

**Concentrating on Campus Crime:  
An Innovative Project Placing Victim Support  
in a University Setting**

Laura Garius

[l.l.garius@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:l.l.garius@lboro.ac.uk)



# *A Pilot Project*

- A collaborative project between campus-based university and a Victim Support scheme
- Key innovation - student volunteers trained to support victimised peers
- Paradox: *High percentage of victimisations*  
*Low percentage of VS clientele*
- Sought to maximise access to VS for the student demographic
- Discuss student-tailored project implementation
- Present student-specific challenges and rewards
- Outline the benefits to university, its students, and Victim Support

# Student Victimization

- **Universities: Ivory Towers or Crime Hot Spots?**

- 28% increase in UK admissions
- 1 in 3 (Home Office, 2009)
- 6 in 10 repeats (Barberet et al., 2003)
- Student population “misled into assuming that they [are] enrolling in ‘ivory towers’ and not ‘hotspots’ for criminal victimisation” (Sloan et al, 1997, p. 149)

- **“Archetypal easy victim”** (Morrall *et al.*, 2010, p. 823)

- vigilance
- lifestyle/ routine activities
- £1,981 electronic goods (*Endsleigh, 2012*)
- *burglary* (accommodation type, household occupancy patterns)
- *Violent/ Sexual* crime (Drug and alcohol consumption)

- **Student-Specific Problems:**

- deadlines, assignments, accommodation loss

# *Student Under-reporting*

- **Reporting Figures**

- 60% un-reported (Barberet et al, 2003)
- 97% VS clientele provided by police referrals
- gap in client base = young, adult, *student* victims
- greater reluctance - male (Hart and Rennison, 2003) hate crime (NUS, 2012) and international (Shepherd, 2012) victims

- **Why?**

- authority figures
- insurance
- permission to study abroad
- 'cultural bias' (Pease and Farrell, 2007)
- victim-blame

- **Student-Specific Problems:**

- far from traditional support
- may not have developed new networks

# Project: Aims

	Victim Support (Leicestershire)	Loughborough University	Loughborough Students' Union
Primary Aim	To ensure that students who became victims of crime were able to access all necessary support to ensure their continued wellbeing.		
Secondary Aims	To trial a peer-support system for a group under-represented in terms of accessing VS services.	To ensure that students who were victims of crime did not experience a detrimental impact on their studies.	To provide an additional level of support to students who accessed existing services within the Union.
Tertiary Aims	To attract a new demographic of volunteers.	To improve the employability of students by offering them additional voluntary opportunities.	

# *The Pilot Project*

- **Demographics :**

- 10 active volunteers: 2 m, 8 f, 1 BME volunteer, 1 bilingual volunteer, 4 third years, 6 second years

- **Drop-in Details:**

- 2 days/ week – 2.5 hour sessions

- Phone Support

- Supported 122 cases

- Tuesday/ Thursday

- **Additional activities:**

- Service User Surveys

- Running promotional events for the project/ VS

- Assisting with recruitment/ prospective volunteer interviews

- **Funding:**

- Loughborough Development Trust

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Laura Garbus

# The Project: *Setting Up*

Ensure basics of communication established at initial meeting

Identify a single contact point for the project to provide direction and leadership

Agendas, minutes, and invitee lists required for all meetings - with clear action points

Promotional material agreed at the earliest opportunity

# *Initial Student-Specific Limitations*

- **Living situation of students**

- **Rarely have private space within shared accommodation outside of their bedrooms**
- Students' Union neutral base
- Phones for remote support
- Home visits abandoned, but aspects of the 'home visit' elements of training included

- **Confidentiality**

- **Close-knit community increases possibility of volunteers and clients knowing each other before/after**
- VS tailored training to cover appropriate protocol in that situation

**VS Trainers should be made aware of the potentially different needs of the student population before the core training commences so that they can prepare to incorporate discussions appropriately**

# The Project: *Recruitment*

- **Timing**

- **Blocks of time when students are likely to be unavailable (exams/ holidays) for recruitment**
- Second round of recruitment timed to coincide with the start of the new academic year

- **Obtaining Documentation**

- **Significant part of population lives away from home**
- **Delays in CRB checks and project launch**

Create timeline of training demands and align with key dates in the university calendar. Consider a rolling or multi-phase approach to recruitment

Ensure documentation requirements are explicitly discussed in advance. It may be appropriate to ensure that students bring documents to the interview

# The Project: *Training*

- **Student Schedules**

- **Student schedules differed/ conflicted with VS training**
- VS trainers offered flexibility to circumvent issue
- Training held on Saturdays and Wednesday (extra-curricular) afternoons

- **Pace**

- **Used to absorbing material in short time periods - students felt training pace slow**
- VS Supplied much of the information in a distance-learning format for students
- Compressed the training course into a shorter time frame whilst retaining content

**Adaptions to the standard training programme and timetable should be considered in order to accommodate students' commitments and learning styles, as well as to ensure volunteers are aware of other services available on campus**

# The Project: *Launch*

- **Raising Awareness of VS project**

- Student-specific promotional Material
- LSU TV screens
- Health and well being events, Action events, Fresher's fare
- Student-targeted merchandise
- Gazebo at university hubs (library, university shop/ takeaway/ union plaza)
- Twitter Feed, Email alerts, Loughborough Echo publication, University Website, Label University Magazine

- **Distinguishing VS from other on-campus Support Services**

- **Confusion between support services regarding best-suited clientele**

Identify and approach other support-service providers within the establishment and make connections to facilitate referrals and eliminate client-base confusion

# Project: *Benefits*

- Peer support (Cowie and Olafsson, 2000)
- Accessible/ increased VS support
- Kaukinen (2002) informal networks
- Project provides informal, approachable, local point of contact
- Confidentially, non face-to-face contact, same ethnic cultural social group
- Reduce repeat victimisation



- Transferable skills, expand skill set, improve curriculum vitae
- Boost academic achievement (Astin & Sax, 1998)
- Improve mental and physical health (Wilson, 2000)
- Enrich experience (Brewis et al., 2010)

- Peer support provision for student demographic identified as particular challenge for Victim Support (Victim Support, 2011)
- Multi-cultural demography - opportunities to recruit international and multilingual volunteers
- New generation of lifelong volunteers

- Extending ability to support students
- Raising awareness of crime/ prevention
- 'town and gown'
- University's responsibility (Bryant et al, 2012)
- Improves student retention, academic success (Hunter & Brisbin, 2000)
- Heighten national/ international appeal (Shepherd, 2012)

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Thank you for listening!

If you would like any more information on the project or to see the full report, please contact:

Laura Garius (**[l.l.garius@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:l.l.garius@lboro.ac.uk)**)

or

Dr. Louise Grove (**[l.e.grove@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:l.e.grove@lboro.ac.uk)**)