

The University of Chester develops innovative sexual violence response training



The University of Chester is developing an innovative training and response model which will see around 60 University staff being trained to provide specialist support to anyone disclosing sexual violence across its sites.

The model consists of University staff being trained to act as First Responders in the event of disclosures of sexual misconduct, and as Sexual Violence Liaison Officers to provide ongoing support to students or staff who have experienced sexual misconduct. LimeCulture is also upskilling staff to deliver training to students and colleagues on consent and healthy relationships.

Feedback from this training so far has been overwhelmingly positive. One participant stated: *“This was one of the most interesting and thought-provoking training sessions I have attended.”* Another participant added: *“The course was brilliant, really supported reflection...[and] managed a difficult subject well.”*

Funding for the training is coming from [Cheshire’s Reflect and Respect campaign](#) following a successful bid from John Dwyer, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. The aim of the project is to tackle violence against women and girls and a part of the UK Home Office’s Safer Streets 3 initiative.

Dr Helen Galbraith, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) at the University of Chester, said: “It is really encouraging to see how the funding from Safer Streets has been put into action in Cheshire and is directly benefiting students who were identified as a key demographic.

“By working in partnership, we have been able to offer real practical solutions through the delivery of student training on issues such as consent, healthy relationships, allyship and digital safety. Also, training staff as First Responders and Sexual Violence Liaison Officers will help ensure dedicated support for those who have experienced sexual violence.”

Stephanie Reardon, Chief Executive of LimeCulture said: “Universities across the country have recognised how critical it is to provide an effective response to sexual violence, and create a safe, supportive environment in which both students and staff can learn, live and thrive. We’re delighted to be supporting the team at the University of Chester on their SVLO journey.”

John Dwyer, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, said: “I’m proud to have secured the Safer Streets funding and it’s fantastic to see this training delivering results already. It’s crucial that any measures we take to protect victims of sexual violence go hand in hand with changing attitudes too.

“Everyone has the right to feel safe on campus and that their concerns will be taken with the seriousness they deserve. Students and staff can be reassured that they will receive the best possible support thanks to the SVLO scheme.”

For more information on the Reflect and Respect campaign, visit <http://reflectandrespect.com/>

For any additional media enquiries, please contact becky@rapecentre.org.uk or call 07960 438312

Image description from right to left:

- Kara Joynson, Student Projects & Development Manager, University of Chester
- David McNeilage, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire
- Danielle Knox, Detective Inspector and Safer Streets 3 Project lead, Cheshire Police
- Dr Helen Galbraith, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience), University of Chester
- Assoc. Prof. Peter Greenall, Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education, Reaseheath College and University Centre Reaseheath