**National Union of Students Scotland**

**The student movement and the women’s movement both have a long history of political campaigning. Campaigning during the 16 days of action against gender-based violence is a key time when students’ associations and women’s groups come out in force to take action.**

A report published by the National Union of Students (2013) found that 1 in 4 woman students reported unwanted sexual behaviour during their studies and 1 in 5 experiencing sexual harassment during their first week of term. This followed on from research in 2010 which showed that 14 per cent of women students had experienced serious sexual violence, the majority of which was carried out by fellow students. Of these only 4 per cent reported this to their institution. These statistics highlight the scale of the problem across colleges and universities and evidence the need for further action to be taken.

As a response to this in 2017, NUS Scotland Women’s campaign launched a [16 days of action toolkit](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/38015/8e19663b040d54c24d27fd9189b52057/16days_toolkit_NOV2017.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1519052140&Signature=m6PinrVkUmuAjmvwYV%2BJkBviYdw%3D) to support students’ associations and student groups to campaign against gender-based violence. It featured a range of actions that students could take; these actions ranged from raising awareness, seeking commitment from the college/university to tackle gender-based violence or getting involved in a national campaign. These actions required little resource and were time bound, focusing activity during the 16 days of action, which started on 25 November 2017. This made it easy for student groups to get involved in planning and delivering the campaign and also to adapt the campaign to suit their local context as well as tying in to a national movement.

At a national level NUS Scotland Women’s campaign also launched a series of posters and business cards; highlighting the support available to survivors of gender-based violence and supported the call for increased funding for colleges and universities to tackle gender-based violence. These activities fed into the overall aim of the campaign which was for colleges and universities to do more to tackle gender based violence on campus, focusing on prevention and survivor care.

The posters and business cards were produced together with Fiona Drouet, whose daughter Emily was subjected to abuse and violence from her boyfriend when she lived in university halls. Emily tried to get help but in March 2016 she took her own life. The aim of the posters was to ensure that students knew where they could get help and to raise awareness of gender-based violence and how that might manifest in a college/university setting. Two designs were created to give students’ associations a choice in which poster to use, recognising that different posters would reach out to different audiences. The business cards were designed to be discreet, allowing students or staff to carry information around which they could discreetly provide to those in need. Following the campaign NUS Scotland Women’s campaign set up a gender-based violence student working group who have evaluated the campaign materials.

Nationally we also supported a call for increased funding for colleges and universities to tackle gender based violence. This was done through a petition website making it easy for supporters to promote and sign up to the campaign. The petition secured coverage in the national media which helped to increase sign ups and to showed decision makers the strength of feeling behind the campaign.

**Delivering a successful campaign**

To plan and deliver a successful student campaign there are many key considerations:

         **Identify the problem and potential solutions** – Tackling gender-based violence is a big issue and there’s are a number of different avenues to take such a campaign forward. Researching the issue and building an evidence base can help to improve the chances of your success. This might include referencing national research but can also include testimonies from students. Engaging with the wider student population about the campaign ideas will help to focus the campaign message and refine the campaign asks. Students’ Associations may already have policy on tackling gender based violence that could help to focus the campaign. This research will help to identify the campaign aim and help when it comes to influencing decision makers.

         **Create a SMART campaign aim** – Your campaign aim should be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced** and **Time bound**. It’s particularly important to think about what is achievable given your resource and timescale and where you can have the biggest impact in creating change.

         **Involving other people** – Building a campaign team helps to bring new ideas to the table and share out the work involved in the campaign. This should include talking to other stakeholders in your college/university and in the local community as well as involving other interested student groups. Ensuring a diverse range of stakeholders are involved by taking an intersectional approach is essential to improve the relevance of your campaign to different audiences and increase the chances of success.

         **Targeting the decision maker** – You need to find out who has the power to make the change you’d like to see. NUS Scotland’s campaign to increase funding to tackle gender-based violence on campus could have targeted individual colleges or universities but instead chose to ask the Scottish Government for the funding.

         **Plan your actions** – You should think about what actions you will take to change the decision makers’ mind and if you want to gather mass support for the campaign. The 16 days of action toolkit included a number of different actions including film screenings, Fight the Night marches, online petitions and awareness raising activities. Actions should be easy for people to get involved with and appropriate to your ask.

More information on planning a successful campaign can be found in NUS Scotland’s campaign planning [resource](https://nusdigital.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/document/documents/28465/0827105d02f67f42c5ff1114945844eb/Campaign_planning_handout_-_OCT16.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJKEA56ZWKFU6MHNQ&Expires=1519052555&Signature=FIZIDw5Ddon4GamXdOJmAmeOtqM%3D).