# Report and Support

Annual report 2023-2024

# Contents

## Introduction

At the University of Nottingham, we believe everyone in our community should feel safe from any form of harassment or misconduct. We educate our staff and students on the standards of behaviour we expect and we promote safety and awareness initiatives to protect our community. As well as ensuring that students receive appropriate support in response to their reports, Report and Support enables us to better understand risks our students can face and therefore work with our internal teams and external partners to help to reduce these risks. We have chosen to publish our third annual report as part of our drive to raise awareness of these issues within our community of staff and students, and our commitment to be increasingly transparent about both the nature of the issues and how we respond to these.

## High-level Summary

- In the academic year for 2023-24, there has been a total of 876 reports to Report and Support from staff and students at the University (UoN), which is an increase of 87 reports compared to this period in 2022-23. This demonstrates ongoing and increasing student and staff accessibility and confidence in the system.
- For 725 reports the reporting person was a student (this represents 1.9% of the UK UoN student population), for 86 a staff member and 64 from other sources.
- The most reported incident types by students were harassment (212), bullying (125), sexual assault (137), domestic abuse (92), and discrimination (91). (please note the total number of the type of incidents will be higher than the overall number of reports as more than one 'type' can be selected).
- For comparison the previous year for student reports the 5 most reported types of incidents were 207 reports of sexual assault, 152 reports of harassment, 149 reports of bullying, 145 reports of assault and 137 reports of domestic abuse.

- For national context to the number of sexual assaults reported, Rape Crisis report that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 18 men have been sexually assaulted since the age of 16. They also state that 5 in 6 women who are raped don't report – and the same is true for 4 in 5 men.
- 175 or 20% reports in this period were anonymous. This is a slightly higher percentage than the previous year which was 17% but lower than 2021/22 which was 23%. This figure therefore remains reasonably consistent. The most common reasons given for reporting anonymously were worries about repercussions for themselves or others, followed by 'they did not know what to do', and 'I'm worried about being seen as a trouble maker'.

## Update on Areas for Development Identified for 2023/24

- **Development of further safeguards and guidance around risks to students in regard to exploitation, with a focus on support for international students.**

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding has been part of a Modern Slavery working group and has contributed to the Modern Slavery Act Annual Statement, which specifically references our safeguarding arrangements and that any concerns about modern slavery should be reported through Report and Support.

The Report and Support Team continue to work closely with our Visa and Immigration Team who have processes in place to flag any engagement concerns about international students to enable wellbeing checks.

Staff safeguarding training includes information about modern slavery and exploitation.

- **Ongoing development of UoN's policy and guidance for supporting students who are under 18 years.**

There has been significant work undertaken in this area, which has included:
- Specific checks on Report and Support to quickly identify any reports from students who are under 18.
- Dedicated halls on 2 campuses identified for our students who are under 18.
- Ongoing programme of DBS check processes for relevant wellbeing and academic staff.
- A suite of training has been developed for all staff working with under 18s and staff safeguarding training requirements have been communicated to all staff and attendance is monitored.

- Students are reminded that we have under 18 students here and that there are some differences in legislation relating to those under 18 in our mandatory Consent Training for all new students.
- The protocol for students under 18 has been revised and shared with the Safeguarding Steering Group for approval.

■ **Awareness raising to promote the use of Report and Support for reporting hate incidents.**

There have been new promotional materials developed which emphasise that Report and Support can be used for reporting hate in incidents, and these have been shared across our campuses. We have developed a Report and Support Monthly Focus for students which shares information about the more common issues which are reported, and this has included a focus on hate crime. There is evidence the awareness raising of support available in regard to hate crime has been effective as there has been a 58% increase in reports about hate crime and incidents this year compared to the previous academic year.

■ **Deep dive audit with a focus on reports relating to bullying and harassment.**

There has been a significant focus on these issues within the last year, supported by our work to prepare for the Office for Students' E6 requirements around sexual misconduct and harassment. Overseen by a specific steering group there is work in progress around establishing a single source of information for students, staff and student training and review of our Dignity Policy. Please see table 1 and graph 2 in this report for further detail.

**Other updates:**

The University's Apprenticeship Programme was inspected by Ofsted in June 2024. There was a specific focus on safeguarding within the inspection including how we use Report and Support. Ofsted was satisfied with all of our safeguarding arrangements and the outcome of the inspection was 'good'.

New safeguarding training requirements were circulated to all staff in September 2024 and over 2000 staff have now attended our instructor led Safeguarding at UoN training.

## Overview of the management of Report and Support

Student Reports

All student reports are reviewed every working day by the Report and Support Team. All reports are responded to as soon as possible and they are triaged for response according to risk. Consideration is given to which teams or people (including external agencies where appropriate) should be involved to support the student and help manage risk. Regular triage meetings are held with key partner teams such as the Investigation and Resolution Team (where it appears that a student may have breached the Code of Conduct) and Residential Experience Team, as well as safeguarding leads in our Student Union, to ensure that support and risk management is co-ordinated effectively.

The reporting person will usually be contacted in the first instance to discuss the report and agree next steps. If the affected student has not made the report themselves, they will also be contacted as soon as possible, either by the Report and Support Team or assigned team or person to discuss the report and establish their views and wishes about any support they may need. Each week the Report and Support Team review open, assigned cases, and agree closure or on-going actions required. Student feedback is requested when a report is closed to ensure we can continue to improve our support to students.

More complex safeguarding issues where multi-agency involvement may be required will usually be managed within the Report and Support Team which is overseen by the Senior Manager for Safeguarding.

At the University of Nottingham, everyone in our community should feel safe from any form of harassment or misconduct. We educate our staff and students on the standards of behaviour we expect and promote safety and awareness initiatives to protect our community. Where we received reports which indicate a student has not complied with our Code of Conduct, following investigation they could receive sanctions from the University, which range from training and education to expulsion. The University will also work with the Police where there are criminal investigations.

Staff Reports

Report and Support is utilised by both the student and staff population across the University.  Reports can be provided from named individuals but also on an anonymised basis. If a

report is made by and about a staff member this is picked up through the HR Business Partnering team and triaged. The reports are picked up daily and professional support and guidance provided by the HR team to Leaders and Managers if it requires investigation, signposting, or wider intervention.

The HR Business Partnering Team analyse the trends and data and provide this to HR Leaders. The data analysis is considered not only from an Employee Relations perspective but in terms of driving forward changes to culture and behaviour and supporting our work with EDI.

The Organisational Development team have implemented ways to make the system more accessible to staff, including adding reference to the wellbeing resources and working with the Dignity Advisors and HR Policy Manager to embed the approach within their responses. The Associate Director of Organisational Development and the Associate Director of HR Business Partnering are working together on a collaborative approach to ensure the effectiveness of Report and Support going forward.

## Quantitative Data and commentary

Please note. For some data deport numbers less than 5 will be shown as <5.

Graph 1. All reports by month with comparison data from 2023-23.



**All reports**
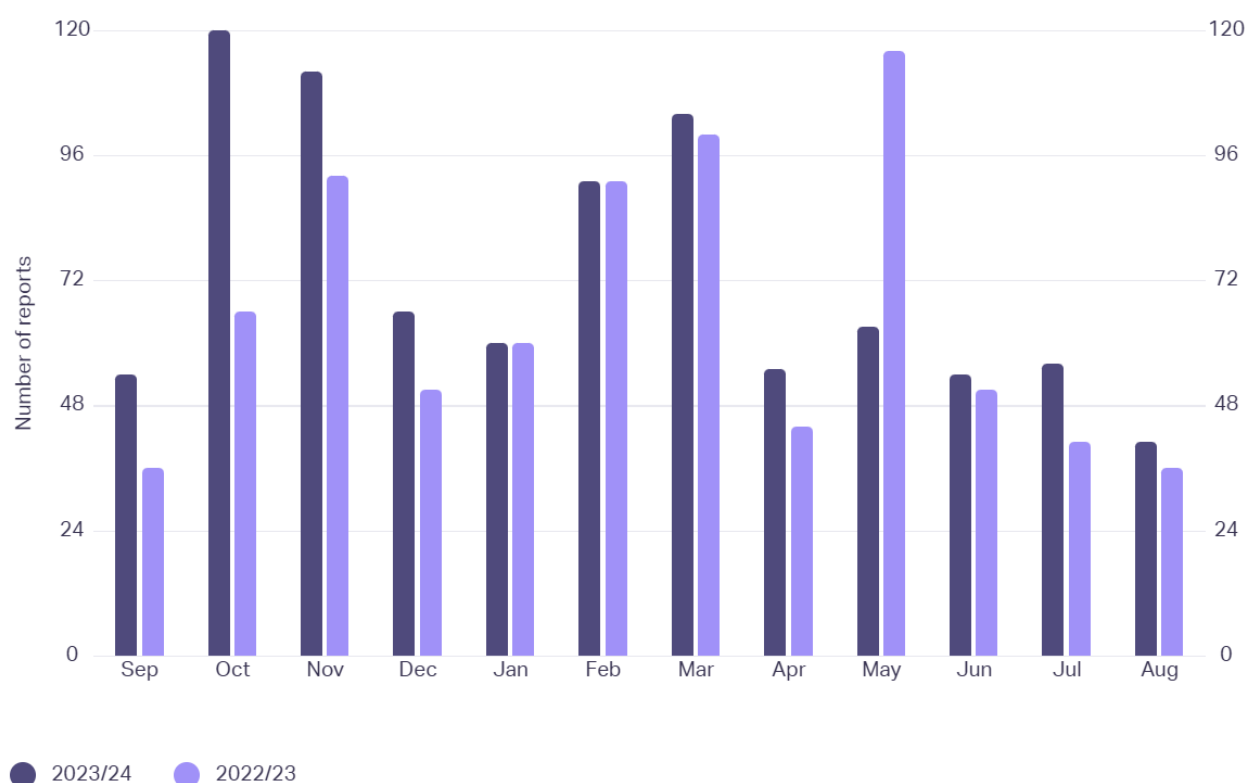
The highest number of reports received in the last year was in October, as opposed to May in the previous year. There was significant awareness raising about Report and Support at the start of the new academic year, particularly with our new students to ensure they know how to access support should they need it, and the timing of this increase would indicate this was effective. As outlined in our previous annual report there was ongoing monitoring of the increase in reports in May 2022 which was not repeated this year. Analysis for the period of May 2022 showed that the most comment reports were for sexual assault, assault and domestic abuse. The University of Nottingham is part of Nottingham's Sexual Violence Action Network, where we work with partner agencies to ensure we provide effective support to students in this area. Anonymised data is shared with this group on an ongoing basis in order to identify and respond to patterns and themes locally.

Table 1. What are people reporting?

## What are people reporting?

| | A postgraduate student | An undergraduate student | Other | Staff | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| An assault | 4 | 60 | 4 | 2 | 70 |
| Bullying | 24 | 101 | 10 | 32 | 167 |
| Discrimination | 22 | 69 | 18 | 28 | 137 |
| Domestic abuse | 11 | 81 | 3 | 1 | 96 |
| Exploitation | 1 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 18 |
| Fraud | 8 | 22 | 5 | 2 | 37 |
| Harassment | 43 | 169 | 13 | 36 | 261 |
| Hate crime or hate incident | 8 | 41 | 25 | 9 | 83 |
| Initiation/hazing activities | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Other | 38 | 125 | 16 | 19 | 198 |
| Sexual assault | 13 | 124 | 8 | 0 | 145 |
| Sexual harassment | 16 | 45 | 6 | 3 | 70 |
| Victimisation | 4 | 21 | 3 | 4 | 32 |

Graph 2: Reporting person's perception of factors involved (for reports of harassment)
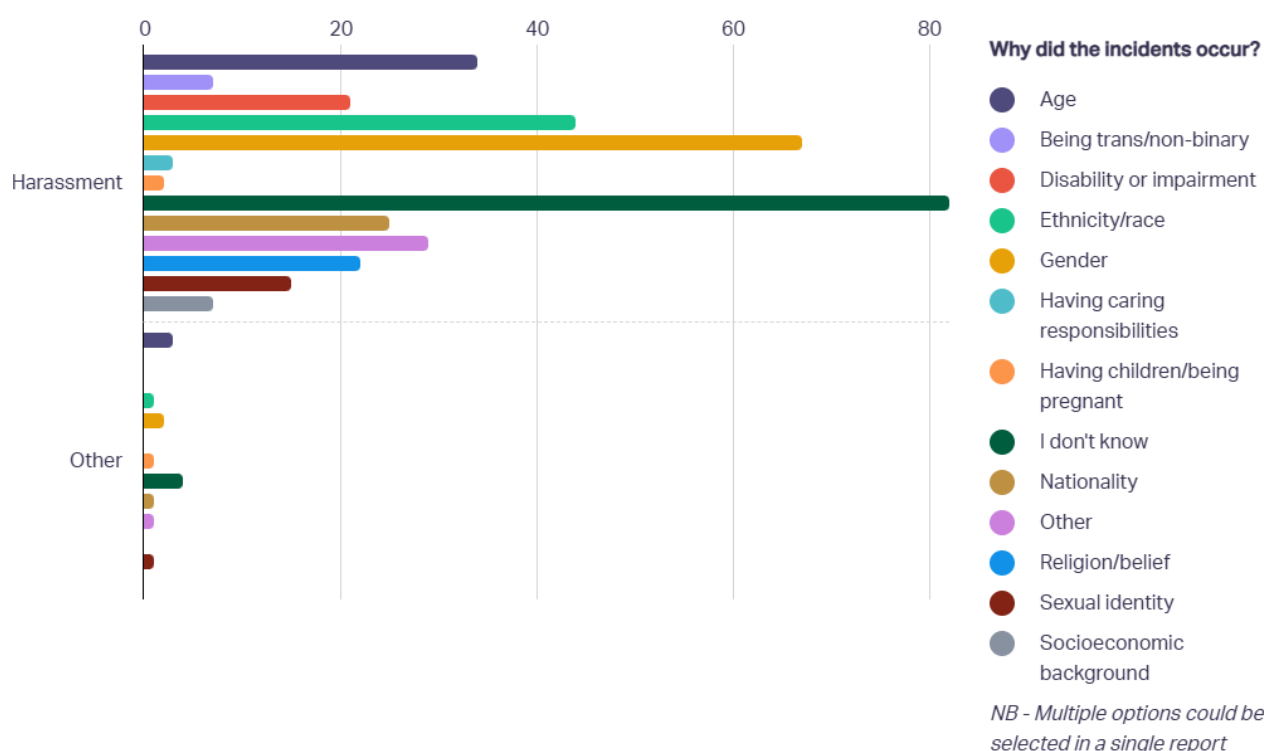


Reports of harassment have increased this year to become the most commonly reported issue this year, whereas reports of sexual assault, which have decreased from 193 last year to 145 this year, had for the previous 2 academic years been the most commonly reported issue.

There has been significant work with the University as outlined above in regard to identifying and responding to harassment, and also analysis into the reports received, particularly in regard to protected characteristics. As you can see from Graph 2 the most common factors involved (apart from "I don't know", which is usually used when the report is being made on behalf of someone else) is perceived be the reporting person is gender, followed by ethnicity and age. Of the 261 reports received, 150 were from people who identified as female, with 58 from those identifying as males, 3 of 'other' and the remainder from people stating they did not know or preferred not to say the gender of the person who had experienced the issue.

In terms of ethnicity, the highest single proportion (37%) of reporting people stated they were white British, with the next highest proportion being "I don't know" (which is usually used when a report is being made on behalf of someone else) and "prefer not to say".

In regard to age, The majority of reports were from younger students, with 52% being 18 to 21 years old, 18% being 22-25 years old and other reports from people older than this.

There is ongoing work within the university to respond to the increase in reports of harassment and ensure our staff feel confident in how to support students who have experienced this and to communicate to all of our community the standards of behaviour we expect. However what is being reported within the University reflects the national picture, with the Office for National Statistics reporting in 2023 that:

- 1 in 10 people aged 16 years and over experienced at least one form of harassment that made them feel upset, distressed, or threatened in the previous 12 months.
- More women (13%) than men (7%) experienced at least one form of harassment;
- Experiences of harassment are more prevalent among younger age groups, with one in five 16- to 19-year-olds (20%) and 20- to 24-year-olds (21%) having experienced at least one type of harassment in the previous 12 months.
- A quarter (26%) of those who had experienced sexual harassment said they had experienced harassment at their place of work.

In terms of the significant proportion of females reporting, we know nationally from the national Police framework for Policing Violence Against Women and Girls that some types of abuse disproportionately affect women. Following their 2023 survey by the Office for Students reported that women were more than twice as likely to experience sexual harassment than men (27 per cent compared to 12 per cent), and over three times more likely to experience sexual assault or violence than men (13 per cent compared to four per cent). Clearly the university sector needs a focus on preventative work as well as support for students for this issue and this will be a focus for our work this year.

Table 2. What happened to submitted reports?

| Advice and Signposting | 213 |
| --- | --- |
| Referral to other Wellbeing Teams | 195 |
| Referral for review or investigation under the Code of Conduct | 122 |
| Support offered but declined | 104 |
| Referral to Residential Experience Team | 75 |
| Referral to the Student Union | 62 |
| Referral to Sexual Violence Liaison Officer | 55 |

| Referral to Security Team | 53 |
|---|---|
| Safety Planning | 48 |

The table above shows the most common initial outcomes for reports received. In terms of referrals to statutory agencies, 38 referrals were made to the Police, 4 safeguarding adult and 9 child safeguarding referrals were made to local authorities. No Prevent referrals were made in the last year, but advice was sought from Prevent officers for 4 reports.

As well as a decrease in reports of sexual assaults, there has been a decrease in students accessing support from out specially trained Sexual Violence Liaison Officers.This support is offered to all students reporting sexual violence. Relatively low numbers of students reporting sexual violence also choose to report to the Police (only 9 students chose to do this after making their report). A common reason given for this is due to the current length of time for criminal justice processes. This has been fed back to the Sexual Violence Action Network, and there is ongoing discussion between the Police working within Operation Sorteria, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham to try and improve support for students choosing to go through the criminal justice system. This also appears to be a sector wide challenge with the Office for Students reporting in 2024 that ninety per cent of students who experienced sexual assault or violence in the last year did not report the incident to the police.

## Areas of Development for 2024-2025

1. Continuation of work to respond to further increase of reports of harassment, including delivery of staff and student training around this. Also to further understand the increased percentage of female students reporting this.
2. Further work to understand the decrease in reports of sexual violence and access to support around this, as we know nationally people experiencing sexual violence is increasing (Crime Survey for England and Wales).
3. Further work to understand the increased percentage of female students making reports.
4. Completion of measures to ensure consistent safeguarding measures are in place to support students on placements and field trips.

**Report Compiled by Laura Sanderson, Senior Manager for Safeguarding, February 2025**