

Equally Safe Sub-Group to explore GBV Support Cards. Minute of meeting.

12.30 – 13.30, Thursday 12 April 2018

Shuwanna Aaron	NUS Scotland
Gareth Allen	Scottish Government
Fiona Drouet	#Emilytest campaign
Ann Gow	UCU Scotland
Isabelle Kerr	Rape Crisis Scotland
Susannah Lane	Universities Scotland
Jenny Lees	NUS Scotland
Roseanna MacDonald	Scottish Women's Aid
Suzanne Marshall	College Development Network
Veena O'Halloran	University of Strathclyde
Steven Paxton	Scottish Government
Jill Stevenson	University of Stirling
Boab Thomson	Universities Scotland

1. Membership and introductions. Scope of first meeting.

Susannah Lane welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Equally Safe Sub-Group to explore GBV Support Cards and invited introductions from the group. Ms Lane suggested that the first meeting limit discussion to matters relating to the development, funding and evaluation of the cards, to which members agreed. Members also indicated they were content for an action note of the meeting to be published online.

2. Focus of the cards

Who are the card users?

Fiona Drouet provided a background to the idea of the support cards, informing members that the concept was born out of conversations with HE staff, who said they felt vulnerable when students disclosed personal issues. Ms Drouet said she wanted to offer a tool to university staff, in the short-term, so they felt better equipped to support their students.

Ms Lane asked the group if the reach of the cards should be extended to staff in student contact roles, even if they are not employed directly by the university. Ms Drouet said it was important that everyone in the university community, whether employed directly by the university or on a contract, should be equipped to deal with disclosures. Jenny Lees replied that it might also be appropriate for students to carry the support cards, in addition to staff, and wondered if there was scope to look at the volume of cards produced.

Ms Lane asked members if the cards were to be used by both staff and students, would the messaging need to be different or could messaging which suits both groups be achieved. Members unanimously agreed that messaging which is suitable to both users could be achieved.

Members then explored whether the cards should be given out to students, following a disclosure. If the cards were to be passed on to students, some members indicated that this would need to be managed, as cards would need to be replenished on an ongoing basis. The group agreed that, during disclosure, it would not be effective for staff to produce the card and then keep it.

Ms Lane asked that if NUS Scotland could give some thought to scale, if students are also to receive the cards.

Ms Lane asked the group if there was merit in putting stickers, with similar messaging to that of the support cards, up in student's accommodation. She also asked whether there would be value in having support numbers for mental health available, as well as GBV. The Group agreed that the two issues were distinct but it should be possible to convey this in the design of the sticker.

Agreements/actions:

- We'll proceed on the basis that the cards are to be a resource for staff in HE and FE but would also be useful for students to have access to them. The messages would work across both communities.
- We'd make this resource available to staff in student contact roles but not employed by HEIs. We'll consider how to achieve this as part of the project plan.
- We'll consider how to ensure replacements are made available to staff (could this form part of the evaluation?)

Implementation in both colleges and universities

The group agreed that it would be feasible to deliver the support cards to all 19 higher education institutions and colleges in time for the start of AY 2018/19. Suzanne Marshall said it would be useful to have wider representation from the college sector as members of the sub-group.

Agreements/actions:

- The cards will be developed & distributed to work for the college sector as well as HE sector.
- CDN will consider additional members to ensure the college sector is fully represented & advise accordingly. To confirm whether CDN and/or Colleges Scotland should be represented.

Longevity

Ms Lane reaffirmed that the support cards are intended an interim measure and is not meant to supplant any other training. Ms Drouet said that she views the support cards as an immediate safeguard but thinks if effective, they can be used indefinitely. NUS Scotland said they viewed the GBV support cards as a pilot, with the need to evaluate the initiative after one or two years. Members agreed, emphasising the importance of a formal evaluation. Members stated that if the initiative was to last longer one year, a check-in would need to be built in to assess the impact and benchmark.

Agreements/action:

- The cards would be developed in such a way that they did not date quickly and could continue to be used by staff for longer than a year.
- The project plan will factor in check-points and evaluation stages.

3. Card design and content

NUS Scotland gave a short presentation on its 2017 pilot project of GBV support cards for students. Shuwanna Aaron said the pilot took a national approach and tried to ensure that there were services which were specific to certain communities, such as the LGBTI community and communities of colour. NUS Scotland said going forward, students should have access to services that represented different communities.

Feedback from the pilot highlighted the importance of ensuring students know where they can physically go for support. Students appreciated there being a national service, but thought there also needed to be an on-campus service too. On the branding, NUS Scotland received very good feedback. Students had responded well to the message “it might be nothing, but give us a call anyway.”

Support service: national or local?

Isabelle Kerr informed members that she thought it was vital that telephone numbers on the cards were national helpline numbers. She added that when people call the national number, they are always directed to local services. She advised that the specified number on the card for the National Domestic Violence helpline is only available to people in England and Wales. There was concern that the acronyms AMINA and the name Hemayt Gryffe would not be familiar enough sign-posts for people. If those support lines stay on the card, there would need to be further clarification of the type of support they offer.

The group agreed that ‘less is more’ in terms of helplines and agreed to remove Hemat Gryffe and the National Domestic Violence number (given it is not a resource for Scotland), but keep the other helplines.

The group explored the option of additionally having a link to individual institutions’ own support services online on the card. Members fully agreed that the support cards should have links to individual institution’s support websites and recognised the importance of local and national services coming together. Practically, the group felt that an empty and customisable space on the cards for HEI’s own services would be the best way to do this, although noted the implications of this for the timescales of the project. Jill Stevenson added that if it wasn’t feasible to feature individual institutions’ own URLs, then a link to the Equally Safe website could be an option.

Agreements/action:

- National helpline numbers will be prioritised. Where the type of service is not immediately clear from the organisation’s name, more clarity will be provided.
- The project should explore how to provide the option of customisation for individual colleges and universities, if they want it, to provide a link back to institutions’ support services.

Card format and use

The group agreed that there was no foreseeable issues with the suggested size of the cards. Members raised the issue that not all staff wear lanyards but as long as the card was designed so it could fit easily in wallets and purses.

Copy and terms

It was agreed that not all victims identify with the term ‘rape’ or ‘domestic abuse’ if that is not their experience. The group agreed that the front of the card should make reference to the fact that the support line numbers are there to support people for things other than abuse in a relationship, rape and sexual assault etc. This should be articulated clearly on the front to make people aware that they can get support for the full spectrum of issues.

The group also agreed that the cards should be issued to staff with a supporting leaflet, reference to further information online, to explain the context and provide information in advance of a student disclosure. It was noted it will be important to offer clarity for staff on what we are expecting them to do in this scenario. Ms Lane added that it was important for staff to understand the wider context of GBV, and the gendered approach to sexual violence, and said it would be helpful to have a microsite dedicated to providing background information. It was agreed that it made sense to situate this with the online presence of the Equally Safe Toolkit. Ms Macdonald would provide further advice on what information should be made available to staff.

Ms Stevenson said this information could also be expanded to presentation slides, or an online module, which could then be embedded into institutions own training programmes.

Visual identity

The group agreed that it was logical to link the visual identity of the support cards to Equally Safe and use the same branding. This means that the support cards would not replace any individual campaigns but would supplement them. Gareth Allen said he would be able to connect the group to the Equally Safe campaign.

Ms Lane discussed the notion of testing the visual identity of the support cards before launching. The group agreed that this was a sensible approach. UCU Scotland said they would endeavour to bring a group of university staff together soon to test ideas. NUS Scotland Ms Lane added it would also be beneficial to test the visual identity with both students and survivors.

Agreements/action:

- Scottish Government to pass on relevant contacts for the Equally Safe brand and the contact for the hosting of the Equally Safe toolkit so that this can be explored.
- NUS Scotland to share the original art work files of the original cards and #EmilyTest so that we can test this as one of the potential identities for the cards.
- The design stage would create a number of creative routes to be tested with stakeholders and focus groups.
- Universities Scotland to work with NUS Scotland, UCU Scotland and Scottish Womens' Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland to schedule focus groups for testing.

4. Evaluation

NUS Scotland said the evaluation they undertook after their pilot project had been informal so it would be helpful to work with Rape Crisis Scotland for a steer on how to evaluate campaigns similar to this project.

The group discussed what performance indicators would be relevant. UCU Scotland said initial feedback from staff would be useful, such as how often they have used the support cards and student's reaction to them. Immediate feedback on use of the cards would be easy to obtain, but longer-term measures of success would be difficult to achieve.

Ms Stevenson said her institution was in the midst of evaluating a small-scale project and would enquire as to whether there were any lessons to be learned, and methods of evaluation, which could be applied to this project.

It terms of tracking use of the cards, it was agreed that it would be inappropriate to attempt to do this via calls to national support services. Ms Stevenson also suggested that when students are referred to their institution's support services, the support staff could ask whether they were referred via the support card. This would be one way of evaluating the effectiveness of the cards.

Agreements/actions

- Rape Crisis Scotland to share its experience of project evaluation and any documents that might be relevant to evaluation.
- Stirling University to share its in-house evaluation.
- The Group would further refine and agree appropriate measures to use to evaluate the project.

Questions

Ms Lane noted that the meeting's discussions had been very helpful. The decisions reached today had increased the scale and complexity of the project. NUS Scotland asked about the role of Universities Scotland in the project. Ms Lane replied that Universities Scotland would have a leadership and co-ordinating role in helping to develop the support cards.

Ms Marshall said she would liaise with Colleges Scotland, to get buy-in from FE principals and to decide who should be part of the group going forward.

Turning to funding, Ms Lane informed the group that she sourced quotes from print suppliers ahead of the meeting to get a sense of the cost. Based on a 50,000 print run for HE staff only (which was the initial specification) the project would cost between £10K and £20K, excluding VAT and not including distribution, design, testing and evaluation. She added that as a result of the discussion in this meeting, where the group agreed to include colleges and making sure the cards could be used by students, the scale has increased significantly. There was an opportunity to explore whether there may be some resources available from the Scottish Government given this project is close fit with the Government's aspirations to see something take place, across the sector and in time for the next academic year. This would need to be referred back to the Minister.

Agreements/actions

- To explore the potential for financial support for the project with the Scottish Government and other potential funders.

ENDS