



All Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research

Connecting sexual violence researchers across the island of Ireland

Newsletter November 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.

Please keep sending in your material so we can showcase the work of our members. In relation to this:

- When submitting content for the Newsletter, please provide us with as much information as necessary. Sometimes we receive links with no summary/explanatory material, and it is difficult to present such material without following up with the relevant member.
- Similarly, when emailing AINSVR content to be circulated across the Network via email, please draft the

email you would like forwarded with all the relevant information and contact details. We are receiving an increasing number of these requests, and it becomes difficult if we do not have the right information and/or have to draft an email for an event/call that we have limited information on.

We are also delighted to report that we delighted to have been awarded funding from **Cuan, the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency, Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration**, to facilitate the work of the AINSVR. Many thanks to all at **Cuan** for the invaluable support.

As a final introductory point, we would like to welcome **Dr Elizabeth Agnew as Interim Co-Director of AINSVR** who will be stepping in for Dr Eihne Dowds who will be on maternity leave until November 2026. Dr Agnew is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast. Her research focuses on peer-based harmful behaviours (including sexual behaviors) and the regulatory challenges presented for legal and other professionals. Dr Agnew's full profile can be found [here](#).

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

Publications



- **Millar, R., Crawford, O., Armour, C. and McLaughlin, C. (2025.)** Understanding Dynamics: A Systematic Review of the Attitudes, Knowledge, and Competencies of European Frontline Professionals Toward Domestic Abuse. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. Available open access [here](#).
- **Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, (2025)** Irish attitudes to consent, sexual violence and culture 2025 Benchmark Research. Available [here](#).
- **Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (2025)** Irish people more aware of consent,

but young men worryingly 'unsure' of meaning & practice. Available [here](#).

- **Bergin, N., Alzaabi, A., Barrett, M., Roe, S., Walsh, A., Geoghegan, A. and Harty, S.** (2025) Children and adolescents attending for a forensic medical examination at a regional centre in Ireland: a 5-year retrospective study of patients, alleged perpetrators and service provision. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. Available [here](#).
- **Hanna, C., Dowds, E. and Agnew, E.** (2025) Reforming Legal and Policy Responses to Investigating and Prosecuting Sexual Violence Conference 19 & 20 June 2025: Conference Report. Available [here](#).
- **Keenan, M. and Zinsstag** (2022) *Sexual Violence and Restorative Justice*. Oxford University Press. Now available open access [here](#). See also a Podcast [here](#) and YouTube video [here](#)

Projects

The Second Rape: An Investigative Analysis of Rape Myth Narratives in Courtroom and Media Discourses

Congratulations to Dr Georgia Stanley (Ulster University [UU]) on passing her PhD viva on Thursday 9th October. Georgia's thesis title was '*The Second Rape: An Investigative Analysis of Rape Myth Narratives in Courtroom and Media Discourses*'. Her supervisors were Prof Fidelma Ashe and Dr Shauna Page. The thesis was examined by Dr Eithne Dowds (QUB) and Prof Ann-Marie Gray (UU); Prof Rory O'Connell (UU) chaired the viva.

A Critical Evaluation of the Admission of Sexual History Evidence in Northern Ireland Sexual Offence Trials: Prevalence, Impact and Reform

Congratulations to Dr Chloe Templeton (Queen's University Belfast [QUB]) on passing her PhD viva on Monday 20th October. Chloe's thesis title was '*A Critical Evaluation of the Admission of Sexual History Evidence in Northern Ireland Sexual Offence Trials: Prevalence, Impact and Reform*'. Her supervisors were Dr Eithne Dowds and Prof

Anne-Marie McAlinden, and the project was in collaboration with the Gillen Review Implementation Team, Department of Justice, Northern Ireland. The thesis was examined by Prof Joanne Conaghan (University of Bristol) and Dr Elizabeth Agnew (QUB); Prof Kevin Brown (QUB) chaired the viva.

He Who Shall Not Be Named? Rethinking Northern Ireland’s Approach to Defendant Anonymity in Serious Sexual Offence Cases

Congratulations to Dr Chloe Hanna (Queen’s University Belfast [QUB]) on passing her PhD viva on Wednesday 22nd October. Chloe’s thesis title was ‘*He Who Shall Not Be Named? Rethinking Northern Ireland’s Approach to Defendant Anonymity in Serious Sexual Offence Cases*’. Her supervisors were Dr Eithne Dowds and Prof Anne-Marie McAlinden. The thesis was examined by Dr Margaret Fitzgerald-Oreilly (University of Limerick) and Dr John Taggart (QUB); Dr. Pratyush Nath Upreti (QUB) chaired the viva.

Recent Events

Victim Support at Court (VSAC) Celebrates 20 Years of Court-Based Victim Support

On 25th September 2025, Victim Support at Court (VSAC) marked 20 years of accompanying and supporting victims, families and witnesses through the criminal trial process.

Founded by a survivor who experienced court without support, VSAC began with a handful of trained volunteers in Dublin’s Four Courts. Today, it’s a national service with over 100 volunteers and seven staff, offering free, confidential court accompaniment across Ireland.

At the anniversary event in the Four Courts, CEO Dympna Kenny reflected on VSAC’s journey, from humble beginnings to strategic expansion, including partnerships with Volunteer Ireland, Solas Project and EU initiatives. Minister Colm Brophy praised VSAC’s “compassionate dedication,” while Patron Dr Marie Cassidy celebrated its legacy.

With over 30,000 individual contacts since 2016, VSAC continues to provide trusted, trauma-informed support - from explaining courtroom layout to offering quiet spaces and accompanying victims throughout proceedings. As Dympna said: “You don’t have to go through the court process alone.”

Upcoming Events

They are here too: Experiences of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) among migrants in Europe.

Date: Friday, 27 February 2026

Location: Institute for Research on Genders and Sexualities

Dublin City University, Ireland

Deadline for Abstracts: 30 November 2025

This interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together researchers, frontline practitioners, community advocates, and migrant voices to critically examine the connections between migration and DSGBV in Europe. We welcome not only academic papers but also research-informed discussions, workshops, storytelling formats,

and grounded contributions based on practical experience or community engagement.

The event will also feature the **presentation and discussion of findings from the four-year IRC-SFI funded project “They are Here Too: Gendered Violence in the South Asian Immigrant Community in Post-COVID Ireland”**, which explores gender-based violence and South Asian communities in Ireland through an intersectional and collaborative lens.

We invite submissions on themes including but not limited to:

- Gendered and racialized border violence
- GBV in asylum systems, refugee camps, and detention
- Law, policy, and the contested politics of “protection”
- Barriers to support services and shelters for migrant women
- Colonial legacies and the racialization of vulnerability
- Queer and trans experiences of migration and violence
- Community-based and grassroots responses to GBV

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- Ethical and creative methodologies in researching violence and migration

We strongly encourage submissions from practitioners, advocates, and members of migrant communities. Contributions can take the form of papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, or other formats—academic or practice-based.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a 250-word abstract or proposal (including format) and a short bio (max 100 words) to arpita.chakraborty@dcu.ie by 30 November 2025. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 10 December 2025.

For questions, accessibility concerns, or informal inquiries, please contact Dr Fabrizio Leonardo Cuccu at fabrizioleonardo.cuccu@dcu.ie.

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

This Project is supported by Cuan: the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency.

