**Minutes from ‘Addressing GBV and Sexual Harassment Strategy Group Meeting’**

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| *Subject*: GBV and Sexual Harassment | *Date:* 22/02/2024 |
| *Location:* Microsoft Teams | *Time:* 14:00 – 14:53 |

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| *Chair:* Nick Edwards *- NGE* | *Clerk:* Lisa Kilgour - *LK* | *Minute Taker:* Sara Misuri - *SR* |

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| *Attendees* | *Apologies* |
| Brown, Grame *GB* | Shea, Anna |
| Kilgour, Lisa *LK* | Rolle, Kylie |
| Cox, Owen *OMC* | Grant, Rhona |
| Erikainen, Sone *SE* | Scaife, Karen |
| Edwards, Nick *NGE* | Phillips, Jennifer |
| Murdoch, Jemma *JM* | MacFarlane, Morgan |
| Greig, Iona *IG* |  |
| Campbell, Keith *KC* |  |
| Smith, Fiona *FS* |  |
| Hamilton, Lindsey *LH* |  |
| Chalmers, Janine *JC* |  |
| Sai Shraddha S. Viswanathan *SV* |  |
| Walker, Rebekah *RW* |  |
| Misuri, Sara *SM* |  |

***Attending + Introductions***

*NGE*: Deputy Director of People and Head of Student Support – Coordinator of the ‘Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment Strategy Group’ and of the EmilyTest work.

*LK:* Student Advice & Support Adviser – focusing on Strategic and Practical GBV-prevention work, and involved in the ET work.

*GB*: Attending their first meeting. Senior lecturer in Criminal Justice. Has done research in Criminal Law, Criminal Justice and Sentencing, -- especially focusing on the Law of Sexual Offences. Wrote and published a book a few years ago on the topic. In a previous role, used to practically support the practical side of supporting casework related to the investigation side of GBV.

*KC:* Head of Security, Portering & Mailroom services. Involved with work from outset.

*OMC:* Security Officer. Trade Union Representative for UNISON. Member of Court.

*SE:* Lecturer in Sociology. Part of the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) committee for the School of Social Science. Research areas are Sexuality and Gender Diversity. Focused on Trans Inclusion, Sexual Diversity, LGBT rights, hate crimes and violence towards trans people.

\**NGE* invites the team to openly speak about this group with other Staff Members – in particular other Academics who may wish to be involved in the conversation. Attendance can be sporadic for some.

*IG:* Student Support Assistant for Student Support & Advice. Previously attended as Conduct and Addressing GBV Intern working on ET and the Charter (Responsible for impact Pieces on the ET Story). Also 4th year student and able to bring a student’s prospective.

*SM:* Graduate Trainee Administrator for Student Support.

*LH:* Senior HR Partner. In the Complex Casework team. Support Schools of Social Sciences and DHPA.

*JM:* Deputy Head of the Student Support Services. Head of Student Support and Advice. Responsible for Student Resident Assistants in Hillhead.

*JC*: Head of Organisational Development for HR.

*SV*: Students Union VP for Welfare (running end of term).

*RK*: Wellbeing Engagement Officer. Focused on Mental Health and Wellbeing, as well as the Wellbeign Strategy.

*FS:* Head of HR Business Partnering.

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| *Speaker* | *Agenda Item* | *Points* | *Action* |
|  | **1**  *Welcome* | * *NGE* introduces the group. * The meeting is to be shorter than usual. Serving to celebrate and discuss the EmilyTest Charter (ETC) Outcome and to begin discussing changes to the GBV Policy. * The meeting also serves to facilitate the conversation between previous and future meetings. |  |
|  | **2**  *EmilyTest Charter Outcome Report* | *NGE speaking*   * Celebrating the success in relation to the ETC. * The group initially expressed interest in the ETC two years ago, and finally submitted in September 2023 (over 40k words). * The submission is available on Teams. * Outcome report now available after review. The document breaks down the outcome of all 46 minimum standards listed by the guide. These were all achieved in a satisfactory way. * In the first meeting between *NGE* and Fiona (from ET) after the ETC’s outcome; Fiona indicated that no other Institution had as many clean passes on the Charter as the UoA. According to EmilyTest, this Charter has the clearest outcome to date. * This is an especially strong success with the history of Emily and the University – as the judging panel likely scrutinised the Charter in detail. * A small ceremony was held at the end of January with Fiona and EmilyTest. The award will be advertised soon. * This success and work shall be considered as the start of a journey. More work to do from this. * Amongst the 46 standards; only 4 were marked with an amber code (against the 42 green ones). * Overall, the ET Panel has issued several recommendations and feedback. * The University will need to formally re-submit a Charter every 4 years, with an additional yearly smaller submission. * Update in November 2024 at the latest commenting on what has been implemented since the previous submission.   *LK Speaking*   * In the process of identifying specific targets/tasks for specific individual and Teams. This is in response to the ET feedback. * Some tasks have already been selected for *SV* and the Students Union. * 2 documents (created by Shivangi Anthony, presented by *LK, IG*) going through the Minimum Standard Table and the Outcome Report and creating a ‘to do list’. * *IG:* Actual Tasks that have been identified for a Smart Plan. Tasks have been categorised as ‘On-going’, ‘Complete’, etc. * This can be used as an ongoing plan to be regularly updated. * *LK:* Every November the Charter will be re-assessed according to developments made on these tasks. The Amber points will be re-evaluated.   *NGE Speaking*   * In the past, the Strategy Group used a rolling action log: this was mostly operational, especially for the Directorate of People (less focused on the long-term strategy of the group) * *JC’s* Team has been working on a tracker for EDI Action Plans. ET will be included in the document. * The group should acknowledge that this work is ongoing. * The LISTEN practice (5 basic principles of ET) may be expanded into other operational practices. How does it feed into the University’s Aberdeen 2040 Plan? How can it focus on preventing as well as reacting?   COMMENTS   * *OMC:* Met with the Minister for Higher Education on 08.02.24 and our Charter was perceived as the ‘gold standard’. The Minister spoke with other Institutions, and the success of the work from this group is evident. * *NGE:* Other Institutions do not manage to bring together staff members from as many teams and Directorates as the UoA. Genuine and full collaboration has been very positive. * *NGE:* There is an ongoing discussion about implementing the Charter as a requirement for Institutions. GBV strategy groups are also starting to be engaged with by English Institutions. * *JC:* It would be beneficial to expand on Intersectional work in the case of future submissions of the ETC. * *NGE:* Looking to expand on this by also inviting guests to the Group. We will be looking to speak about harassment/hate crimes. Overall, it is important to acknowledge that Institutions must deal with: GBV, age, race, gender, etc. * The LISTEN tool may be developed as a more intersectional guide on how to tackle harassment in general. | * LK to identify tasks to focus on from the ETC outcome and pass them onto the relative Team Members. * ALL: Thinking of a new strategy to implement LISTEN across all the EDI-relatred fields. |
|  | **3**  *GBV*  *Policy* | *NGE* Speaking   * GBV Policy first passed in 2021. A limited review was enacted in January 2023. * Having worked at the ETC, as well as the Code of Practice for Non-Academic discipline, and the Investigation Policy on the Staffing site; the GBV Policy may need more revising and updating. * IG started to look at the current GBV Policy to determine upcoming changes. * The group should work on reviewing the GBV Policy and flagging what updates seem necessary, whilst acknowledging where the suggestion comes from (ETC, Structure Changes, etc.)   *COMMENTS / FEEDBACK*   * *FO* previously circulated guidance on Domestic Abuse from the Students Union. * Investigation Policy + HR policy to be considered. * *NGE* and *LK* agree that the policy currently has a lot of signposting within it. With current updates and new resources, signposting may be removed from the Policy text. The policy should be a ‘Statement of Commitment’. * Shorter text in the policy may be easier to navigate. * *JC* mentions that other recent policies (EDI, Neurodiversity, Menopause privacy) have been standardised. Having a template may be helpful. * *LH* would be happy to support *LK* in renewing the policy as *LH* worked on the original version. *LH* points out the new version should also be made accessible. *LH* points out that the group should think of strategies to ensure the Policy’s content is not at risk of getting out of date. * *SE* points out there may be some issues in relating this policy to other existing ones (ie the Trans Inclusion Policy). *SE* points out that the policies may benefit from including more in-dept examples of how abuse/violence towards a group may look. * *SE* recently took the role of EDI for their School. The School of Social Sciences was asked to compile their own variant of the GBV Policy – other Schools do not have it. * *LK* recently became aware of this in conversation with *SE* and the LLMVC School. * *NGE* points out that it may be better to avoid localised copies of the policy. Ideally there would only be one copy to avoid fragmentation. * *NGE* points out there are currently over 140 policies across the University. Ideally there could be a document that can connect all the level of harassment (easier to navigate). * Trans Incl Policy to be reviewed soon. * Trauma-Informed practice to be reviewed/made clearer. * *JC* points out a Dignity Toolkit will be out soon. * *LK* points out that the Policy should only link to a page for support. The Support Page should be regularly reviewed. For instance, it should include a mention of SARCS. * *LK* mentions that the *Appendix* is to also be updated. References to Visa/International Advice within the Student Support team should be removed.   Section 8 may include a mention of LISTEN.  Section 3 may include the Code of Practice.  Section 4 mention and ‘Equality and Diversity Adviser’ – it is not evident whether there may be one. (*JC* would have covered the role – the Team now has 2 Senior EDI members who may take onto the role).   * *NGE* points out that the Group may start thinking about the use of the ‘GBV’ terminology – and seek to expand its understanding amongst students/develop a more straightforward language. * *IG* points out that the Report Tool & Support terminology may be outdated. * *IG* trusts that it would be beneficial to outline what Staff Members have access to the Online Report Tool. * *LK* thinks the Policy should include a statement admitting that GBV does happen in UoA. It is ideal to avoid secrecy, and ensure that students are aware of the Support system that are in place. * *NGE* trusts that the Institution has been more open to acknowledging GBV and admitting to it. This has encouraged more people to do disclosures. * *OMC* is concerned that a long document may be daunting for a survivor. It would be useful to have a brief, easy-to-read statement at the front. * *NGE* and *LK* are planning for the new document to have references to other sources, including differently formatted guides. * A new GBV Policy shall be first drafted for the April meeting, and a more finalised version can be developed by June. Ideally, the new GBV policy could go live in the new Academic Year. * *SE* (Via message): expresses interest in being involved it the policy revision. | * Changes and Polices – bring a new initial version of the GBV Policy by the April meeting (open to volunteers). |
|  | **4**  *AOCB* |  |  |

**Breakdown of Action Points**

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| *Action Point(s)* | *Person(s) Responsible* | *Deadline* |
| **Review the ETC feedback and develop tasks for various Teams/Members** | **LK** | **n/a** |
| **Read and draft a first revised version of the GBV Policy** | **NGE + LK + Any Volunteers (to reach out to NGE/LK)** | **By April Meeting** |
| **Regularly update achievements/progresses made from actioning feedback coming from the ETC** | **As it applies** | **n/a** |
| **Review a Support Page + regularly update with up-to-date resources/signposting.** | **n/a** | **n/a** |
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