City Council again.  | Nick Edwards | N/A |
|  Look into the Community Champion Project and update accordingly.  | Karen Scaife  | N/A |
| Schedule a meeting to look at possible changes to welcome week and induction materials to help international students.  | Nick Edwards and Karen Scaife  | N/A |
| Send strategy group papers with Fitness to Practice concerns and examples of cases.  | AUSAVP - Sai | N/A |
| Have a discussion with Colin and Rhona from the medical school about potential changes to the policy.  | Nick Edwards | N/A |
| Add Fitness to Practice to the next meetings agenda.  | Lisa Kilgour  | In anticipation of the next strategy group meeting |
| Lengthen the meeting to 2 hours going forward.  | Lisa Kilgour  | In anticipation of the next strategy group meeting |