

Supporting Disclosures of Sexual Misconduct

Advice & Guidance for Staff

SUPPORTING DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The University has a duty to provide neutral and balanced support to all students, whether the student is **reporting** an allegation of misconduct or **responding** to an any allegation.

It is possible that a student will choose to disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to any staff member. It is likely the student has chosen a particular person because they know them and feel they can trust them. A disclosure will be unique to each student's situation and it is important to remain calm, reassure the student, assess the situation/risk, listen to their story and provide support and options.

Sexual Misconduct can be experienced by anyone. It is crucial the staff member creates a safe space and that the student is aware of their options so they can make an informed choice. Remind the student of the limits of confidentiality and your possible legal obligations.

UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

Queen's University is committed to providing a safe environment conducive to the academic, social and personal development of all members of the University. The University will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment for all students, staff and visitors to the University. This principle applies to all members of the University. The University regards as unacceptable any form of sexual misconduct and operates a zero tolerance policy with regard to sexual misconduct.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct means any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or by force, intimidation or coercion. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender and it can occur between people of the same or different gender. Such behaviour will usually also constitute a criminal offence.

Sexual misconduct may be committed in person and also by letter, email, text or by postings on social media sites. Examples of sexual misconduct can include sexual intercourse or engaging in a sexual act without consent, attempting to engage in sexual intercourse or a sexual act without consent, sharing private sexual material of another person without consent, kissing without consent, touching inappropriately without consent, inappropriately showing sexual organs to another person, making unwanted remarks, suggestive sounds or gestures of a sexual nature, spreading rumours about another person's sexuality, name-calling or jokes about sex or gender and visual displays of posters, graffiti, videos, pictures or other offensive material. These examples are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and other forms of behaviour may be regarded as sexual misconduct. It is likely these examples will constitute a criminal offence.

	GUIDANCE NOTES
1. DEFINITIONS	<p>Reporting Student - The person who is alleging, in good faith and in compliance with University policies, the occurrence of a breach of the Student Conduct Regulations and/or the law. (Appendix 3)</p> <p>Responding Student - The person whose actions are alleged to have breached the Student Conduct Regulations and/or the law. (Appendix 3)</p>
2. CLARITY ABOUT YOUR ROLE	<p>Explain at the outset the parameters of your role – that you can listen, provide information and practical support and will assist the student in obtaining specialist assistance from internal and external sources.</p>
3. PRIVACY	<p>Ensure a private, quiet space is available for discussion and the student is comfortable, feels safe and is able to speak freely without interruption.</p>
4. CONFIDENTIALITY	<p>Ensure you explain this is a confidential process, though there may be circumstances where it may be necessary for you to share information without their consent –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a known risk of harm to them or to others. • There are safeguarding concerns i.e. student is under 18 years old • If there is a legal obligation to disclose any detailed information (The Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 states that it is the duty of a person, who is aware of an offence to report it to PSNI. Therefore at this stage inform the student that if they disclose any identifiable information you may have to report this. <p>Once you have clarified the bounds of confidentiality, you can discuss the following-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the student can choose to disclose as much information as they wish too • Explain that there is an online reporting system and that you can support them to complete a report. • The University will keep this information while they remain a student at QUB. • Information may be shared internally in line with the University's Privacy Notice

5. KEY QUESTIONS FOR THE REPORTING STUDENT

Ensure the following key questions are explored during the discussion:

- What form of sexual misconduct are they experiencing / have they experienced?
- When did the incident take place? Is it recent or historic?
- Have they told anyone else about this?
- Do they feel safe right now? If not, your response should be considered in line with the Support Pathway (Appendix 1a) and the Referral Pathway Flowchart (Appendix 2)
- Do they require immediate medical assistance? If so, your response should be considered in line the Referral Pathway Flowchart (Appendix 2) seeking medical helps as a priority.
- Have they or do they wish to report their experiences to the Police? It is important to confirm there is no obligation to do so and to not put pressure on the student to take any particular course of action. The student should be provided with a copy of the Internal and External support contact details, which provides details of available support to report experiences. (Appendix 4)
- What do they need from you at this moment?

6. KEY QUESTIONS FOR THE RESPONDING STUDENT

Ensure the following key questions are explored during the discussion:

- When did the incident take place? Is it recent or historic?
- Have they told anyone else about this?
- Do they feel safe right now? If not, your response should be considered in line with the Support Pathway (Appendix 1b) and the Referral Pathway Flowchart (Appendix 2)
- The student should be provided with a copy of the Internal and External support contact details, which provides information of available assistance. (Appendix 4)
- What do they need from you at this moment?

7. SAFETY

The safety of the student is paramount. Assess that the student is safe and whether they require any immediate medical attention. If the alleged perpetrator is still in the vicinity, please notify either the Police on 999 or QUB Security on 5099. If the student requires emergency medical aid please call 999 for an Ambulance. If there is no immediate risk **DO NOT** call emergency Services without the students consent.

If the student does not feel safe in their accommodation, emergency shelter can be provided by either contacting Women’s Aid or QUB accommodation. The University has a range of properties across campus and the student can move location if necessary.

The student can also access medical attention from The Rowan Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre), from any Sexual Health Clinic or from their GP. Please refer to the Internal and External Support for contact details.

Examples of helpful statements might include-

“Do you feel safe right now”

“Can I ask if you need any medical treatment”

“Would you be open to getting further support”

8. GIVE THE STUDENT CONTROL

Recognise that those who have been the victim of sexual misconduct often feel that they have lost the control to make choices about their situation and/or feel powerless. It is therefore really important that the student should feel in control of what happens after their disclosure is made. Within the bounds of confidentiality, they should be given the opportunity and support to develop their own thoughts, explore options and make their own informed decisions about the next steps. Use invitations as a way of exploring with the student what their wishes are.

Confirm (where possible) the level of risk faced by the student.
Helpful questions include-

“Are you feeling frightened right now?”
“Can I just ask what it is you are afraid of?”

As well as ensuring the student has consented and they are aware of what they have consented to, it is also advisable to explain to the student that they can withdraw their consent at any stage.

Helpful questions include-
“Can I just check that you are happy for me to pass this information onto”
“Can I just clarify what we have agreed as the next steps”

9. SENSITIVITY

Respond to a disclosure in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental manner. Thank the student for feeling able to share sensitive information and reassure them that you will help them. Recognise the barriers to disclosure such as fear, embarrassment or feelings of shame or blame.

Allow time and space for them to talk and use basic communication skills such as open body language, active listening and attending. Try not to interrupt their flow but occasionally use paraphrasing or open questions to clarify their story.

The student may be in a distressed state, they could be confused and find it difficult to recall information. Try not to use sympathetic language or ask leading questions, it is not your role to investigate this incident but to gather the facts and reassure the student of the support available.

Please note: It is advisable not to touch a reporting student as this can be traumatic for a survivor of sexual assault and you could also transfer DNA.

It is appropriate to use silence as a communication tool, in order to give them time to reflect and recount information. Grounding techniques such as getting the student to take deep breaths or to count backwards from 10 to 1 may be helpful in order to get them centred.

Examples of empathetic language include

“Thank you for coming along- How can I help?”
“Take your time- you only have to tell me what you feel comfortable telling me and you can stop at any time”
“I understand this can be difficult to talk about”

10. TIMELINE

When supporting a Reporting student it is important to clarify when the incident took place, If the incident has taken place within the past 7 days, advise that eating, drinking, teeth brushing, smoking, and showering can impact on forensic evidence being gathered. It is likely that they may have done some of these things already, so therefore reassure that this is a natural response to the trauma experienced.

Explain that DNA can remain on clothing indefinitely and therefore if they wish to preserve evidence, they could put the clothing into a clean plastic bag and seal it with the date and time recorded.

There is also a window of opportunity for any medications to be administered. For emergency contraception should be started ASAP and within 72 hours. HIV prophylaxis should be started within 36 hours. If there is a suspicion that drugs were issued as part of an assault, it is best to be tested within 24 hours.

Useful responses could be-

“Can I ask when this first happened?”

When supporting a Responding student it is important to clarify when the incident occurred and if the Police are aware of the incident. If there is an ongoing Police Investigation explain to the student that you are not able to go into details of the case for prejudicial reasons. If the Police are not aware of the incident, explain to the student your duty to report a known crime before they go into detail. It might be useful at this stage to inform the student of the University processes such as the Student Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Conduct Regulations. Advise them of their rights and you can signpost the student to SU Advice or Student Wellbeing for further support.

Useful statements could be-

“The University has a duty to support students who have been accused of Sexual Misconduct and I will assist you to get the appropriate information and support.”

11. REPORTING A DISCLOSURE

It is important to explain to the student the difference between a disclosure and a report and for them to be aware of the processes so they can make an informed decision.

A **disclosure** is a conversation about an incident by telling either the University or Police about their experience without wanting to pursue any further action. The University will record this information accordingly, in line with data protection.

A **report** is formal record of the incident by raising a complaint to either the University and/or Police, whereby the student wishes for the matter to be investigated and possible action taken against the accused. If the student makes a report to Police this will take precedent over a University investigation. If the student wishes to make a report to Police, advise that any subsequent discussion is stopped and that the student is enabled to contact Police directly. If the student wishes to report to University, make the student aware of Referral Pathway and the subsequent processes involved. Please refer to the Sexual Misconduct Policy, the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Student Complaints Procedure for further information. If the student makes an allegation of sexual misconduct against a member of staff the Staff Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked.

Explain to the reporting student there is no time limit to reporting an incident of sexual misconduct to the Police and they can do this at any stage.

If the reporting student does not wish to report to Police at this stage, they can still

	<p>attend the Rowan Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) and give anonymous details. The SARC will be able to provide emergency medical help such as contraception and medication to prevent STI's and HIV. The Rowan can also gather and store forensic evidence for up to 7 years should the student decide at a later date to proceed with a report to the police.</p> <p>If you receive a disclosure from a responding student regarding an allegation of Sexual Misconduct it is important to check with the student who else is aware of this. You can advise the student that it is a requirement within the Conduct Regulations, for students to inform the University if they have been accused of a series crime, so that measure can be put in place to protect everyone's safety.</p> <p>Useful Statements could be-</p> <p><i>"Have you thought about what you want to do about this?"</i></p> <p><i>"Would it be helpful if I talked through the options with you?"</i></p>
<p>12. IMPACT OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT</p>	<p>Sexual misconduct can impact people in many different forms and is individual to each survivor. It is important to also recognise that traumatic symptoms can be indicative of other underlying health issues. As a guide some of the symptoms may include being withdrawn, poor academic performance, losing interest in activities, difficulties with concentration and memory, absenteeism, visible bruising or injuries, agitation or nervousness and notable weight gain/loss. Feelings of blame, shame and guilt are very common in this situation</p> <p>Responding students who are accused of sexual misconduct may also experience similar symptoms and their wellbeing is paramount. If you have any concerns that the student is at risk, please refer to the Student Support Protocol and contact Student Wellbeing Service for advice and guidance.</p>
<p>13. SUPPORT OPTIONS</p>	<p>There are a range of support options for students both internally to the University and externally in the community. Please refer to the Internal & External Support Tables (Appendix 4) for the most appropriate support option</p>
<p>14. SELF CARE</p>	<p>Receiving a disclosure from a distressed student can be difficult and is important that you look after yourself, this could involve speaking to a person either within your team, Student Wellbeing or accessing specialist support such as the staff counselling service via Inspire.</p> <p>It is good practice to maintain professional boundaries and not to become emotionally involved. Finally there is responsibility on the First Responder to look at appropriate self-care strategies such as debriefing to a colleague, Student Wellbeing or accessing the Staff Counselling Service. Participating in creative activities such as art, music, cooking and exercise may also be beneficial.</p>

CHECKLIST

Safety

Timeline

Understand Disclosure

Discuss confidentiality

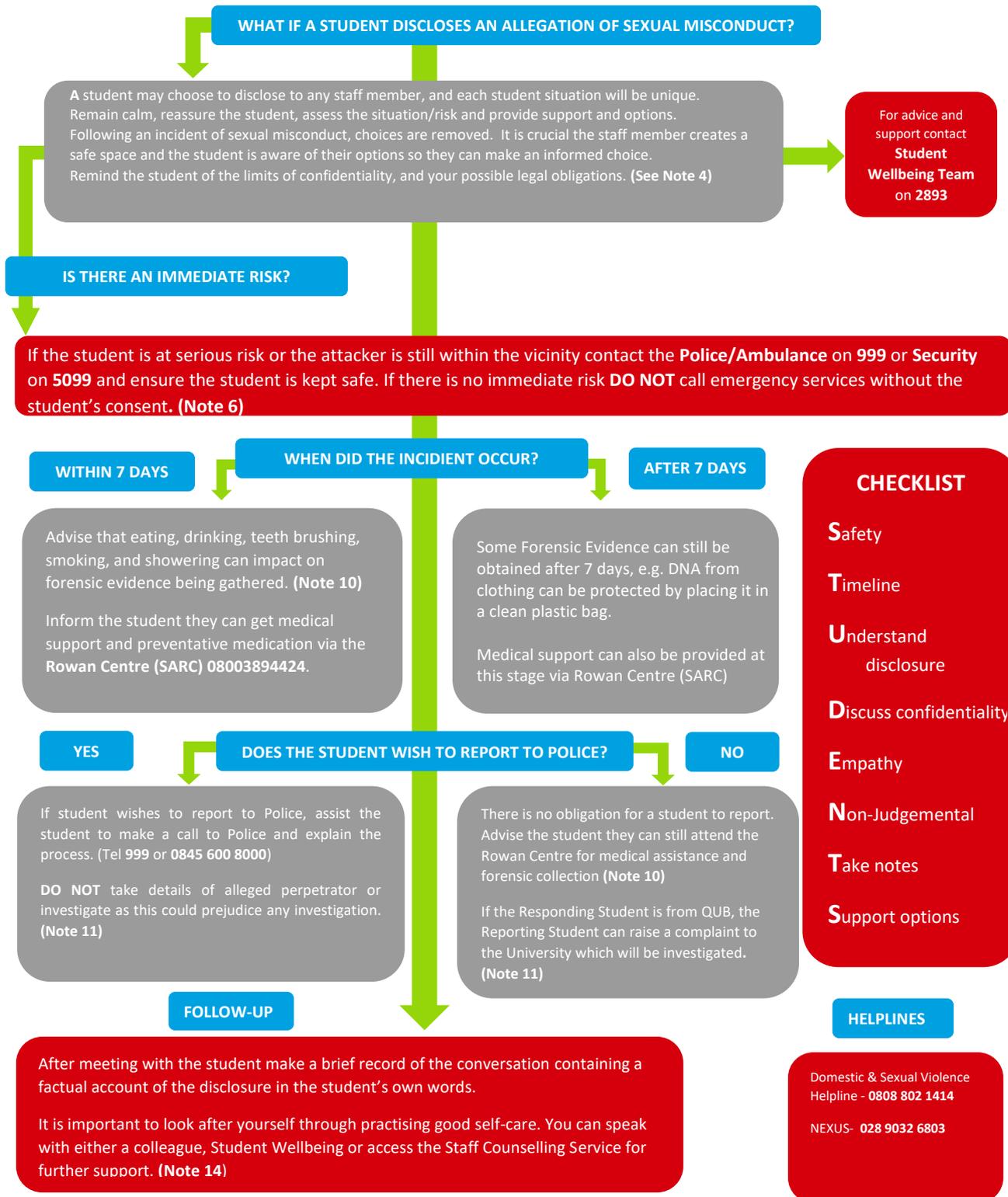
Empathy

Non-Judgemental

Take notes

Support Options

SUPPORT PATHWAY for Students REPORTING Allegations of SEXUAL MISCONDUCT



SUPPORT PATHWAY for Students RESPONDING to Allegations of SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

WHAT IF A STUDENT DISCLOSES AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?

A student may choose to disclose to any staff member, and each student situation will be unique. Remain calm, reassure the student, assess the situation/risk and provide support and options.

A student who is accused of an incident of sexual misconduct is entitled to receive support from the University without judgement. It is crucial the staff member creates a safe space and the student is aware of their options so they can make an informed choice. **(Note 1)** A student who has been accused of sexual misconduct may be feeling vulnerable and their wellbeing is paramount.

For advice and support contact **Student Wellbeing Team** on **2893**

IS THERE AN IMMEDIATE RISK?

If the student is at serious risk of harm contact **Emergency Services** on **999** or **Security** on **5099** and ensure the student is kept safe. If there is no immediate risk **DO NOT** call emergency services without the student's consent **(Note 6)**.

YES

HAS THE INCIDENT BEEN REPORTED TO POLICE?

NO

If the Police are aware of an incident and in the process of investigating, explain to the student that you can't discuss any details of the case.

Advise they can access support via Student Wellbeing, Inspire and SU Advice.

If the Police are unaware of this allegation, explain to the student you have a legal obligation to report a known crime before they go into any detail **(Note 4)**

Advise they can access support via either Student Wellbeing, Inspire or SU Advice.

YES

HAS THE INCIDENT BEEN REPORTED TO THE UNIVERSITY

NO

Advise the student of the University processes and refer them to the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Explain that any Police investigation will take precedent and the University will conduct an investigation under the conduct regulations after this. Advise they can access support via Student Wellbeing, Inspire and SU Advice.

If the student is under investigation by the Police, explain they have a duty under the Conduct Regulations to report this to the University, so that reasonable steps can be taken to ensure everyone's safety.

Refer the student to the Conduct Regulations and advise of supports through Student Wellbeing, Inspire and SU Advice.

FOLLOW-UP

After meeting with the student make a brief record of the conversation containing a factual account of the disclosure in the student's own words.

It is important to look after yourself through practising good self-care. You can speak with either a colleague, Student Wellbeing or access the Staff Counselling Service for further support. **(Note 14)**

CHECKLIST

- S**afety
- T**imeline
- U**nderstand disclosure
- D**iscuss confidentiality
- E**mpathy
- N**on-Judgemental
- T**ake notes
- S**upport options

HELPLINES

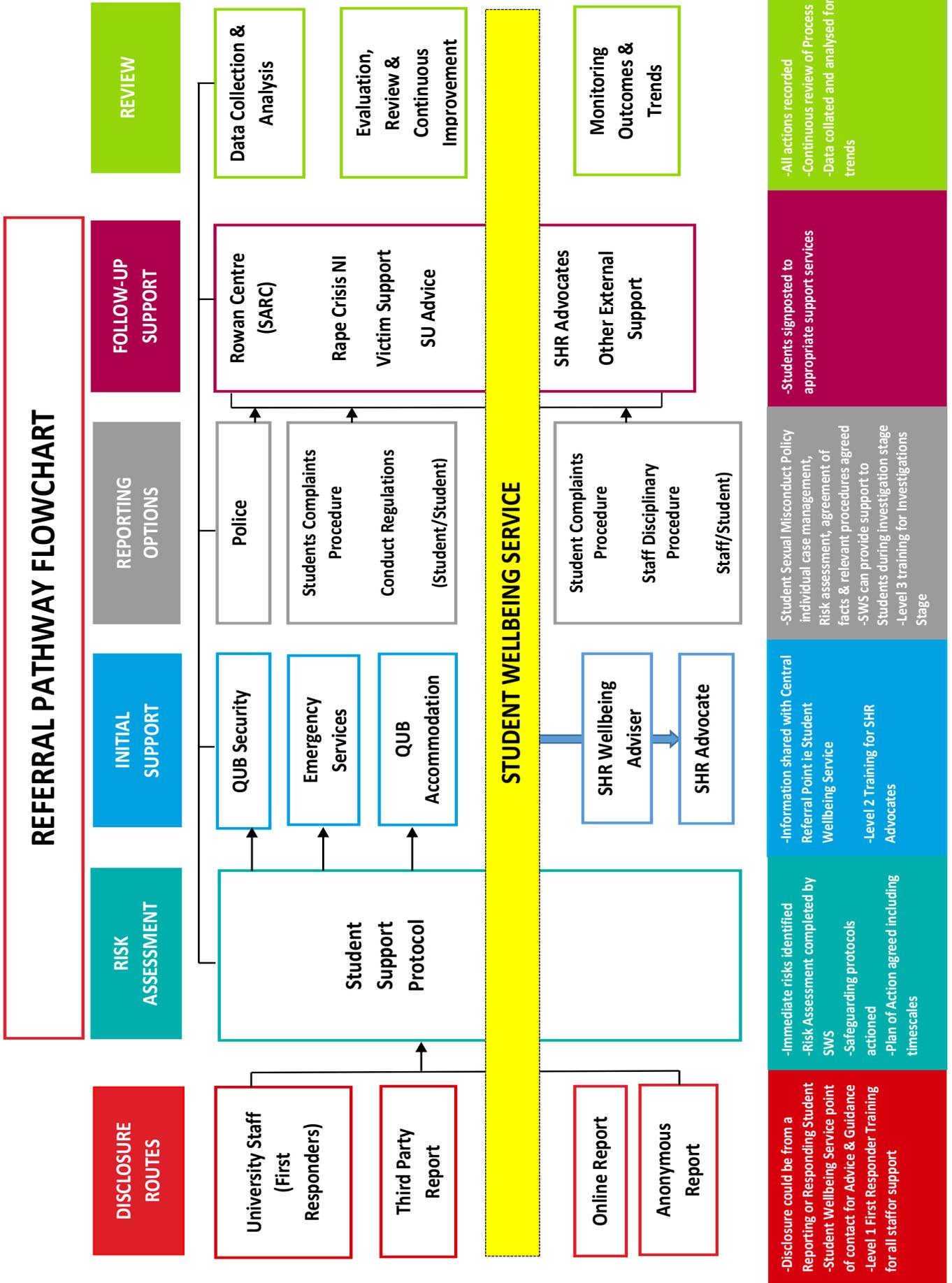
24Hr QUB Inspire Counselling
08088000016

SU Advice
02890973726

Lucy Faithful Foundation
08081000900

Referral Pathway Flowchart

Appendix 2



The following definitions apply to complaints of sexual misconduct-

People Involved:

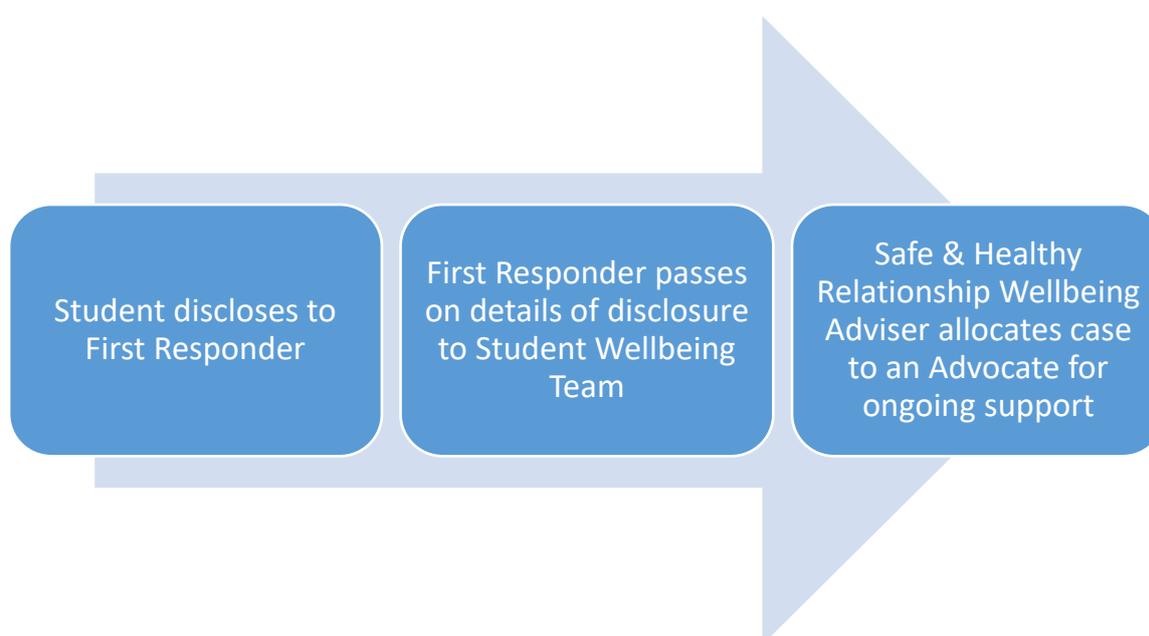
Reporting Student: The person who is alleging, in good faith and in compliance with University policies, the occurrence of a breach of the Student Conduct Regulations and/or the law.

Responding Student: The person whose actions are alleged to have breached the Student Conduct Regulations and/or the law.

First Responder: Any member of staff who can assist a reporting or responding student with a disclosure of sexual misconduct and signpost them to appropriate supports.

Safe & Healthy Relationship Advocates: These are specially trained staff volunteers, who can meet students following a disclosure of sexual misconduct and can provide signposting to specialist services and ongoing support.

Safe & Healthy Relationships Wellbeing Advisor: This is a dedicated position within the Student Wellbeing Team responsible for co-ordinating the Universities response to safe and healthy relationships issues. The SHR Wellbeing Advisor is available to provide advice and guidance to both students and staff. The SHR Wellbeing Advisor will act a case manager for referrals to the SHR Advocates.



Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Service Provided
Student Wellbeing Service	<p>Main line: 2893 studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Safe and Healthy relationships Advisor: 3945 j.finnigan@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Student Guidance Centre Level 2</p>	<p>Advice and support through a number of services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in sessions (Mon -Fri, 12.30-1.30pm) • One-to-one sessions with a wellbeing advisor • Self-help resources • Workshops • Counselling
QUB Security	<p>Security control room: 5099 Emergency extension: 2222 security@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Administration Building Level 1</p>	<p>Security staff are on duty at all times to ensure a safe and secure environment for all persons on the University campus.</p> <p>In an emergency where there is an imminent and serious danger to people or property then the appropriate emergency services should be contacted, either on the emergency extension or 9-999 yourself.</p>
Queen's Accommodation	<p>Elms BT9 : 4525 accommodation@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Residential Life Team (Elms BT9): 4718 rlc@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Elms BT9 78 Malone Road BELFAST BT9 5BW</p> <p>Elms BT1 8 College Ave BELFAST BT1 6DS</p> <p>Elms BT2 1 McClintock Street BELFAST BT2 7GL</p>	<p>The Residential Life team work within accommodation to offer support to students, encourage them to join in social events and organise a weekly programme of events.</p> <p>There is a team of Residential Assistants who live within the accommodation and are in regular contact with the students.</p>

Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Service Provided
Inspire	<p>24-hour Freephone/ appointment line: 0808 800 0016 gubstudents@inspirewellbeing.org</p> <p>Student Guidance Centre Second Floor</p>	<p>Queen’s students and staff can access a counsellor 24 hours a day, 7 days per week on the Freephone number, and can book an appointment on the same number or via email.</p>
Advice SU	<p>3726</p> <p>studentadvice@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>Students’ Union Second Floor</p>	<p>Confidential and non-judgemental advice on issues such as money, education, accommodation, funding and health.</p> <p>The Advice SU drop-in runs Mon& Wed 2-4.30pm, & Fri 9.30am-12pm.</p>
<p>QUB Chaplaincies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presbyterian • Methodist & Church of Ireland • Catholic Chaplaincy 	<p>028 90 66 9078 info@presbyterianireland.org 12-14 Elmwood Avenue</p> <p>028 90 66 7754 info@thehubbelfast.org</p> <p>22 Elmwood Avenue 028 90 66 9737 gubcc@downandconnor.org 28 Elmwood Avenue</p> <p>There are other affiliated chaplains who work with the University in a less formal capacity - their details can be found at http://www.qub.ac.uk/about/Campus-and-facilities/Chaplains-and-Religious-Representatives/</p>	<p>The Chaplaincy centres provide a focus for weekday or Sabbath worship, a range of social events and activities, groups for prayer or study, in addition to pastoral care and counselling.</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Community Engagement Manager: 5190 dee.corbett@qub.ac.uk</p>	<p>Community Engagement manages the relationships between the University and external public and private bodies, recognising the University’s responsibility to be a good neighbour.</p>

Sexual Health Clinic QUB

John Finnigan (Student Wellbeing):
3945
j.finnigan@qub.ac.uk

A free sexual health clinic offering advice, free STI testing and Emergency Contraception.

Clinic Location:

The Space, 1st Floor Students' Union

The Clinic runs every Monday, 1-4pm, on a first come first served basis.

EXTERNAL SUPPORTS

Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Service Provided
PSNI	<p>Emergency: 999</p> <p>Non-Emergency: 101</p> <p>Police Exchange: 028 90 65 0222</p>	
Rape Crime Unit	<p>Emergency number: 0845 600 8000 or 999</p> <p>Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111</p> <p>Police Exchange: 028 90 65 0222</p>	Emergency 24 hour phone number.
The Rowan (Sexual Assault Referral Centre for Northern Ireland)	<p>0800 3894424</p> <p>www.therowan.net</p>	24/7 services to children, young people and adults who have been raped, sexually assaulted or sexually abused, such as: emotional support, forensic medical examination, clinical assessment, sexual health screening and treatment, signposting onto counselling and other support services, and follow-up support.
24 Hour Domestic and Sexual Violence (DSV) Helpline	<p>0808 802 1414</p> <p>Text SUPPORT to 07797805839</p> <p>24hrsupport@dvhelpline.org</p>	<p>The 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline is available 24 hours, seven days a week. The helpline also responds to and supports victims of sexual violence.</p> <p>It is open to all women and men affected by domestic violence and sexual violence.</p>
Nexus NI	<p>Belfast/Co. Antrim/ Co. Down: 028 90 32 6803</p> <p>Co. Armagh: 028 38 35 0588</p> <p>Co. Fermanagh: 028 66 32 0046</p> <p>Co. L/Derry: 028 71 26 0566</p> <p>www.nexusni.org</p>	Specialist counselling for male and female survivors of sexual abuse/violence, 16+.

Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Service Provided
Women's Aid	Belfast & Lisburn: 028 90 66 6049 www.belfastwomensaid.org.uk	Accommodation to women and children experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence. Links to counselling, outreach, drop-in service, advocacy, group/individual sessions, support with solicitors, SSA, Social Services, case conferences, court support, specialist training programmes, follow-up, training, prevention and protection.
The Rainbow Project	Belfast: 028 90 31 9030 Derry: 028 71 28 3030 www.rainbow-project.org	Provides a range of services and opportunities for LGBT people and their families including daily drop-in service 10am-4.30pm, LGBT youth groups and support, transsexual support group, gay men's counselling service, sexual health- condoms, information, HIV and Syphilis rapid testing, advocacy services and older men's support service.
Men's Advisory Project (MAP NI)	Belfast: 028 90 24 1929 Foyle: 028 71 16 0001 Email: info@mapni.co.uk	MAP provides counselling services for men experiencing domestic abuse, as well as information and referrals to other organisations, awareness raising sessions and also a range of services to men and women who want assistance and support to deal with their anger.
Sexual Health Clinics (BHSCT)	Appointment phone-line (8.15-11.15am): 028 90 63 4050 NHS Sexual Health Helpline: 0800 576 123	Belfast Trust provides a wide range of sexual health and HIV services. The service is organised into male and female clinics with separate entrances and waiting areas. However on a Tuesday afternoon there is a mixed clinic which is accessed through the male reception.
Common Youth (formerly Brook NI)	Belfast: 02890328866 Coleraine: 02870342178 https://www.commonyouth.com/	Common Youth provide free, confidential sexual health advice to young people aged Under 25. They provide a range of services including contraception, emergency contraception, pregnancy tests, clinics including STI Clinics and counselling.

Name of Organisation	Contact Details	Service Provided
Victim Support (ISVA)	<p>Belfast: 028 90 24 4039</p> <p>Ballymena: 028 25 63 0784</p> <p>Foyle: 028 71 37 0086</p> <p>Newry: 028 30 25 1321</p> <p>Omagh: 028 82 24 0012</p>	<p>An independent charity that supports people affected by crime. Offers confidential services including:</p> <p>Community service – coping with the personal effects of crime and dealing with the police, courts, legal professions & making a claim.</p> <p>Criminal injuries compensation service- helping victims of violent crime to claim compensation.</p> <p>Witness Service supporting people going to court. Helps witnesses at all Crown, Magistrates, Youth and Appeal courts.</p>
Lucy Faithful Foundation	Stop it Now Confidential helpline 08081000900	The Lucy Faithful Foundation provides support to anyone who is concerned about a persons or their own sexual behaviour via its Stop it Now Helpline. This behaviour can be for both off line and online actions.