

# Evaluation of Safeguarding Students Catalyst Fund Projects

Conference on protecting students  
from hate crime and harassment

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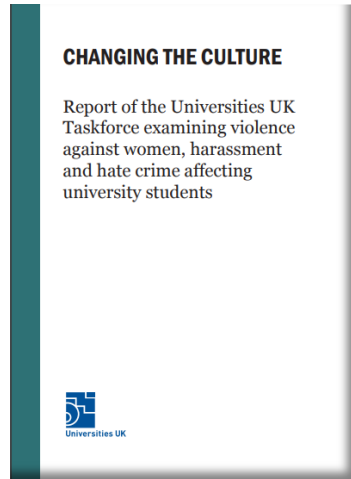
Wednesday 12 June 2019

# Overview

- Background to the evaluation
- Broader context to student safeguarding
- HE / FE context
- Learning from the evaluation
- Conclusions and recommendations

# Background

- **Aim of OfS Catalyst funding (2017-2020)** – to support effective practice by helping HE providers improve student safeguarding
- Following UUK Taskforce report *Changing the Culture* in 2016
- Objective: short-term diverse intervention to support high coverage activity and **stimulate sector-level culture change** in tackling safeguarding issues
- £4.7m in one-to-one matched funding for 119 projects across three calls:
  - Round One: 63 projects addressing **sexual misconduct**
  - Round Two: 45 projects on **hate crime and online harassment**
  - Round Three: 11 projects on **hate crime on grounds of religion or belief** (to complete by March 2020)



Broader context

# Broader context

- Stephen Lawrence/MacPherson/Zahid Mubarek – racism
- Broader #metoo movement
- Intersectional perspectives
- Of concern to Criminal Justice agencies plus (mental) health services

# HE / FE context

- Vulnerabilities associated with transitions
- Intersectional vulnerabilities: gender, age, ableism, ethnicity and sexuality
- Intersectional perspectives
- Of concern to Criminal Justice agencies plus (mental) health services

Learning from the evaluation

# About the evaluation

- Advance HE appointed as **independent evaluators** of overall intervention from 2018-20 to:
  - Support learning, exchange & dissemination of effective practice from projects
  - Help establish 'what works' in safeguarding students
  - Overall evaluation in addition to but mindful of individual projects' evaluations
- **Formative and summative** evaluation process
- Evaluation of Rounds One and Two complete; Round 3 projects and evaluation until spring 2020



# Evaluation approach

Evaluation considered **whether evidence for intended outcomes within key themes via:**

- Review of projects' own documentation and materials
- Primary research with project teams, sponsors, external partners and students
- Secondary research sources (including grey literature)
- Ongoing discussions with academic and national expert and stakeholder organisations
- Events with project teams e.g. roundtables and webinars



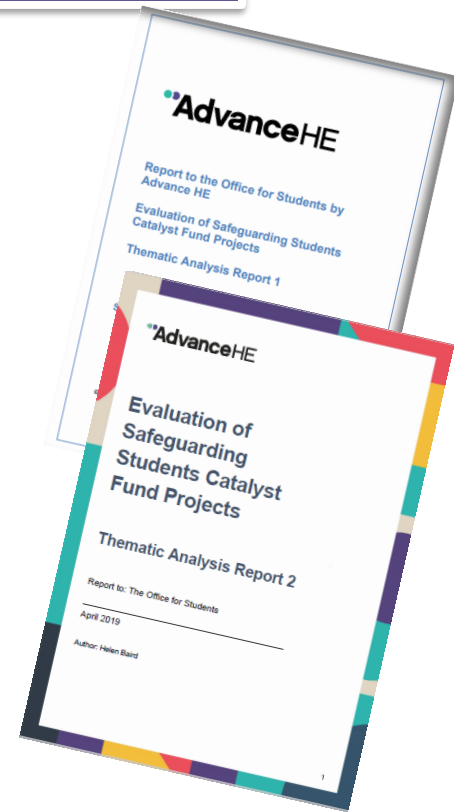
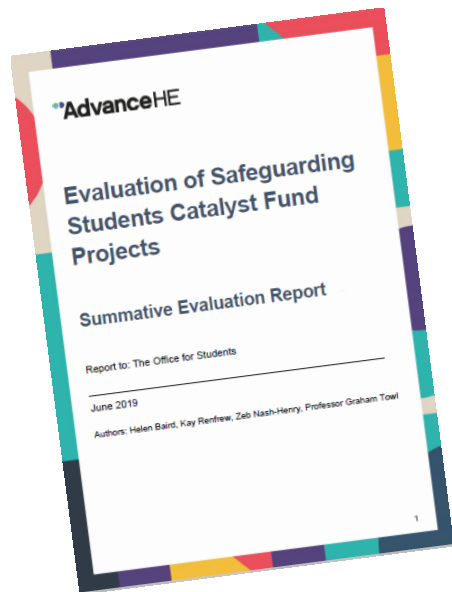
# Main outputs from the evaluation

- Two Thematic Analysis Reports on learning from Round One and Round Two projects (Sept-18 & Apr-19)

(<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/evaluation-of-safeguarding-students-catalyst-fund-projects/>)

- Summative Evaluation Report on learning from Round One and Two projects (June-19) covering:

- **Critical success factors and lessons learned** from projects
- **Outcomes**, early evidence of impact and **cultural change**
- How to **sustain and embed the work** of the projects – within funded providers and wider HE sector
- Priority next steps for policymakers, sector bodies & providers



# Learning from the evaluation

- Some key findings:
  - Catalyst funding **maintained momentum** of *Changing the Culture*
  - **Scale of funding** a great strength across 87 providers – in alleviating reputational concerns and securing leadership buy-in
  - Catalyst funding stimulated activity across much of sector on safeguarding
  - But, no time to pilot initiatives; hence some **duplication of effort**
  - Work on tackling **sexual misconduct** (tolerance down and reporting rates beginning to go up) ahead of that on **hate crime and incidents** across sector
  - Funded providers able to progress safeguarding work more quickly and comprehensively as a result
  - UUK data shows positive impact of Catalyst funding on progress in safeguarding compared with non-funded English HE providers
  - Safeguarding projects becoming embedded ('one-off' or 'business as usual') within some, but not all, funded providers (substantial variation remains)

# Learning from the evaluation

- **HE providers embarking on safeguarding initiatives** should:
  - Develop a well-researched, strategic and planned approach, and evaluate to understand 'what works' and impact it has
  - Need to establish baseline and then monitor change
  - Draw on peer advice through networks
  - Be aware it takes at least a year to design, implement and begin to embed change – no quick fixes
  - Develop and implement policies and processes first, then reporting systems with supporting information and resources before awareness raising campaigns and training

# Learning from the evaluation

- **Leadership teams** generally should:
  - Take responsibility for key decisions and risks around safeguarding, including taking action to direct this work
  - Ensure safeguarding activity is embedded within existing governance structures
  - Regularly monitor prevalence (including trends) and outcome reports of safeguarding incidents and report to governing body at regular intervals
  - Add student safeguarding in relation to sexual misconduct and hate crime are added to strategic risk registers.
- **Governing bodies** should:
  - Hold their executive teams to account for tackling sexual misconduct and hate incidents
  - Ensure adequate monitoring of prevalence and outcomes (including all reporting students protected characteristics)

# Learning from the evaluation

- Vast amount of detail in **Summative Report** and learning points for providers grouped into main evaluation themes
- To **drive sector level change** – Government and HE sector bodies (the OfS and Equality and Human Rights Commission) should continue to monitor progress being made by HE providers to ensure student safeguarding
- Government should monitor and determine whether enough is being done by providers themselves and if this work is being sustained, with support and encouragement from sector bodies

Conclusions and next steps

# Conclusions

- Much progress has been made – evidenced e.g. with some significantly increased reporting rates
- But, progress is inconsistent across the sector with much variability
- Commonalities and differences between issues: underreporting a commonality
- To realise the full potential (including sustainability) of safeguarding initiatives there is a clear need for senior leadership support
- Reputational issue related concerns often appear to conflate reporting rates with actual rates
- Increasingly signs that there appears to be greater risks to inaction than action for providers



# Recommendations

- Report contains 20 recommendations to help **ensure effective and innovative practice** developed by Catalyst funding is disseminated, embedded and sustained
- These should help to:
  - Achieve (or maintain) universal **senior leader buy-in** (particularly when Catalyst funding finished)
  - Ensure **reporting** of incidents and outcomes reaches senior leaders and governing bodies
  - Develop and embed **effective practice** for HE sector (for tackling sexual misconduct and hate crime / harassment)

# Minimum safeguarding practice

1. **Annual reports to the governing body** which are publicly available covering reports, disclosures and outcomes
2. Integration into **communications for prospective students** so they are aware of the behaviour expectations and student safety support in place
3. There need to be **active communications campaigns urging victims / survivors to come forward** and report their experiences
4. **Staff and student training programmes** need to be in place (bystander intervention + specialist staff training)
5. A member of the **senior executive team needs to hold accountability** for work on addressing sexual misconduct and hate crime / incidents
6. Good policy and evidence-informed practice needed
7. Resources – providers should plan for rise in reporting levels – **need for one FTE per 10,000 students who specialises solely in this area**
8. **Partnership working** - collaborative working in place with local SARCs, police, other providers, schools and specialist voluntary and community organisations

# Summary

- Drive up reporting rates – a new norm of reporting may contribute to prevention too:
  - Report progress annually to the governing body – and make anonymous data with report rates and actions taken
  - Report to include; personal/health, educational, investigative and police referral rates as ‘inputs’
  - Report related ‘outcomes’ too
- Bystander intervention work for sexual misconduct, hate crime and hate incidents
- Communications plan and clear, accessible reporting and disclosure procedures needed – plus effective student support (informed by experiences of victims/survivors and their advocates)

Reference slides

# Terminology

- “**Sexual violence**” is generally taken to mean acts ranging from what is increasingly being referred to as “everyday sexism”, such as sexist comments being made, to the most serious of sexual crimes. Thus, the term includes both criminal and non-criminal behaviour. However, in policy and practice within HE providers, the ambit of institutional governance is captured as **sexual misconduct**. In other words, it refers to conduct which may be in breach of a provider’s rules and regulations. The level of evidence required with cases of misconduct is at a civil level, in other words the **balance of probabilities**. Just as the level of evidence is different to the Criminal Justice System, so are the range of possible sanctions.
- **Hate crime** is characterised by the motivation for the commission of the offence. **Five strands** are monitored by English police forces: **disability; gender identity; race, ethnicity or nationality; religion, faith or belief; and sexual orientation**. By far the most prevalent hate crime reported, both in England and across HE providers, is viewed as racially motivated. There is a lack of clarity and understanding across the HE sector (among both students and staff) about what constitutes hate crimes, and what can and should be done about them, which can lead to certain crimes being overlooked.
- **Hate incidents** is a broader term which does not necessarily involve the commission of a crime. These are described as “**everyday harassment**” or “**micro-aggressions**” affecting students, based on their disability, gender identity, race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, faith or belief, or sexual orientation.
- A further definitional issue exists with **online harassment**, which is part of a bigger picture and cannot be addressed in isolation from the perpetrators’ behaviours which needs to be addressed, not solely the channel for the harassment.

Evaluation themes	Desired outcomes from Catalyst intervention
<b>1. Leadership and governance of safeguarding projects</b>	<p>More senior leaders are proactively committed to eradicating issues of sexual misconduct and hate crime/incidents, and more providers are taking a provider-wide approach to tackle safety issues as a result, with more senior leaders recognising the need to support this work and are acting to direct the work.</p>
<b>2. Delivery and effective management</b>	<p>More holistic and clearer safeguarding policies and processes are in place across providers for reporting and responding to misconduct, with more revised codes of conduct and staff and student contracts, and increased tackling of safeguarding issues.</p>
<b>3. Student involvement, training and experience</b>	<p>More co-creation and design of initiatives with students, more student-centred interventions in place, more account taken of victims/survivors' voices, more bystander and other awareness training, all leading to safer students with more positive experiences and ultimately fewer incidents taking place on campuses, with downstream improved student mental health, retention, attainment, and other educational and employment outcomes.</p>
<b>4. Staff involvement, including of academic and teaching staff and specialist resources</b>	<p>More staff training across providers, increased numbers of specialist practitioners operating within providers (including to handle disclosures and provide support and trained investigators), enhanced use of academic expertise and research in making the case for and driving change (such as of criminologists, sociologists and psychologists) and safety issues becoming more embedded in the curriculum.</p>
<b>5. Reporting mechanisms</b>	<p>More providers have better reporting mechanisms and systems, more holistic reporting process in place, and increased awareness of how to report among students, leading to increased reporting of sexual misconduct, of hate crime and harassment, including online incidents, increased confidence of victims/survivors in reporting and ultimately the reporting of sexual misconduct and hate incidents becoming the new norm.</p>

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<b>6. Partnership/ collaboration</b>	More commonly agreed definitions of misconduct across providers, improved collaboration among sector stakeholder organisations and campaign groups, more collaboration and partnerships between HE and third sector organisations, more local, regional partnership working and community engagement, all leading to an enhanced influence on government policy and cross-silo working.
<b>7. Culture, attitude or behavioural change</b>	More providers recognising cultural change needed (not just changes to policies and practice), more providers with action plans to address cultural barriers, better understanding of barriers to cultural change, better understanding among staff/students of all backgrounds on what constitutes sexual misconduct and hate incidents, more students and staff empowered to advocate for themselves and others, all forms of harassment considered by all to be unacceptable, more providers extending approaches to all student safeguarding issues, less sexual offending, fewer hate incidents and less crime.
<b>8. Risks or negative outcomes/barriers to change</b>	Potentially including reputational damage to providers and the sector from increased reporting and media spotlighting, reputational risks for providers which try something and get it wrong, lack of work in other areas of equality, diversity and inclusivity as a result through trade-off, the risk of active opposition, issues with identity politics, and potential backlash.
<b>9. Sustainability and embedding of change</b>	Increased resources within providers committed to tackling issues, more sustained and embedded initiatives and projects, more iterative ongoing training programmes, more sustainable partnerships in place with local and regional partners, enhanced influence on public discourse, and ultimately improved sector reputation on safeguarding issues.