

# Allegations of abuse in schools, colleges and universities

The website “Everyone’s Invited” is a movement which is “committed to eradicating rape culture” and describes “rape culture” as “all the ways that different forms of aggressive and violent sexual behaviour are normalised, encouraged and even admired by society”. Find out more.

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The website “[Everyone’s Invited](#)” is a movement which is “committed to eradicating rape culture” and describes “rape culture” as “all the ways that different forms of aggressive and violent sexual behaviour are normalised, encouraged and even admired by society”. The site has now amassed nearly 40,000 members and over 10,000 testimonials describing anonymised experiences.

Originally founded in June 2020, the website was set up by founder Soma Sara as a platform where victims of peer-on-peer sexual abuse can anonymously share their stories. With the number of allegations made on the website now surpassing 10,000, the issue has attracted the attention of the Metropolitan police and the focus appears to be on allegations made of abuse experienced within the education sector.

Robert Halfon, chairman of the House of Commons education select committee, has called for a full independent inquiry, while Chief Constable Simon Bailey, the lead officer for the national task force for child sexual abuse investigations, has announced a hotline for abuse reports will be set up.

The impact will be felt by many education providers who will need to respond accordingly. Indeed, England’s children commissioner, Dame de Souza, has highlighted that schools must report serious claims of sexual violence and harassment to the police. Moreover, the Met Police has been reviewing the content on Everyone’s Invited and contacting schools it can identify.

Some have raised the issue that anonymous posts do not enable them to take specific action and that many testimonies relate to incidents outside of school. Nonetheless, all educational providers will need to seriously consider how they will react and respond to any allegations and, in particular, should seek specialist legal advice in relation to conducting internal enquiries and responding to any potential police investigations to ensure processes are properly managed from the outset.

As the reports in the [media](#) and testimonies on the website show, these allegations encompass schools across the independent and state sector as well as universities. All education providers should be aware of the potential for allegations to be made and a police investigation but, regardless, for many a need still exists to conduct internal investigations and ensure that all is being done to address these issues.

Education providers will want to adopt a proactive approach to addressing the potential for allegations internally as soon as is practicable, but in any event without delay.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that going forward there will be much greater emphasis on schools, colleges and universities providing effective routes for such issues to be reported as well as specific policies to address inappropriate behaviour of this nature. Getting ahead of the curve and conducting a full review of existing policies and updating as necessary at the earliest opportunity is advisable.

Browne Jacobson has a highly experienced team of lawyers who can advise and assist in setting up and conducting internal investigations of this type and reviewing policies and procedures. We also have much experience of representing organisations

throughout police investigations. We would be very happy to provide help and advice in this regard, please do get in touch if you wish to discuss matters in more detail.

## Contact



Stephanie McGarry

Partner

[stephanie.mcgarry@brownejacobson.com](mailto:stephanie.mcgarry@brownejacobson.com)

+44(0)115 908 4113

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