



All Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research

Connecting sexual violence researchers across the island of Ireland

Newsletter April 2025

Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to the All-Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research (AINSVR), a Network that aims to connect scholars, practitioners and policy makers working on issues related to sexual violence across the island of Ireland.

Our newsletter provides a space to reflect on AINSVR activities and share information about

members research and other relevant initiatives.

Remember to check out our website: ainsvr.org and follow us on X @ainsvr2023.

Publications



- Reynolds, M., Anyadike-Danes, N., Lagdon, S., Aventin, Á., Flack, W., McGlinchey, E., & Armour, C. (2025). Rethinking Sexual Trauma Research: University Students Reactions to Participating in a Sexual Trauma Survey *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Available [here](#)
- Dowds, E. (2025) Challenging the role of good character evidence in rape trials: Monsters, myths and mitigation. *The International Journal of Evidence & Proof*. Full article [here](#) & Policy Brief [here](#).
- Millar, R., Hardy, C. and McLaughlin, K. (2025) Exploring Parent Perspectives: A Qualitative Study on the Impact of Post-Separation Domestic Abuse on Children. *Journal of Family Violence*. Available [here](#).

- Stanley, G. (2025) 'Trials and Tribulations: The Barriers to Accessing Rape Trial Transcripts for Rape Myth Analysis in Northern Ireland, England, and Wales'. *Cork Online Law Review*. Will become available [here](#) soon.

Projects

Cuan is undertaking a stakeholder consultation to inform the scoping of data requirements for a National Domestic Violence and Abuse survey to be conducted by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The undertaking of a National Domestic Violence survey by the CSO is an action under the Zero Tolerance Strategy (Third National Strategy on Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence, 2022-2026).

The agency has also just commissioned a Bibliometric Analysis of DSGBV research in Ireland and internationally.

Georgia Stanley is currently undertaking a PhD project Ulster University on rape myth

narratives in courtroom and media discourses which is due completion later this year.

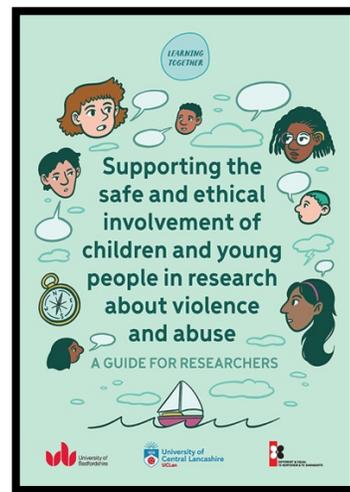
Free online training course on participatory approaches to researching childhood sexual violence



The Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) commissioned a consortium of researchers and practitioners to develop an introductory online course on participatory approaches to involving children and youth in sexual violence research. The course is being launched on April 11th, and you are very welcome to join the launch - [Click here to register](#) - or to avail of the free resource following that date. Feel free to contact Helen Beckett at hlbeckett@uclan.ac.uk with any questions.

Guides to support children and young people's involvement in sexual abuse research:

As part of the Learning Together project, young people in the UK and Albania took part in a series of sessions around how children and young people could best be supported to take part in research about sexual abuse or other topics that might be perceived to be sensitive.





Two guides have been created on the basis of this work – one for researchers on what young people want you to think about when designing research with children or youth and one for young people, to support informed decision-making around taking part in research.

These guides are free to download from the project website – please do share any feedback on their use, so this can be shared with the young people and funder, by emailing hlbeckett@uclan.ac.uk You can also sign up to receive future resources at the website, including a guide to trauma-informed research and practical tools to support the involvement of children and youth in research.

Recent Events

School of Nursing and Midwifery Annual Professor Jean Orr Lecture: *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls –Linking the efforts of The World Health Organization and Northern Ireland Policy and Research – There is something all of us can do.*



A public lecture entitled Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Linking the Efforts of the World Health Organization and Northern Ireland Policy and Research was held at Queen’s University Belfast on the eve of International Women’s Day, March 7th, 2025.

Organized by Prof Maria Lohan and team, and chaired by Dr Jenny McNeil, the event welcomed lead expert from the World Health Organization, Dr Avni Amin, who gave a superb overview of over two decades of WHO work across the globe addressing this important issue. This was followed by a panel discussion that included a number of key academics including Professor Dirk Schubotz and Dr Lorna Lawther from Queen's, and Dr Susan Lagdon, from University of Ulster who have contributed, through research or education, to efforts to address Violence Against Women and Girls, as well as Prof Clare Archbold, the Director of the Northern Ireland Executive's Strategic Framework for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, and Sonya McMullan from Women's Aid. Orlaithí Flynn MLA and Chair of the All-Party Committee on Women's Health then closed the event.

Several members of the All-Island Network on Sexual Violence Research attended, along with the public. If you were there, we hope you found it encouraging and interesting.

Launch of Cuan's first National Awareness Campaign



On Wednesday, 26 February, Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan and CEO of Cuan Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe launched Cuan's first national awareness campaign, Hardest Stories, highlighting the importance of victims and survivors sharing their experiences.

With the tagline 'The stories that are hardest to tell need to be told', the campaign aims to shed light on personal stories of violence while recognizing that far too many exist. It also

seeks to empower people to share their own experiences.

The launch took place at the Irish Film Institute, Dublin and was attended by members of the Cuan Board, Secretary General Oonagh McPhillips and colleagues from the Department of Justice, and representatives from across the DSGBV and civil society sector.

As part of the event, broadcaster Ciara Doherty hosted a fireside chat with Nicola Hanney, author and survivor of domestic abuse and coercive control, and Ciara Mangan, survivor of rape and workplace abuse, and founder of Beyond Surviving. They reflected on the real-life process of sharing their stories, drawing connections to the campaign's fictionalized scenarios of survivor storytelling.

To learn more about Hardest Stories, visit gov.ie/stories. You can also follow Cuan on Youtube, Instagram @cuanagency.ie and LinkedIn Cuan, DSGBV Agency for updates.

The Centre for Children's Rights and the All-Ireland Network for Sexual Violence Joint seminar with Prof. Helen Beckett



On 26th February 2025 Prof Helen Beckett, Professor Helen Beckett, University of Central Lancashire, presented her work on *Journeys through justice: children's experiences of criminal justice processes following sexual abuse* at Queen's University Belfast.

Upcoming Events

One in Four - Irish Attitudes to Tackling Child Sexual Abuse 1st May 2025

One in Four research launch: Irish Attitudes to Tackling Child Sexual Abuse, a whole of society approach.

Thursday, May 1 · 9am - 1pm. Atrium Room, Department Of Justice. 51 Saint Stephen's Green D02 HK52 Dublin Ireland.

Link to register [here](#).

Conference: Reforming Legal and Policy Responses to Investigating and Prosecuting Sexual Violence 19th and 20th June 2025.

On 19th and 20th June 2025 Queen's University Belfast will host a two-day conference dedicated to an in-depth multi-jurisdictional discussion of the ongoing complexities surrounding reform in the area of sexual violence. The conference is organised by Dr Elizabeth Agnew (Queen's University Belfast),

Dr Eithne Dowds (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Susan Leahy (University of Limerick), Dr Siobhan Weare (Lancaster University).

Confirmed speakers include:

- Her Honour Judge Patrica Smyth (Recorder of Belfast)
- Professor Julia Quilter (University of Wollongong Australia)
- Professor Clare McGlynn (Durham University)
- Professor Vanessa Munro (University of Warwick)
- Professor Penney Lewis (Law Commissioner for Criminal Law England and Wales)
- Dr Dominic Willmott (University of Loughborough)

Link to register will be circulated in due course.

If you have an idea for an event or want to collaborate in some way please do get in touch with us at ainsvr2023@gmail.com