



Sexual Assault  
Treatment Units

# SATU Annual Report 2024



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# Introduction

## i. Welcome from the Clinical Lead



This is the 16th Annual Report of Key Service Activities from the six HSE funded Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs), a period of time over which the service has demonstrated growth and development in order to respond to the needs of people who need to access it. The SATUs are located in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Mullingar, Galway and Letterkenny and, in 2024, these units provided care for 1021 people. This metric represents a slight downward trend in number of attendances over the past few years, although four SATUs were busier in 2024 than the previous year, highlighting the importance of ongoing data collection to inform service and patient needs. It remains imperative that people can access responsive care in a timely fashion and that all aspects of society are aware of the prevalence and potential impacts of sexual violence, and the location and type of services available. 2024 brought powerful testimony from survivors of sexual crime, the eloquent words and lived experiences of Blathnaid Raleigh and Giselle Pelicot, to name just two, emphasise why SATU services and allied structures, agencies and responses are required and we must never forget the fundamental impact that frontline teams can have.

In 2024 all six SATUs continued to build on a range of initiatives including education and outreach while remaining committed to provision of high-quality patient care. Each SATU has a blended team, with an ANP (or candidate ANP), CNSs, administrator(s), support staff and on-call forensic examiners, as well as a clinical lead in place. Our team continues to collaborate closely with other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team, including colleagues from Cuan, An Garda Síochána, allied Rape Crisis & Sexual Violence Centres and Forensic Science Ireland as well as with colleagues who provide care for people under 14 years.

### SATU Updates

The Dublin SATU was delighted to welcome Laura Feely, the first medical social worker for the SATU service. This was advocated for through the estimates process, and funded in Budget 2024. Already Laura's impact has been significant and we look forward to welcoming further medical social workers for the other SATUs in the coming years.

The final months of 2024 delivered capital development for the Waterford SATU. Development of a fit for purpose facility will enhance the care options and support, and ultimately the patient experience, for all those who use Waterford SATU.

We acknowledge everyone who worked so hard to drive this redevelopment and make it a reality. We continue to advocate for capital investment in the Dublin, Cork and Mullingar SATUs and look forward to commitment in this regard.

Despite the infrastructural gaps however, in 2024, 95% (536/565) of people were seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination (where relevant). However, as in previous years, in one of every three cases where there was a delay beyond 3 hours this was because the 'satu was unavailable for use' (which generally means another case is in progress). This highlights the infrastructural need for additional forensic suites, particularly in busier units.

We were delighted to continue to offer our SATU staff emotional support programme in 2024 and acknowledge Dr Nicola O'Sullivan and Dr Anne Golden for their commitment to this. This programme focusses on reflective practice, wellbeing and emotional support at work and its link to staff development, wellbeing and retention. We now offer a blended programme of some group workshops, but mainly individual, online Professional Therapeutic Spaces to support wellbeing at work.

In 2024 the Dublin SATU commenced a pilot of onsite photodocumentation, in certain forensic cases where photography of injuries was relevant. This was only possible due to the support of the HSE Spark programme, particularly Catherine Marsh, in collaboration with Deirdra Richardson, Christine Pucillo, Nicola Maher and Oonagh Farrell. The project was rewarded with a prize at the Irish Healthcare Awards in December 2024 and we look forward to furthering this initiative in 2025.

### **SATU Research and Education**

Throughout 2024 work continued on advocating for an additional training programme for clinical nurse specialists / forensic nurse examiners in Sexual Assault Forensic Examination. Six candidates will commence training in 2025 and we look forward to welcoming them to the team. Work continues on building a more modular, flexible, but equally as comprehensive a, training programme which could be accessed by other members of the Sexual Assault Response team, and indeed by specialist nurses in allied healthcare areas who wish to upskill as forensic nurse examiners.

Training of aspiring forensic medical examiners is also ongoing, but currently separate from forensic nurse examiner training. This programme now takes the form of a suite of online resources, in conjunction with onsite observation in a host SATU combined with a day of simulation-based training hosted at The Irish Centre for Applied Patient Safety and Simulation (ICAPSS) at the University of Galway in order to support participants to achieve the relevant competencies. Thanks, as always, to Dr Andrea Holmes, clinical lead for the Galway SATU for her ongoing commitment to this significant project. In time we hope to integrate this module as a portion of the programme traditionally undertaken by nurses and midwives, to reap the efficiencies and benefits of multiprofessional training.

Dr Daniel Kane, in conjunction with a number of co-authors completed the first portion of his SATU based research programme in 2024. This built on his 2023 work and included publications, international presentations and awards on demographics of attendances, storage of evidence (option 3), injury in context of disclosures of sexual violence and SATU attendances by older people. This body of work has greatly contributed to the national and international evidence base in this area and will continue to drive SATU progress and service development and improvements in patient care.

As well as the Annual Study Day, which takes place in the Autumn every year (see Section 3), each SATU offers significant educational outreach in their locality – in terms of professional education (e.g. emergency and other healthcare departments, interagency education (prison services, An Garda Síochána) as well as outreach education to local schools and colleges. This is a valuable way of highlighting the work of SATU, signposting how and where to access services as well as providing plentiful opportunities for discussions on consent, health promotion and risk reduction.

This year, SATU outreach continued to include attendance at a number of concerts and festivals, including Electric Picnic. Engagement and collaboration in our communities is increasingly recognised as an important factor in creating awareness, reducing incidents, facilitating disclosure, and providing a swift care response for those who have experienced sexual violence, and we look forward to continuing and expanding this initiative. Thanks to a number of CNSs and ANPs for leading and contributing to this in 2024. Many thanks, also, to Sarah O'Connor for coordinating a professional development programme for the SATU services, and we look forward to many more excellent learning opportunities in this context.

In April the Rotunda hosted a commemorative event to honour the late Dr Moira Woods, one of the founding forensic examiners of the Rotunda SATU. This provided an opportunity to reflect on those early days and how far we have come. We acknowledge the incredible commitment of those who went before, people who worked hard to establish services in very different times. We truly stand on the shoulders of giants and would not be where we are today without our predecessors building foundations, working long hours and taking significant risks.

### Thanks and Acknowledgments

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of the SATU team. This report of key service activity is only possible because of the commitment to collation and inputting of relevant data into the database to ensure accurate presentation of service activities and key performance indicators. 95% of first SATU visit attendances were entered on the database within 10 working days of the first visit, which demonstrates the commitment of the entire team.



I would also like to thank a number of key personnel within the Health Service Executive, including Killian McGrane, Tracy McAuley, Davinia O'Donnell and Dr Cliona Murphy (NWIHP). Their commitment to SATU services despite multiple demands on their time and resources is greatly appreciated. Regular SATU network and interagency meetings, moderated by NWIHP, are really valuable to ensure transparent communication between groups. Furthermore I acknowledge the support we receive from Masters, Clinical Directors, Directors of Midwifery/ Nursing and hospital & network managers who advocate for us despite frequent, competing and important demands on their valuable resources.

As always, it is important to acknowledge the people who attend SATUs around the country. Nobody ever 'wants' to attend a SATU and we never cease to be amazed by the strength that our service users display, despite significance of the events they have experienced. We really value the feedback that they provide, in order that we can critically appraise our service through the lens of a service user. This underpins continuous quality improvement and is really valuable in informing ongoing staffing and infrastructural developments.

Please contact me directly or [nwihp.corporate@hse.ie](mailto:nwihp.corporate@hse.ie) if you have any questions or comments on this Executive Summary of Key Service Activity.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Maeve' followed by a stylized surname.

**Prof Maeve Eogan**

National Clinical Lead (SATU)

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## ii. Foreword



It is with respect and gratitude that I present the 16th Annual Report of Key Service Activities from the six HSE funded Sexual Assault Treatment Units. Led by Professor Maeve Eogan, the SATU Network has continued to strengthen and evolve over the past year demonstrating its commitment and dedication to those affected by sexual violence. In 2024, the SATUs provided care to over a thousand individuals, which serves as an important reminder of the ongoing need for accessible, responsive and compassionate services.

This report captures the breadth and depth of work undertaken in 2024: from new initiatives like the appointment of a medical social worker at the Rotunda SATU, to crucial infrastructural developments in Waterford, and service innovations such as the enhanced forensic photo documentation project. These advancements reflect not only the dedication of our SATU teams but also the vital collaboration with partners across the Sexual Assault Response network.

I am also encouraged by the emphasis on education, outreach, research and staff well-being over this past year. Whether through supporting survivors in their most vulnerable moments, contributing to the national and international evidence base, or advocating for improved training and facilities, every initiative reinforces our shared commitment to providing the best possible care.

Given the 24/7, 365 nature of the SATU service, succession planning and addressing future workforce needs are extremely important. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the valuable partnership that Professor Eogan and her colleagues have established with the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI) for the delivery of the SAFE (Sexual Assault Forensic Examination) education programme for nurses and midwives.

At the National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP), we remain incredibly proud of our ongoing partnership with the SATUs. We were privileged to visit the centre in Galway and meet with the staff on the 16th of May 2024. Once again, I'd like to thank Professor Maeve Eogan, our National Clinical Lead, and the entire SATU team across the country for their unwavering commitment to providing specialist, compassionate, and professional care—24/7—to people who have experienced sexual crime. I would also like to acknowledge the trust and bravery shown by those who attended a SATU. This report is testament to your resilience and a commitment to do better every year.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Cliona Murphy".

**Dr Cliona Murphy**  
Clinical Director (NWIHP)  
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# Section 1

## Key Service Activity

This section provides an analysis of key service activities throughout 2024, including attendance numbers, incident details, referral sources, attendance types, drug and alcohol use, and pregnancy and STI prophylaxis. The data presented aims to highlight trends, challenges, and areas for improvement in service delivery.

i. Attendance

The first set of metrics relate to attendances at the 6 SATUs as well as the attendance type.

National Attendances

In 2024 there were a total of 1021 attendances to the 6 SATUs. This was a decrease of 4% (41) on the previous year. The table outlines attendances over the last 5 years.

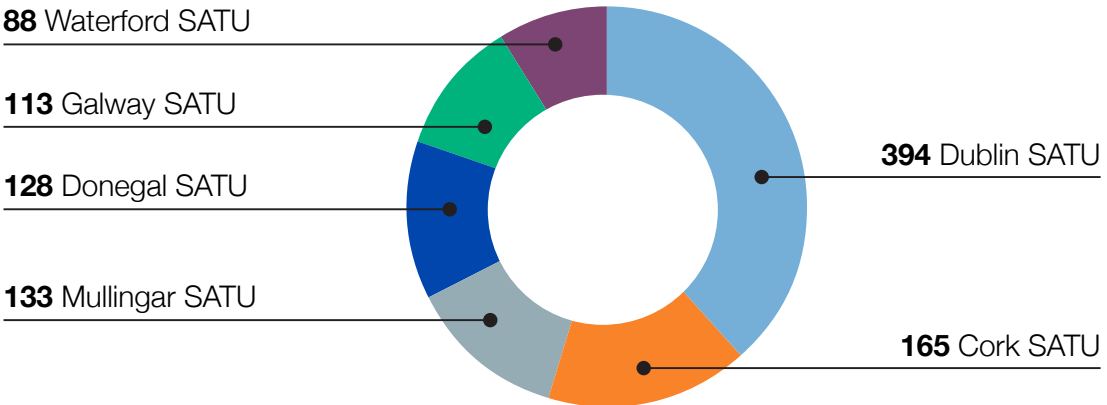
Year	Attendances (number)	Difference from previous year (number)
2024	1021	-41
2023	1062	-10
2022	1072	+213
2021	859	+125
2020	734	-209

Local Attendances

A total of 1,021 attendances were recorded across the six SATUs.

- ▶ The Dublin SATU saw a decrease of 57 attendances (13%) compared with the previous year.
- ▶ The Galway SATU also experienced a decline in attendances from 137 in 2023 to 113 in 2024.
- ▶ The remaining four units saw a modest increase in the number of attendances.

The chart below illustrates the number of attendances at each site.



## Section 1: Key Service Activity (continued)

The below charts show the trends over the past five years for attendance in the SATU units.

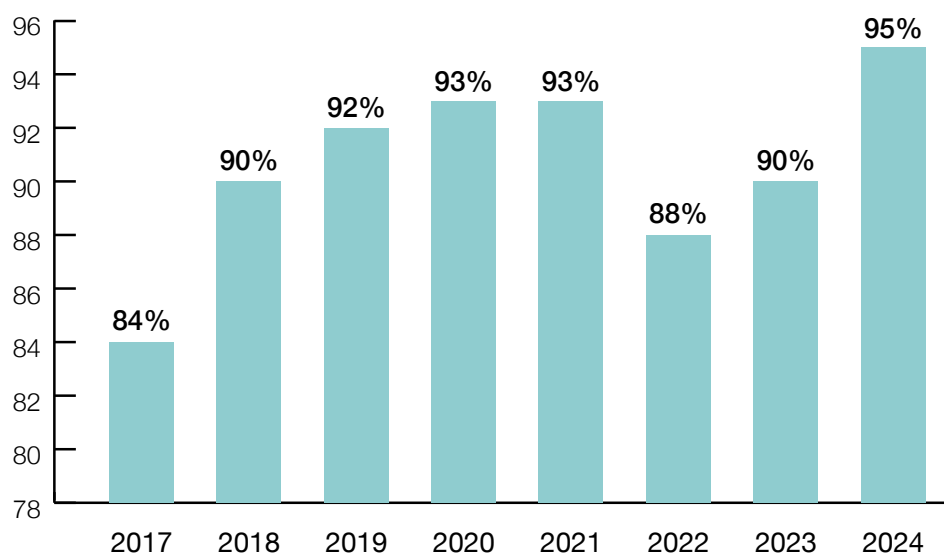
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Dublin SATU</b>	277	309	427	451	394
<b>Cork SATU</b>	111	148	190	152	165
<b>Mullingar SATU</b>	101	120	148	124	133
<b>Galway SATU</b>	89	100	107	137	113
<b>Donegal SATU</b>	78	101	125	117	128
<b>Waterford SATU</b>	78	81	75	81	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>1072</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>1021</b>

### Seen within 3 hours

95% (536) of people were seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination, exceeding the KPI target of 90%. The 95% achievement of this in 2024 marks a record high, reflecting the commitment and dedication of SATU staff.

However, in situations where the KPI target was not met, 1 in 3 times (31%) this was because of the 'SATU being unavailable for use' (typically indicating another case in progress). Additionally, 24% of delays were attributed to the unavailability of a forensic clinical examiner, and 21% were due to the absence of SATU support staff. These findings highlight the need for additional forensic suites and sufficient staffing, particularly in high-demand units.

### % Seen within 3 hours



### Attendance type

The SATU provides individuals with a health check, medication, and forensic examination services, as well as providing psychological support. A health check is always offered, regardless of whether a forensic exam is chosen. The service currently offers **three core options of care**:

**Option 1** When a person is aged 14 years or over, discloses sexual violence and wants to make a complaint to An Garda Síochána. A forensic clinical examination will be offered by SATU if the incident happened within 7 days of the disclosure.

**Option 2** When a person is over 16 years of age, has experienced unwanted sexual activity either within the last 7 days, in recent weeks, months or years but does not want to report to An Garda Síochána and is requesting a health check. Depending on the duration of time since the incident, a sexual health screen is offered. No forensic samples are taken.

**Option 3** When a patient is over 16 years of age, has experienced sexual violence in the last 7 days and is undecided if they want to report to An Garda Síochána (Storage of Evidence). Patients can attend for a forensic clinical examination and the forensic samples are securely stored for a period of up to one year in SATU.

In all options, patients are offered medications such as emergency contraception and preventive treatment for infectious diseases. They are also provided with follow-up appointments for sexual health screenings and psychological support from the RCC where applicable. Child protection obligations are adhered to, regardless of the chosen care option.

A breakdown of the attendance type can be seen below.

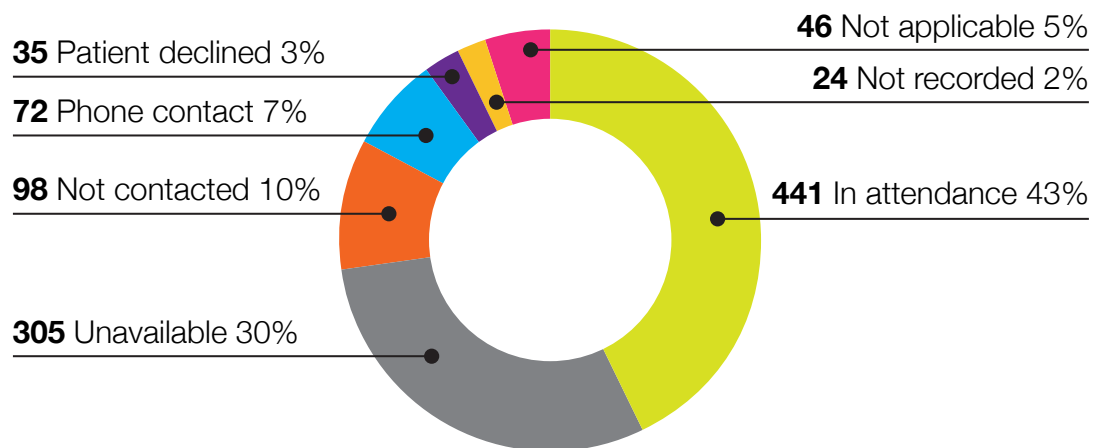
	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Option 1: Garda Forensic Exam Kit	529	52%
Option 2: Health check	258	25%
Option 3: No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	137	13%
Garda no kit	58	6%
Other	22	2%
Advice	17	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) Input

**56%** (548/975) of attendees had the opportunity to meet with a Psychological Support worker at their first SATU attendance, marking a 10% decrease from the previous year.

Efforts are made to ensure that a support worker from the affiliated Rape Crisis Centre (RCC), Sexual Violence Centre (SVC), or ASSC is available either in person or remotely (via phone or video call). This provides survivors/victims with practical and emotional support, including counseling and court accompaniment services if required. Additionally, they offer information on other available services and how to access them. The accompaniment services are free and confidential.

#### RCC Psychological Support



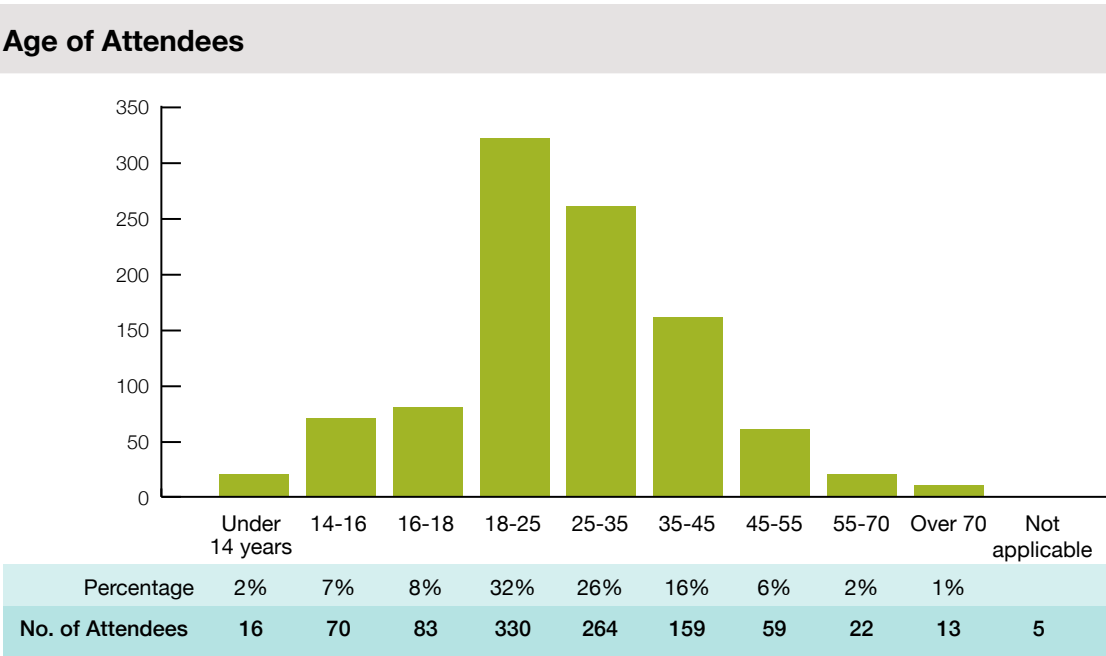
To enhance accessibility to psychological support, the Dublin and Tullamore Rape Crisis Centres are providing extended support service at the Rotunda and Mullingar SATUs. As part of this initiative, an RCC representative is on-site during certain follow-up appointments. The programme is progressing well and has received positive feedback.

It remains crucial for SATUs and partner agencies to continue promoting awareness of these allied support services, ensuring that individuals can access them, in a timely fashion, as needed.

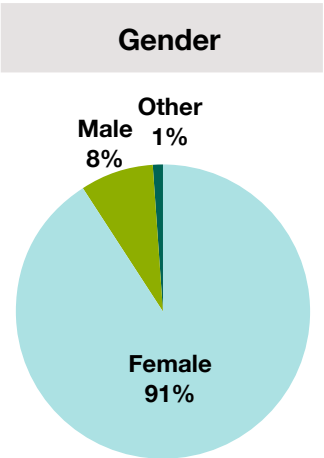
## ii. Gender/Age/Nationality/ Occupation

In contrast to previous years, attendees **under 25 years** of age accounted for **499 (49%)** of cases, representing just under half of all attendees. However, the **18-25** age range remained the highest at **330 (32%)**. The proportion of attendees in the **16-18** age bracket decreased from 11% to **8%** in 2024, while the **25-35** age bracket increased from 22% to **26%**.

The mean age of attendees was 28 years.

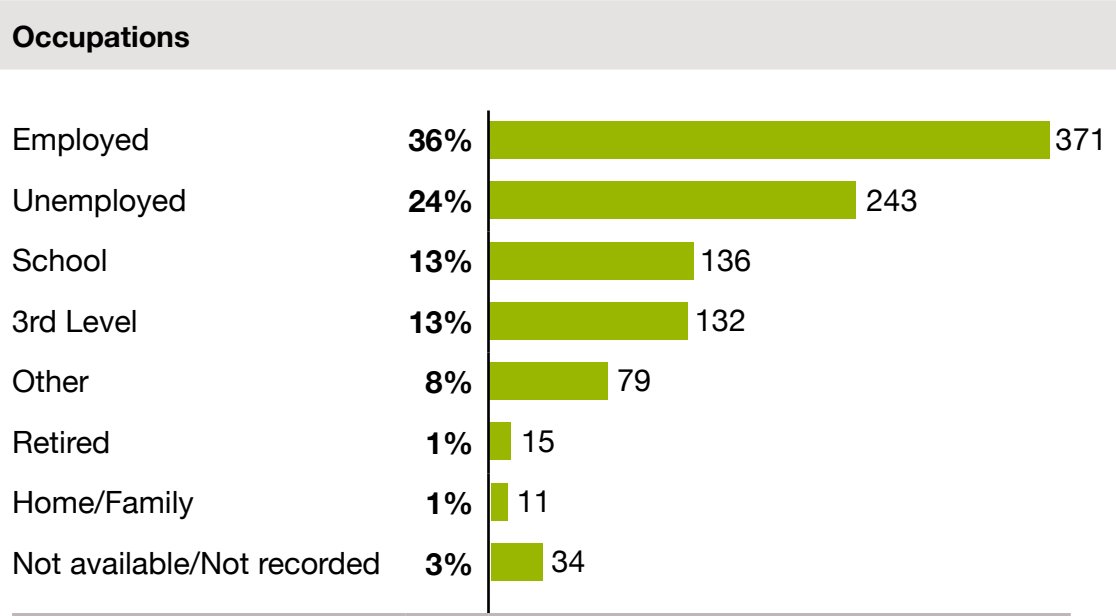


- ▶ Where recorded, **91%** (924) of attendees were **female**, **8%** (86) were male and **1%** identified as another gender or none. These figures closely follow trends observed in the previous two years.
- ▶ **69% (705)** of people who attended SATU identified as Irish. Attendees from **57** other nationalities were recorded in 2024, with interpreters required to assist with communication in **4%** of attendances — an increase of 2% from the previous year. Russian was the most commonly required interpretation language, accounting for **16%** of cases requiring an interpreter.





- **School or third level students** who previously represented the largest demographic group, dropped by 8% in 2024 to **26%**. **Employed individuals** became the largest cohort at **36% (371)**, while **24% (243)** described themselves as **'unemployed'**.

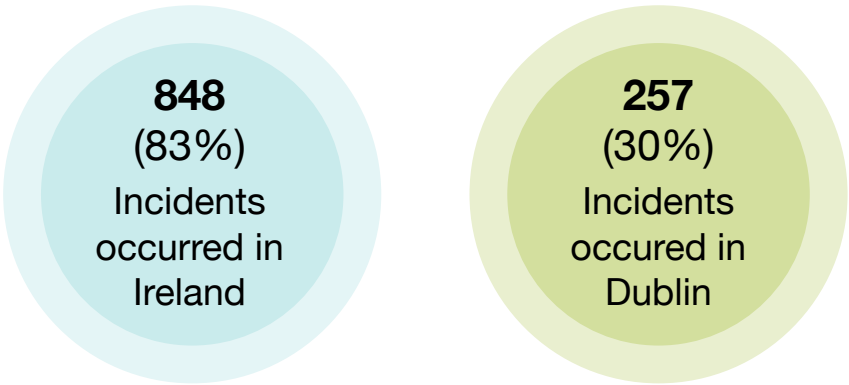


### iii. Details of Incident

The next set of metrics look at the details of the incident, including the location, time, assailant and injury to the patient.

The percentage of incidents that occurred in Ireland in 2024 was similar to the previous two years at 83%. The European continent accounted for 77 incidents at 7.5%.

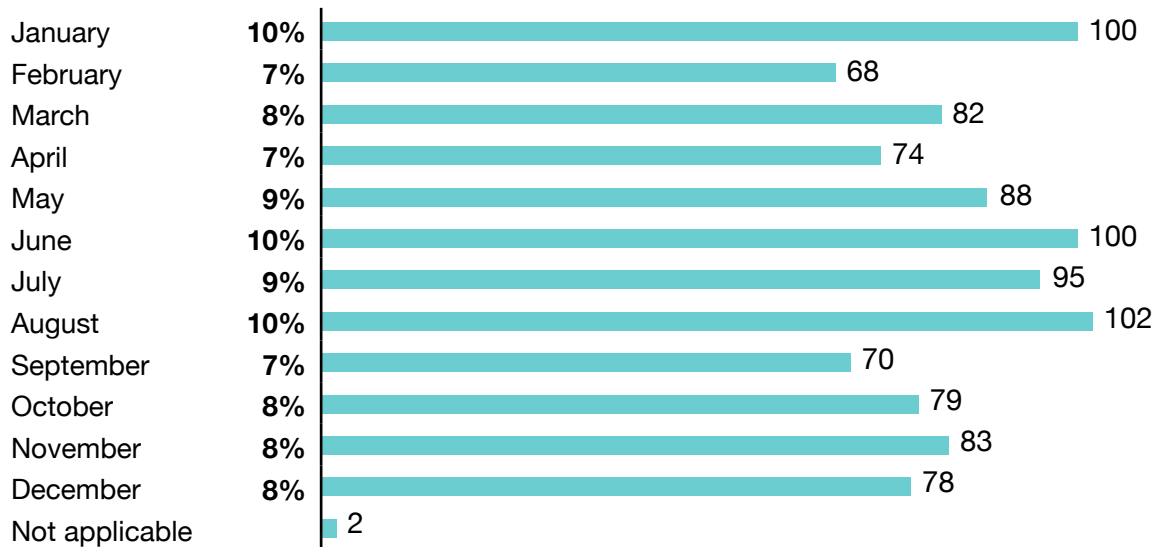
Dublin remained the county with the highest number of incidents at 30% (257). Cork had the second highest number of incidents at 12% (103).



## Timing of incident

**January, June and August** were the busiest months of the year, each recording **10%** of all incidents. Whilst the weekend days, **Friday, Saturday and Sunday**, continued to account for the largest proportion of incidents, (**572 cases, 56%**), this was a decrease from the previous year's figure of 79%.

### Month Incident Occured



## Timing of SATU attendance from incident

Although January and August were the busiest months for incidents to occur, May and August recorded the highest number of SATU attendances.

### Month of Attendance



**Monday** and **Tuesday** were the busiest days for attendance, with **367** cases (**36%**), while Friday through Sunday saw 352 cases (35%).

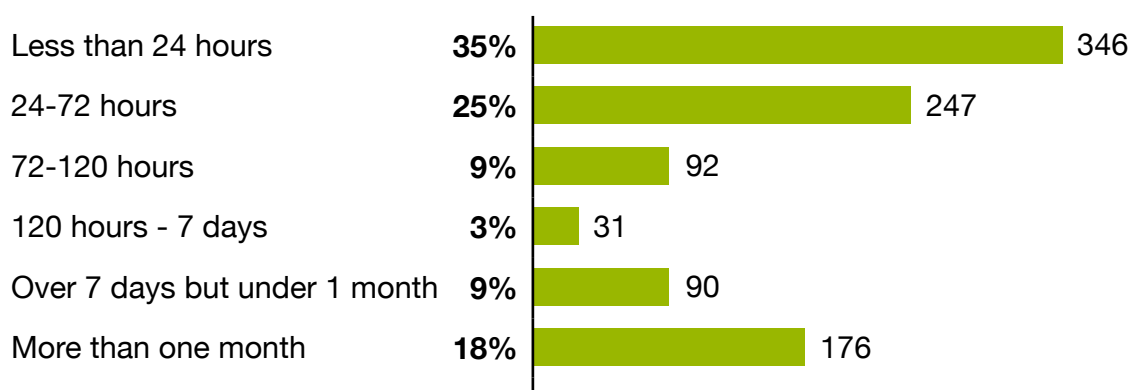
### Day of attendance



With 35% weekend attendance and 36% of patients attending on Monday and Tuesday, this suggests that a high proportion of weekend incidents are reported within a few days.

The majority of incidents, 82% (833 cases), occurred between 8 PM and 8 AM. This pattern underscores the critical need for round-the-clock availability of the Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs), which play a pivotal role in providing immediate care, support, and forensic examination for victims of sexual assault.

### Duration of time between the incident and the attendance at SATU (all cases)

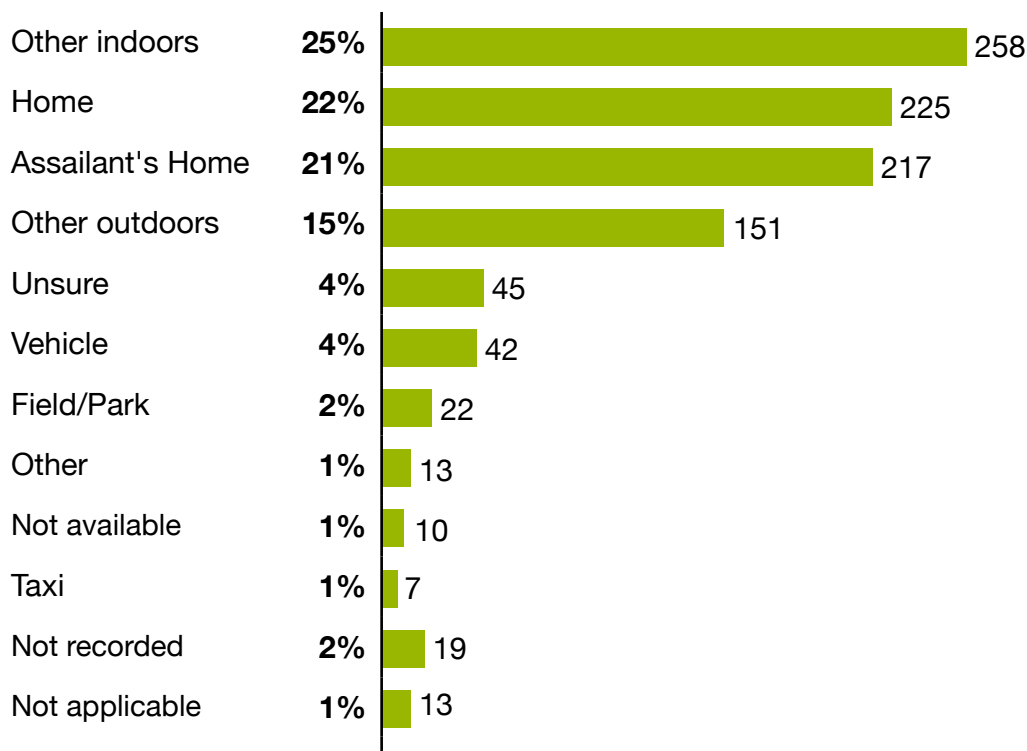


The graph above illustrates the duration of time between an incident and attendance at SATU. Early attendance facilitates prompt access to forensic sampling, as well as health services, including emergency contraception and infectious disease prophylaxis.

### Location of incident

The statistics from **2024** are in line with data from **2022** and **2023**, where the majority of incidents (68%) occurred indoors, predominantly in the victim's (22%) or assailant's home (21%). **17%** occurred in various outdoor settings.

#### Location of the Incident

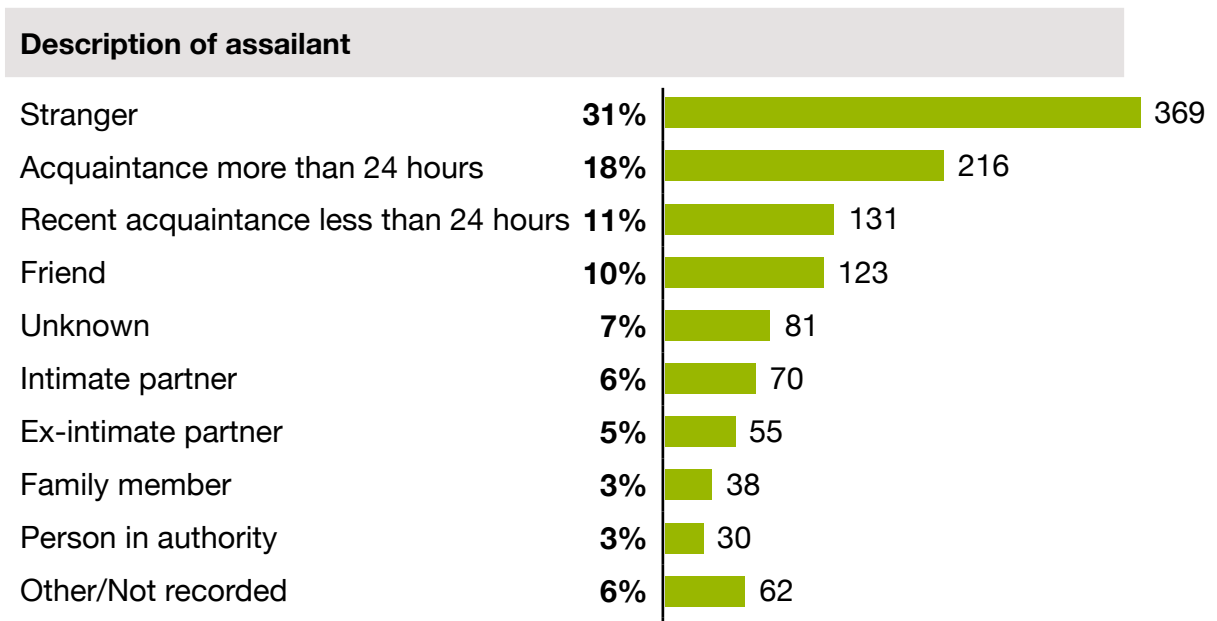


### Description of assailant

The data from 2024 indicates a reduction in the proportion of assaults involving a single assailant and an increase in incidents involving multiple assailants. **89%** of assaults (913 cases) were perpetrated by a **single assailant**, a 1% reduction from 2023. Meanwhile, **10%** of assaults (97 cases) involved multiple assailants, reflecting an increase in such incidents compared to previous years.

There were 11 female assailants recorded in 2024.

In 2024, incidents where the perpetrator was described as a stranger rose by 3% to **31%** (369 cases). There was a significant decrease in the rate of recent acquaintance assaults (less than 24 hours), which fell to **11%**, down 4% from 2023. The proportion of disclosures relating to intimate partner and intrafamily sexual violence was similar to previous years.



### Physical restraint use

Physical restraints were used in **36%** of incidents in 2024. Restraint by arms/hands were recorded in **111 (11%)** incidents, and throat restraint was recorded in **69 (7%)** of attendances. Weapons were used in **7%** of incidents, an **increase of 3%** from 2023.

Threats were reported in **19%** of incidents, including threats to the victim, relatives, and children.

### Injury at time of examination

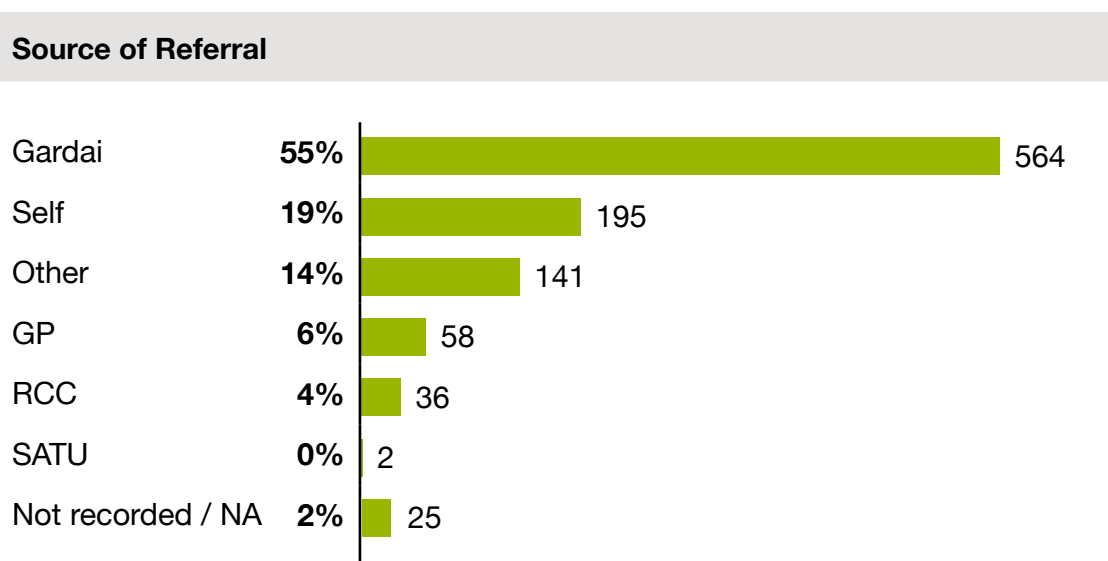
While physical injury was not identified in **60%** of attendees (611 cases) at the time of their SATU assessment, there was an increase in the percentage of victims requiring **referrals for injury follow-up care**. This figure increased by one third compared to the previous year, to **21 cases (2%)**. Although the increase is small, and the proportion requiring hospitalisation for treatment of injury is similar to previous years, it may suggest an **escalation in the severity of injuries** sustained in sexual assault incidents, necessitating more extended medical care.

Physical Injury Outcome	Number	Percentage
No injuries	611	60%
Injury - No follow up	240	24%
Referral - Injury follow up required	21	2%
Other	6	1%
Hospitalised due to injury	5	%
Hospitalised due to Mental Health	4	%
Pre-existing injury	2	%
Not recorded	93	9%
Not applicable	39	4%

## iv. Referral Source and Options of Care

The next set of metrics examines the referral sources to the SATU and the care options chosen by patients.

The majority of cases – **55%** were referred to the SATU by An Garda Síochána, while self-referrals were the second most common, accounting for **19%** of presentations.



Of the 1,021 individuals who attended SATU, 587 (57%) chose to report the incident to An Garda Síochána. However, as there is no statute of limitations on sexual crimes, individuals may still decide to file a complaint with An Garda Síochána at any point after their SATU visit, even if they initially chose not to do so.

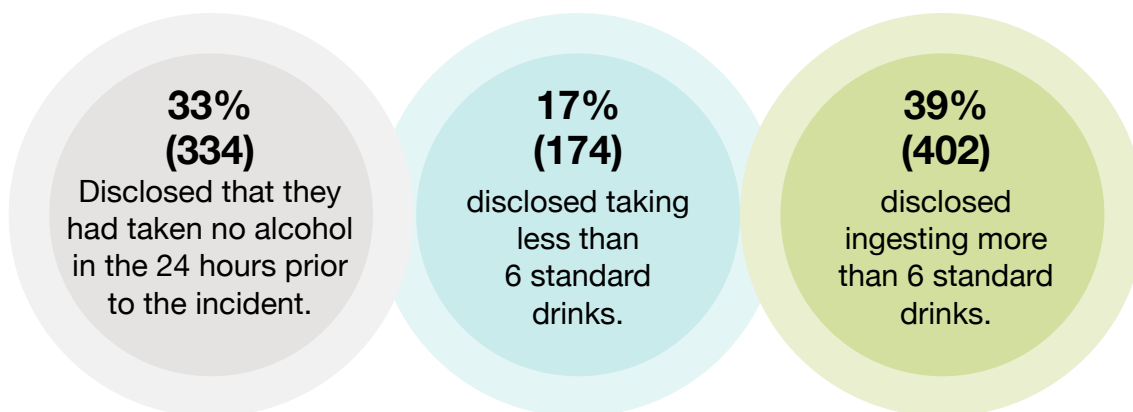
The tables below demonstrate the types of SATU attendance in each group.

Disclosures to An Garda Síochána	598	
Option 1: Garda with kit	529	88%
Garda no kit	58	10%
Option 3 who then reported	11	2%

Did not report to An Garda Síochána	423	
Option 2: Health check	258	61%
Option 3	126	30%
Advice/other	39	9%

## v. Alcohol and Drug use

Regarding drug and alcohol use at the time of the incident.



In relation to drugs the metrics are almost identical to the previous year, **735 (72%)** reported **not haven taken any drugs**, **169 (17%)** had taken recreational drugs, **14 (1%)** having taken prescription drugs and **16 (2%)** having taken recreational and prescription drugs, in the 24 hours prior to the incident.

Additionally, **212** individuals **(21%)** expressed concern that the incident may have been a drug- or alcohol-facilitated assault. A further **175 (17%)** were unsure whether a Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA) had occurred.

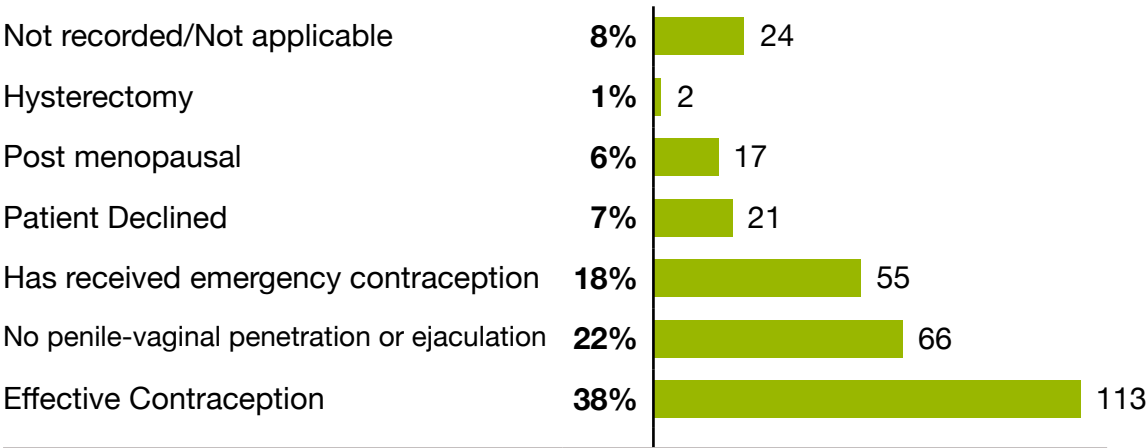
These are important metrics, both in terms of highlighting that incidents of sexual violence can occur in the absence of alcohol and drugs, but also that concerns about drug facilitated sexual crime are frequent. It is important that SATUs are available to respond to people who are unsure whether a sexual assault occurred. It is not a prerequisite that a person has a complete recollection of any or all aspects of the incident in order to attend for SATU based care.

## vi. Pregnancy and STI Prophylaxis

SATUs offer a health check to all individuals who use the service. The final set of metrics examines the use of pregnancy and STI-related preventative measures following the incident.

In 2024, 100% of women who presented within 120 hours and required emergency contraception were provided with this in SATU. **298** women did not require it for a range of reasons as tabulated below. It is interesting to note that less women require emergency contraception in SATU than previously – this is likely due to increased availability of free of charge contraception, including emergency contraception, in community services.

### Reasons why emergency contraception was not required



Additionally, **4%** of attendees received chlamydia prophylaxis—a significantly lower percentage than in previous years due to guideline changes implemented in mid-2023.

Furthermore, **38%** of attendees began a Hepatitis B vaccination programme, while **5%** received HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEPSE).

In terms of follow-up care, **76%** of SATU patients were scheduled for an STI review appointment or received STI screening at first attendance.

Others declined or decided to book their own follow-up appointment. The availability of home STI screening via the HSE funded SH:24 scheme ([sh24.ie/](https://sh24.ie/)) provides people with a free of charge alternative to attending for practitioner delivered screening, which may be more acceptable to some.



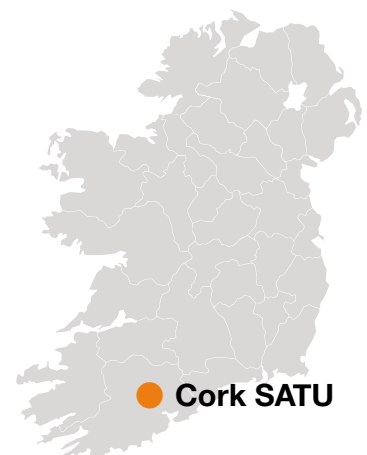


## Section 2

# Updates from the SATU services

## i. Cork SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	165	+13	+9%
2023	152	-38	-20%
2022	190	+42	+29%
2021	148	+37	+33%
2020	111	-33	-23%



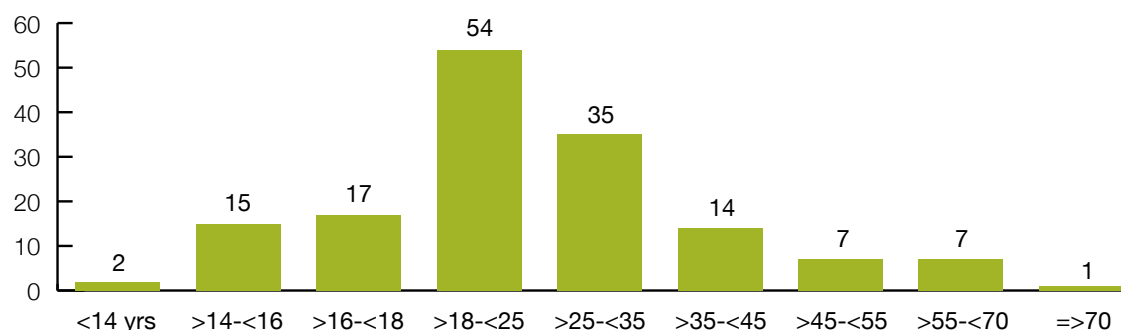
### LOCAL STATISTICS

2024 saw an increase in attendances in Cork SATU up by 9% from 152 in 2023 to 165 in 2024. 89% of those who attended SATU identified as female, 10% identified as male and 1% identified as other, similar to previous years.

#### Age Range

In 2024, Cork saw a change in the age profiles attending SATU with an increase in the numbers between the ages of 25 to 35 years up from 23% in 2023 to 30% in 2024 and an increase in patients between the ages of 35 to 45 from 9% in 2023 to 13% in 2024. Interestingly, there was a decrease in the numbers for the younger patients (between the ages of 14 to 16) attending SATU down from 10% in 2023 to 4% in 2024, and those aged 16 to 18 years down from 11% in 2023 to 9% in 2024. There was a modest decrease in the ages 18 to 25 years down from 36% to 33% and also from 55 to 70 from 5% down to 3%.

#### Age Range of Attendees



### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

In acute cases, Cork SATU saw 95% (75) patients within 3 hours of a request for services, an increase of 3% on 2023. Once again it is important to note, that in 4 cases where there was a delay, Cork SATU was already in use at the time. This is a similar finding to the reason for delays in 2023 and highlights the need for ongoing planning to extend the physical SATU space to further reduce these instances. In 2024, Cork SATU continued to provide on-call assistance to our colleagues in Waterford when requested ensuring patients had access to a 24/7 service.

Duration since the incident	Number	%
< 24 hours	50	30%
24 hrs – 72 hrs	45	27%
72 hrs – 120 hrs	21	13%
120 hrs – 7 days	6	3.5%
7 days – 1 month	23	14%
>1 month	19	12%
Unrecorded	1	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100%</b>

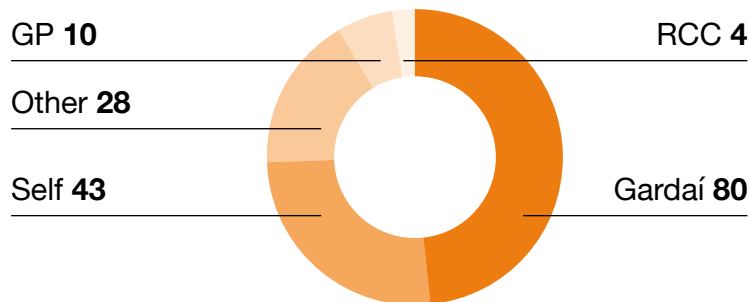
### Type of attendance

76% (125) of patients attended SATU within 7 days of the incident, with 60% (75) attending in the presence of An Garda Síochána and 40% (50) opting for either no Gardaí presence and storage of evidence, or a health check. Of the 125 patients who attended within 7 days of the incident, 50 of these attended within 24 hours and 72 attending between 24 hours – 7 days. Furthermore, 28 patients (17%) opted to avail of a storage of forensic evidence option ultimately giving them more time to report the incident to Gardaí. This is a decrease from 24% in 2023.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	75	45%
Option 2 - Health check	56	34%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	28	17%
Garda no kit	5	3%
Other	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Source of Referral

There was an increase in the referrals from the Gardai, up from 67 in 2023 to 80 in 2024.



## Key Achievements in 2024

### Assistance with provision of child services

2024 saw Cork SATU work closely with the Accompaniment Support Services for Children (A.S.S.C.) with the intention of bringing this service to young people from 14 years to 18 years when attending SATU. A.S.S.C is dedicated to safeguarding children during criminal proceedings and includes the provision of an accompaniment support service to SATU. Cork SATU have facilitated the engagement of many local services including YHS, West Cork Beacon, UCC and Tusla, with A.S.S.C support staff in the vision of overall improving the holistic care provided to young people who require our service. Along with accompaniment to SATU, A.S.S.C offer an advocacy phone support by highly trained volunteers. We continue to work closely with all involved in this initiative and hope to welcome A.S.S.C volunteers into Cork SATU early 2025.

### Child Youth Participation

In October 2024, the Child Advisory Board, a diverse and inspiring group of children attended SATU and Family Centre 2. They came together to provide valuable feedback on the upcoming Barnahus South. Their insights, shared with great enthusiasm and thoughtfulness, are shaping the future of this important development. We appreciate their contributions, as their perspectives help ensure that the new space will meet the needs of children and families. Additionally, a workshop was held at the Glen Resource Centre which provided another opportunity to engage with this group of young people. Their ongoing involvement continues to be an invaluable part of this process.

### Staffing

In July 2024, Cork SATU welcomed Dr Daniel Kane to the on call rota and we bid a fond farewell to Dr. Emily Rutherford. Dr. Rutherford was a valuable member of the SATU team, her efforts and dedication to the patients and the service was remarkable and if life leads her back to Cork we would be more than happy to see her here again.

We welcomed two new support nurses to our team, Marguerite Coakley and Caroline Cadogan and we look forward to working with them in the years to come.

We said a sad goodbye to support Nurse Déirdre Fitzgerald when her career took a different direction. Déirdre was an amazing support to the patients she cared for we wish her the very best in the next chapter.

### Staff training and achievements

In April 2024 forensic nurse examiners Catherine O'Brien and Niamh Whooley completed the certificate in Nurse Prescribing in University College Cork with the support of the HSE and the SIVUH. The course ran over 6 months and involved a combination of college theory days and onsite learning. This is of huge benefit to patient care going forward.

In July 2024, Margo Noonan was awarded an employment based PhD scholarship from the School of Medicine and Health in UCC.

2024 saw Cork SATU continuing to provide assistance to Cork Family Centre on the provision of medical and forensic care to children under the age of 14 years. SATU staff have been involved in the development and roll out of the Barnahus South Service which commenced in April 2024. This included the SIVUH and CUH taking governance of the Paediatric Forensic Medical Service (formerly The Family Centre). In October 2024 Richelle Clancy joined the team as Clinical Nurse Manager II Barnahus/SATU and is continuing with the development and roll out of the service. She brings valuable expertise and is a much needed addition, especially to the children's service.

We continue to work closely with a number of agencies on the development of a co-located SATU and Barnahus South.

The Cork SATU staff also had the achievement of presenting at various events to a wide demographic including:

- ▶ Cuan Lee Bru Columbus Wilton
- ▶ Postgraduate Diploma ED students University College Cork
- ▶ Transition to Registered General Nurse programme
- ▶ SIVUH NCHDs
- ▶ NMPDU/ ANP talk
- ▶ Collins Barracks
- ▶ Prep day for SIVUH Interns
- ▶ CUH Conference
- ▶ Eist Linn
- ▶ SV disclosures in ED, UHK

The Staff in the unit attended various conferences and events as part of their education and training. Some of the conferences included:

- ▶ South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital conference in Brookfield
- ▶ Children and Young People Services Committees Youth led Anti-Racism Conference
- ▶ Sexual Health Conference
- ▶ Civil Defence Officers Association National Conference
- ▶ Nursing Midwifery Planning and Development Unit – advanced nurse practitioner conference
- ▶ Men Overcoming Violence & Men Ending Domestic Abuse Conference
- ▶ Empower Kids & TLC Kidz project- Coercive Control Web Launch

The Cork SATU team attended various study day throughout the year including:

- ▶ SATU Administrator study day in Mullingar
- ▶ Bernardos TLC Programme
- ▶ SATU Legal skills study day
- ▶ National SATU study day
- ▶ University Hospital Kerry study day

Members of the team completed various training courses such as:

- ▶ Making every contact count
- ▶ Ruhama training
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ ABM

### Community

The Cork SATU staff had engagements with a range of organisations and attended various meetings, such as:

- ▶ Domestic Violence network meeting
- ▶ Sexual Health Network Meetings
- ▶ AKIDWA
- ▶ SATU scoping meeting
- ▶ Student welfare – UCC
- ▶ TUSLA Child youth participation
- ▶ CYPSC Cork

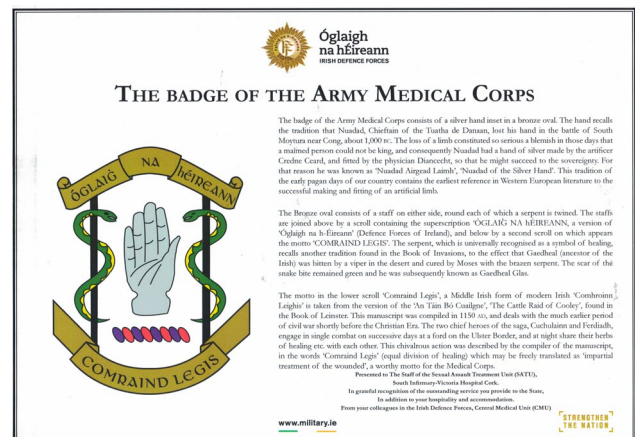
### Education and Training

Margo Noonan, ANP SAFE, attended Collins Barracks in May 2024 and provided training to the Irish Defence Forces on the medical, legal and holistic management of sexual violence disclosures. This training was live streamed to other barracks nationwide at the time. SATU staff are committed to working with the defence forces in the development of policies and guidelines in recognising sexual violence, developing preventative programmes and medical management of sexual violence survivors. In light of this work Cork SATU staff were presented with The Badge of The Army Medical Corps by the Irish Defence Forces Central Medical Unit “in grateful recognition of the outstanding service to the State, in addition to your hospitality and accommodation.”

In 2024, Margo attended parent's evenings in 4 different schools to educate parents on the The Impact of an Educational Programme on Challenging Rape Myths and Consent Misconceptions in Adolescent Males - the ASSUME Programme' that Margo initially developed in 2017 and now Margo and Sinead are rolling it out in the secondary schools in Munster. In 2024, Margo Noonan and Sinead Maher delivered a comprehensive schools programme which includes education on busting myths, fears regarding sexual assault and rape, the law around sexual violence and laws pertaining to social media and how it applies to young men and women. It covers the topic of consent and how this applies to real life with anonymized case studies. The programme is targeted at educating young people about the many faces of sexual violence, how to recognise sexual violence and where and how to look for help. The aim is to empower as many young people as possible with this knowledge to protect them as they get ready to start their young adulthood journeys. We are striving to create a culture where victim blaming is challenged and the focus of blame is on the perpetrator. The programme was delivered to a large number of students ranging from 2nd year up to 6th year pupils and Margo and Sinead had over 40 visits to various schools from Cork, Kerry, Waterford and Limerick throughout 2024.

The Cork SATU do extensive work with the University College Cork and are part of the UCC Bystander initiative. Some of the team took part in the UCC Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance week. The Cork SATU also facilitated a site visit for some UCC students to visit the unit. A site visit was also facilitated for 2nd year integrated Children's programme nurses.

Information mornings are held in Mercy University hospital to promote awareness of the unit.

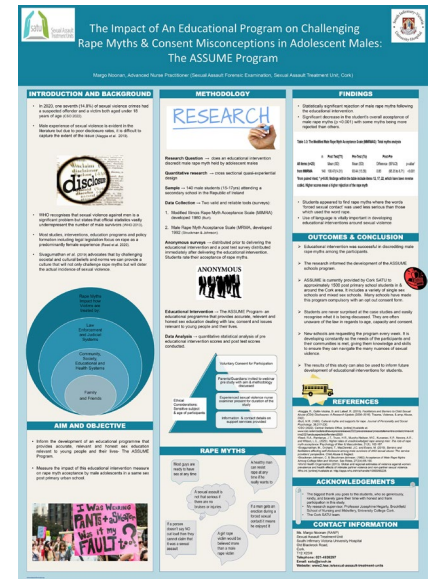




SATU continues to work closely with the HSE – South and HSE – East Emergency Management Officers through training and advice regarding pre-hospital emergency management care for victims of sexual violence. In May 2024, members of the SATU were invited to attend the Bruce Springsteen Concert in Páirc Uí Chaoimh, to see the emergency management teams and care provision locations.

### Awards

In December 2024, Margo Noonan won the best poster at the Nursing and Midwifery Research conference in University College Cork with her poster on 'The Impact of an Educational Programme on Challenging Rape Myths and Consent Misconceptions in Adolescent Males- the ASSUME Programme'.



## Key Objectives for 2025

### Recruitment

2025 welcomes the addition of Renju Mathew to the SATU team. Renju is due to commence a Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Sexual Assault Forensic Examination in RCSI in February 2025. We wish her every success with her studies.

We are also very excited to receive funding for the first time, for a dedicated SATU social worker. The recruitment process is ongoing for this post and we are acutely aware of the benefits this post will bring to the patients that attend.

### Infrastructure

Plans continue for the co-location of SATU and Barnahus South. Space remains an issue within the Cork SATU.

### Outreach and Education Projects

The Tralee Outreach services continued to grow month on month in 2024. The patient feedback from this service is extremely positive and it has been an invaluable resource to those who need it. We are delighted to announce that in 2024 Cork SATU worked very closely with staff in the office of Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in University of Limerick (UL) with the plan to extend the outreach service to include a clinic on the UL campus. This clinic will be open to students and also those who are not students of UL and will enable patients to access follow up care where travel or resources might otherwise be an issue. Similar to the clinic in Tralee, the UL outreach clinic is due to run on a monthly basis to provide aftercare and infection management to those who disclose sexual violence. We look forward to getting this service up and running at the beginning of 2025.



### Cork SATU Team

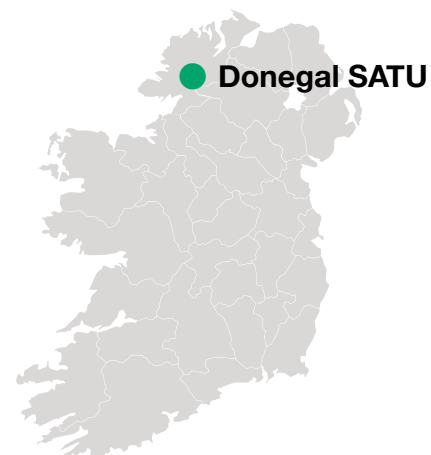
<b>Clinical Lead</b>	Dr John Coulter
<b>ANP Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner</b>	Ms Margo Noonan
<b>CNS Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners</b>	Ms Louise Tiernan
	Ms Sinead Maher
	Ms Niamh Whooley
	Ms Catherine O'Brien
<b>Administrator</b>	Angela Brosnan
<b>On Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Suzanne Cremin
	Dr Emer O'Flynn
	Dr Jill Mitchell
	Dr Dan Kane
<b>On Call RGN SATU Support Staff</b>	Ms Sharon Quinn
	Ms Gobnait McGrath
	Ms Siobhan Cahill
	Ms Claire Hawe
	Ms Carol Mills
	Ms Teresa O'Farrell
	Ms Gillian Daunt
	Ms Renju Mathew
	Ms Amy Cooney
	Ms Ally Hinchin
	Ms Marguerite Coakley
	Ms Caroline Cadogan

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all SATU staff, with special mention to our support nurses, Gobnait McGrath, Sharon Quinn, Siobhan Cahill, Claire Hawe, Carol Mills, Teresa O'Farrell, Gillian Daunt, Renju Mathew, Amy Cooney, Ally Hinchin, Marguerite Coakley, Caroline Cadogan, our Forensic Examiners, Dr Suzanne Cremin, Dr Emer O'Flynn, Dr Jill Mitchell and Dr Daniel Kane, local management, Dr. Ruth Lernihan, Director of Nursing and hospital staff in the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, and Dr John Coulter, Medical Director of Cork SATU. The continued commitment, support and dedication shown to the unit and our patients does not go unnoticed.

We aim to continue to represent victims at a local and national level through research and collaboration with other agencies.

## ii. Donegal SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	128	+11	+10%
2023	117	-8	-6%
2022	125	+24	+24%
2021	101	+23	+30%
2020	78	-32	-29%



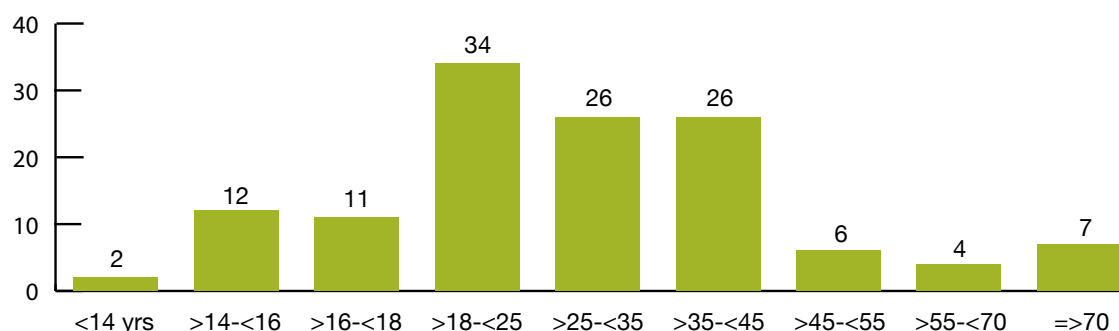
The Donegal SATU experienced a 10% increase in attendees in 2024 to 128, reaching its highest attendance in the past 5 years.

### LOCAL STATISTICS

#### Age Range

The 18-25 age range accounted once again for the highest group of attendees at 27% (34). Under 14 years of age dropped from 11% in 2023 down to 2% (2) in 2024. Under 18 years of age accounted for 32% of attendances in 2023 but this fell to 20% in 2024. However there was a significant increase in the 35-45 age range which rose by 8% to account for 21% (26) of attendees.

#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

Letterkenny SATU saw **100%** (41) patients who contacted their service **within 3 hours** of request to SATU for Forensic Clinical Examination. This is an increase of 7.5% on the previous year.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number		%
< 24 hrs	35		27%
24 hrs - 72 hrs	21		16%
72 hrs - 120 hrs	6		5%
120 hrs - 7 days	7		6%
7 days - 1 month	33		25%
> 1 month	16		13%
Long term abuse	7		6%
Forced Prostitution	3		2%

### Type of attendance

The was an increase in Garda Forensic kits from the previous year (22% in 2023 to 34% in 2024) and also a slight increase in no garda “option 3” – forensic exam and storage cases (11% in 2023 up to 13% in 2024). Health checks fell by 9% down to 28% in 2024.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number		%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	43		34%
Option 2 - Health check	37		28%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	16		13%
Garda no kit	27		21%
Other	4		3%
Advice	1		1%

### Source of Referral

There was a slight increase in referrals from An Garda Siochana (up 5%), GPs (up 2%) and the RCC (up 3%) in 2024. Self referrals dropped by 2% and other dropped by 7%.



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## Key Achievements in 2024

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The Donegal SATU continued to excel with staff training and achievements, outreach and various projects in 2024, making it another very busy year for the unit.

### Staff training and Achievements

- ▶ In 2024, Kellyann Moore CNS SAFE and Leah O'Regan CNS SAFE were successful in completing the Certificate in Nursing (Nurse/Midwife Prescribing) awarded by the University of Galway.
- ▶ In September 2024, both CNSs commenced the pathway to Advanced Practice in Nursing, supported by the Director of Midwifery, and SATU Clinical Director, Letterkenny University Hospital (LUH). Both CNSs were successful in securing funding through the ONMSD.
- ▶ The RANP was invited to contribute to 'Ireland's Cervical Cancer Elimination Plan Strategic Vision 2025-2040' *'Initiative: Trauma-informed approach to cervical screening for women who have experienced sexual violence.'* The Action Plan was launched in November 2024.
- ▶ The RANP was invited to prepare a Case Study to WHO Europe 'Screening in Action' who are spotlighting frontline healthcare workers across the European region.
- ▶ The DOM facilitated SATU Support Cover from the LUH on an "as-and-when" required basis; Tuesday – Friday from 08.30hr to 17:30hrs. This has reduced the need for on-call during operational daytime hours and has been a very effective and positive initiative.
- ▶ Additional Outreach sites were sourced in 2024 for Clinics, closer to patients' homes. The Donegal SATU is now able to facilitate follow-up clinics in the North, South, East and West of Donegal as well as an Outreach clinic in Sligo.
- ▶ Kellyann Moore CNS designed and presented a Poster *"The Donegal Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) Cervical Screening Quality Assurance Audit"* at the National Colposcopy conference in Limerick in October 2024.

### Education and Training

The Donegal team were extremely busy in 2024 with various education and training programmes throughout the community and with a range of different demographics.

- ▶ Collaborative (SATU, An Garda Síochána, Donegal RCC) Education workshops for Law and Humanities undergraduate students, Catering Students, Nursing and Health and Social Care Students were facilitated throughout the year.

- ▶ The CNSs facilitated 'SATU Walkthrough' workshops for all Atlantic Technological University Donegal, 3rd and 4th year Health and Social Care students and Garda students throughout 2024.
- ▶ The CNSs facilitated educational sessions with ED Staff in Letterkenny University Hospital (LUH) and Sligo University Hospital (SUH) throughout 2024.
- ▶ The CNSs facilitated workshops with migrant and marginalized communities in Donegal and Sligo working in close collaboration with Social Inclusion.
- ▶ Leah O'Regan CNS presented at the International Women's Day in Sligo in March 2024.
- ▶ Kellyann Moore, CNS recommenced the Post-Primary Schools Education Programme in collaboration with the Donegal Rape Crisis Centre.
- ▶ The RANP and CNSs facilitated Information sessions through the northwest region to Foroige, Mental Health Youth Liaison, Community Mental Health teams, Tusla, IPAS, Rape Crisis Centres, Addiction services, the Red Cross, the Civil Defence, the Donegal Family Support Practice Forum and the Probation Service.
- ▶ The CNSs presented at the 'Foundation Programme Sexual Health Promotion' in Donegal and Sligo.
- ▶ The RANP participated and presented at the Joint Garda/Tusla 'Child Protection Workshop' January 2024.
- ▶ The RANP facilitated a lunchtime CNME Webinar 'Challenging the Barriers Faced by People with an Intellectual Disability who Experience Sexual Assault' in April 2024.
- ▶ The RANP presented at the HSE/Garda Event: Working Together for Vulnerable Victims (How to support and safeguard) in June 2024.
- ▶ The RANP presented at the 'National INMO Telephone Triage Section Conference' in September 2024.
- ▶ The RANP presented at the 'Domestic violence postpartum/maternity' Study day in the CNME Letterkenny in October 2024.
- ▶ The RANP presented two abstracts at the Academy of Forensic Nursing in November 2024: 'Silent Harm: Improving Access to Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) for the Deaf Community' and 'An Irish Perspective: - How Little Opportunities can have a Big Impact on Women's Health.'
- ▶ The RANP presented at the Northwest Regional Taskforce and Social Inclusion Conference on "Working Effectively with Client who present with Complex Trauma" in December 2024.
- ▶ The SATU Team collaborated with ATUs Donegal and Sligo at various events such as the 'Healthy Campus Week,' 'Shift Week' 'Well-being Days,' and 'Consent Workshops' facilitating information sessions with students during these events.

- ▶ The SATU Team facilitated Garda Workshops ‘The Journey of the patient/injured party following a report of sexual assault’ for Student and regular Garda, Sergeants, Inspectors DPSU and Specialist Garda in Donegal and Sligo/Leitrim Garda divisions.
- ▶ One to two week placements continued to be facilitated for pre-registration General, Intellectual Disability and Mental Health throughout the year. This programme under the governance of NMBI and commenced in 2012.
- ▶ In 2024, the Donegal SATU also commenced providing placements for pre-registration and from Dundalk Institute of Technology and postgraduate Midwifery Students from the University of Galway.

### Staff Training

The SATU Team continued to broaden their scope of practice and continuing professional development, attending various online trainings, face-face webinars and conferences.

- ▶ All Forensic Examiners in the Donegal SATU attended the online Legal Skills training in 2024.
- ▶ The SATU Team attended and maintained all Mandatory Training.
- ▶ Peer review of cases and Medico/legal reports continued in 2024 under the governance of the Donegal SATU Clinical lead, promoting collaboration and quality assurance within the Unit.
- ▶ The RANP, in collaboration with national SATU Colleagues developed a national SATU Support Staff training programme. This was rolled out in the 2nd quarter of 2024. All Donegal SATU Support staff participated and completed the programme.
- ▶ Connie Mc Gilloway (RANP) and Sharon Curran, Donegal SATU Administrator coordinated a national SATU Database Working Group aiming to consolidate, progress and further develop key metrics.

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## Key Objectives for 2025

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### Recruitment

A position for a third CNS (Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner) continued to be vacant by the end of 2024, however, interviews occurred in October 2024 and one candidate was selected for the Donegal SATU. The Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (SAFE) course is due to commence in January 2025.

To recruit an additional GP on the on-call rota and additional SATU Support Staff.

### Infrastructure

Discussions will continue regarding the need for a Back-Up Generator for the SATU.

### SATU Database

Connie Mc Gilloway (RANP) and Sharon Curran, Donegal SATU Administrator will continue to coordinate a national SATU Database Working Group aiming to consolidate, progress and further develop key metrics.

### Outreach and Education Projects

Following discussion with partner agencies a post primary schools programme will continue in 2025 as part of a wider collaborative schools programme.

The RANP, Connie McGilloway led a national project in improving access to the SATUs for the Deaf Community through Irish Sign Language (ISL), developed in collaboration with An Garda Síochána, Rape Crisis Centre, CHIME, Justisigns2, Trinity College Dublin; the Centre for Deaf Studies and the Irish Deaf Society. This project was due to be launched nationally in the last quarter of 2024, however, this has been delayed to the 2nd quarter of 2025 to align with an update to the National SATU Website.

Throughout 2025, the Donegal SATU team will continue to ensure the quality and safety standards in the care we provide align to the Health Information and Quality Authority National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare.

### Donegal SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr Matthew Mc Kernan
<b>RANP/Forensic Clinical Examiner/ Unit Manager</b>	Ms Connie Mc Gilloway
<b>CNS/Forensic Clinical Examiners</b>	Ms Kellyann Moore Ms Leah O'Regan
<b>Administrator</b>	Ms Sharon Curran
<b>On Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Mairead Brogan Ms Lisa Crossan
<b>On Call SATU Support Staff</b>	Ms Deirdre Rooney (RGN) Ms Billie Ní Riada (RM) Ms Michelle Burns (RGN) Ms Sinead McLean (HCA) Ms Aoife Price (HCA) Ms Donna Black (HCA) Ms Victoria Stewart (HCA) Ms Erin Gallagher (HCA) Ms Carol Stewart (HCA) Ms Katarina Ergotic (RGN)

### iii. Dublin SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	394	-57	-13%
2023	451	+24	+5.6%
2022	427	+118	+38%
2021	309	+32	+10.5%
2020	277	-116	-30%



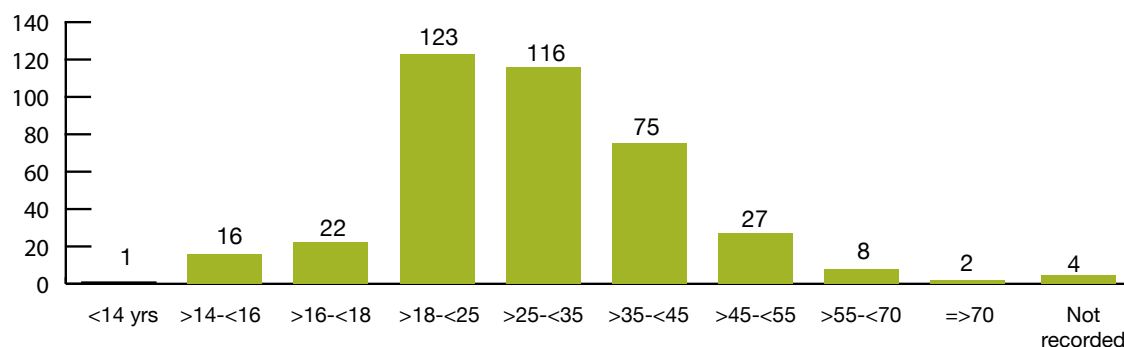
### LOCAL STATISTICS

There was a drop in attendance at the Dublin SATU service in 2024, for the first time since 2020. The possible reasons for this could be due to less cover provided to other units nationally or a drop in reporting or incidence of sexual crime. There was an overall decrease of 13% in attendances to the Dublin SATU service.

#### Age Range

The age range of 18-25 accounted for almost 31% of attendees to the Dublin SATU. Once again this age group represents approximately one third of attendees to SATU, similar to other years. While there was some increase in attendances in both the 35-45 age group and the 55-70 age group, conversely the numbers under 18 attending dropped from 16% of attendees in 2023 to 10% in 2024.

#### Age Range of Attendees





### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

The Dublin SATU saw 93% of patients who contacted their service within 3 hours of request to SATU for Forensic Clinical Examination. This is an increase of 8% on the previous year. The most common reasons for failing to meet this target are examiner or suite not available. The nature of this 24/7/365 service means that the on call rota heavily relies on forensic medical examiners who complement our core team. These medical examiners are often working fulltime in their own field and on occasions short delays outside this timeframe arise. Nonetheless reaching a 93% target is only achievable because of their contribution. We also acknowledge that a second suite in our unit would further boost this timely response.

### Duration of time since reported incident

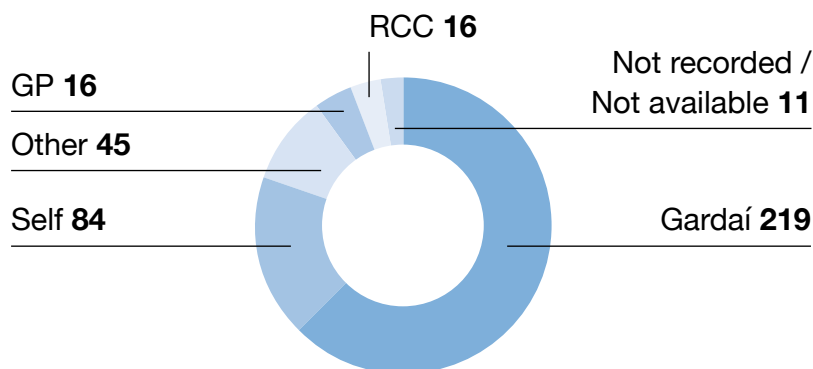
The percentage of patients reporting inside of 24 hours increased by 10% on the previous year up to 49%. The total percentage reported within 72 hours was 83% in 2024 compared to 65% in 2023. This is a significant increase which shows we are improving awareness of our service to enable patients to report earlier and thereby increase the possibility of forensic evidence collection.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number	%
< 24 hrs	146	37%
24hrs - 72 hrs	100	25%
72 hrs - 120 hrs	34	9%
120 hrs - 7 days	11	3%
> 7 days	96	24%
Unrecorded	6	2%

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number	%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	224	57%
Option 2 - Health check	100	25%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	47	12%
Garda no kit	4	1%
Other	19	5%

### Source of Referral

Referrals from An Garda Siochana were down from 292 in 2023 to 219 in 2024 and there was an increase in Self referrals from 17% in 2023 up to 21% (84) in 2024. There was also a slight increase in GP referrals.



### Key Achievements in 2024

Dublin SATU was honored to receive the Nursing and Midwifery Project of the Year at the Irish Healthcare Awards. This recognition was awarded for the successful integration of forensic photography into SATU services, enhancing the quality of patient care and forensic documentation.

Staff training was a major focus throughout the year. Christine Pucillo and Deirdra Richardson completed training on the Cortexflow photodocumentation camera system, funded by the HSE Spark Innovation Programme. This innovative system has led to reduced patient stress, increased efficiency, and improved data collection by minimizing the number of examinations and professionals present during forensic evaluations. Deirdra Richardson completed the Cervical Screening Education Programme and is now proficient in cervical screening. Plans are in place to develop a trauma-informed cervical screening follow-up clinic. We hope to be able to provide this care to SATU patients by the close of 2025.

The Medical Social Work service was introduced in 2024, as an important step forward in enhancing the holistic support we provide to patients attending the SATU. As part of our multidisciplinary team, our medical social worker, Laura Feely, plays a critical role in providing ongoing psycho-social, emotional and practical support to patients. We welcome this added development, along with the collaboration with external support services it brings, to ensure seamless support for everyone who attends the unit.

In 2024, we launched a pilot programme in collaboration with the Rape Crisis Centre (RCC), providing on-site support for patients attending follow-up care. Initially offered once a week, the service was expanded to three times per week in response to high demand. Providing immediate access to psychological and emotional support during return visits has proven highly beneficial. Patient feedback on the pilot has been overwhelmingly positive.

Education and outreach remained a priority. We continued our participation in numerous initiatives, including the Debunking the Myths. Additionally, Dublin SATU continued its presence at Longitude and Electric Picnic, providing essential support and education at these major festivals. In addition, Christine Pucillo and Maeve Eogan continued to play an integral role in the Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) subgroup, contributing to policy development and service enhancements for survivors of sexual assault.

In December, Dublin SATU collaborated with Newstalk and the RCC to raise awareness about SATU services. Newstalk's "The Hard Shoulder" programme featured an extensive report on the topic. Furthering outreach efforts, RCC volunteers began attending follow-up clinics in March, initially once a week and later increasing to every clinic day.

Dr. Dan Kane presented at the RCOG World Congress, where his research on "Genital and Anal Injury After Sexual Assault: Prevalence Rates and Associated Risk Factors" was selected as a top submission and later published in the BJOG. He submitted his PhD "Sexual Assault treatment units: The Irish Experience" and we congratulate him on the trojan amount of research he has produced for our field.

### Staffing

Staffing changes in 2024 included the appointment of Oonagh Farrell as the new Clinical Nurse Manager 2 in January. The team also welcomed Laura Feely, who commenced in September as the unit's newly funded Senior Medical Social Worker (MSW).

This year, we bid a sad farewell to our long-standing administrator Moira Carberry who has retired after many years of dedicated service. She has been an integral part of our team for so many years. Ciara O'Connor will take on the role in January and we look forward to welcoming her to the SATU team. We also say goodbye to our valued healthcare assistant, Laura Doherty, and support nurse, Priscilla Shanley, who have moved on to new opportunities. We thank them for their hard work and dedication and wish them all the best for the future.

Another significant milestone was the appointment of Kate O'Halloran as Dublin SATU's first Advanced Midwife Practitioner (AMP) candidate.

We wish Dr. Dan Kane the very best as he heads to Canada to complete a fellowship in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. We hope he has a fantastic experience.

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## Key Objectives for 2025

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We are delighted to have a candidate commencing the SAFE course in 2025—Shelley Carlyle Morgan, who has worked with us as a support midwife. We are really looking forward to her joining our team on a full-time basis in the new year.

In July, we will welcome Dr. Aoife McEvoy an Obstetrics and Gynaecology SpR to the team. She will be joining on a part-time basis completing a fellowship across both colposcopy and SATU, and her expertise will be a valuable addition to our service.

Due to significant redevelopment projects at the Rotunda it is anticipated that SATU will be moving to an upgraded location on-site, allowing for significant improvements to our facilities.

### Dublin SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr Nicola Maher
<b>Clinical Midwife Manager</b>	Ms Noelle Farrell
<b>Clinical Midwife Specialists</b>	Ms Deirdre Richardson
	Ms Kate O'Halloran
	Ms Naomi Finnegan
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist</b>	Ms Christine Pucillo
<b>Maternity Care Assistant</b>	Ms Laura Doherty
<b>Administrators</b>	Ms Moira Carberry
	Ms Denise Rogers
<b>Senior Medical Social Worker</b>	Ms Laura Feely

The core team in Dublin are supported by the on-call team of Forensic Examiners and Support Nurses along with our multi-disciplinary colleagues and other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team. These include the following Forensic Examiners: Prof Maeve Eogan (national clinical lead SATU), Dr Daniel Kane, Dr Wendy Ferguson, Sarah Farrelly, Dr Elzahra Ibrahim, Dr Haroon Khan, Dr Ciara Luke, Sue Roe, Dr Amy Worrall and Dr James Walshe. They also include the following support nurses; Juliet Aimuanmwosa, Shelley Carlyle Morgan, Sarah Cass, Basia Czerwko, Noelle Farrell, Shiby Joseph, Maureen Kington, Danielle Parkinson, Eleanor Power, Janice Reyes, Feba Jacob and Priscilla Shanley. Thank you all for your contribution and commitment to the SATU service.

## iv. Galway SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	113	-24	-17.5%
2023	137	+30	+28%
2022	107	+7	+7%
2021	100	+11	+13%
2020	89	-13	-13%



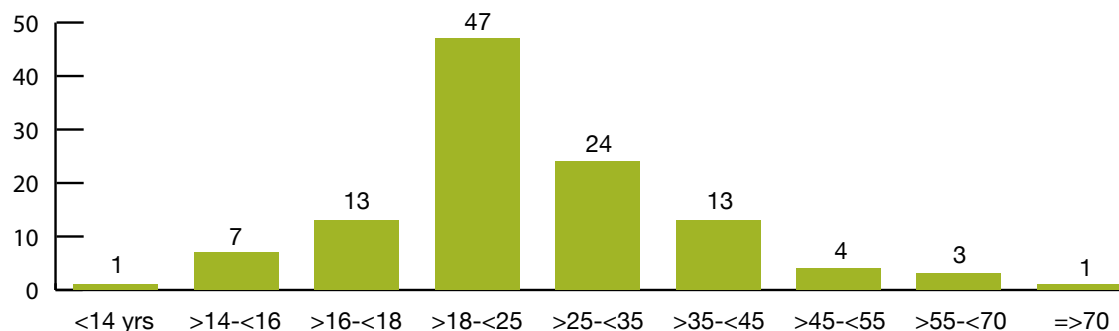
### LOCAL STATISTICS

The Galway SATU had a decrease of 17.5% (24) of attendances in 2024.

#### Age Range

The age range of 18-25 was the highest attendee group in 2024, the same as the previous year. Under 18 attendees fell by 7%, they accounted for 18.5% in 2024 compared to 25.5% in 2023.

#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

The Galway SATU saw 91% (62) patients within 3 hours of a request to a SATU for a Forensic Clinical Examination. This is a decrease of 4% on 2023.

### Duration of time since reported incident

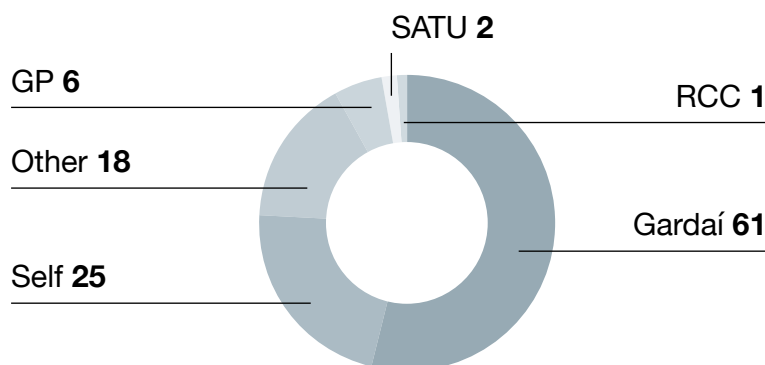
Duration of time since reported incident	Number		%
< 24 hrs	39		35%
24hrs - 72 hrs	29		25%
72 hrs - 120 hrs	13		11%
120 hrs - 7 days	2		2%
> 7 days	8		8%
Unrecorded	22		19%

### Type of attendance

The type of attendance to the Galway SATU was similar to the demographics in 2023.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number		%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	61		54%
Option 2 - Health check	31		27%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	21		19%
Garda no kit	0		0%
Advice	0		0%

### Source of Referral



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## Key Achievements in 2024

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### Staffing

- ▶ An additional number of assisting nurses were recruited and trained which has greatly enhanced covering the 24 hour on-call roster.
- ▶ The 2025 SAFE course in RSCI was advertised and a successful Galway candidate will commence training in early 2025 as CNS.

### Education and Development

- ▶ The Clinical Nurse Specialists completed the Prescribing Certificate in University of Galway.
- ▶ Galway Forensic Physicians and Clinical Nurse Specialists gave presentations, undertook clinical audits, facilitated training and professional examinations with a variety of colleagues and allied professionals.
- ▶ The Galway team are now embedded in multiagency work as part of Barnahus West, which benefits our 14-18 year old patients.
- ▶ The Introduction to SATU course for Doctors was held at University of Galway Irish Centre for Applied Patient Safety and Simulation in October 2024 and 16 doctors attended.

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## Key Objectives for 2025

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- ▶ Recruitment and training of new forensic medical and nurse examiners for Galway SATU to support daytime and on-call work
- ▶ Increased outreach into the community
- ▶ New secure storage of historical files

### Galway SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr Andrea Holmes
<b>CNM2</b>	Ms Cathy Bergin
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialists</b>	Ms Caitríona Freeney
	Ms Catherine Conroy
<b>Senior Administrator</b>	Ms Maeve Geraghty
<b>On-call Support Nurses</b>	Ms Pamela Bartley
	Ms Mags Bourke
	Ms Eileen Coen
	Ms Lorraine Courtney
	Ms Caroline Farrell
	Ms Orelia Ryan Fox
	Ms Deirdre Gallagher
	Ms Fiona Gilmore
	Ms Monica Gudza
	Ms Teresa Hynes
	Ms Mary Rooney Hynes
	Mr Raj Karamala
	Ms Ann Marie Mc Garry
	Ms Kathy O'Loughlin
	Ms Yvonne O'Donovan
	Ms Jincy Scaria
	Ms Heather Stanley
	Ms Jincy Scaria
	Ms Heather Stanley
<b>On-Call Forensic Examiners</b>	Ms Catherine Conway
	Ms Caitriona Freeney
	Ms Susan Hogan
	Dr Neasa Conneally
	Dr Lia Kyranoudi
	Dr Andrea Holmes

### Acknowledgements

We are indebted to our colleagues across the SATU network, but particularly in our nearest unit, Mullingar, for cross-cover when there are roster gaps in Galway.



## v. Mullingar SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	133	+9	+7%
2023	124	-24	-16%
2022	148	+28	+24%
2021	120	+19	+19%
2020	101	-21	-17%



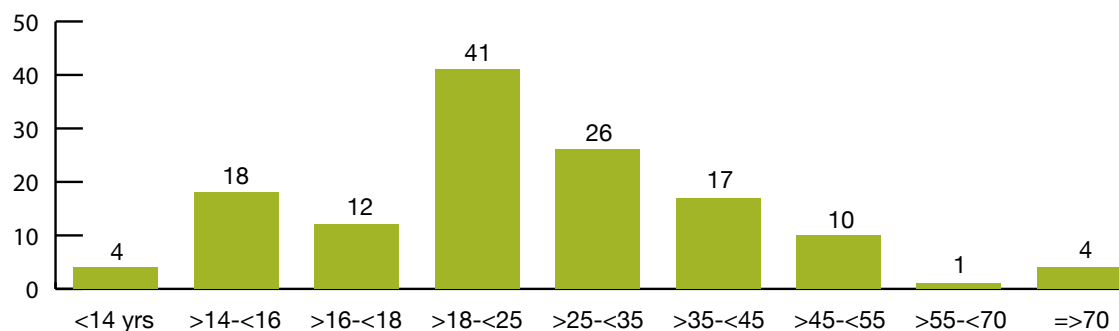
### LOCAL STATISTICS

The Mullingar SATU had an increase of 7% (9) of attendances in 2024.

#### Age Range

The 18-25 age range accounted for the highest attendees, the same as the previous year. Below 18 years of age accounted for 25.5% of attendees in 2024 which was an increase of 5.5% from 2023.

#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

100% (76) patients were seen within 3 hours of a request to a SATU for a Forensic Clinical Examination (Options 1 & 3).

#### Duration of time since reported incident

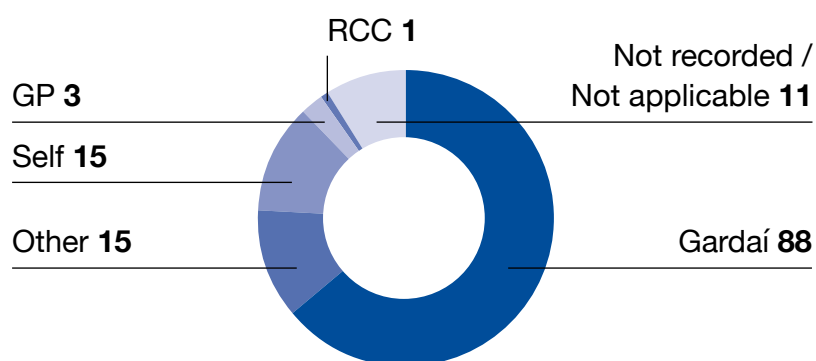
The percentage of attendees reporting within 72 hours of the incident is similar to the previous year at 54% in 2024 and 55% in 2023, however there has been a decrease in reporting under 24 hours by 6%, down to 26% in 2024 from 32% in 2023.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number		%
< 24 hours	35		26%
24 hrs - 72 hrs	38		28%
72 hrs - 120 hrs	11		8%
120 hrs - 7 days	5		4%
>7 days	13		10%
>1 month	18		14%
Unrecorded	13		10%

### Type of attendance

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number		%
Garda Forensic Exam Kit	68		51%
Health check	23		17%
Garda no kit	19		14%
Advice	13		10%
No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	10		8%

### Source of Referral



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## Key Achievements in 2024

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In 2024 Mullingar SATU utilised our staff's core skills to develop the service clinically through innovations in mental health, emergency management of the patient who experiences sexual violence and Adult Safeguarding. These initiatives have contributed to the further growth and development of SATU Services in the Midlands. Key areas of focus in 2024 included;

- ▶ Outreach Services
- ▶ Focus on Mental Health
- ▶ Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse
- ▶ Clinical Developments

Some areas of key achievements were:

### **Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Programme for Healthcare Professionals**

SATU Mullingar in association with the Regional Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education based in Tullamore devised accredited and delivered this multi-agency programme for Healthcare professionals. This programme was initially delivered for nursing staff and this year has been expanded to include all healthcare professionals. This programme was accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) and includes presentations by An Garda Siochana and Rape Crisis Centre. Running approximately three to four times per year the feedback on this programme has been overwhelmingly positive.

### **Patient and accompanying professional's feedback analysis**

In 2024, a means of formally recording feedback from those who accompany our patients to SATU was introduced to support the feedback from our patient cohort. Those that accompany our patients to SATU whether they are professional such as members of An Garda Siochana or family or other professionals have a unique perspective of the provision of care to those that experience sexual violence that is valuable to collect and informs changes and developments in practice.

A feedback sheet was developed to ascertain the experience of the accompanying person and the implementation of this project commenced in July 2024. Six month figures yielded 53 returned feedback sheets which were analysed and sorted into thematic areas.

The three emergent themes reflected what was most important to those accompanying patients and could be broadly divided up into Staffing, Environment and Provision of Care.

Patients with respondents noting;

*“A professional and methodical process. At all times the victim was at the centre of everything and was informed”*

In relation to staff a small selection of comments received noted an overwhelmingly positive response. Some of the comments received are noted below.

*“Amazing in every way, great at their jobs”*

*“10/10 from Forensic Examiner Nessa and Nurse Mary on the very professional and courteous service to the IP and the Gardai”*

*“Excellent, thank you my daughter commented on how nice Nessa was on the phone when we rang”*

*“The nurse Liz who looked after me was amazing, I felt so safe. The Doctor Ros was so good and explained everything to me and took her time with me”*

Challenges with the physical location of the SATU service in Mullingar have been highlighted at regular intervals by both staff working in the Unit and those attending for care. It is therefore unsurprising that this was reflected in the feedback from respondents:

*“Could be more spacious, wasn’t suitable for a person with mobility issues, it wasn’t practical”*

*“Extremely noisy not ideal for this type of service”*

*“Facilities take from a perfect score”*

The recording of feedback allows the service to continually develop and address any issues by providing valuable insight into the attendees experience.

### **Education and Training Provided by SATU Staff**

Mullingar SATU is committed to the provision of ongoing education and training. Both formalised educational programmes through the Regional Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Education and structured lectures e.g. Emergency Department education and training programme are provided throughout the year. In 2024 a light was shone on the area of adult safeguarding and presentations were given at various Adult Safeguarding events around the country.

Mullingar SATU retains its commitment to caring for those who experience Domestic Violence and is a member of the Longford Westmeath Local Area Network forum.

A sample of the extensive education and training provided is detailed below.

- ▶ Midwifery Services Education Sessions
- ▶ Technological University of the Shannon Presentation on Sexual Health Module
- ▶ Midlands Domestic Violence Forum
- ▶ Domestic Sexual Gender Based Violence in Pregnancy to Maternity Services
- ▶ Presentation to Domestic Violence Services
- ▶ Training provided to Longford Women's Link Counselling Course
- ▶ National Divisional Protective Services Unit Training provided.
- ▶ Presentation to TUS "Risk Awareness"
- ▶ Emergency Department Training and Education. SATU Services form a core part of ongoing Emergency Department Education and Training and this education is delivered twice yearly.
- ▶ Adult Safeguarding Presentation
- ▶ Local Area Network Domestic Violence Group
- ▶ Regional Centre of Nursing and Midwifery Education Pregnancy Programme
- ▶ Go Purple Event
- ▶ Launch DV Resource Pack
- ▶ Ruhama
- ▶ Longford Westmeath Clinical Society
- ▶ Laois DV Services
- ▶ Research and Audit Day
- ▶ SSSTDI Conference
- ▶ Cavan Traveller Movement
- ▶ Safeguarding Adults at risk of abuse
- ▶ Stronger Together
- ▶ Louth Meath Safeguarding Conference
- ▶ Tullamore Safeguarding Midlands
- ▶ Adult Safeguarding Webinar
- ▶ 16 days of Action Offaly DV Services
- ▶ NMPDU Super Grand Rounds



Nessa Gill ANP from Mullingar  
presenting at Grand rounds

### Conferences and Presentations

- ▶ TUS SHAG week
- ▶ RHM Grand Rounds and Super Grand Rounds
- ▶ Local Area Network Domestic Violence

SATU Mullingar has continued its engagement with the Laois Offaly Children and Young People Services (CYPSE) in the provision of a multi-agency educational school programme. This commitment to preventative work and education in relation to sexual violence is hoped to increase awareness and contribute to the reduction in harm associated with sexual violence. This initiative which was a collaboration with Gardaí DPSU, Offaly Domestic Violence Support Service, Tullamore Rape Crisis Centre, Laois Domestic Abuse Service, Tusla and HSE Sexual Health Service Portlaoise along with the Laois Offaly CYPSC.

### Staffing

Continuing the commitment to reinvigorating the SATU team we have been very pleased to welcome the newest members of our team. Dr's Nessa Hughes and Anne Bergin have joined the service as Forensic Medical Examiners, we welcome their experience and commitment to SATU and can see the benefit their knowledge and experience brings to the team.

In January 2024 we were very lucky to welcome Mary Cleary on board as a full time nurse to manage our service. Mary has worked as a Support Nurse in SATU since the very beginning. Coupled with this Mary is qualified in both General and Mental Health Nursing which brings an invaluable perspective which SATU has been able to capitalise on to grow and develop services within SATU to those who experience Mental Health difficulties. This along with over thirty years' experience in Theatre and service development have been a welcome addition to SATU Mullingar.

The competition for a Candidate Clinical Nurse Specialist was held in late 2024 and Priya Jose was successful and will join our team in early 2025. As a midwife of many years' experience we look forward to her experience complementing our service.

SATU administration was supported for a period in 2024 by Angela Pearce. This additional support and Angela's wizardry with IT resources was very welcome.

### Retirements

2024 saw the retirement of two SATU and indeed Regional Hospital Mullingar stalwarts.

Marie Corbett worked since the inception of SATU Mullingar as a Support Nurse. Marie's other role as Director of Midwifery was integral to the development of the SATU services and she was pivotal in all developments that SATU benefitted from and her kind gentle care that she provided to our patients has left a lasting legacy

Professor Michael Gannon our legendary Consultant and Obstetrician and Medical Director of SATU since the beginning in 2009 retired in January 2024. Prof Gannon, a unique clever and thoughtful individual whose insight and perspective on SATU issues was unmatched in wisdom. Always accessible and sage in his advice we were unbelievably lucky to have had him at the helm. His kindness and subtlety of direction was gently given with a mischievous smile. We will miss him immeasurably.

Following on from the retirements of our Director of Midwifery Marie Corbett and SATU Medical Director Professor Michael Gannon SATU we have been extremely lucky to welcome Maureen Reviles as Interim Director of Midwifery and Prof Sam Thomas Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist as Medical Director for SATU Services. Their keen interest and active involvement and willingness to embrace the individualised and unique type of care provided by SATU services is energising. This has injected an added impetus to drive forward improvements and developments in SATU services. We look forward to what the future heralds with both in the lead.

### Cover for other units

SATU Mullingar continues to provide cross cover for other units if and when needed. This was reciprocated by other units in covering Mullingar when the need arose. We are grateful for the support of our colleagues in the provision of this care when needed.

### Staff Supports

We in SATU are committed to staff support and in May 2024 the inaugural SATU Administrators Study Day was held in Mullingar bringing together the administrative staff from the six units for a very well planned and organised day. The administrative staff really do form the backbone of our units and it is planned to make this an annual event.

Continuing with staff support and a commitment to same Monthly Peer review continued for Forensic Clinical Examiners. This meeting, held on the last Thursday of each month provides a space for Forensic Examiners to meet to discuss cases and any other issues that occur in their practice as well as sharing knowledge and supporting each other. Forensic reports are Peer Reviewed and this has been of

immense educational benefit to our service and to staff development as well as providing an important link for our on call staff who do not form part of the core day time team.

Clinical Supervision is also available to all staff and all are encouraged and facilitated to attend.

This focus on staff welfare and development strengthens the team and we are grateful to the support of Dr Anne Golden and Dr Nicola O' Sullivan for providing this support to the team in Mullingar.

### **Outreach Services**

Ongoing commitment to the provision of accessible care to our patients in order that each person receives equitable care regardless of their geographical location has remained a central tenet of Mullingar SATU Care in 2024. An outreach service is provided for attendees who cannot attend the Mullingar SATU for follow up, this could be for various reasons including: childcare difficulties, time, economic factors and also those patients who experience Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence for whom accessing appointments is difficult as well as unsafe. This outreach service is available for patients who are availing of a Health Check or Follow Up SATU Care and is facilitated by a Forensic Clinical Examiner and Support Nurse. In 2024 Outreach Clinics are provided in Monaghan, Cavan, Longford, Portlaoise, Athlone and Tullamore as well as other areas as required.

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## Key Objectives for 2025

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- ▶ Ongoing engagement in audit and research to ensure robustness of service
- ▶ Continuing engagement in Outreach services as it has a proven value to patients by noting increased attendance at follow up appointment
- ▶ Noting of age profile of patients, a targeted approach to those patients is recommended
- ▶ Ongoing engagement in communication through monthly peer review and education sessions with the SATU Team
- ▶ Provision of designated SATU Car Parking Space
- ▶ Addressing the need for appropriate discrete SATU accommodation to ensure patient privacy



### Mullingar SATU Team

<b>Medical Director SATU</b>	Professor Sam Thomas
<b>ANP Forensic Clinical Examiner</b>	Ms Nessa Gill
<b>SATU Nurse</b>	Ms Mary Cleary
<b>Administrator</b>	Ms Irene Monaghan

The core team in Mullingar are supported by the on call team of Forensic Examiners and Support Nurses along with our multi-disciplinary colleagues and other members of the Sexual Assault Response Team.

2024 was an exciting year for SATU Mullingar. New staff joined and brought with them an energy and drive to further support our commitment to providing the best care for our patients, retirements of colleagues who had shared so much with us over the years and opportunities to improve the SATU services through growing and developing our services were embraced. Our feedback initiative shows that we continue to do a very good job and we go forward into 2025 with a pep in our step and renewed vigour to continue our work.

As always, we could not do this job without the unstinting support of so many and for that we thank you. We respect the fortitude of those patients whom we are privileged to provide care to, and it is that which drives us forward into 2025.



The Mullingar Team at RANP week

## vi. Waterford SATU

Year	Attendances (n)	Difference from previous year (n)	% Increase / Decrease
2024	88	+7	+9%
2023	81	+6	+6%
2022	75	-6	-8%
2021	81	3	4%
2020	78	6	9%

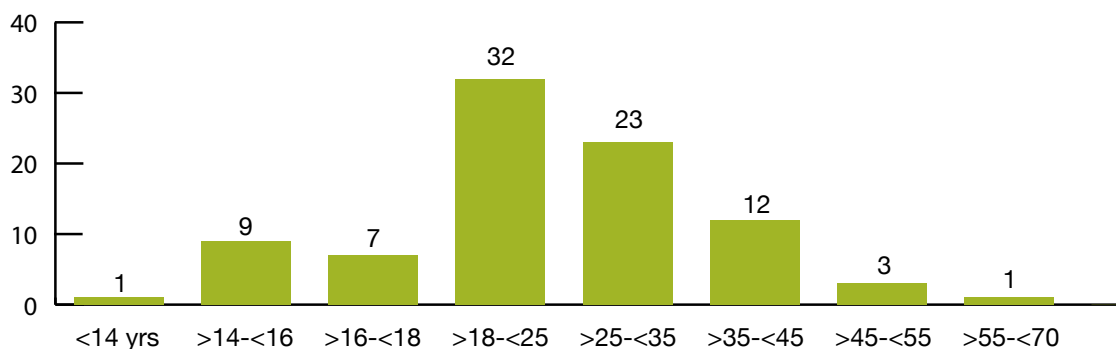


### LOCAL STATISTICS

#### Age Range

There were 88 attendances in Waterford SATU in 2024 which was an increase of 9% from the year previous. The mean age of attendees to Waterford SATU was 26 years, the same as 2023. The youngest patient was 14 years old and the eldest was 61 years old. The 18 – 25 age group accounted for 32% of attendees, down 5% from 2023 but the 25-35 age group increased by 7% to 23% in 2024.

#### Age Range of Attendees



#### Patients seen within 3 hours of a request for a Forensic Clinical Examination

98% of patients who required Forensic Clinical Examination cases were seen within 3 hours of initial referral to SATU.

#### Duration of time since reported incident

There was a significant increase in the number of attendees who reported the incident within 24 hours which increased by 12% and also between 24-72 hours which increased by 9%. Therefore overall the number of attendees who reported the incident in under 72 hours increased by 21% up from 66% in 2023 to 87% in 2024 which highlights the great work of the Waterford SATU.

Duration of time since reported incident	Number		%
< 24 hours	42		56%
24 hrs - 72 hrs	23		31%
72 hrs - 120 hrs	8		11%
120 hrs - 7 days	1		1%
7 days - 1 month	7		8%
>1 month	2		2%
Long term abuse	4		5%
Unrecorded	1		1%

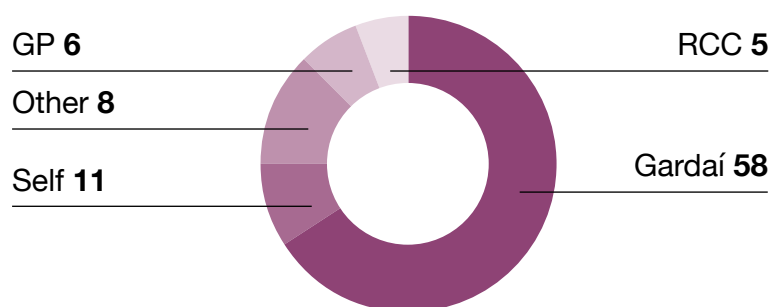
### Type of attendance

The request for Option 1 – Garda Forensic Exam kit also increased in 2024 up by 7% on the previous year.

Type of attendance including number of patients who reported incident to An Garda Síochána	Number		%
Option 1 - Garda Forensic Exam Kit	57		65%
Option 2 - Health check	13		15%
Option 3 - No Garda - Forensic exam & stored evidence	15		17%
Garda no kit	2		2%
Advice	1		1%

### Source of Referral

The source of referral trend mirrors 2023 for the Waterford unit.



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## Key Achievements in 2024

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The Waterford SATU were extremely busy in 2024 with both staff education and community education and events. Below are examples of the great work and achievements by the team in 2024:

- ▶ Dr Susan Uí Bhroín trained and started as a Forensic Medical Examiner.
- ▶ Ann Folan, CNS completed her Registered Nurse Medicinal Product Prescriber in RCSI.
- ▶ SATU Waterford presented at the Southeast Safeguarding Conference which coincided with the National Safeguarding Day held in Hotel Kilkenny.
- ▶ SATU Waterford were represented at number of events held by SETU Waterford including First Year Orientation Day, Fresher's week, the 1 million stars Love Installation in conjunction with the Amber Women's Refuge and the SETU tackling gender-based violence – National Summit.
- ▶ SATU Waterford continues to be represented on the ESP committee.
- ▶ SATU Waterford provided education for new Rape Crisis Volunteers
- ▶ SATU Waterford were present at the Ask for Angela Launch Wednesday 25th September in conjunction with Waterford City Council.
- ▶ Sinead Boyle, ANP presented at cervical check education webinar series.
- ▶ Sinead Boyle, ANP and Ann Folan CNS participated in multiple webinars throughout the year including Tackling Strangulation and Sexual Violence Research Conference on tackling Violence Against Women Across the Island of Ireland.

### Infrastructure

The last week of December 2024 saw SATU Waterford move into its long-awaited new unit. The new unit will have a positive impact on both the service and the overall experience for attendees. It has critically needed extra space with better facilities, improved resources, and a more comfortable environment, which is essential for a service of this nature. The official opening of the unit will be in 2025.



Pictured at the launch of the new Sexual Assault Treatment Unit at University Hospital Waterford (UHW), serving the South East, were (from left to right): Gemma Fitzgerald (Admin Support, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW), Ann Folan (Clinical Nurse Specialist, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW) and Sinead Boyle (Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW).



Pictured at the launch of the new Sexual Assault Treatment Unit at University Hospital Waterford (UHW), serving the South East, were (from left to right): Janet Murphy (Director of Midwifery Services, UHW), Dr. Susan Uí Bhroin (Consultant in Emergency Medicine and Clinical Lead/ Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW), Prof. Maeve Eogan (Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist/Rotunda Hospital and the HSE's National Clinical Lead for Sexual Assault Treatment Unit services), Ann Folan (Clinical Nurse Specialist, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW), Sinead Boyle (Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, UHW) and Dr. Cliona Murphy (National Clinical Director, National Women and Infants Health Programme, HSE).

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## Key Objectives for 2025

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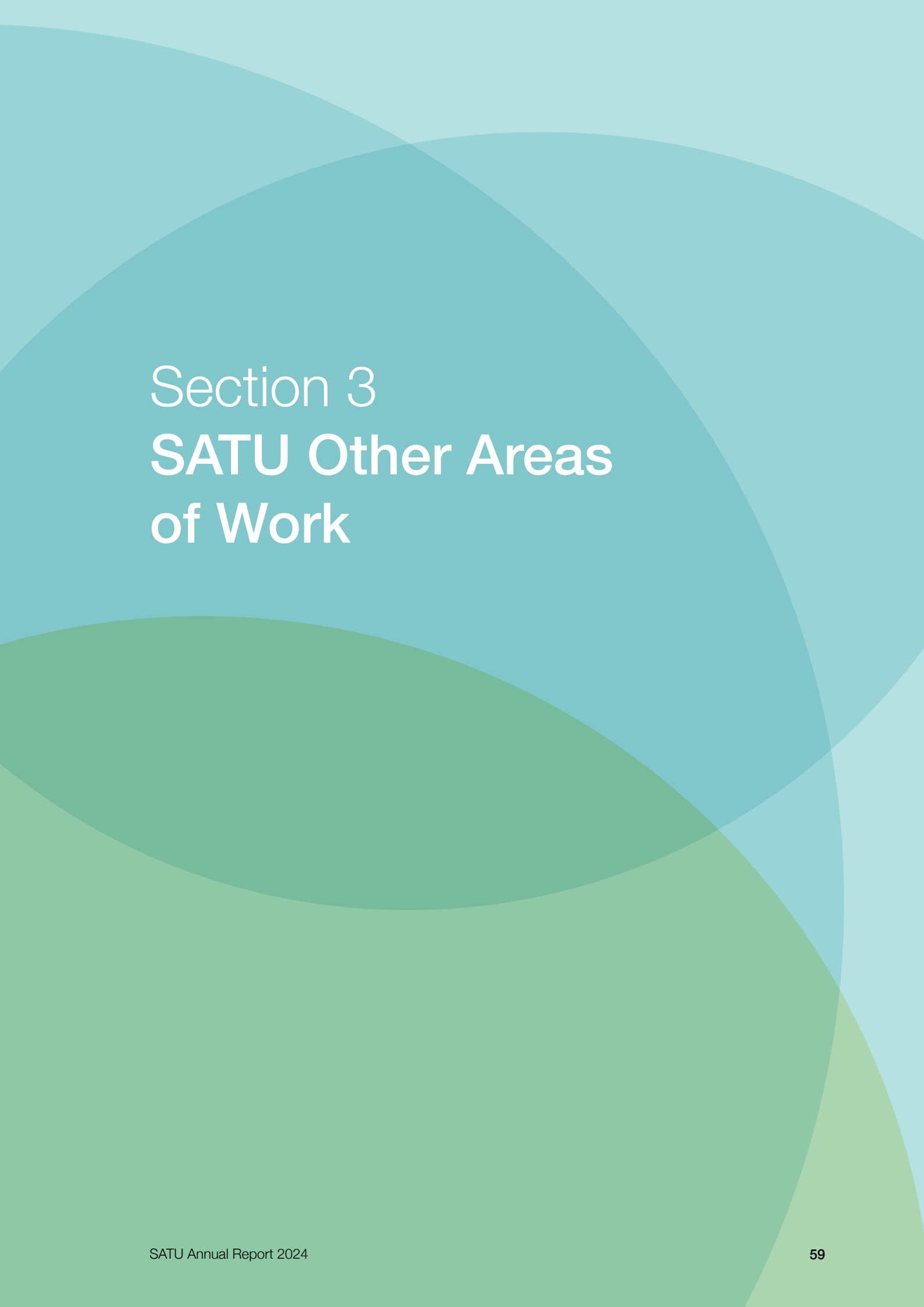
Education and Staffing remain key objectives for the Waterford unit in 2025:

- ▶ We have two nurses training as support nurses who will complete their training this year and we plan to recruit more support nurses.
- ▶ We are hoping to recruit more Forensic Medical Examiners in 2025 with at least one due to commence training imminently.
- ▶ SATU Waterford continue to work with SETU and to provide support and education to various organisations in the region and throughout the hospital.

### Waterford SATU Team

<b>Clinical Director</b>	Dr John Bermingham
<b>Advanced Nurse Practitioner</b>	Ms Sinead Boyle
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist</b>	Ms Ann Folan
<b>Administrator</b>	Ms Gemma Fitzgerald
<b>On-call Forensic Examiners</b>	Dr Ellen McGovern
	Dr Helen Doyle
	Dr Sarah Dorrian
	Dr Rebecca Howley
	Dr Susan Uí Bhroín
<b>On-call Support Nurses</b>	Ms Maria O'Neil
	Ms Mary Doherty
	Ms Rhona Boland
	Ms Emma Blake
	Ms Martina Wynne
	Ms Margaret Power
	Ms Karen Power





# Section 3

## **SATU Other Areas of Work**

## i. Annual Study Day

In 2024 the SATU study day was hosted by the Department of Justice on 4th October. As always this was a vibrant day of interagency collaboration and discussion. We were delighted to welcome Stephanie O’Keefe from Cuan, the new Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency, who spoke about their inspiring strategic vision for the sector. Rachel Morrogh gave a presentation on some of Dublin RCC’s ongoing initiatives, and Helen McGrath from the CSO gave her annual update on outputs from the sexual violence survey and next steps in that context.

The study day was also a useful opportunity for Catherine Marsh and Cheryl Weir to update stakeholders on the role of photodocumentation in SATU. We also had a number of research presentations, Daniel Kane summarised his recent research work and Gabriel Otterman provided a synthesis of European Guidelines in provision of care following child sexual abuse. Dr Susan Leahy introduced the All Ireland for Sexual Violence Network to the audience, a really valuable initiative to foster collaboration, communication and engagement between research communities, with which the SATU teams are delighted to be involved.

Sincere thanks to all speakers and attendees, and to Minister Helen McEntee who eloquently welcomed us to the Department of Justice, summarised the Departments motivation to deliver on the Third National Strategy and other initiatives and acknowledged the role that all members of the sexual assault response team play in providing quality responses to sexual violence.



### National Sexual Assault Treatment Unit Study Day 4th October 2024 | Department of Justice, St Stephens Green, Dublin

Start	Finish	Speaker	Title of Presentation
09:30	09:45	Professor Maeve Eogan	Welcome and SATU Network Update for 2024
09:45	10:15	Dr Stephanie O’Keefe	The work of Cuan, the new Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Agency
10:15	10:40	Rachel Morrogh	Onsite DRCC Support at SATU Rotunda – recent developments
10:40	11:00	Helen McGrath	Sexual Violence Survey – 2024 Updates
11:00	11:20	<b>Morning Break</b>	
11:20	11:50	Dr Daniel Kane	Recent SATU Research – knowledge to inform practice
11:50	12:20	Dr Susan Leahy	All Ireland Network for Sexual Violence Research
12:20	13:10	Dr Gabriel Otterman	Clinical care of childhood sexual abuse: a systematic review and critical appraisal of guidelines from European countries
13:10	13:45	<b>Lunch Break</b>	
13:45	14:00	Catherine Marsh	Photodocumentation of injury – experience from the Cortexflo Pilot
14:00	14:30	Cheryl Weir	Photodocumentation in my practice – is it useful?
14:30	15:15	Dr Marie Keenan	A Review of the Processing of Sexual Offences in Ireland: Stakeholder Perspectives with a focus on SATU
15:15	16:30	Dr Nicola O’Sullivan, Dr Anne Golden	Reflecting on the Emotional and Relational Impact of Working with Sexual Violence ( <b>SATU staff only</b> )

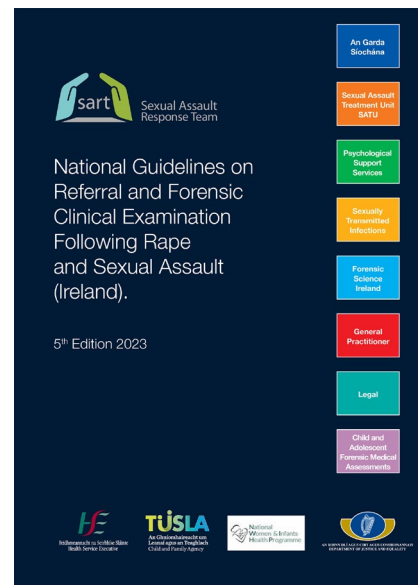
Approved for 6 CPD Credits in the External CPD category (RCPI). This CPD recognition is accepted by all Irish Postgraduate Training Bodies 1 CPD credit is equivalent to 1 hour of educational activity.  
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland CEUs -6.



## ii. National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Guidelines

The 5th Edition of the National Guidelines on Referral and Forensic Clinical Examination Following Rape and Sexual Assault (Ireland) were published in 2023, and have been updated online since to reflect service developments and improvements. These guidelines form the basis for an inter-agency and inter-speciality approach to holistic care for persons who experience sexual violence. The updates reflect the ever-evolving landscape for each of the agencies and disciplines involved, whilst continuing to ensure a person-centric approach to care.

A link to the Guidelines can be found in appendix 1.



## iii. SATU Administration Network

The National SATU Administrative Network was established by NWIHP in March 2023 and has continued to grow and strengthen since its inception. The network's primary aim is to connect all six SATU units, providing national-level organizational leadership and support.

The objectives of the network are:

- ▶ To provide a space of support for the SATU administrators.
- ▶ To assist with the production of the annual SATU report of Key Service Activity and other reports and documents as required
- ▶ To provide a mechanism to resolve issues that are common to multiple SATUs.
- ▶ To ensure quality and consistency of administration resources across the 6 SATUs.
- ▶ Deliver on key service objectives and integrate with other HSE functions as required.

The network comprises the NWIHP administrative resource, an administrator from each SATU, and Sarah O'Connor, the National SART Guidelines Coordinator. Meetings are held virtually every five weeks, with a rotating schedule to accommodate Dublin SATU administrators.

On February 22, 2024, the network hosted its first SATU Administration Network Learning Day at Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar. All six units were represented, and the event was a great success, offering a valuable opportunity for units to share ideas and best practices.

Going forward, the training day will rotate annually between different SATU locations. This initiative allows administrators to gain firsthand insight into the operations of each unit, fostering the exchange of new ideas and best practices. The goal is to create a more streamlined service across the network while strengthening collaboration and support between units—enhancing both daily operations and long-term service development.

The network meets every five weeks via teams to discuss updates and new ideas and any potential issues. The administrators are extremely engaging and the group has had positive results on the service.

In 2024 one of the rotunda administrators Moira Carberry retired and we would like to acknowledge her participation and enthusiasm in the group until her retirement.



### **Agenda For SATU Administrators Learning Day Galway**

20th February 2025

09:00am – Welcome and Introductions

09:45am – Tour of Barnahus Galway SATU (Subject to no patient present)

10:45am – Break

11:00am – ANP Presentation

12:30pm – Lunch

13:30pm – In person Reflective practice session specific for SATU administrators

14:30pm – Administration Workshop Session:

Statistics and Trends

Annual Report

Issues and Current Hot Topics

15:30pm – Update on Safe Course and other Training Provisions

16:00pm – Wrap up, Thank you and Evaluation.

16:30pm - Finish

## iv. SATU Medical Social Worker

In September 2024, the Medical Social Work (MSW) service was formally introduced in Dublin SATU, led by Laura Feely, Senior Medical Social Worker. This development has significantly enhanced the multidisciplinary team at the Dublin SATU and marks a significant step in expanding psycho-social support for patients that attend the clinic

The MSW service offers specialised psycho-social, emotional, and practical support to all patients attending the Dublin SATU. The service ensures that patients have access to crisis intervention, risk-assessment, safety-planning, advocacy, referrals to relevant agencies, including domestic violence and mental health services, and additional community supports. The MSW also plays a key role in liaising with external agencies, facilitating ongoing care beyond the initial forensic examination.

In practice, Laura, the MSW at the Rotunda, provides comprehensive support to patients throughout their SATU journey. She completes all follow-up calls to patients after their initial presentation, offering a welfare check-in and an opportunity to introduce the service. This ensures that patients are aware of the support available to them and allows for early intervention if needed. Additionally, at follow-up clinic appointments, Laura is on-site to provide one-to-one support, addressing any ongoing emotional, social, or practical concerns that may arise in the aftermath of their experience. One-to-one MSW follow up appointments can also be arranged upon patient request or need.

Prior to the establishment of the MSW role in Dublin SATU, core nursing/midwifery staff extended their support as much as their scope allowed, primarily by directing patients to known external services. While this ensured that patients received a level of support, it did not replace the need for a dedicated, professional social work service. The introduction of the MSW role brings a specialised, structured, and trauma-informed approach that compliments the multidisciplinary, holistic care provided at SATU. Being able to offer this service to patients has really allowed us to expand our support role for patients. It has been fantastic to be able to now facilitate more comprehensive individualised psychosocial care.

Looking ahead, there is a recognised need to expand the MSW service to other SATU clinics across Ireland. Integrating dedicated MSW roles into SATUs would enhance the care for patient's nationwide, providing equitable access to holistic support services. The ongoing development of the service will continue to be informed by patient needs, emerging best practices, and the evolving landscape of trauma-informed care in Ireland.

## v. Reflective Practice and Emotional Supports

The specialist administrative and nursing team in the Sexual Assault and Treatment Units (SATUs) in Ireland provide complex treatment to people across Ireland who have been sexually assaulted or raped. The challenging nature of the work was recognised by the Department of Health in 2018 following a review of the service. At that time they recommended the provision of high quality emotional supports for all staff (core and on-call). In addition they recommended clinical supervision for all core and on-call staff.

Responding to the Department of Health report, in November 2021 the SATU service began offering their staff, (medical, nursing/midwifery and administrative), the opportunity to avail of professional therapeutic reflective practice spaces. These confidential and safe spaces are offered online across all SATU sites. In addition group reflective practice spaces are offered to staff teams. The benefits and availability of reflective practice spaces are signposted to (medical and nursing) staff in training and new recruits. The service is offered by two independent practitioners, trained, and experienced in providing reflective practice and clinical supervision to staff working in health, forensic and social care settings. Dr Nicola O'Sullivan and Dr Anne Golden. The service has been steadily progressing with considerable uptake by staff across the SATU service.

Reflective Practice is a form of in-depth thinking about work activity with the aim of developing as a practitioner (Kurtz, 2020). High quality clinical supervision and reflective practice is associated with increased staff well-being and job satisfaction, and reduced burnout (Hyrkas, 2005, Kurtz, 2020). The provision of this supportive and safe service offers the opportunity to think, reflect and get in touch with experiences at work. It is also recognised as essential that the mental health of practitioners treating survivors of sexual assault are offered a supportive and structured environment regularly.

These reflective practice spaces are offered in recognition of the complex and emotive work that is being undertaken in SATU. Once per quarter staff across the SATU team are invited to attend a workshop on a subject related to Emotional Wellbeing and staff self-care, to contribute further to the individual spaces provided. Vicarious Trauma; reflective practice; compassion and compassion fatigue, are subjects that have formed the basis of these workshops. The workshops present a range of issues relevant to identification and mitigation of potential vicarious trauma when working in this area. Three out of four of these annually are moderated online, and one group session is held concurrent with our in-person SATU Study Day in the Autumn of each year.

Between January and December 2024, the SATU teams have taken up 246 individual reflective practice spaces. In addition across 2024 the new graduates attended a monthly reflective practice group and Dr Anne Golden and Dr Nicola O'Sullivan visited some of the SATU sites providing an in-person reflective space and further information on self-care and wellbeing strategies.

The impact that this service and support has had on the SATU staff delivering care to victims of rape and sexual assault is evident from feedback from staff. Staff report that they find it a flexible and easy service to avail of, with a considerable number saying that it has helped them to better deal with difficult experiences in work.

A sample of this feedback is provided below:

*'It helps me rationalise and deal with my emotions after cases, namely the more complex cases'*

*'I would say that I always feel better after... clinical supervision. Without this space I think my concerns/feelings would fester and I would not be able to cope well. Clinical supervision reminds me I need to be kind to myself'*

*'Clinical supervision has been instrumental in my continued work in SATU, it allows me to work through both clinical and organisational aspects of the job to reflect upon my practice and to constantly improve the work I do for those that attend the service'*

*'It is something I look forward to every month, its great to have a safe space where I can talk about how cases have affected me, or the general stress of working in SATU'*

*'I find it a very confidential and trusting space where I can offload issues. I find the support invaluable and I feel understood'*

*'It has been of huge benefit. I feel I now have more understanding of my own reactions and behaviours. I have a deeper understanding of why certain feelings or behaviours may occur. This allows me to understand and to cope better. It also allows a better understanding of clients'*

## vi. Outreach and Innovation

### Enhancing Patient Care, Preserving Dignity A Trauma-Informed Approach to Forensic Photography

#### Forensic Photography Pilot at the Rotunda Hospital SATU

In 2024, the HSE Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin 1, launched an innovative pilot project to trial the inclusion of high-quality forensic photography as part of its service. This initiative was led by Catherine Marsh, FNE, Deirdre Richardson, CMS, Christine Pucillo, CNS, Dr Maeve Eogan and Dr Nicola Maher. This initiative represents a significant step forward in trauma-informed care and evidence collection for individuals who have experienced sexual violence.

#### Why Forensic Photography Matters

Evidence collected by SATUs can play a critical role in criminal investigations. Timely and accurate documentation offers individuals more options should they choose to pursue legal action. While body injuries are not inevitable after sexual violence, photographic documentation, where consent is given and criteria are met, can strengthen the evidential record, alongside written notes and medical illustrations.

Prior to this pilot, body injury photographs were taken by An Garda Síochána photographers, either at the SATU (if available) or by requiring the individual to attend a Garda station after their SATU visit. This additional step can prolong an already distressing process and increase the number of interactions during a highly vulnerable time. In contrast, many other countries incorporate forensic photography within healthcare settings.

#### Pilot Project Objectives

The forensic photography pilot at the Rotunda Hospital SATU began in early summer 2024 and aimed to:

- ▶ **Uphold patient dignity and autonomy** by offering photography as part of the trauma-informed care pathway.
- ▶ **Reduce stress and examination time** by minimizing the number of personnel and follow-up appointments required.
- ▶ **Improve the accuracy and quality of evidence collection** through the secure capture of high-resolution images at point of examination.
- ▶ **Establish standard protocols and scalable training** for wider rollout across Ireland's SATUs.



- ▶ **Encourage continuous peer review** to ensure the service meets the highest standards.
- ▶ **Educate patients** on their options and empower them to make informed decisions throughout the process.

### How It Works

Two core forensic nurse examiners at the Rotunda SATU, on duty during daytime hours, were trained in the use of the Cortleflo forensic camera system by Fernico. This portable, advanced equipment allows for the secure capture of high-quality body injury images directly in the exam room. All images are encrypted and stored securely, with tightly controlled access. It's important to note that photography of genital injuries is not performed, and no individual is required to consent to photography if they are uncomfortable.



### Why Dublin?

The Rotunda Hospital SATU was selected for this pilot as it is the busiest in Ireland, seeing 42% of all SATU service users nationally (451 attendances in 2023). The scale and diversity of its caseload make it an ideal site for assessing the advantages, challenges, barriers, and opportunities for broader implementation.

### National Recognition

In December 2024, this project was recognised at the Irish Healthcare Awards, winning the prestigious award for *Best Nursing and Midwifery Project of the Year*. This accolade reflects the dedication and innovation of the Dublin SATU team and acknowledges the impact this pilot is having on improving care for survivors of sexual violence.



*“No one knows how they will react to a sexual assault or rape; every reaction is unique. At SATU, we provide a safe space where individuals’ needs are heard and respected. Trialling forensic photography as part of this care pathway is a natural next step in making the experience as supportive and efficient as possible.”*

**Catherine Marsh, Forensic Nurse Examiner and National Nursing/Midwifery Fellow for Innovation at HSE Spark Innovation Programme**

*“We are constantly striving to improve the experience for those attending SATU. This pilot, led by two trained core daytime examiners at the Rotunda Hospital, allows us to assess the benefits and challenges of embedding forensic photography in our service. Should we expand this model, we are committed to ensuring all staff are fully trained and supported.”*

**Professor Maeve Eogan, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Rotunda Hospital, and HSE National Clinical Lead for SATU Services**

### About the Cortexflo System

The Cortexflo forensic camera system is a dedicated tool designed for clinical and forensic environments. Its secure, encrypted image storage and intuitive operation make it ideal for capturing accurate, high-resolution photographs of body injuries while maintaining patient confidentiality and legal compliance. By integrating this technology within SATU services, the HSE is reducing the need for external personnel and streamlining care, ensuring individuals receive compassionate, effective support when they need it most.

### Concerts and Festivals

In May 2024, members of the SATU were invited to attend the Bruce Springsteen Concert in Páirc Uí Chaoimh, to see the emergency management teams and care provision locations.

### Electric Picnic

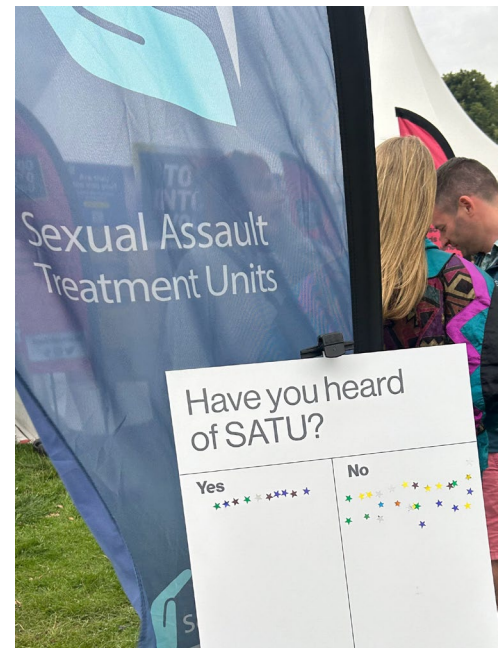
Staff from the SATUs once again attended the Electric Picnic festival in 2024 and we wanted to take a moment to highlight the significant benefits of the SATU staff’s attendance, based on the data collected over the course of the weekend. With over 75,000 attendees, the SATU presence not only raised awareness of the services but also contributed to ensuring safety and well-being on-site by being part of the safe guarding team daily meetings.





### Here are some key metrics from the SATU participation:

- ▶ HSE Website Engagement: QR codes were placed at hand-washing stations and at the SATU Tent, leading to 75 scans over the 3 days. This QR directed festival-goers to essential health information on the HSE website, showing that attendees are actively seeking health resources in real-time.
- ▶ Distribution of hand sanitizers /Condoms- the SATU staff distributed over 5000 condoms and lube over the 3 days and over 1000 hand sanitizers
- ▶ Service Awareness through SATU: An interactive board provided by the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) revealed that over 500 individuals engaged with a question about awareness of SATU's services. Of these, only 106 participants indicated prior awareness, showcasing our reach and the importance of ongoing awareness campaigns.
- ▶ Nationwide Engagement: Another interactive SATU board encouraged attendees to "Place Yourself on the Map," with over 300 people participating. Engagement spanned across almost every county in Ireland, with the exception of Sligo, Mayo, and Leitrim, indicating the broad national impact of our efforts.
- ▶ Engagement Duration: On average, visitors spent 3-5 minutes interacting with the SATU boards and staff. This meaningful engagement allowed the team to communicate key messages effectively and provide information that attendees could take away and apply post-festival.
- ▶ Timely Incident Response: The SATU team were able to respond swiftly to a direct reported assault on-site, with SATU staff and Garda handling the situation efficiently. The SATU presence ensured that this sensitive situation was managed professionally and quickly, highlighting the value of having trained personnel on-site.



The data reflects the importance of SATU's participation in EP and festivals events. It is clear that our involvement not only increases public awareness but also provides crucial on-the-ground support, ensuring a safe and informed environment for attendees.



## vii. Training and Continued Professional Development

Recruitment has started for February 2025 Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) based Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) education programme for Nurses and Midwives, Level 9 QQI (Masters Level). Five of the units are recruiting a candidate for the training – Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway and Mullingar.

## viii. Funding

The SATU budget received a significant boost in 2024 with the addition of 2 WTE (Whole-Time Equivalent) positions for Medical Social Work. This additional resource is allocated as follows:

1. 1 WTE for the Dublin SATU
2. 0.5 WTE each for the Galway and Cork SATUs

The majority of SATU funding is allocated to staff costs, with the remaining budget used for:

- ▶ Providing dedicated emotional support for SATU staff.
- ▶ Training and development opportunities for current staff.
- ▶ Increasing awareness of SATUs and their services.
- ▶ Updating and maintaining IT equipment and software used across SATUs.





# Section 4 Research

SATUs have recently enhanced their commitment to research, both to identify trends and support service needs, but also to consider and assess service improvements and to inform policy and development needs.

Several peer reviewed papers have been published in 2024, many of which reflect the largest published sample sizes in the literature. These have also been presented at national and international conferences, and Dr Daniel Kane was awarded the RCSI Research Output Impact Award for 2024.

Some of the completed works include the following, abstracts of which are available in Appendix 2.

1. Kane D, Daly R, Walshe J, Maher N, Pucilio C, Richardson D, Flood K, Eogan M. Physical injury in men after sexual assault: An analysis of 137 cases. *Forensic Sci Int.* 2025 Feb;367:112340. doi: 10.1016/j.forsciint.2024.112340. Epub 2024 Dec 9. PMID: 39672034.
2. Kane D, Walshe J, Maher N, Pucillo C, Richardson D, Holmes A, Flood K, Eogan M. Women attending the sexual assault treatment unit services in the Republic of Ireland: A 7-year review. *Int J Gynecol Obstet.* 2024; 00: 1-9. doi:10.1002/ijgo.15947
3. Kane D, Walshe J, Richardson D, Pucillo C, Noonan M, Maher S, Flood K, Eogan M. Storage of evidence and delayed reporting after sexual assault: Rates and impact factors on subsequent reporting. *J Forensic Leg Med* 2024; 106. ISSN 1752-928X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jflm.2024.102731>.
4. Kane D, Gill N, Walshe J, Fallon C, Flood K, Eogan M. Sexual assault of the older person: Attendances to the Republic of Ireland's sexual assault treatment unit network. *J Forensic Leg Med* 2024, 102683, ISSN 1752-928X. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jflm.2024.102683>

Publication of these papers adds to publications from this research programme in previous years, including the following:

1. Kane D, Kennedy KM, Flood K, Eogan M. Male patient attendances at Sexual Assault Treatment Units in Ireland: An analysis of 381 cases and a comparison with female patients. *J Forensic Leg Med.* 2024 Feb;102:102643. doi: 10.1016/j.jflm.2024.102643. Epub 2024 Jan 9. PMID: 38224652.
2. Kane D, Eogan M. Female perpetrated sexual assault: a review of attendances to the national sexual assault treatment units in the Republic of Ireland. *Int J Legal Med.* 2024 May;138(3):1157-1164. doi: 10.1007/s00414-023-03134-7. Epub 2023 Dec 14. PMID: 38092893.



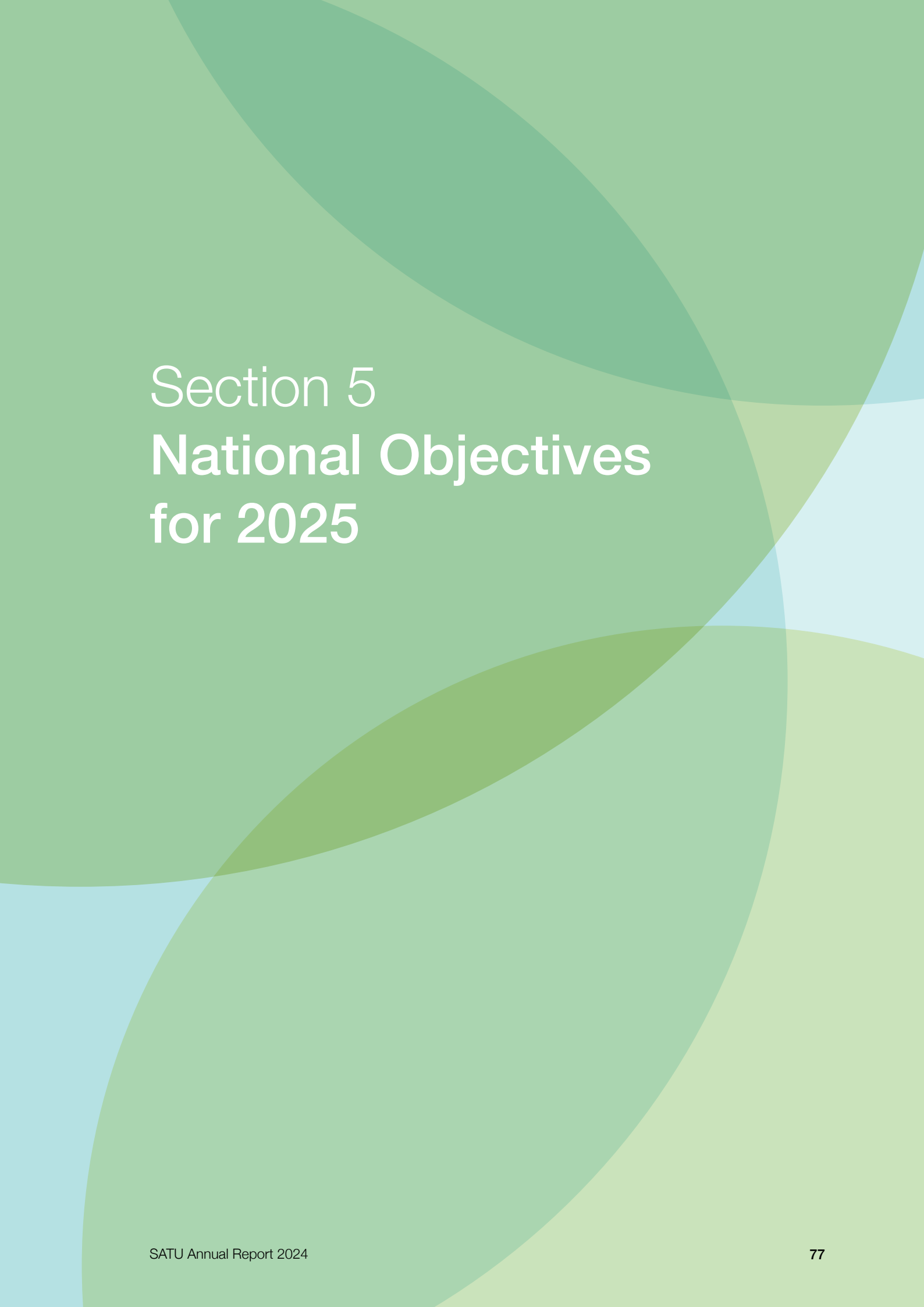
3. Kane D, Kennedy KM, Flood K, Eogan M. General practice trainees' understanding of post-sexual assault care: the impact of a specialist educational intervention. *Ir J Med Sci.* 2024 Jun;193(3):1331-1336. doi: 10.1007/s11845-023-03576-3. Epub 2023 Dec 6. PMID: 38055147.
4. Kane D, Kennedy KM, Eogan M. The prevalence of genital injuries in post-pubertal females presenting for forensic examination after reported sexual violence: a systematic review. *Int J Legal Med.* 2024 May;138(3):997-1010. doi: 10.1007/s00414-023-03117-8. Epub 2023 Nov 16. PMID: 37971512..
5. Kane D, Eogan M. Female adolescent sexual assault; a national review of 1014 consecutive cases. *J Forensic Leg Med.* 2024 Jan;101:102613. doi: 10.1016/j.jflm.2023.102613. Epub 2023 Nov 8. PMID: 38086273.
6. Kane D, Holmes A, Eogan M. Post-exposure prophylaxis, STI testing and factors associated with follow-up attendance: a review of 4159 cases of acute post-sexual assault medical care. *Sex Transm Infect.* 2024 Jan 17;100(1):39-44. doi: 10.1136/sextrans-2023-055980. PMID: 37977653; PMCID: PMC10850710.

It is also notable that Margo Noonan, from SATU Cork, won the best poster at the Nursing and Midwifery Research conference in University College Cork with her poster on 'The Impact of an Educational Programme on Challenging Rape Myths and Consent Misconceptions in Adolescent Males- the ASSUME Programme' in December 2024. It is vital that we continue to research, publish and present the work that is ongoing in SATUs in order to raise awareness of the service, and inform service development appropriate to patient need.

The SATU network is delighted to have developed links with AINSVR, the All Ireland Network on Sexual Violence Research. This is a collaboration between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Limerick, led by Dr Eithne Dowds and Dr Susan Leahy. The aim of the Network is to bring together academics and postgraduate research students, practitioners and policy makers from across the island of Ireland, working in the area of sexual violence. To date there has been much shared learning and we look forward to ongoing collaborations with this Network.







# Section 5 National Objectives for 2025

# National Objectives for 2025

In 2025 the SATU service will focus on some key objectives in order to continually improve the care of the people who need to use their service.

## Ongoing ambitions

- ▶ Capital development – with focus on a number of units with specific infrastructural needs.
- ▶ Recruitment and retention – with focus on recruiting and training additional medical and nursing staff for all SATUs.
- ▶ Sustained commitment to research and audit.
- ▶ Responsive health service – develop a training programme on SATU care for practitioners in other areas of the health service. This helps to highlight care available in SATUs, and support HSE staff to signpost care options where relevant.
- ▶ Further develop the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Training Programme with a view to establishing a more flexible, multispecialty modular training model.
- ▶ Facilitate interagency, multi-stakeholder collaboration by hosting the bi-annual SATU Professional Clinical Network meeting.
- ▶ Continue to prioritise the wellbeing and emotional support needs of our healthcare workers with provision of online professional therapeutic spaces and group workshops
- ▶ Continue to engage with the Barnahus Steering Group and others relevant stakeholders, working towards collocation of adult and child sexual assault treatments services.
- ▶ The SATU service will continue to work collaboratively with CUAN, the National Social Inclusion Office and colleagues in the Department of Health on various projects and work initiatives.

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# Section 6 Appendix

## Appendix 1

The Guidelines can be found at the following link:

[Guidelines on Referral following Rape and Sexual Assault.pdf \(hse.ie\)](#)

## Appendix 2

Abstracts of the research mentioned:

1. Kane D, Daly R, Walshe J, Maher N, Pucllio C, Richardson D, Flood K, Eogan M. Physical injury in men after sexual assault: An analysis of 137 cases. *Forensic Sci Int.* 2025 Feb;367:112340. doi: 10.1016/j.forsciint.2024.112340. Epub 2024 Dec 9. PMID: 39672034.



Forensic Science International

Volume 367, February 2025, 112340



### Physical injury in men after sexual assault: An analysis of 137 cases

D. Kane <sup>a b</sup> , R. Daly <sup>a</sup>, J. Walshe <sup>b</sup>, N. Maher <sup>b</sup>, C. Pucllio <sup>b</sup>, D. Richardson <sup>b</sup>, K. Flood <sup>a</sup>,  
M. Eogan <sup>a b</sup>

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#### Highlights

- Almost 7 out of every 10 men who attended the SATU had a forensic examination.
- 1 in 5 men who disclosed a sexual assault had genital and/or anal injuries.
- An anal injury was identified in 24.5% of men who disclosed completed anal penetration and had proctoscopic examination.
- 40% of men who disclosed sexual assault had extra-genital injuries.

2. Kane D, Walshe J, Maher N, Pucillo C, Richardson D, Holmes A, Flood K, Eogan M. Women attending the sexual assault treatment unit services in the Republic of Ireland: A 7-year review. *Int J Gynecol Obstet*. 2024; 00: 1-9. doi:10.1002/ijgo.15947

Received: 4 July 2024 | Revised: 20 August 2024 | Accepted: 21 September 2024 | Published online: 9 October 2024

DOI: 10.1002/ijgo.15947

## CLINICAL ARTICLE

Gynecology



# Women attending the sexual assault treatment unit services in the Republic of Ireland: A 7-year review

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Sexual assault is pervasive in today's society, with the numbers of those reporting it increasing. In Ireland, 50% of women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. We sought to describe the incident details of females presenting to the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) network in the Republic of Ireland and to determine associations between incident characteristics and: (1) victim age, (2) presence of injury, (3) victim-perpetrator relationship, and (4) number of assailants.

**Methods:** This was a retrospective cross-sectional study of all females who attended between 2017 and 2023. Descriptive bivariate analysis was performed.

**Results:** There were 5942 female attendances, with an average age of 26 years. The largest age group was women between 18 and 25 years (38.1%,  $n=2263$ ). Forensic examinations were performed in 76.6% ( $n=4549$ ). Assailants were male in 92% ( $n=5469$ ) of incidents, with multiple assailants disclosed in 7.3% ( $n=435$ ). Strangers or recent acquaintances were the assailant in 38.5% ( $n=2290$ ) of incidents, and close associates in 22.9% ( $n=1359$ ). Incidents occurred at the survivor's home in 22% ( $n=1306$ ) of incidents, and in the assailant's home in 22.6% ( $n=1342$ ). Drug use within 24 h was reported in 15.1% ( $n=897$ ) of cases, and alcohol use in 72% ( $n=4276$ ). Drug-facilitated assault was suspected by 16.1% ( $n=955$ ). Injuries (genital and extra-genital) occurred in 30.3% ( $n=1800$ ) of attendances and were more likely to be seen in those who disclosed ingesting alcohol (Relative risk [RR] 1.325,  $P<0.001$ ) or drugs (RR 1.111,  $P=0.04$ ) in the 24 h preceding the incident, in those who presented within 24 h (RR 1.646,  $P<0.001$ ), those aged 18 years or older (RR 1.07,  $P=0.003$ ), and those where the incident occurred outdoors (RR 1.24,  $P<0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** This study, one of the largest on female attendances to a national SATU network, offers detailed insights into demographics, incident details, and circumstances. Most were young women, mainly 18 years and older, many of whom were full-time students. Forensic examinations were the primary reason for attendance, underscoring the network's key role in evidence collection. The study also identified

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Research Paper

## Storage of evidence and delayed reporting after sexual assault: Rates and impact factors on subsequent reporting



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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Sexual assault (SA) is alarmingly prevalent, yet reporting rates remain disproportionately low. Forensic examinations (FE) play a crucial role in both immediate medical care and evidence collection, yet many victims/survivors may not report the crime initially, leading to the loss of vital forensic evidence. The storage of evidence ‘Option 3’ care alternative provides post-SA care including FE without initial police involvement.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional study analysing the attendances of people who chose to store evidence at the Dublin Sexual assault Treatment Unit (SATU) between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2023.

**Results:** There were 238 storage of evidence FEs (‘Option 3’) performed during the study period, which represented 12.8 % of all FEs. The majority identified as female (89.1 %), with an average age of 26.6 years. 31.9 % attended within 24 h of the incident, and 51.3 % self-referred. Most assaults occurred over weekends (64.7 %), with alcohol consumption reported in 82.2 % of cases and drug-facilitated SA concerns in 20.2 %. Genital injuries were present in 17.9 % of females and 19 % of males.

Those that availed of storage of evidence (compared with those who initially reported to the police) were significantly more likely to have consumed alcohol ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the assault was more likely to have occurred indoors ( $p = 0.002$ ). There was no significant difference in care option choice for those ‘unsure’ of the assault occurrence ( $p = 0.353$ ).

Among storage of evidence cases, 20.2 % subsequently reported to the police, with females more likely to report ( $p = 0.02$ ), while people who were uncertain whether an assault had occurred were less likely to report ( $p = 0.04$ ). Genital injury ( $p = 0.822$ ), victim-assailant relationship ( $p = 0.465$ ), assault location ( $p = 0.487$ ), and substance consumption ( $p = 0.332$ ) did not significantly affect subsequent reporting rates.

**Conclusions:** The availability of storage of evidence has afforded people the opportunity to access prompt, responsive SATU care including collection of forensic evidence which may have significant evidential value. This approach provides further opportunity for comprehensive detection of a crime, even if reporting to the police is delayed.

### 1. Introduction

Sexual assault is widespread in society with a recent national survey in Ireland reporting that 52 % of women and 26 % of men disclosed experiencing some form of sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Despite this high prevalence rate, the numbers reporting these crimes to criminal justice agencies are low. A large gap exists between the prevalence of sexual assault and the number of reported incidents, meaning that the true prevalence of sexual crime is frequently unknown and likely be significantly higher than routinely collected statistics suggest.<sup>1,2</sup>

Several factors contribute to the decision not to seek help or to report sexual assault. These include feelings of shame or embarrassment, a

desire to forget the incident, a lack of belief in the effectiveness of support systems or their ability to protect survivors, difficulties in reporting when the perpetrator is known to the victim/survivors (such as a family member or friend), fear that reporting may result in further psychological harm due to disbelief, or if the survivor was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the assault.<sup>3–6</sup> Moreover, certain demographic groups facing heightened societal pressures are less likely to report, including males, gender diverse individuals, those with physical or mental disabilities, individuals struggling with addiction, or ethnic minorities.<sup>4,7</sup>

Forensic examinations (FE) following incidents of sexual assault serve two primary purposes. The first is to provide immediate medical

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## Research Paper

## Sexual assault of the older person: Attendances to the Republic of Ireland's sexual assault treatment unit network

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## A B S T R A C T

**Background:** Sexual assault (SA) poses a threat to all areas of contemporary society. Although older individuals represent a vulnerable demographic, a considerable gap exists in the literature regarding the context in which older individuals experience SA. This study aims to provide a comprehensive description of older individuals' attendances at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) network in the Republic of Ireland.

**Methods:** A 7-year national cross-sectional study was performed to analyse the attendances of older people ( $\geq 65$  years old) to the SATU network, and to compare them with younger attendances ( $< 65$  years old), with a more in-depth subset analysis of Dublin SATU attendances.

**Results:** During the study period, there were 6478 attendances to the SATU network, of which 0.93 % ( $n = 60$ ) were older people. These included 59 females and 1 male, with the average age of  $76.05 \text{ years} \pm 8.16$ . Forensic examinations were performed in 81.7 %, with the majority seeking assistance within 7 days (80 %). Comparison of older ( $\geq 65$  years) and younger ( $< 65$  years) attendees revealed older individuals were more uncertain whether a sexual assault had occurred (35.5 % vs. 14.4 %,  $p < 0.001$ ) but more likely to report the incident to the police (78.3 % vs. 64.3 %,  $p = 0.02$ ). Assault by a person in authority was significantly more common in older age groups (11.7 % vs. 1.8 %,  $p < 0.001$ ). Older individuals were significantly more likely to be assaulted in their own home (33.3 % vs. 21.5 %  $p < 0.03$ ) or in 'other-indoors' settings (e.g. nursing home/hospital) (43.3 % vs. 23.4 %  $p < 0.001$ ). They were less likely to be assaulted in the assailant's home (5.0 % vs. 22.9 %,  $p < 0.001$ ) or outdoors (5.0 % vs. 19.7 %,  $p = 0.004$ ).

In our subset analysis of 19 cases, 73.7 % occurred in healthcare facilities, 63.2 % had dementia, and 42.1 % were care dependent. Genital injuries were present in 44.4 % of patients and extra-genital injuries in 22.2 %.

**Conclusion:** Unique patterns are evident in sexual assault experienced by older people, underscoring the necessity for tailored interventions and effective support systems for reporting and addressing this vulnerable demographic. This is especially crucial in healthcare environments, where a notable proportion of cases occur, frequently involving individuals with dementia and requiring care assistance.

## 1. Introduction

In contemporary society, sexual assault (SA) poses a significant threat. Although older individuals represent a vulnerable demographic, a considerable gap exists in the literature regarding the context in which older individuals experience SA.

As we age many of us experience cumulative decline in our reserves until minor stressors trigger disproportionate changes in our health status: we become increasingly frail.<sup>1</sup> With this frailty emerges potential vulnerabilities to poor health outcomes, to social isolation, and to abuse.<sup>2</sup> As the global population ages an increasing number of older adults are likely to be at risk of elder abuse. This abuse can take many forms, including psychological, financial, physical and sexual.<sup>3</sup> Despite this, research has shown that reports of rape and sexual assault decrease

with age.<sup>4</sup> Ireland, along with many developed countries, has seen an increase in the older adult population largely due to improved healthcare, rise in living standards and improvement in social care provision.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is critical that we develop a better understanding of sexual abuse of older persons to improve our existing services. Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) within the Republic of Ireland extend care to individuals aged 14 and above who disclose a recent incidence of sexual violence. The specialized SATU team ensures easily accessible, comprehensive services that address the medical, psychological, and emotional needs of victims of sexual crime. They provide appropriate follow-up care in a supportive and sensitive manner. Recognising that SATUs cater to older individuals, this study seeks to bridge the existing research gap, aiming to enhance our understanding of the unique needs of older attendees within the SATU network. This will allow us to

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