

## **Policy on Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment**

### **Purpose and scope**

The Union currently operates policies and procedures to ensure the Union is a safe space for students and is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of its students. This policy forms part of The Union's approach to promoting a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work that is free from discrimination and harassment. The overarching premise is one of support and education, focusing on boundaries of acceptable and responsible behaviour.

This policy applies to staff, officers, members and third parties including visitors, suppliers and contractors.

### **Definition**

The Union has adopted the definition of Sexual Harassment adopted by the NUS.

The defining characteristics of sexual harassment are that it is unwanted and/or persistent behaviour of a sexual nature. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Unwanted sexual comments (including comments about your body or private life).
- Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendos, and offensive gestures
- Wolf whistling, catcalling, or offensive sexual noises
- Groping, pinching or smacking of your body, such as your bottom or breasts
- Having your clothing tugged, pulled or lifted without your consent e.g. Someone exposing their sexual organs to you without your consent.

### **Policy Statement**

The Union holds a firm zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment in line with the NUS definition outlined above, as everyone should feel safe whilst on our premises. Zero tolerance means that we will consistently apply a prohibition to sexual harassment meaning that anyone who commits any form of sexual harassment will be stopped and potentially disciplined for their actions.

The Union will take initial steps to try to prevent sexual harassment from ever occurring by:

- Informing all students that run and attend Students' Union events that The Union upholds a zero tolerance policy.
- Including zero tolerance in any form of training for both staff and students.
- Promoting the Union's stance on sexual harassment through a publicity campaign in consultation with the Vice President Community.
- Not displaying images in the Union which objectify, fetishize or stereotype people.
- As sexual harassment can affect anyone of any gender, we will ensure that any plan of action will be gender neutral in its language and approach as all students should be free from sexual harassment regardless of their gender.

If someone commits any form of sexual harassment on our premises the Union will:

- Ask people to leave our premises or events where appropriate.
- In respect of our members, implement our membership code and disciplinary procedure. This applies to individuals, clubs and societies. Sanctions may include removing a student's right to Union membership.
- In respect of our employees, refer to our disciplinary policy and procedure.

### **How can you help tackle sexual harassment?**

Every single student and member of staff deserves to be able to work or study in an environment free from sexual harassment. We can all play a role in ensuring that is the case at The Union:

- Talk to your friends/colleagues about sexual harassment; what it is, how it makes people feel, and why it is not okay.

- Think about your actions. Even if you would never knowingly harass someone, anything that creates an intimidating, humiliating or offensive environment, or makes someone feel stressed or anxious - is harassment, even if it's unintentional. What one person thinks is harmless 'banter' can have a real impact on many others' enjoyment and safety.
- If you see any form of sexual harassment taking place, and you feel safe to do so, challenge it. Even if you don't know who was involved, report it. It's important that we know when, where and how sexual harassment takes place so that we can tackle it together.

### **Who can I contact to report or discuss incidences of sexual harassment?**

If you are a student who is sexually harassed during your time at university, regardless as to whether the harassment has taken place on or off campus, we would strongly advise you to contact the Advice Centre at The Union on 0161 247 6533 or email [s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk). Our team of trained advisors will ensure confidentiality and offer you the support you need in dealing with your situation, as they understand how these situations can affect you as a student.

The University also offers a Counselling Service if you feel you need some extra support. All information for this service can be found at: <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/counselling/>. Employees can contact the HR Manager in confidence at [lesley.edwards@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:lesley.edwards@mmu.ac.uk). Students, employees and third parties can alternatively contact The Union's Chief Executive Officer ([m.j.robinson@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.robinson@mmu.ac.uk)), who will advise you on how to follow up with complaints and direct you to both internal and external support services.

In some circumstances, you may wish to contact the police, in an emergency call 999 or in a non-emergency situation call 101. Alternatively, if uncomfortable talking over the phone you may wish to drop into your local police station, you may wish to take a friend/partner/or member of your family with you for support.

### **Other support available:**

#### **Manchester:**

##### **Victim Support**

Tel: 0845 456 8800

Web: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/what-we-do/local-services/north-west/manchester>

In case of rape, we would encourage you to contact **Manchester Rape Crisis** Tel: 0161 273 4500

Web: <http://www.manchesterrapecrisis.co.uk/>

or **St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre** (women and girls service)

Tel: 0161 276 6515

Web: <http://www.stmaryscentre.org/>

**Survivors Manchester** (male only service)

Tel: 0161 236 2182

Web: <http://www.survivorsmanchester.org.uk/>

#### **Crewe:**

**Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre** (Cheshire & Merseyside)

Tel: 01925 221 546

Web: <http://www.rapecentre.org.uk/>