



Intervention Initiative Programme - Pilot Evaluation

**School of Law, Criminal Justice and Computing
March 2017**

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Background

The Home Office, the Government Equalities Office, the Department of Health and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills wrote to all Vice Chancellors in March 2015 strongly encouraging them to develop initiatives that promote safety and discourage a climate of violence in universities. This followed a report from the National Union of Students that revealed problematic levels of abuse and harassment amongst university students (with 68% of respondents having been targeted by verbal or physical harassment in or around their universities) and low levels of reporting of incidents (NUS, 2011: 3,4). The approach suggested by the Home Office included the implementation of the Intervention Initiative programme, which was developed by the University of the West of England (UWE) with funding from Public Health England (Fenton et al, 2016). The Intervention Initiative is a bystander education programme 'for the prevention of sexual coercion and domestic abuse in university settings, through empowering students to act as pro-social citizens' (Fenton et al, 2014). It frames the solutions for sexual and domestic violence within the community, and encourages both men and women to actively change the culture that facilitates any form of harassment (Fenton et al, 2016: 13, 25).

Senior Management Team (SMT) at CCCU responded to the Government's call for action with the creation of a Lad Culture and violence Against Women Delivery Group, (later re-named Expect Respect Delivery Group, to which three subcommittees were added). These were tasked with reviewing and identifying ways to support the implementation of new policy and effect cultural change in the areas identified as most problematic. The project has the sponsorship of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and is being led by the Student Experience Department, working closely with the Student Union.

The Expect Respect Delivery Group recommended to SMT the implementation of the Intervention Initiative programme at the University (SMT minutes, 05/01/16), seen as key to effect a cultural change to address, amongst others things, issues of violence against women, sexual harassment, consent and healthy inter-gender and intra-gender relationships (Expect Respect Delivery Group Briefing Paper A, 29/02/16). Before rolling-out the Intervention Initiative programme to all students across the University, it was decided that it would be best practice to run a pilot of the programme with a small group of students (04/12/15). This would allow for the identification of issues that might arise and tailor the programme to CCCU's student body. The programme director for Applied Criminology and the Head of the School of Law, Criminal Justice and Computing were approached to this effect and agreed to support the implementation of a bystander intervention pilot scheme in the School. This would form the basis of a report that would be submitted to the Expect Respect Delivery Groups and the Student Experience Department at the end of March, 2017. This report would inform the decision to rollout the programme to the rest of CCCU's student population, and the format that this would take.

The report presented here refers to the preliminary findings of the evaluation of the pilot project with a group of Level 4 Applied Criminology students. Whilst it is acknowledged that these findings have limited statistical significance due to the small number of participants in the pilot project, some important trends can still be identified in the answers provided. These are discussed below and form the basis for the recommendations at the end of this report.

The Research Project

The research project that forms the basis of this report was set up partly to assess the impact of the Intervention Initiative pilot programme, and its potential rollout through the University. Funding was secured by the researchers from the Law, Criminal Justice and Computing Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. This has paid, so far, for the distribution of the questionnaires on which this report is based, the purchase of refreshments for participants on a weekly basis (for which the Student Experience Department also contributed with £200) and the purchase of a £50 voucher that was awarded after a prize draw to one of the students who attended all eight sessions that comprised the programme. A dedicated Blackboard site was created and used to communicate regularly with participants. The pilot programme was advertised to students in a variety of ways, including in some Applied Criminology sessions during Term 1. Ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences' Faculty Research and Ethics Committee before the research started. The pilot programme was implemented between January and March 2017. Initially, 50 students signed up to undergo the programme; this resulted in 35 students completing Questionnaire 1 (delivered at the beginning of the programme) and 28 completing Questionnaire 2 (delivered at the end of the programme). The programme was facilitated by staff from the domestic violence charity Rising Sun, using materials developed by the UWE. The programme consisted of eight one-hour sessions delivered on a weekly basis.

The methodology used for the research consisted of a questionnaire before the start of the programme and another at the end. The questionnaires were anonymous to avoid participation bias, that is, to allow respondents to respond as freely and truthfully to the questions as possible. This provided a short-term notion of the impact of the programme and benchmark findings to act as comparisons when follow up research is undertaken. The questionnaires used mostly close-ended questions and focused on the content of the Intervention Initiative programme. The findings that underpin this report relate to Questionnaire 2. A total of 48 questions were asked in this exit questionnaire. These covered a range of topics, from students' views on domestic and sexual violence to examining the suitability of the pedagogical tools used in the programme. It is on the latter aspects that this report will mainly focus on.

The research project will also include semi-structured interviews with participants. These will focus on similar areas to the questionnaires but do so in more depth. They are expected to allow for a richer understanding of the impact of the programme in

terms of its potential to effect attitudinal and cultural change. These have not been conducted yet and are therefore not part of this report.

Applied Criminology staff were not involved with the delivery of the pilot programme, which was undertaken solely by Rising Sun staff. A member of the Applied Criminology staff was available at the beginning and end of each weekly session, should participants or the Rising Sun staff have wanted to draw our attention to any problems that might have arisen during the sessions.

The Applied Criminology staff was not part of the delivery of the programme. It was felt that their roles as lecturers, tutors and markers of students' work inevitably created an unequal power relationship with the participants of the programme. This power imbalance could potentially deter participants from sharing their honest views on the issues covered in the programme or share personal experiences.

Findings

Population makeup

At the time of writing this report, the total number of participants in Questionnaire 2 was 28. Of these, 21 identified as female and seven as male. This partly reflects the gender imbalance of the student population on the Applied Criminology programme, which is 81.9% female and 18.1% male.

The age group breakdown for Questionnaire 2 is as follows (see also Table 1): in relation to those who identified as female, 15 are between 18 and 21 years old, the largest age group represented; two are between 22 and 25 years of age, one is between 26 and 29 years of age and three are 41 years old or above. In relation to the males, there is a bigger spread in terms of participants' age; two are between 18 and 21 years old, one is between 26 and 29 years of age, one is between 30 and 34 years of age, one is between 35 and 40 years of age and two are 41 years old or above.

Age Group	M	F
18-21	2	15
22-25	0	2
26-29	1	1
30-34	1	0
35-40	1	0
41 and above	2	3
Total	7	21

Table 1: Age breakdown of participants

Most participants did not have children. Only four of the 21 females and one male answered positively to the question of whether they had children (one male did not answer the question altogether). When asked how many children they had under 18

years of age, two females stated that they had one child under this age and one that she had two children under this age. One male stated that he had a child under 18.

Engagement with the Programme

The levels of engagement with the programme were positive overall (see Table 2). The majority of respondents to Questionnaire 2 attended seven or more of the eight sessions that comprised the programme. Three of the seven males and seven of the 21 females attended the eight sessions that comprised the programme. One male completed four sessions, one male completed five sessions and two males completed seven sessions. Of the females, one attended four sessions, four attended five, three attended six and six attended seven sessions.

Number of sessions attended	Males	Females
8	3	7
7	2	6
6	0	3
5	1	4
4	1	1
TOTAL	7	21

Table 2: Number of sessions attended by participants

Experiences with the Programme

Questionnaire 2 asked participants a number of questions about their experiences with the programme. They were phrased as sentences that participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with ('strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree' 'agree' and 'strongly agree'). The questions ranged from the way the programme covered the topics discussed, the importance of learning about these issues at University level, the impact of the programme in their choice of university and whether the programme contributed to develop their knowledge of the subject areas covered.

- Delivery

In terms of the overall delivery of the programme, the majority of respondents had a positive view, stating that the issues discussed were approached by the moderators in a sensitive way (all 21 females and six of the seven males either strongly agreed or agreed that the issues were covered, as a whole, in a sensitive way). There are some exceptions that will be discussed further below in relation to one exercise in particular that some respondents felt uneasy with, but overall respondents were happy with the approach undertaken.

- Content

In terms of the content of the programme, the majority of participants also either agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to discuss issues of domestic abuse, sexual violence and rape at university. This was particularly evident in the female population, with 16 females strongly agreeing that these issues should be covered at

university level. Male respondents were more divided in their answers between 'agree' and 'strongly agree', but still all but one supported the discussion of these issues at university level. Compared with the other topics (rape, sexual violence and domestic abuse), 'lad culture' was a more divisive topic amongst female respondents, with 12 out of 21 indicating that they strongly agreed that it should be discussed at university level and five only agreeing that it should. Six of the seven males also indicated that 'lad culture' should be discussed at university level and only one strongly agreed that it should. Other topics that respondents said that they would like to have discussed included: sexual abuse and harassment by family, colleagues, friends and neighbours, alcohol and drug abuse, unhealthy relationships and LGBT-related issues.

- Impact

In terms of impact of the programme, participants also broadly agreed that it developed their knowledge of the subjects covered, with responses split between 'agree' (nine females and two males) and 'strongly agree' (10 females and three males). The only aspect in which the programme did not seem to have had much impact was on participants' likelihood of choosing CCCU as a place of study. Indeed, two males and one female strongly disagreed that they would have been more likely to choose CCCU had they known that the programme would be available. Three males and six females agreed that they would have been more likely to choose CCCU. This should, however, take into account that 10 females and one male neither agreed nor disagreed that they would have been more likely to choose CCCU. In terms of potential for recruitment, it would seem that most participants would have either been indifferent to the existence of the programme when choosing a university, or felt positive towards it.

The programme appears to have had a very strong impact on participants' behaviour as bystanders. The overwhelming majority said that they were more likely to intervene as a result of the programme (25 of 28). Three females stated that there had been no change on how likely they would be to intervene, as a result of the programme. No participant said that they were less likely to intervene as a result of the programme.

- Implementation

Participants were also asked a number of questions regarding the implementation of the programme. These ranged from logistical questions, to the behaviour of staff and whether the programme should be rolled out to the rest of the university. On the latter, a large majority of participants strongly agreed that the programme should be rolled out to the rest of the students in the University (16 females and four males).

Most participants agreed that staff's enthusiasm kept them interested in the programme (13 females and four males), and that they would have liked more time to discuss the issues raised in the programme (eight females and three males).

Consideration should, therefore, be given to the length of each session to maximise student experience.

Most respondents also agreed that the timetable was suitable (10 females and five males agreeing that it was). Sessions ran on Mondays, between 1pm and 2pm, straight after an Applied Criminology compulsory module. This meant that students were in session for three hours without a break, but does not seem to have had a negative impact on their enjoyment of the programme.

There was some division of opinion regarding the rooms used, which were primarily in Moore building. Although a total of 15 participants (12 females and three males) deemed the rooms generally suitable, a sizeable proportion of respondents (five females and one male) disagreed. There were also some written comments that space was limited, particularly when the group of participants was at its peak.

There was a striking division in terms of gender regarding the impact of the availability of refreshments on participants' motivation to attend the sessions. Most males disagreed that refreshments were important in motivating them to attend sessions (three out of six), with the remaining either having a neutral reaction (two out of six), one strongly disagreeing, and only one strongly agreeing that they were important to motivate him in terms of attendance. Conversely, most females strongly agreed that refreshments were important (seven out of 20 – one female did not answer the question) and five agreed. Four females neither agreed nor disagreed, three disagreed and one strongly disagreed.

The programme ran over eight one-hour sessions in consecutive weeks. Participants were asked whether they would have preferred the programme to be delivered over one or two days instead. Most males disagreed with the programme being delivered in a shorter time span (five out of seven), with the remaining neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the suggestion (two out of seven). With the females, the views on an alternative mode of delivery were more divided. A large proportion of women either disagreed with this suggestion (five out of 20 – one female did not answer the question) or neither agreed nor disagreed (five out of 16). Six females, however, agreed with the programme being delivered in a more concentrated way, two strongly agreed, and two strongly disagreed with this mode of delivery.

These answers may reflect participants' desire to have more time to discuss the issues covered in the programme, as mentioned above. Condensing the sessions into fewer days may give the impression that there would be less time to engage in discussion, something that seems to be highly valued by participants. The indifference to running the programme on one or two whole days may also be due to the fact that the respondents would have to be on campus on a day that they would not normally be required to. Drawing conclusions from the data on female participants in particular is very difficult; they seem to tend towards disagreeing or having a neutral response to the condensed mode of delivery. Although males' responses seem to be clearer towards rejecting a condensed version of the delivery of the programme, the low numbers make extrapolations equally difficult.

A final open-ended question was introduced in Questionnaire 2, asking participants to write down any additional information that they would like to convey about the programme. This information complemented the close-ended questions and one open-ended question that were used in the questionnaire. The qualitative data clarified students' preference for more time to discuss the programme.

Longer session + going over more weeks

Would have been nice to have more time to discuss topics e.g. 2 hour sessions

It also reinforced students' positive views of the programme:

Really good programme

This should be available to all students and made compulsory

Made clear and presented in a nice and sensitive way

Furthermore, it revealed some issues with the programme that should be addressed before rolling it out to the whole student population. One exercise in particular seemed to have been less well received by some of the students and should be reviewed by the delivery team:

The (...) about abuse where I was asked to write my favourite place, activity, person I trust the most and my deepest secret. I did not (...) this as now it was done. It upset me and another member of the group. I feel as though it should be done as a group ie: this is Claire...Claire's favourite place is...etc etc and discussed it as a group

Paper activity seemed to upset a few people (safest place, most trusted person, secret, etc)

Certain exercises could have been approached with more sensitivity, eg, the safe place, person & secret activity

I think some tasks could of [sic] been explained a bit more previously as some girls were upset by the three strips of paper task

Recommendations

The recommendations made in this report must be read in the context of the data obtained. A study based on 28 participants can only have indicative strength in terms of the significance of the responses obtained. It does, nevertheless, provide a sound indication of the impact of the pilot project and its potential, should it be rolled out

to the whole student population. Based on the data obtained, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Rollout the programme to the rest of CCCU's student population.
2. Deliver a minimum of two hour slots per session to ensure that there is enough time for discussion
3. Reconsider the nature of the exercise that requires participants to reveal certain personal information (e.g, safe space)
4. Continue evaluating the programme in terms of impact and delivery with future cohorts
5. Deliver the programme in a longer format, rather than condensing it over one or two days
6. Ensure that staff who deliver the programme are not only knowledgeable and sensitive about the topics, but also enthusiastic about it (potentially identify champions)
7. Consider introducing the discussion of issues related to abuse by other family members, alcohol and drug consumption and LGBT
8. Consider timetabling the sessions during periods where students are already in the University (preferably immediately after compulsory sessions)
9. Communicate with students regularly throughout the programme to identify any issues with the delivery that may have a negative impact on them and offer timely support
10. That the staff who deliver the programme are not students' lecturers, tutors, markers or have any other form of academic relationship with them to avoid power imbalances interfering with students' experience of the programme

Overall, the programme was well received by the participants. It had a positive impact on their understanding of sexual and domestic abuse, and on their likelihood to act as bystanders. A programme rollout to all CCCU student population is therefore recommended, subject to the points raised above.

References

Expect Respect Delivery Group Briefing Paper A, 29/02/16

Expect Respect Delivery Group minutes of meeting held on 04/12/15

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