

19th September 2023

Letter to all KSS Deanery learners and educators from Professor Jo Szram, Postgraduate Dean and Miss Ginny Bowbrick, Head of School of Surgery, Kent Surrey and Sussex Deanery

You will have heard about, read or seen recent media coverage regarding [newly published research](#) that reveals the extent of reported sexual misconduct within the UK surgical workforce. This work was commissioned by [The Working Party on Sexual Misconduct in Surgery](#), a group of NHS surgeons, clinicians and researchers who are working to raise awareness of sexual misconduct in surgery in order to bring about cultural and organisational change.

This national survey found that two-thirds of women in surgery reported having been the target of sexual harassment from colleagues and one third experienced sexual abuse. Sexual harassment and abuse were also reported (at lower prevalence) by men.

This is a shocking report and whilst the research was undertaken within surgery, the findings are relevant and should be considered within every specialty and across healthcare.

NHS England have published a [sexual safety charter](#) and we pleased that many organisations working within and across the NHS have already signed up to this.

In common with these organisations, we are writing to you to state that these types of behaviour will not be tolerated in the KSS Deanery. We are actively working with other stakeholders to tackle this issue through a number of active measures.

For our trainees, we want you to work and train in an environment where you feel safe, feel valued and have a voice that is heard.

For our educators, we recognise that you are also at risk of such events, may have had past experiences that you have reflected on again over the last week, and/or may have had trainees and colleagues approaching you to support them following this coverage.

It is important that we understand that **we are all responsible** in challenging and reporting these behaviours, whether it happens to us, or we witness it.

If this has happened to you, please speak up about your experience so that we can both offer you support and take action.

This can be through your Clinical or Educational Supervisor, your College or Specialty Tutor, Director of Medical Education (DME) and Postgraduate Medical Education Team, your local Trust support services, particularly the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or through the Deanery via your Training Programme Director (TPD) or Head of School. We are also both happy to be contacted directly and in confidence.

Other ways of reporting concerns to the Deanery are listed here:

Education quality concerns england.escalatingconcerns.kssquality@nhs.net

Education quality team england.kssquality@nhs.net

Deanery team england.ksspgme.se@nhs.net

We and our team are here to support you.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jo Szram
KSS Postgraduate Dean

Miss Ginny Bowbrick
KSS Head of School of Surgery