

Office for
Students

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OfS

Protecting students from hate crime and harassment

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Aim of session

- Context and key challenges around sexual violence, hate crime and online harassment
- Overview of OfS sector regulatory role
- Safeguarding Catalyst programme
- Next steps

Context and key challenges

- 17% new students suffered some form of sexual harassment during first week [2015 NUS poll]
- 62% of students and recent graduates surveyed have experienced sexual assault during their studies [2018 poll Revolt Sexual Assault and The Student Room]
- In 2017-18, there were 94,098 hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 17% compared with the previous year.



OfS objectives

Every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers.

Participation

Objective 1

All students, from all backgrounds, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Experience

Objective 2

All students, from all backgrounds, receive a high quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.

Outcomes

Objective 3

All students, from all backgrounds, are able to progress into employment, further study, and fulfilling lives, and their qualifications hold their value over time.

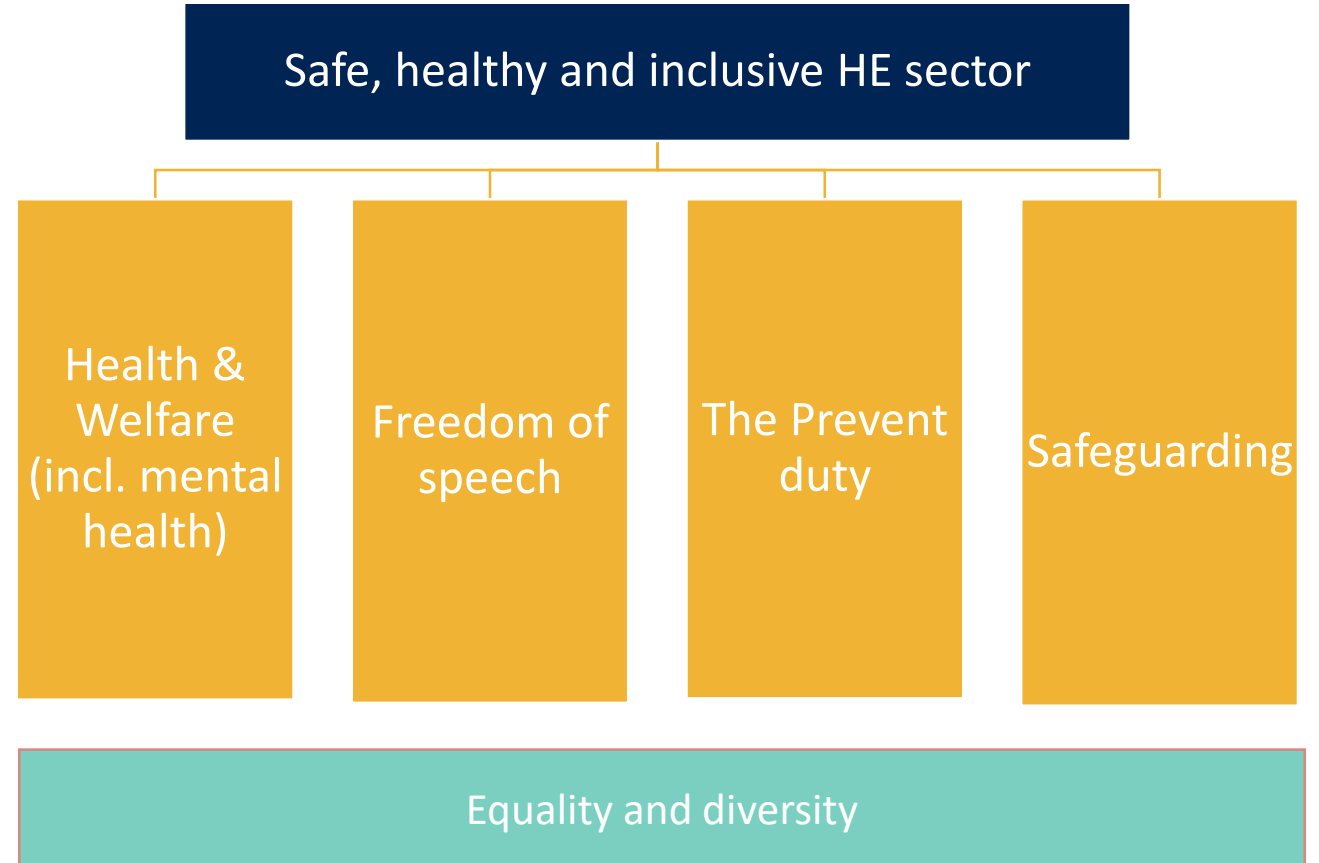
Value for money

Objective 4

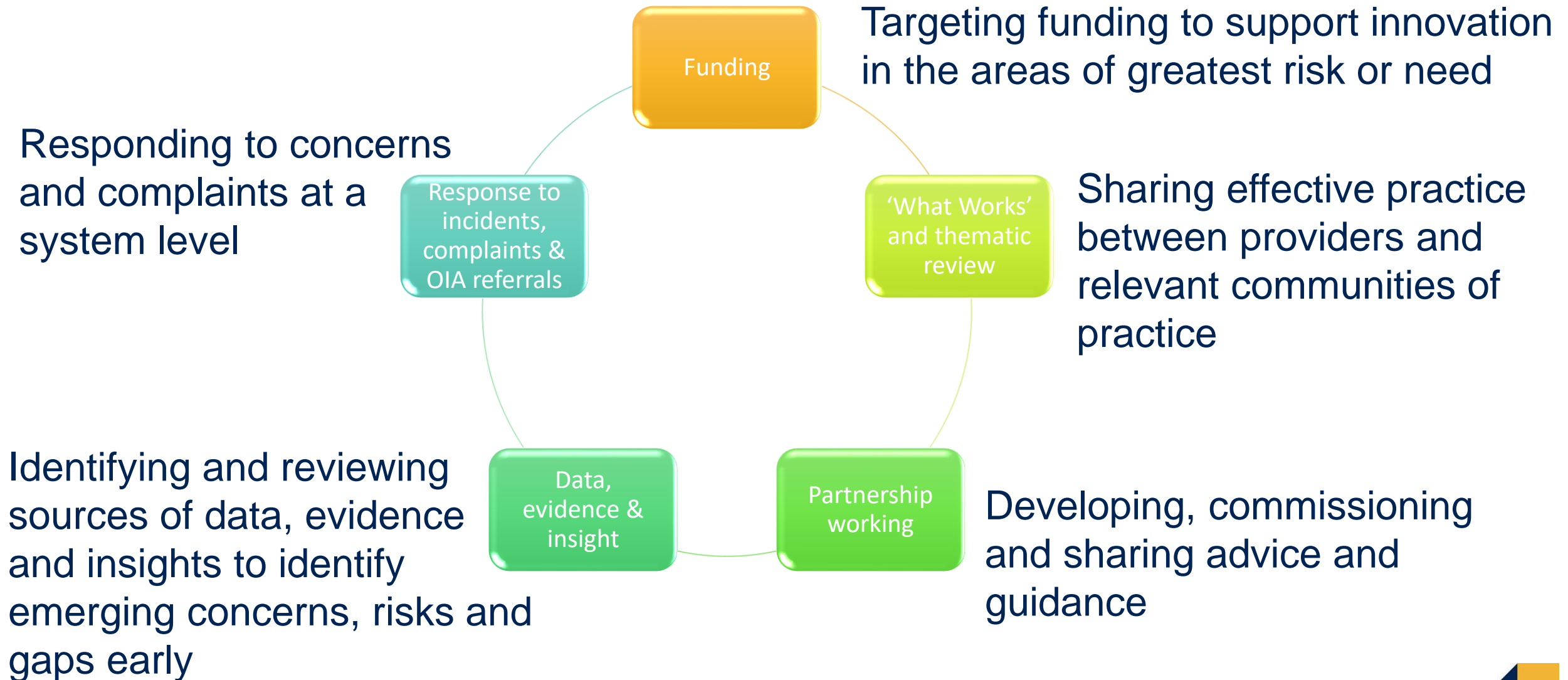
All students, from all backgrounds, receive value for money.

Our core areas of work

- We will not prescribe to individual providers what their welfare arrangements should look like
- But we do have some specific legal functions
- Regulating at sector-level we will champion a **safe, healthy and inclusive HE sector** to ensure best possible outcomes for students
- Focus will be to shine a spotlight on systemic issues or gaps and catalyse a step change in the sector
- OfS has a unique overview of collective student interest and can ensure an evidence-led approach to systemic issues



Sector level regulation/intervention



Student safeguarding Catalyst programme

- The **first call** provided £2.45 million funding to 63 projects addressing safeguarding students on campus. The large majority of these projects focussed on sexual harassment.
- The **second call** provided £1.8 million funding to 45 projects, addressing all forms of hate crime and online harassment.
- The **third call** provided £480,000 to 11 projects addressing religious-based hate crime.
- **Evaluation:** Advance HE is carrying out a programme-level evaluation of all 119 projects.

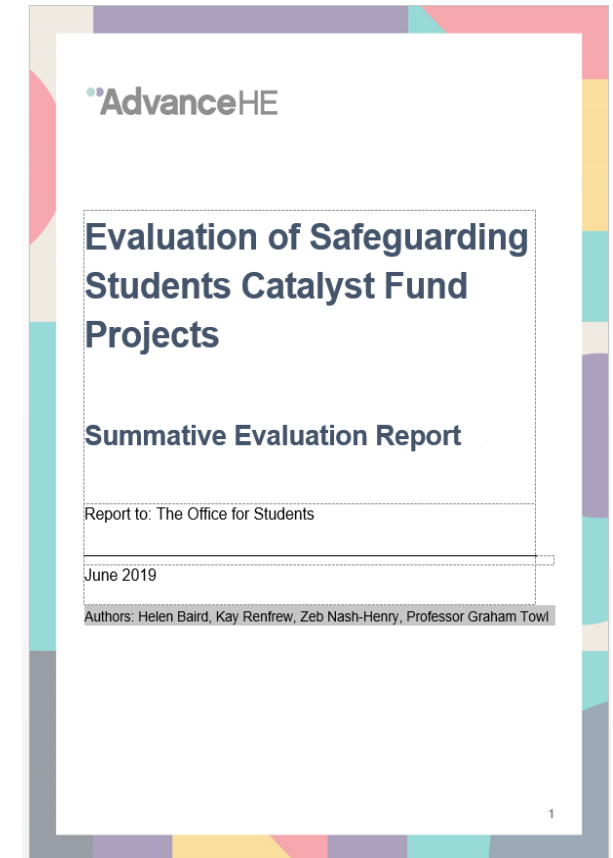


Key activities – student safeguarding Catalyst Projects.

- developing the ‘bystander’ initiative, training staff and students
- developing system improvements, training packages and partnership working models to drive change
- developing transferable good practice for the benefit of all students and higher education providers
- developing and sustaining positive campus relations between different groups
- developing respectful approaches to freedom of speech, on-campus debate and protest
- developing and sustaining whole-provider or city- or region-wide collaboration

Impact of Catalyst programme

- Increased awareness of sexual violence, hate crime and online harassment
- Increased reporting of sexual misconduct and hate incidents
- Growing confidence amongst students that providers will respond to reported incidents
- Commitment to ongoing training programmes
- Increase in resources specifically committed to tackling safeguarding issues
- Strong ongoing partnerships with local and regional partners
- Range of resources and toolkits produced



Next steps – OfS

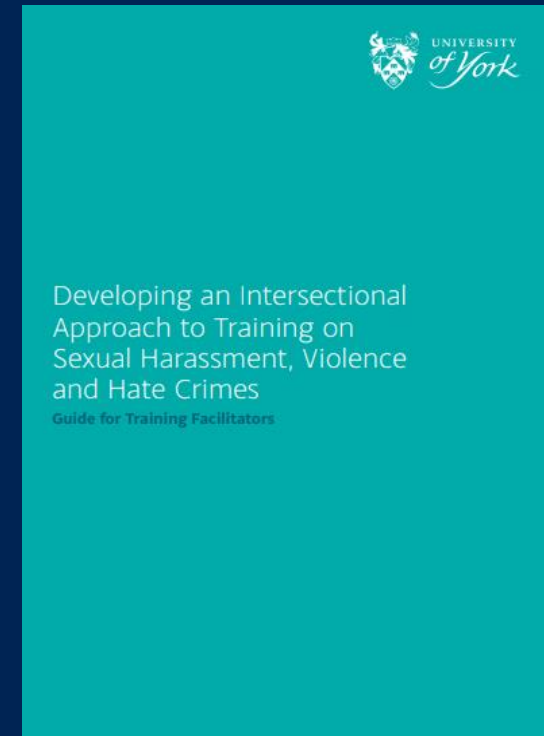
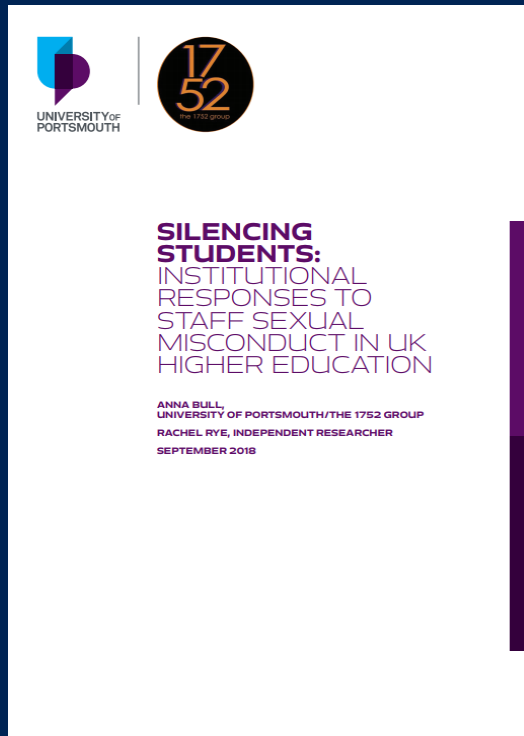
- Develop a community of practice to enable learning, exchange and dissemination of innovative and good practice
- Launch a series of roundtable events in 2019-2020 to examine key issues
- Facilitate and promote the sharing of effective practice and ‘what works’ to develop evidence-informed policy and practice
- Secure access to resources and tools produced by the projects



Next steps – higher education providers

- Secure an active commitment from senior leaders
- Consider how best to understand and support your student population, and co-create activities and policies with students
- Further develop evaluation to understand impact of activity and ‘what works’
- Review the effectiveness of existing policies and approaches
- Embed practices to tackle sexual misconduct, hate crime and online harassment within existing governance, policies and processes

Resources and outputs



Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

Other OfS programmes of work relating to student welfare and safeguarding

- Delivery of mental health challenge competition and broader work to explore the development of sector-wide measures in relation to mental health and student wellbeing
- Work with Research England on shared areas – e.g. joint funded programme on mental health; PGR harassment issues
- Horizon scanning: understanding continued gaps/issues at a sector-level and ensuring diversity of sector are engaged.
- Thematic/communities of practice established



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Thank you for listening

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