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Workshops and talks on sexual consent will, for the first time, form a standard part of freshers' induction activity at twenty Cambridge colleges next week.

Sexual violence against women and girls is endemic within our society, and Cambridge University is no exception to this – a survey ran jointly by the Women's Campaign and Varsity found that over 46% of women students had been groped. 8.4% of women experienced attempted penetration, and 4.4% had been seriously sexually assaulted. Of those 88% did not report the assault. The specific context of our university, with small college year groups, often populated with socially dominant all-male drinking societies who see misogyny and sexual harassment as 'just banter', makes coping, let alone reporting all the more difficult for survivors of sexual violence.

The talks and workshops are run by the JCRs (student union) in each college, with training provided by the CUSU Women's Officer.

With these consent workshops we want to send out a clear message that sexual violence should not be tolerated in our community. We want to combat the myths and lies around rape and assault and remind those who've experienced sexual violence that it is **never** their fault. 34% of people believe a victim of sexual violence to be partially or totally responsible if they had behaved in a 'flirtatious manner'.\*

The workshops give students a space to articulate and develop their ideas about sexual consent, something that is usually seriously lacking in school sex education. Half an hour in the middle of a busy and difficult week is not going to somehow fix everything, but we hope to open up the discussion on consent, combat pernicious myths about sexual violence, and also give students a chance to start thinking about a model of consent that works for them.

While these workshops are marked as a compulsory part of colleges' freshers week, we want to stress that incoming students who feel they might find the workshops difficult, upsetting or triggering should most definitely prioritise their own safety in choosing whether to attend.

Please contact Amelia Horgan (Women's Officer) if you have any questions.

#### **List of colleges who will be running talks or workshops:**

Emmanuel, Girton, Jesus, Trinity Hall, King's, Churchill, Fitzwilliam, St Catherines, Queens, , Newnham, Peterhouse, Murray Edwards, Clare, Pembroke, Gonville and Caius, Magdalene, Robinson, Homerton, St Johns, and Corpus.

\*Amnesty survey