

## Full privacy notice for the sexual misconduct pilot survey

### 1. Introduction

The Office for Students (OfS) is committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we hold about you and how we use it. This privacy notice tells you what to expect when the OfS collects personal information as part of a national pilot to explore the prevalence of sexual misconduct in higher education.

As the regulator of the higher education sector in England the OfS has certain statutory functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017. This pilot survey forms part of the OfS's legal requirement under this Act to ensure the quality of higher education in the providers it funds. Data about the prevalence of sexual misconduct does not currently exist for the UK. This pilot survey intends to help us understand the scale of the issue and how different student groups are affected.

You can find more information about the OfS and the work that we do [on our website](#).

IFF Research (an independent social and market research agency) are carrying out the pilot survey on our behalf.

### 2. Data controller and Data Protection Officer

For any personal information collected within scope of this privacy notice, the OfS is the 'data controller' and IFF research is a 'data processor' acting on our behalf. Our location and contact details are below:

Office for Students

Westward House

Lime Kiln Close

Bristol

BS34 8SR

Tel: 0117 931 7317

Email: [dp@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:dp@officeforstudents.org.uk)

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) is the first point of contact for people whose information is processed. You can contact the DPO using the details above. You should note that this email address is monitored by other members of the OfS's data protection team. Therefore, please mark any correspondence 'for the attention of the Data Protection Officer'.

The OfS is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Our registration number is ZA309955 and you can check our entry details on the [ICO's website](#).

### **3. What personal information we will hold and use**

#### **Personal data we collect from your provider**

Your higher education provider will upload personal data to a secure site for IFF Research to create a survey target list. This list will be used to invite you to respond to an online survey about your experiences of sexual misconduct.

- First name
- Surname
- Date of birth
- Contact details (mobile number and email)
- Course title
- Mode of study
- Provider
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Unique Student Identifier (HUSID)
- Domicile (of permanent home address)
- General qualification aim
- Location of study
- Start date of study
- Subject of study.

#### **Special categories of data we collect from your provider**

- Sex
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Religious belief.

## **Why we collect special categories of data before issuing the survey**

- The collection of special category data, such as ethnicity and disability, will ensure that individuals with these characteristics are adequately represented and that their views and experiences are considered.
- IFF Research can monitor and target particular groups who are underrepresented in order to increase response rates.
- All the information collected will be used to check whether there is any difference in response to the survey questions by students with a given characteristic.
- To assess whether there is any response bias; whether students who responded had the same characteristics as the people who did not respond.

## **If you participate in the pilot survey**

IFF Research will collect your survey responses and share with the OfS in pseudonymised format via a secure online platform.

In addition to your survey responses, we will collect the following administrative data about the survey which will be used for survey development and evaluation purposes:

- time and date of starting the survey
- time and date of finishing the survey
- information about partial responses
- flags to show how many email addresses and phone numbers were supplied
- number of emails sent
- type of device used
- number of reminders sent.

The OfS will then perform analysis on the data to identify the prevalence of sexual misconduct and understand the context surrounding sexual misconduct, including at different providers or with different groups of students.

Your participation in this research, together with your individual responses to the questions, will be kept strictly confidential in line with information security requirements and standards as agreed between IFF Research and the OfS.

You will NOT be identifiable in any results which are published or shared with providers. The results of the pilot survey will primarily be used for internal analysis. We may publish a summary of our findings aggregated at a high level. In addition the results for each provider will be shared back with that provider, in a way that takes steps to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents.

## **4. Our purpose for using the information**

The sexual misconduct pilot survey aims to:

- explore the prevalence of sexual misconduct
- develop an approach to managing a national provider level student sexual misconduct prevalence survey
- help inform decisions about future surveys.

We can only use your personal information where we have a specific purpose or purposes for doing so. National data about the prevalence of sexual misconduct does not currently exist in the UK. This pilot survey intends to help us understand the scale of the issue and how different student groups are affected.

### **Why we collect your personal information before issuing the survey**

The OfS will link your personal information with other existing datasets to analyse the results. This includes being able to monitor and analyse how representative the student sample is, both during and after the survey is completed.

If we want to use your personal information for a reason other than those purposes set out above, we will tell you before we start that use and provide further information about the new purpose(s).

## **5. Legal basis for using your personal information**

Under data protection legislation, we require a legal basis to be able to process your personal information for the purposes set out above.

In this case, the legal basis is:

- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Controller (see GDPR Article 6(1)(e) and for statistical and research purposes (see GDPR Article 89).
- Processing of special categories of data is necessary for statistical and research purposes in accordance with Article 89(1) and Schedule 1 part (4) of the DPA 2018 (see GDPR Article 9(2)(j)).

If you wish to opt out at any stage then you can do so by contacting IFF Research, via email, on: [OfS\\_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com](mailto:OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com).

Please note, you must actively opt out if you do not wish to be surveyed; not responding to an email or SMS message does not constitute an opt-out.

If you opt-out we will keep your personal information submitted to IFF Research, except your name and contact details. This is because we need this information to analyse whether particular students were tending to opt-out of the survey.

## **6. Information we obtain from other sources**

The OfS is the 'data controller' of any personal information collated and transferred for this pilot survey. The OfS may, from time to time, engage other non-statutory bodies or agents to carry out functions on their behalf. In order to carry out this survey the OfS has appointed IFF Research who will request personal information, including contact details, from your education provider. The OfS,

as the data controller, will retain control of any personal data transferred under contract with non-statutory bodies.

## 7. Who we share your personal information with and why

We will not pass your information to any other organisation except where required to do so as part of our functions or by law.

If your feedback relates to any sexual misconduct experiences or incidents or you share any concerns about safeguarding, please note that these cannot be followed up with you by your education provider or the OfS due to confidentiality. The OfS will not have access to your contact details and will not be able to contact you and would not expect to make any contact with your education provider about specific situations. It is important that if you have any concerns about your own wellbeing or safeguarding that you contact your education provider for information on the support and services available.

If you are currently in danger or need urgent medical attention, please contact the emergency services on 999.

In the table below is a list of support services that you can contact in a non-emergency situation, for help and advice:

Support services available to you	Contact details
The Police (law enforcement)	Call '101'. This is a national, 24/7 helpline.
National Health Service (NHS)	Call '111'. This is a national, 24/7 helpline.
NHS mental health support	You can find support at: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/">https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/</a> .
The Samaritans (a charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection)	Call '116 123'. This is a national 24/7 helpline.
Student Minds (the UK's student mental health charity)	You can access support via: <a href="https://www.studentminds.org.uk/findsupport.html">https://www.studentminds.org.uk/findsupport.html</a>
Student Space (an online platform providing support services and advice and information on student life)	You can find support at: <a href="https://studentspace.org.uk/">https://studentspace.org.uk/</a>
Mind (a mental health charity)	Call '0300 123 3393' or you can find support at: <a href="https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/">https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/</a>
SHOUT (a free, confidential text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope)	Text '85258' or you can find support at: <a href="https://giveusashout.org/">https://giveusashout.org/</a>
Rape crisis England and Wales (dedicated helpline for victims of abuse in schools)	Call '0808 500 2222' or you can find support at: <a href="https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/">https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/</a>

## 8. How long we hold your personal information

We are only able to retain a copy of your personal information if it is still needed for the purpose(s) for which it was collected.

The OfS will not be sent your name or contact details. IFF Research will send pseudonymised survey responses to the OfS which will be retained indefinitely for use in producing statistical analysis and research into quality and student experience, and trends in higher education. Pseudonymisation is a technique that replaces or removes information that identifies an individual. The information will not be used to make any decisions about individuals and any reports the OfS publish will not include individualised data.

IFF Research will keep your personal information and survey responses for no longer than three months after the close of the research project, at which point it will be confidentially and securely disposed of.

## 9. Where your personal information will be stored

Your personal information will be kept strictly confidential by all parties involved, will be stored securely within the UK and will not be transferred outside that territory.

## 10. How we protect your personal information

The OfS has a number of security measures in place to protect your personal information, including:

- Accredited to the Cyber Essentials PLUS standard for cybersecurity.
- All staff are required to undertake training in data protection and information security on joining the OfS.
- Formal information security policies that must be read and understood by all staff.
- Personal information is only available to those members of staff who require access as part of their role. This will be managed with an access control list, specifying which users are granted or denied access to the information.
- Personal data is stored in pseudonymised form with access to the key which resolves the pseudonymisation strictly controlled.

You can read more information on [our approach to information security](#) on our website.

IFF Research has regular internal and external audits of its information security and is registered to the International Standard for Information Security, ISO 27001. They are also Cyber Essentials PLUS certified.

## 11. Your rights over your personal information

Once your personal information has been collected, you have certain rights in relation to that personal information that may be exercised. You have the right to request:

- a copy of your personal information
- inaccurate personal information held about you is corrected
- your personal information to be deleted
- processing of your personal information is restricted
- a copy of your information in a format that allows easy transfer ('data portability')
- that you are not subject to automated decision making or profiling (if these take place).

All these rights have certain limitations depending on the request and the purpose for which we are holding your personal information. Further information [about these rights and our processes](#) for handling such requests is available on our website.

## 12. Use of cookies

Cookies are text files placed on your computer to collect standard internet log information and visitor behaviour information. This information is used to track visitor use of the website and to complete statistical reports on website activity. For further information about [our cookies](#) visit our website, or for further general information visit: [www.aboutcookies.org](http://www.aboutcookies.org) or [www.allaboutcookies.org](http://www.allaboutcookies.org).

Information about [IFF Research's cookies policy](#) is available on their website.

## 13. Complaints about the use of your personal information

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal information has been handled by the OfS, please contact us via our Data Protection Officer (details in section two) and we will try to resolve your issue informally.

If you remain dissatisfied, you can complain to the data protection supervisory authority. In the UK, this is the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and they can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk)

## **14. Changes to this notice**

We keep our privacy notices under regular review and we will inform you of any changes to this notice by placing an update on our [privacy notices](#) webpage.

This privacy notice was last updated on 14 April 2023.

## **15. How can I obtain further details about this privacy notice or our compliance with it?**

If you have any questions or require further information about this privacy statement, IFF Research's compliance with data protection laws or the information held about you for this research, please contact the OfS using the details above or IFF Research's Compliance Department. They can be contacted by email sent to: [DPO@iffresearch.com](mailto:DPO@iffresearch.com) with 'Sexual misconduct survey' as the subject or by letter sent to: Data Protection Officer, IFF Research, 5th Floor St Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London, England, EC3R 6HD.

## **16. Can I provide feedback on the survey?**

Yes. IFF Research and the OfS are committed to continuously improving the survey. Should you have a question, comment and/or complaint about this research please contact IFF Research at [OfS\\_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com](mailto:OfS_SMSurvey@iffresearch.com) or the OfS at [smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:smsurvey@officeforstudents.org.uk).