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Whose campus, whose security?

Students' views on and experiences of security services and police on university campuses

Remi Joseph-Salisbury, Laura Connelly,
Kerry Pimblott, Siobhan O'Neill and Harry Taylor

CODE CENTRE ON
THE DYNAMICS
OF ETHNICITY

Whose campus, whose security?

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The Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) is the UK's leading research centre pioneering theoretically informed, empirically grounded and policy relevant research on ethnic inequalities in the UK. CoDE is led by the University of Manchester with researchers based at partner institutions across England and Scotland. The Centre brings together expertise from a range of disciplines including sociology, demography, economics, history, geography, political science, cultural studies and seeks to communicate their research to a wide range of audiences.

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Illustrations and design by Euan Moreland.

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Executive summary

In recent years, high-profile incidents and student activism have raised questions about how securitisation on university campuses is experienced by students, yet there is a stark absence of academic research on the topic. *Whose campus, whose security?* draws on three datasets: a national survey of 635 students, regional interviews with 30 students and data obtained through Freedom of Information requests. The study provides the first empirical account of students' views on, and experiences of, security services and police on UK university campuses. In doing so, it deliberately centres student views and experiences to provide an evidence base for higher education institutions as they operationalise their commitments to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. As detailed below, the report offers key statistics, highlights six key areas of concern, and considers student responses and suggestions for alternatives to the status quo.

Key statistics

Campus security

- More than one third of respondents reported seeing campus security daily.
- Only 30.8% of students thought that security services keep students safe on campus. This figure was significantly lower for those with protected characteristics (29.3%) than it was for those without protected characteristics (47.6%).
- Almost three quarters of respondents felt that some students were more likely than others to have encounters with security personnel (73.8%) on campus. Over three quarters of those (78.6%) identified race as a determining factor in affecting the likelihood that someone would encounter campus security.
- Gender (61.7%), social class (54.8%), migrant status (47.9%), nationality (44.9%) and sex worker status (41.6%) were the next most frequently cited factors affecting the perceived likelihood of an encounter with security.

- In 2020/21 the combined budget for campus security services at the three Greater Manchester case study universities¹ was over £8 million compared to just £3 million for counselling and mental health services.

Police on campus

- Only 16.4% of students with protected characteristics thought that police keep students safe on campus, compared with 31.6% of those without protected characteristics.
- Almost three quarters of respondents felt that some students were more likely than others to have encounters with police on campus (73.1%), and 88.9% of those participants felt that race affected the likelihood of someone encountering police on campus. This was followed by gender (66.7%), social class (66.4%), migrant status (62.3%), nationality (57.1%) and sex worker status (56.2%) as the most cited factors.

Key areas of concern

Alongside general concern about the increased securitisation of campus, and the expansive and conflicting roles that security personnel are now expected to fulfil, the report raises the following concerns:

Racism and boundary policing

- Securitisation is an underdiscussed way through which institutional racism operates in higher education.
- Racially minoritised students are subject to racial profiling and face disproportionately harsh treatment from security personnel and police on campuses, often shaped by efforts to keep (assumed) 'non-students' off campuses.

Gender-based violence

- Students have experienced direct transphobia and misogyny from campus security.
- Just 29.3% of women feel that security services keep students safe, and even

fewer (17.8%) think that the police keep students safe.

- Only 22.6% of students who identify as trans, non-binary or an 'other' gender identity said that security services keep students safe. Just 7.7% of the same group think that police keep students safe.
- The responses of campus security to sexual violence and drink spiking are often perceived by students as inadequate, and sometimes exacerbate already traumatic experiences.

Policing of student activism

- Student activists are particularly vulnerable to negative encounters with campus security, with respondents involved in activism reporting physical, verbal and online abuse.
- The policing of student activists is a key driver in bringing police onto campuses, and student activists are particularly vulnerable to negative encounters with police and campus security.

Mental health

- Many students question the suitability of campus security to perform the role of first responders to student mental health crises. In some cases, security personnel have worsened mental health crises.
- The general presence of police and security personnel on campus can have a negative impact on the mental health of some students.

Covid as a time of crisis

- An increased police presence on university campuses during the pandemic was experienced by some students as hostile and intimidating.
- Students raised concerns about the way security staff and police worked together during this period, including security staff granting police access to student accommodation.
- While the pandemic meant that a wider

cross-section of students experienced the securitisation of campus, racially minoritised students were disproportionately impacted.

- There is some concern that the changes to securitisation in the pandemic will endure beyond the Covid period, as evidenced by recent high-profile events.

University complaint processes and anti-democratic structures

- Existing university complaint processes neither confront the risks, nor repair the harms associated with the securitisation of campuses.
- Students reported frustration and dissatisfaction arising from difficulties in accessing complaint processes, experiencing significant delays in the handling of their complaints and a lack of accountability.

Responses and alternatives

- Various student-led responses have emerged to resist the harms of securitisation, most notably the UoM Cops Off Campus student group.
- Respondents had a range of ideas for reform, including redefining the role of security to centre student welfare.
- Many students felt that investment should be shifted away from security services to non-punitive interventions for student wellbeing.

Introduction

In November 2020, against the backdrop of unprecedented global Black Lives Matter protests, Zac Adan, a first-year undergraduate student at the University of Manchester, made a trip from his halls of residence to a local shop. Upon his return, campus security officers insisted on seeing his ID, pinned him up against a wall, and accused him of ‘looking like a drug dealer’. Adan was clear from the outset that this was a case of racial profiling, driven by the fact that he was ‘black and wearing a hoodie’.² His conviction was strengthened by a subsequent recording of a security officer asserting that he did not ‘know of any white drug dealers, white female drug dealers’.³ Adan’s case raised serious questions about the role of security services on university campuses, a topic which until that point had received very little attention, and is still yet to be properly confronted. This report seeks to address this issue by examining how security services and police are viewed and experienced by students on campus. Drawing upon rich empirical data from three datasets – a national survey, interviews with students at three universities and a series of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests⁴ – it offers the first substantive account of the key issues concerning security services and police across UK universities.

Adan’s case was not the first time the alarm has been raised regarding racism and the securitisation of campuses. In 2017, for example, a CCTV image of Femi Nylander, a Black Oxford graduate who had been visiting a friend’s office on campus, was circulated to all staff and students at the University of Oxford’s Harris Manchester College with a warning to ‘be vigilant’ as people could take advantage of the College’s ‘wonderful and safe environment’.⁵ As Nylander himself noted in a *Guardian* article afterwards, ‘[t]hese incidents are part of a worrying trend. Black and minority students often feel as though they are treated differently by porters and staff.’⁶ The report considers racialised experiences particularly in Chapter 3.

While Nylander’s story serves as a reminder that the racial profiling of university students by security

officers well precedes Covid-19, Adan’s case demonstrates that institutional responses to the pandemic are an important part of the picture, as detailed at length in Chapter 7. During the pandemic, university senior leaders across the UK increased the securitisation of campuses, bringing students into closer and more frequent proximity to campus security and police. Magistrates even cited the challenging Covid context in the eventual acquittal of the security officers charged with assaulting Adan.⁷ Wider research on policing has shown that the Covid-19 pandemic enabled deep-seated institutional racism to flourish.⁸

Though racially minoritised students were particularly at risk, it would be a mistake to assume that the impacts of institutional responses to the pandemic was only felt by this group. A 2021 report by Cops Off Campus, an activist group based at the University of Manchester (UoM), detailed a wide range of negative interactions students had with security services around this time, including security staff granting the police right-of-entry into student residences – that is, students’ homes while at university – without a warrant.⁹ Furthermore, the profiling of Adan occurred just days after the UoM erected ‘huge metal barriers’ around its Fallowfield campus to contain students. Suggesting that the fences made them feel ‘trapped’ and ‘imprisoned’,¹⁰ students tore them down as part of broader protests against the UoM’s response to the pandemic. Central to the concerns of students was the negative impact that this securitisation would have on their mental health, including a sense of isolation – a topic the report picks up in Chapter 6. Specifically, students pointed out that just a month earlier a student isolating as part of lockdown measures on the Fallowfield campus had died by suicide.¹¹

These protests were significant in drawing attention to student dissatisfaction with the securitisation of campus and their desire for change, but such resistance is not new. In 2013, for example, demonstrations against the presence of police on campuses brought 1,000–2,000 people to the streets in London and across the UK under the banner Cops Off Campus,¹²

an earlier iteration of the slogan used more recently by UoM students. In the last few years, the National Union of Students has passed policies to limit police presence on campus, including ones in favour of adopting non-carceral approaches to addressing sexual violence.¹³ Indeed, the issue of gender-based violence has increasingly attracted the attention of (student) activists, the media and campus-based unions in recent years.¹⁴ Central to these conversations are debates around what role – if any – campus security services play in keeping women, non-binary, and/or trans students safe. We take up the issue of gender-based violence in Chapter 4, while Chapter 9 engages with students’ desire for change in order to explore resistance to, and alternatives to, security services and police on campus.

Protests are also significant because – as Chapter 5 shows – student activists are particularly vulnerable to negative interactions with security services and police on campus. Since at least the 1960s, universities, often working with the police, have securitised campuses to limit and undermine student movements.¹⁵ The aforementioned 2013 Cops Off Campus protests emerged specifically out of concern over how university security personnel and police acted violently towards students at University College London protesting against outsourcing and privatisation.¹⁶ There are many recent examples, too. In 2019, student activists at King’s College London had their security passes blocked, barring them from campus during a visit from the Queen.¹⁷ In 2021, footage circulated of two students being pinned to the floor by Sheffield Hallam security officers, apparently in response to a student demonstration over the university’s handling of the rent strike and the mistreatment of staff and students during the pandemic.¹⁸ The following year, after receiving a call from a security officer at student accommodation, police apprehended a group of Sheffield Hallam students who were delivering leaflets as part of a campaign for their Student Union elections.¹⁹ One of these students, Zac Larkham, had previously found out – through a subject access request which yielded more than 190 pages of emails – that university staff had been discussing his whereabouts and activities, and monitoring his social media. Larkham

later said that he no longer felt safe on campus as a result of the revelations.²⁰

When students are dissatisfied with their treatment at the hands of security officers or police on campus, institutional responses – and particularly formal mechanisms for complaint – have been shown to be limited and/or harmful, this issue is taken up in Chapter 8. Adan’s initial experience of harm, for example, continued through and was exacerbated by the UoM’s response to the incident. This included the University’s vice-chancellor, Nancy Rothwell, claiming on national television that she had written to Adan to apologise ‘for the distress that he felt’,²¹ before issuing a public apology the next day to say that the claim, ‘said with good intent, was in fact incorrect’ and the email in question was never sent.²²

As this report goes on to show, students have variable experiences of security services and police on campus, as well mixed feelings when it comes to whether they think that campus security (and to a lesser extent, police) keep students safe. The report shows that some participants report positive experiences, recounting times when security personnel have responded sensitively and empathetically in a context where they were obliged to perform multiple, often competing, roles. However, many other respondents report negative experiences of, and notable concerns about, security personnel and police on campus. The primary focus of the report is on these substantive concerns. These negative experiences are not mitigated by the fact that others have a positive experience of security staff. As such – and after first setting out the project methodology and headline findings from the national survey – the report chapters are organised around six key areas of concern: i) racism and boundary policing,²³ ii) gender-based violence, iii) policing of student activism, iv) student mental health, v) Covid as a time of crisis and vi) university complaint processes and anti-democratic structures. The report closes with a discussion of student-led responses to securitisation, before pulling out six key observations that aid better understanding of students’ views on and experiences of security services and police on UK university campuses.

Methodology

This chapter briefly sets out the research process underpinning the project. The project’s overarching aim was to better understand students’ views on, and experiences of, security services and police on UK university campuses. In doing so, it deliberately centres the perspectives of a key constituent of the university community: students. By surfacing their views and experiences, a range of issues are presented within this report that can be taken up by higher education institutions as they operationalise their commitments to the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. Future research could examine the views and experiences of other constituent groups. With ethical approval from the University of Manchester’s Proportionate University Research Ethics Committee, data collection took place between June and December 2022. To fulfil the project’s overarching aim, three complementary datasets were collected, making this a rigorous, mixed-methods and multiscalar study – the first of its kind to explore this subject matter.

- Quantitative data via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests at three Greater Manchester Universities
- Qualitative data via semi-structured interviews with students at three Greater Manchester Universities
- Quantitative and qualitative data via an online survey with students at universities across the UK

While the online survey dataset provides a national picture, Greater Manchester was chosen as the research site for more localised, in-depth study. It was chosen because, as a major city region, it is home to universities with a range of different dynamics, for example in terms of student demographics, course tariffs, and the respective proportions of home vs international and commuter vs residential students. Additionally, at the commencement of the project, all the research team worked at institutions in Greater Manchester and thus were well situated to recruit participants to the study.

Freedom of information (FOI) request

The *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000* is legislation that enables people to obtain information from public authorities. Despite being a powerful tool, the FOI Act has been underutilised by social researchers.²⁴ Before submitting FOIs, we carried out a review of existing publicly available FOI requests to the University of Manchester (UoM), Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and the University of Salford (UoS). The research team submitted four new FOI requests. Table 1 briefly details the subject matter of each FOI request, the institution or organisation it was sent to, and the outcome. It is worth noting that one request was initially rejected by MMU under *Section 31(1) (Law Enforcement) of the FOI Act 2000* on the grounds that disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice a) the prevention or detection of crime and/or b) the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. The decision was subsequently overturned upon appeal to the Information Commissioner’s Office. The UoS also rejected one of the requests under *Section 43 Commercial Interests* on the grounds that the information requested constitutes a trade secret.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students at three Greater Manchester universities. The research was advertised via the placement of posters on university campuses, social media and relevant email lists. Interested students were encouraged to reach out to the research team via a dedicated project email address. In total, 30 students took part in interviews: UoM (n=16), MMU (n=9) and UoS (n=5). In terms of gender, 9 of the participants identified as men/male, 19 as women/female, 1 as non-binary, and 1 as queer. In terms of ethnicity, 15 participants identified as white British, 3 in ways that can be categorised as ‘white other’, and 12 in ways that can be categorised as racially minoritised – including but not limited to identities such as Black, Asian and mixed-race. Though not collected systematically in the same way as ethnicity, gender and university, interviews also revealed some diversity in terms of

Table 1: Freedom of Information request details.

Subject matter of the FOI	Institution	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget for campus security for all years between 2010 and 2022 • Total number of security staff • Annual budget for counselling and wellbeing services in the most recent financial year for which records are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM • MMU • UoS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM and UoS met request • MMU initially rejected the request under section 31(1) a & b of the FOI Act. They were obliged to meet the request following the research team’s appeal to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown of the total annual security services budget for 2013 and 2021 by key areas such as staffing, technology and facilities which records are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM • MMU • UoS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All institutions met request
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of formal complaints filed against security personnel from 2018/19 to 2021/22 including demographic information on complainant, type of complaint, outcome and resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM • MMU • UoS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All institutions partially met request, with some data withheld due to risk of identifying complainants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the total annual budget and structure of two new Policing Education Qualifications Framework programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejected the request under section 43 of the FOI Act

religion, sexuality, disability, home/international student status and stage of study.

Participants were given the choice of taking part in an online interview via video call or an in-person interview. Most interviews were conducted online. The average length of interviews was approximately 40 minutes. Although an interview protocol was utilised, the interviewer tailored the ordering of the questions to each participant and remained open to new issues as they arose. These questions encouraged students to reflect on their views on and experiences of both security services and police on campus, their perceptions of equality in relation to securitisation, and what a safe campus looks like to them (which often elicited responses about alternatives to security services and police on campus). All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were anonymised before being returned to the participants for ‘member checking’ – a process that allows

participants to check, remove and/or edit data. All interview participants were also invited to choose a pseudonym and received a £20 gift voucher as a thank you for taking part in the project.

A rigorous thematic analysis was undertaken. Firstly, three members of the research team familiarised themselves with the complete interview dataset by reading all transcripts available to date. Secondly, they manually coded a sample of four of the interview transcripts independently, a process that involved identifying common issues raised in the interviews. Thirdly, the researchers met to share their initial codes, and to search for and agree upon broader themes. As a result, an initial coding schedule was developed that was inputted into NVIVO 11. Fourthly, coding was applied to the schedule to all other interview transcripts. During this process, the coding schedule was added to and/or amended to reflect new codes and themes.

Online survey

An online survey was implemented to establish a national picture. The survey largely provided quantitative data, as well as additional qualitative data in the form of free text write-in responses. The survey was conducted using the Qualtrics platform. Respondents were mainly recruited via social media, including via Twitter and Facebook, but the researchers also requested that colleagues at other institutions share the project recruitment material. In total, 635 people participated in the study: 602 current students at a UK university, and 33 students who had graduated from a UK university within the last two years.²⁵ However, it should be noted that not all participants responded to all questions; as such, the sample size varies across the results presented. Students from 91 different universities responded to the survey; the university most commonly attended by respondents was the UoM, representing 13.1% of total survey respondents.

The sample of participants was similar in nature to the wider UK student population in some ways and differed in others. 30.2% of respondents identified as being from a racially minoritised group, if we exclude white minority groups for comparison purposes. This is comparable to the UK student population; the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) reported that students from racially minoritised groups comprised 26.2% of the population in 2020/21.²⁶ The project's sample departed somewhat from the UK student population in terms of gender. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (67.2%) identified as a woman, with 21.6% identifying as a man, 7.1% identifying as non-binary, 1.7% identifying as trans, and 2.4% identifying as an 'other' gender identity or preferring not to respond; 8.7% of respondents identified with a gender different to the one they were assigned at birth; 2.4% of respondents preferred not to say whether they identified with the gender they were assigned at birth.²⁷ Although the sample has more women than the general student population, this to some degree reflects the increased participation of women in higher education where women represented 57% of students in 2020/21.²⁸

Just over half (53.3%) of respondents identified as heterosexual/straight, with 19.0% identifying as bisexual, 11.5% as queer, 9.3% as gay or lesbian, and 6.9% identifying as asexual, pansexual or of another sexual orientation. Some respondents (29.2%) noted that they have a mental or physical disability or impairment that has substantial and long-term adverse effects on their day-to-day activities. The majority of the sample (68.7%) reported following no religion, with 15.6% of respondents being from a religious minority group (Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or other religion), which was comparable to the 16.5% of religious minority students reported by HESA in 2020/21.²⁹

To summarise the characteristics of the sample, although differences were observed between the study sample and the population in terms of gender, university attended, and other factors, these differences were fairly small. However, one additional way in which the sample could differ from the student population is through self-selection bias, whereby there are some shared characteristics among the group of people most likely to volunteer to take part in a survey of this kind. For example, the survey may have appealed to politically engaged students, and as such the responses may more closely represent the views of those students. This deviation from representativeness, and the others previously mentioned, should be considered when interpreting the results.

The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions and free-text response fields, examining respondents' attitudes towards university security and the police. The quantitative survey data were analysed using the R software package version 4.1.0, using the ggplot2 and summarySE libraries for plots and analyses. Quantitative surveys often indicate measurement uncertainty using confidence intervals. Confidence intervals are provided in our bivariate statistics as a rough indicator of whether differences between groups are likely statistically significant, or whether the observed difference between groups could be due to chance. The error bars indicate 83.4% confidence intervals (calculated using standard errors³⁰). The purpose of choosing this level is

to allow for visual comparison of results. Bars that do not overlap approximately indicate a statistically significant difference between two measures at the 95% (or $p < .05$) confidence level.

In the reporting of the survey data, charts have occasionally been split by different subpopulations, including university location, gender and protected characteristics. The definition of protected characteristics for this research includes disabled people, people from racially minoritised groups, religious minority groups, sexual and gender minority groups and women.

Data triangulation and further analyses

Once all three datasets had been analysed independently, the research team met to examine the key findings in relation to each other. This process is often referred to as data triangulation and has the key benefit of maximising rigour by facilitating the cross-verification of data to corroborate or refute findings. This process involved exploring commonalities and differences between the findings from each data set, and identifying areas where further analysis was required. During the writing process, the researchers regularly revisited the raw data to check the validity of findings.

Chapter 1: Headline quantitative findings

This chapter briefly sets out some of the key findings from the online survey. It begins by exploring the questions which sought to understand students' perceptions of the visibility, effectiveness and necessity of security on campus. It then looks at how attitudes on the effectiveness of security vary between those with and those without protected characteristics, and explores whether respondents felt that some groups were more at risk of having an encounter with campus security. Finally, respondents' attitudes towards police on campus are examined.

Findings

Among respondents to the survey, seeing campus security was commonplace. As Figure 1 shows, more than a third (37.3%) of participants said they saw security personnel daily, with only 26.9% seeing security officers less than once a week. Despite this routine presence, responses indicate a large degree of uncertainty around the effectiveness of campus security. Figure 2 summarises responses to participants' perception of whether university security services keep students safe. The most commonly held view among respondents was uncertainty over whether security kept students safe (41.5%), with 30.8% believing that security did keep students safe, and 27.8% believing that they did not.

Although respondents displayed mixed perceptions of the effectiveness of university security in keeping students safe, the majority of respondents thought security personnel were necessary on campus in other ways (Figure 3). In response to being asked to elaborate on what additional functions they thought university security should fulfil, respondents identified several roles, such as providing signposting, first aid, room access and the prevention of theft. These responses are discussed further in Chapter 2. It is also important to note that there may have been respondents who felt that university security services are necessary to keep students safe, but that they are ineffective at doing so.

There are indications that the effectiveness of university security on campuses is viewed differently

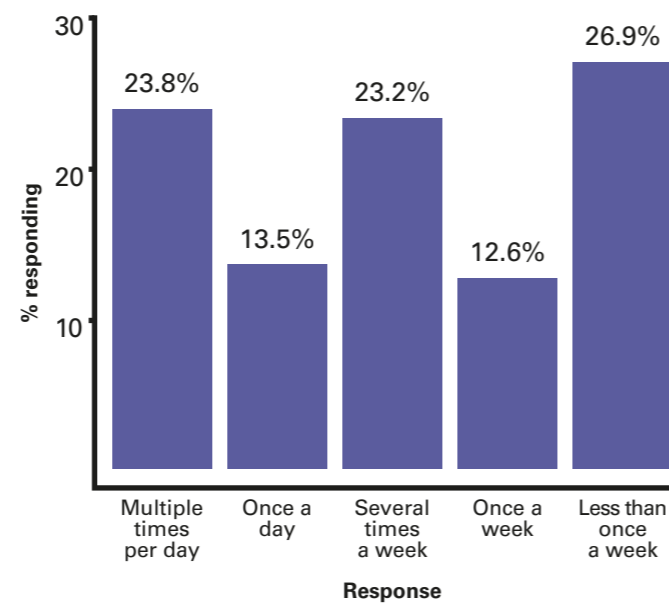


Figure 1: Response to survey question 'How often do you see university security on your university campus?' (n=629).

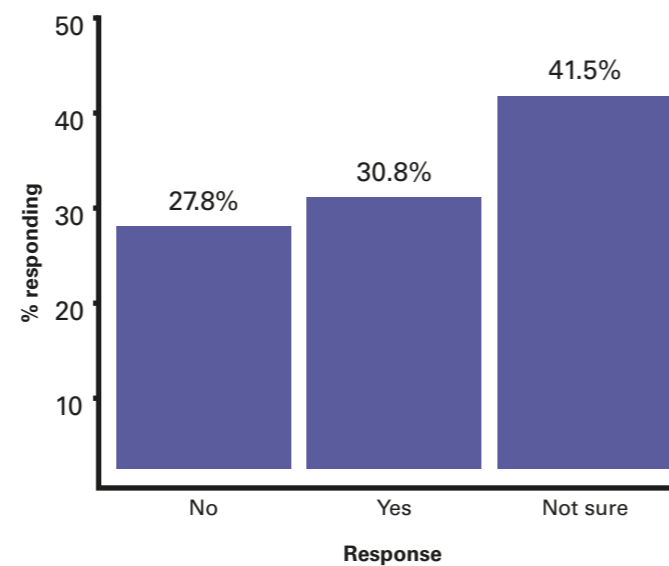


Figure 2: Response to survey question 'Do you think that university security on campus keep students safe?' (n=562).

across subpopulations. Figure 4 compares attitudes towards the effectiveness of security at keeping students safe between respondents having, and not having, protected characteristics.³¹ It shows that those without protected characteristics were significantly more likely to feel that campus security kept students safe. This group was also significantly more likely to think that the presence of police on campus was beneficial to student safety. It shows that those without protected characteristics were significantly more likely to feel that campus security kept students safe (47.6%) compared to those with protected characteristics (29.3%). Respondents with protected characteristics were also significantly more likely to think that the presence of police on campus was beneficial to student safety (31.6%) compared to those with protected characteristics (16.4%).

Relatedly, there was a commonly held view across survey respondents that some students were more likely to have encounters or issues with university security on campus (Figure 5). When asked what factors may make people more susceptible to having encounters with university security, the most commonly identified factor was race (stated by 78.6% of respondents; see Table 2), followed by gender (61.7%) and social class (54.8%).

In addition to questions on university security, respondents were also asked about attitudes towards the police having a presence on campus. Police were much less visible than security personnel, with just 2.5% of respondents seeing them daily. Participants were even less clear about the effectiveness of police on campus keeping students safe; 45.6% were not sure, 36.8% thought police did not keep students safe but 17.6% thought they did. Contrary to attitudes towards security services, students generally felt that police on campus were not necessary in other ways (44.1% not necessary, 35.4% not sure, 20.5% are necessary). Regarding the factors that influence the likelihood of having an encounter with police, participants reported similar factors to those cited with regard to security, with race (88.9%), gender (66.7%) and social class (66.4%) again being the most widely cited factors.

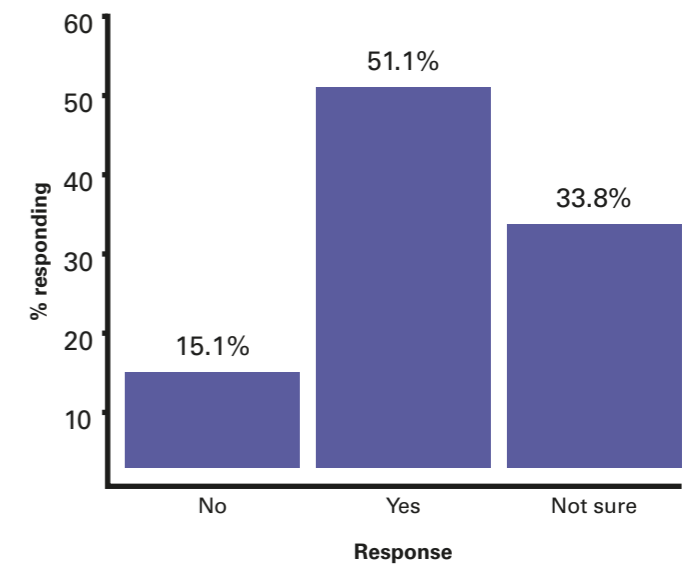


Figure 3: Response to survey question 'Do you believe that university security on campus are necessary in other ways?' (n=562).

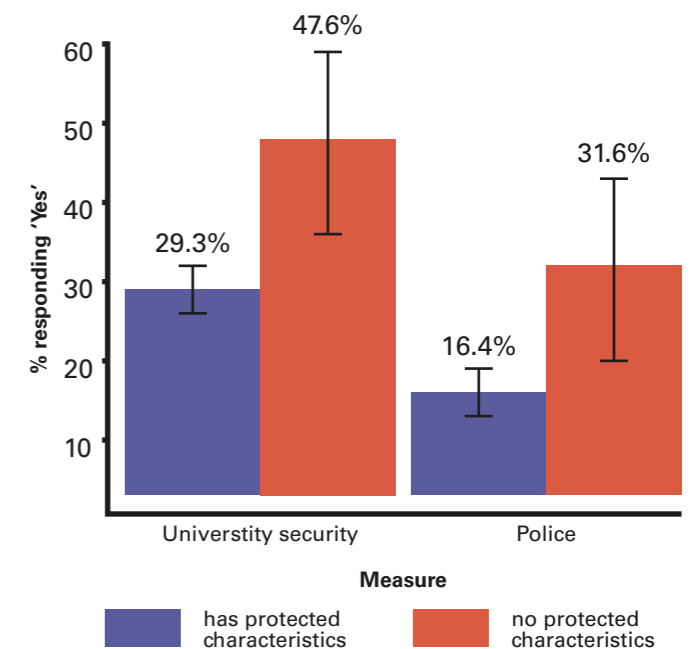


Figure 4: Comparison of survey responses on whether respondent feels that campus security and police keep students safe, split by protected characteristics; n (university security) = 519 with protected characteristics, 42 without; n (police) = 483 with protected characteristics, 38 without.

Survey questions: i) 'Do you think that university security on campus keep students safe?' ii) 'Do you think that police on campus keep students safe?'

Conclusion

The quantitative survey results reveal that while security personnel are a consistent presence on campuses, there is considerable uncertainty among students around the effectiveness of security services in keeping students safe. However, students do believe that security services are necessary in other ways, including in performing caretaking roles that include providing signposting and room access. Conversely, students generally did not see the need for a police presence on campus, and were even less sure about whether they kept students safe. There were differences among the student body around the perceived effectiveness of security services, with students with protected characteristics being less likely to think that security services kept students safe than those without protected characteristics. Certain groups were identified by respondents as having a greater likelihood of an encounter with police or security services, with race, gender and social class all being identified as important factors.

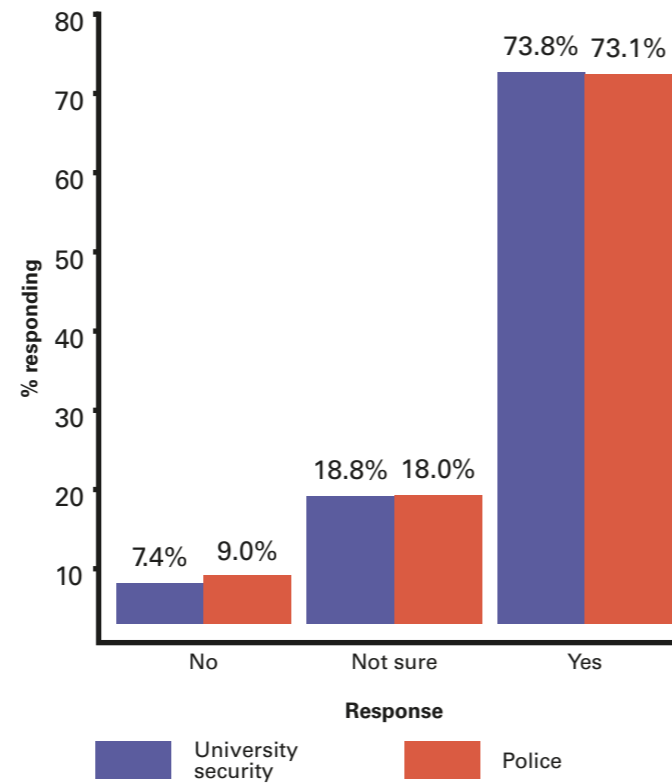
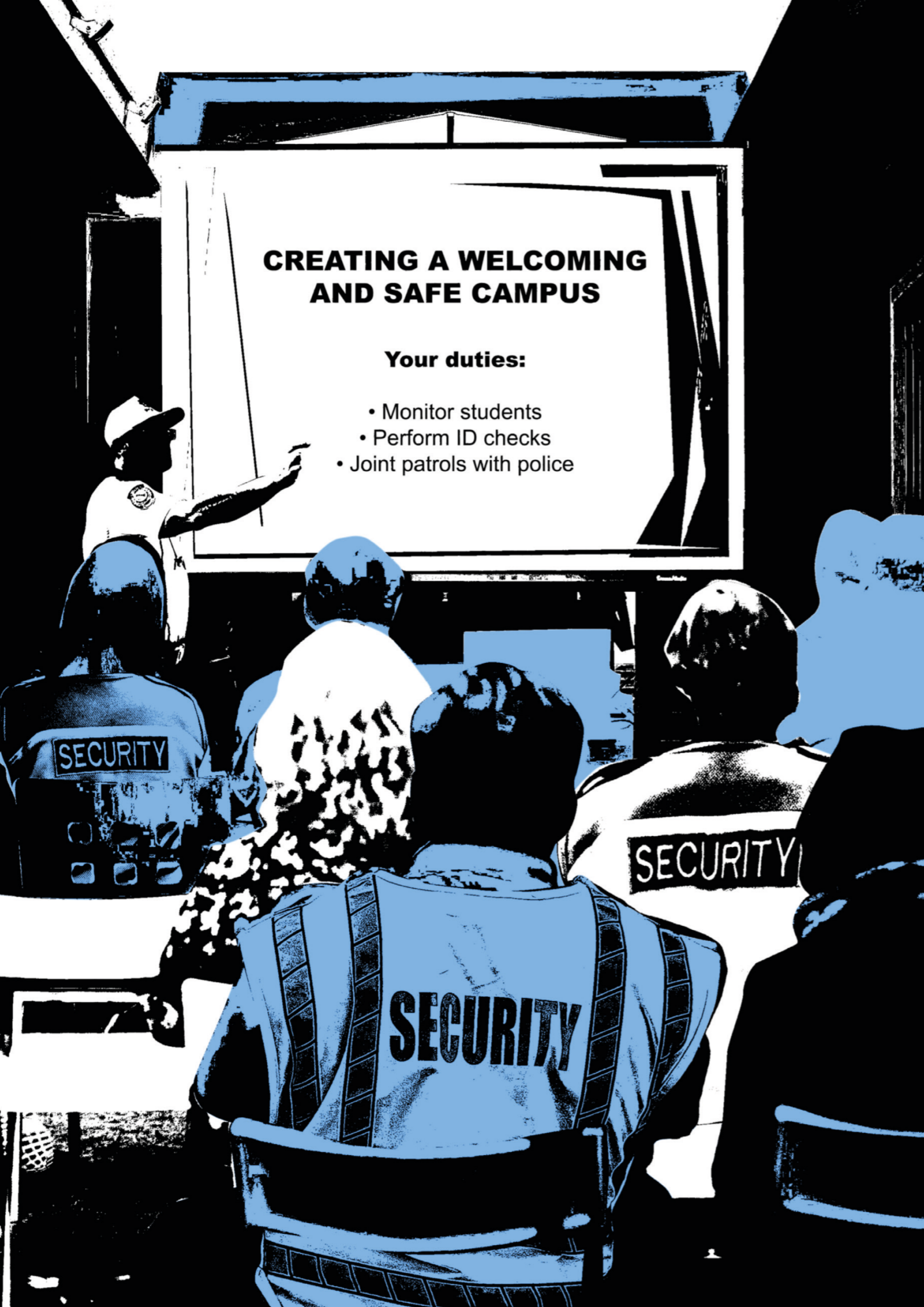


Figure 5: Response to survey question 'Do you think that some people are more likely than others to have encounters or issues with university security/police on campus?' (n=526 university security; n=501 police).

Factor	Uni Security		Police	
	n	%	n	%
Disability	130	39.2	126	38.9
Faith	121	36.4	161	49.7
Gender	205	61.7	216	66.7
Migrant Status	159	47.9	202	62.3
Nationality	149	44.9	185	57.1
Race	261	78.6	288	88.9
Social Class	182	54.8	215	66.4
Sex Worker Status	138	41.6	182	56.2
Sexuality	109	32.8	139	42.9
Other	52	15.7	42	13.0
Total N	332		324	

Table 2: Among those who thought that encounters with security/police are more likely for some people than others, what factors did they think affected the likelihood of an encounter?

Survey questions: What factors do you think affect the likelihood of an encounter with (security/police) on campus? Please select all that apply.



Chapter 2: The role of security services and police on campus

This chapter explores the role of both security services and police on campus. It begins by establishing how universities define the role of campus security and their commitment to these services at three universities in Greater Manchester. Next, consideration is given to how students understand the role of campus security, exploring critical differences in perception among students and the disjuncture between students' understandings and the definitions provided by universities. Finally, the chapter turns to the role of police on campus, exploring their growing presence through research collaborations and co-delivery of training schemes, as well as their controversial interventions during the Covid-19 pandemic and campus protests.

The role and expansion of security services at universities

Campus security officers have many different roles. A review of job descriptions and security policies at three Greater Manchester universities reveals several interlocking responsibilities under the broader remit of creating a 'safe' and 'welcoming' environment for students, staff and visitors,³² including to:

- serve as a first point of contact
- monitor and control access to campus buildings and other facilities
- conduct regular campus patrols
- monitor CCTV
- respond to security related incidents and assist with the maintenance of public order on campus
- administer emergency first aid
- protect university property
- liaise with the police and other emergency services
- oversee compliance with Prevent

Importantly, security officers have only civilian powers which means that they are not permitted to perform searches of personal property without permission, nor are they permitted to detain people using more than 'reasonable force' in accordance

with the principles of a citizen's arrest. Accordingly, campus security often liaise with the police in situations that are deemed to require further action.

The financial costs associated with security services are not insubstantial with combined annual expenditures at the three Greater Manchester universities - University of Manchester (UoM), Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and University of Salford (UoS) - totalling more than £8 million in 2020/21.³³ The UoM's spending on campus security alone exceeded £5 million in 2020/21 and in February 2020 it procured a four-year contract with a private security provider totalling an additional £1.3 million. This contract reflects the move toward the much criticised outsourcing of labour in HE.³⁴ The UoM and MMU also both fund private security providers to conduct night-time patrols. According to the UoM, 'The role of the patrols is to professionally witness noise and anti-social behaviour which can be used as evidence by relevant officers in the City Council and in the universities'. Where deemed relevant, this evidence is used to feed into University disciplinary procedures.³⁵ In 2021, the three Greater Manchester universities also forged a joint collaboration with technology company CriticalArc to create the Manchester SafeZone Alliance that draws on smartphone technology to enable security teams to work collaboratively. A press release by MMU states that this would help 'the three security control rooms to extend the footprint of 24/7 support beyond their campus boundaries'.³⁶

Student understandings of the role of security services

When asked what they thought the role of security services on campus should be, the majority of student interviewees placed primacy on their responsibility to keep students safe. As Rosa (UoS) noted, 'I think their main job is to make the students safe.'³⁷ Interviewees defined this protective role in a number of ways; several even indicated that security personnel should be responsible for intervening to protect students from physical violence either from other

students or members of the public. Teighlor (UoM), for example, asserted that security services should focus on *'keeping people safe [...] if there are fights going off'*. Michal (UoM) agreed stating that it was important to have *'someone there to [...] calm the situation down or resolve it'* should a physical altercation take place.

Several others argued that security services had a particular responsibility to protect women and other students who may be at risk of sexual violence. Eshani (UoM) emphasised the importance of *'after-dark security'* particularly for women, and Katie (UoS) similarly pointed to the importance of security officers providing *'rape alarms or services that help [women] when they're, like, worried or walking home alone'*. A smaller number of interviewees described the role of campus security in keeping students safe in other ways including protecting students from non-violent crimes such as property theft and damage, deterring drug dealing on campus, and providing first aid.

These responses were broadly echoed by the findings of the national survey in which respondents highlighted keeping students safe as the *'prime job'* of security services. In addition to the protective functions already identified, several survey respondents felt security officers were also necessary to address *perceived* threats to student safety in the form of *'outsiders'* or *'non-students'* entering campus. As one respondent expressed, *'[Security] protect students from outside threats [...] such as general public walking onto campus.'* As Chapter 3 explores, other students expressed concerns about this *boundary policing* role and its disproportionate impact on racially minoritised populations, but it remains a recurrent theme in students' understandings of the purpose of campus security.

It is notable in both the interviews and the survey that students see a wide array of responsibilities falling to security services under their protective role. As one survey respondent explained, *'Our security team cover a lot of out-of-hours issues, including helping students move into emergency accommodation if something happens with theirs.'*

They respond to fire alarms, perform first aid, and carry AEDs in their vans. They also help with lock-outs.' In Chapter 6, the report also explores a trend of campus security being first responders to student mental health emergencies due to increased pressure on the NHS and university-based counselling services. Not all interviewees and respondents felt that it was appropriate that security personnel take on these wide-ranging roles but, in the absence of effective alternatives, many considered their presence as better than no response or escalation to police intervention. Chapter 9 explores some of the alternatives students have proposed including greater investment in university counselling and wellbeing provision as well as other non-security initiatives such as helplines, late night transport services, and peer support systems.

A significant proportion of respondents viewed this protective role as the central or only purpose of campus security. As one respondent put it, *'They have no other purpose than to keep students safe, nor should they.'* However, as the following chapters show, respondents were much more ambivalent about whether campus security fulfilled this protective role in practice, with many viewing the interventions of security officers as *'ineffective'*, *'unnecessary'* and causing *'more harm than good'*.

However, student accounts of encounters with campus security illuminate how this duty to keep students safe can conflict with other roles such as *protecting university property* and *maintaining public order*. As will be shown in Chapter 5, this role conflict was observed more frequently by respondents familiar with, or involved in, campus protest. As one survey respondent expressed, *'I see security as, like, the uni's private police and like the police they are there primarily to protect property and maintain the status quo by stopping protest.'* Another reinforced this account, asserting that the *'main job [of security services] is to keep the students from protesting, and surveil and eavesdrop on the students.'* One respondent simply stated, *'They are a tool of the uni for control.'* While universities might consider the role of security personnel in such circumstances as one of responding to security-related incidents

and assisting with the maintenance of public order, a number of students in the project interpreted security's role very differently, as one of *maintaining the status quo*. Importantly, the status quo that student activists viewed security as maintaining – and themselves as responding to – was one that they considered to be harmful.

As Chapter 7 shows, role conflict was particularly pronounced during the Covid-19 pandemic when security services were often tasked by university senior leaders with the surveillance and patrolling of student residences to ensure compliance with Covid-19 legislation. As Billie (UoM) put it, *'[Security] perceived themselves to be not there as, like, wellbeing but, like, law enforcement.'* Teighlor (UoM) asserted, *'Covid-wise their role was just to protect these Covid policies but in a very inhumane way. [...] making sure they [students] were following these rules.'* As the report shows, an area of particular concern was the intensification of campus security's role as a liaison with the police, with students describing how security officers invited police onto campus and granted them entry to student residences in order to investigate suspected violations of coronavirus legislation. In their interviews, students describe a growing convergence between the roles of police and campus security that radically undermined the latter's stated role as protectors of students.

As a result of their concerns about this role convergence, and the increasingly expansive role of security services, some students asserted that greater clarity about the parameters of the role of security services is necessary. Meera (MMU) said that the *'university needs to be a bit more open about our security and what their actual role is.'* In a similar vein, Olivia (MMU) called for universities to *'publish guidelines'* detailing the role of campus security more clearly: *'If they're not going to get rid of security altogether, we need to at least know what they're supposed to be doing. That way we can very easily point out where they're straying from their guidelines and report it to [the] university and it should be very quickly dealt with.'* The report explores university complaint processes in Chapter 8.

The expanding role of police on campus

Police are on campus in a number of different capacities, be it for operational matters, or in their growing role as partners with universities in the delivery of training programmes and research collaborations. In 2020, the College of Policing introduced the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF), a set of new standardised educational requirements for police officers. Recruits seeking to join as constables are now expected to complete a professional education qualification from a course of study at a university or other educational institution accredited by the College of Policing.³⁸ The creation of the PEQF provides a new market for universities with over forty institutions now offering a professional policing degree.³⁹ One of these is the UoS, which in its own words made *'a strategic decision to develop Policing as part of its portfolio of professional subject areas'*. This involved *'a partnership with Greater Manchester Police to deliver a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, a Degree Holder Entry Programme and a Professional Development Transformation package'*. In September 2021, the UoS also launched a BSc in Professional Policing.⁴⁰ As is common practice for programmes of this nature, they have created a pipeline for former police officers entering academic roles, with new posts at the UoS requiring *'substantial professional policing experience'* and *'experience of operational policing in a senior role'*.⁴¹ Serving police officers teaching or attending these courses maintain their powers while on campus.

In addition to these professional training partnerships, universities and police forces are increasingly forging research collaborations that inform policing practices. In 2022, the ESRC awarded nearly £8 million to the Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre led by the University of York and University of Leeds. This research centre includes formal partnerships with the Home Office, the College of Policing, the National Police Chief's Council, and several local police forces from across the North of England. Other large-scale police-university research collaborations include the University of Birmingham's Centre for Crime, Justice and Policing,

the Keele Policing Academic Collaboration, the Open University Centre for Policing Research and Learning, and the N8 Policing Research Partnership.⁴² MMU's Crime & Well-being Big Data Centre also involves one of these partnerships. These growing partnerships serve to strengthen the ties between universities, academics and policing agencies.

In regards to the operational duties of the police, universities are often members of multi-agency partnerships that include local government agencies as well as local police forces, which facilitate cross-institutional knowledge exchange and referrals. Greater Manchester-based universities conform to this practice and routinely share information with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) including in situations where student conduct allegedly constituted a criminal offence.⁴³ GMP also provides universities with information about students that may be relevant to internal disciplinary procedures.⁴⁴ GMP runs weekly drop-in sessions on the MMU campus for students who have 'crime concerns' and recruit new officers from stalls located on campuses.⁴⁵

While many respondents recognised a role for security services on campus, particularly in protecting students, most saw a much more limited role for the police. Those that did believe that police should have a role tended to emphasise how their presence on campus, much like security services, helped keep students safe by acting as deterrent for problematic behaviour including what students variously defined as physical and sexual violence, drug dealing and theft. Others, however, questioned the efficacy of police in playing this protective role and felt that the risks associated with their presence outweighed any perceived benefits. As one survey respondent noted, *'Police aren't actually very helpful in aiding victims and often criminalise young people/oppressed communities.'* Another agreed, asserting, *'I think police are more likely to be violent to students than to protect them. I know more students who have been hurt or harassed by police than helped.'*

As Chapter 7 shows, students' encounters with police at Greater Manchester-based institutions

during the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated these concerns. A significant number of survey respondents expressed opposition to police having *'a permanent presence on campus'* viewing security services as *'sufficient'*. Some described police as *'a last resort'* asserting that *'[u]nless there is an exceptional reason the police should not be on campus.'* Nasir (UoM) said, *'I don't think there is any place for police most of the time on campus.'* Many other participants insisted that police were *'not the answer'* and – as explored in Chapter 9 – called for alternatives that prioritise non-punitive approaches to harm and conflict resolution.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the role of security services and police on university campuses. By considering how these roles are defined by institutions, the chapter has shown that the role of security personnel is characterised by a vast range of competing responsibilities. Centring the perspectives of students, the chapter has also revealed that there is often disjuncture between institutional and student understandings of the role of security officers, something that will be explored in later chapters. In addition, the chapter has considered the increasing police presence on campuses, including as part of training and educational programmes in institutions, and showed that students have a range of concerns about the roles and actions of police. This will be explored further later in this report.



Chapter 3: Racism and boundary policing

Alongside student activism, a growing body of research has long established that higher education is underpinned by institutional racism⁴⁶ – that is, racism which not only occurs between individuals, but is deeply embedded in the practices, policies, procedures and cultures of the university. This scholarship shows that across many fronts, racially minoritised students face barriers, challenges, and exclusions, and – significantly – are often seen as ‘outsiders’ or ‘bodies out of place’ in university spaces.⁴⁷ Relatedly, wider research on both security services and policing has shown that racism shapes experiences: racially minoritised communities are seen as ‘suspect’ and subject to racial profiling.⁴⁸ More specific research on policing in educational contexts has highlighted the central role of racism in shaping who is most vulnerable to harm,⁴⁹ and high-profile cases involving Black students – such as Zac Adan and Femi Nylander – have brought attention to issues concerning racism and the securitisation of campuses. Both of these cases demonstrate how it is often an institutional imperative to keep perceived ‘outsiders’ off campus – or, *boundary policing* – that drive encounters with security services.

Building on this wider evidence, this chapter provides specific empirical evidence on racism and the securitisation of university campuses. In doing so, it highlights racism and attendant boundary policing as a key area of concern regarding the securitisation of universities. The chapter explores the views and experiences of students using interview and survey data in order to elaborate upon the quantitative headlines from Chapter 1. It first considers racial profiling and disproportionate treatment, then boundary policing. Lastly, it considers the extent to which the issues discussed can be understood as pertaining to the role of individuals and/or institutions.

Racial profiling and disproportionate treatment

Findings from this project reveal a widespread perception among participants that racially minoritised students are disproportionately likely to have encounters with security services and/or police on campus, and

that they are more likely to experience harm as a consequence of these interactions. As shown in Chapter 1, survey findings show that a significant majority of respondents (73.8%) felt that some people were more likely than others to have encounters with *university security* on campus. When asked which factors most affected that likelihood, race was the most common choice (selected by 78.6% of respondents). In terms of factors affecting the likelihood of an encounter with *police* on campus, race was again the most prevalent factor, selected by 88.9% of respondents.

Unsurprisingly then, in interviews with students, reflections around inequalities related to securitisation on campus often centred around how racism shapes encounters and experiences. Clover (UoM) put it plainly, saying that ‘*people from other races who aren’t white are targeted more.*’ Alex (MMU) concurred, saying ‘*they’ll treat me differently to my friends of colour,*’ and Zee (UoS) insisted that ‘*police and security*’ are ‘*a threat*’, because ‘*they target and racially profile and then do harm.*’ Daisy (UoM) concurred, suggesting that Black and Asian men were ‘*especially*’ targeted:

[...] they will literally target them more in comparison to the white people, especially for drugs because they will just say, oh they look like drug dealers [...] just like racially profiling them straight away. But you wouldn’t ask the white girl who’s always doing drugs every weekend to, like, check – patting them down.

Daisy’s assertions about racial profiling were particularly prescient given that, as discussed in the introduction, a security officer was recorded following the incident involving Zac Adan as saying that he did not ‘know of any white drug dealers, white female drug dealers’. As Omar (UoM) put it, ‘*basically making the implication that a person has either got to be Brown or Black [...] in order to sell drugs.*’

Drawing particular attention to the role of the police in the securitisation of campus, Gavin (UoM)

recounted an incident involving a 19-year-old Black girl who was arrested by police on her birthday. The incident on Fallowfield campus during Covid lockdown ‘was documented in quite an appalling video’ which, for Gavin, reflected the ‘hostile, intimidating [and] unwelcoming’ practices of campus security services. Daisy (UoM) also recounted her own negative experience:

During Covid the police came into our uni flat because I think someone reported us to ResLife and ResLife let the police come in. And then me and my friend, we both got fined £200 because she didn’t live in my flat. And then I asked the other girls in my flat who are white, did you get fined? And they didn’t get fined. So we thought, okay, this is injustice, something like racial because why aren’t the other white girls getting fined?

Daisy’s personal experience indicated to her that Black students are subject to harsher treatment than their white peers, a view that was widespread. This account also shows how initiatives like ResLife⁵⁰, which are often seen to be positive by students, can play a role in facilitating this. Qualitative survey responses showed that concerns about racial profiling and disproportionate treatment extended way beyond the three universities included in the project’s interview element. A (Black) respondent from the national survey, for example, recalled being ‘the only one to enter the Student Union club and [get] stopped and searched’, adding that he ‘was stopped and searched every time [...] another time I was in a small group of black men and we all got searched. We were then accused of dealing drugs.’ The racial profiling of Black men by campus security as drug dealers was a commonly raised concern among both survey participants and interviewees, and reflects wider patterns in racist policing.⁵¹

Boundary policing

As well as attempts to manage the Covid-19 pandemic (which is discussed in Chapter 7), and tied to

concerns about the buying/selling of drugs on campus, negative encounters that students have with campus security often emerge as a consequence of institutionally driven efforts to keep those marked as potential ‘outsiders’ off university campuses – ‘outsiders’ often being seen as synonymous with non-white men. This *boundary policing* appears to be at the centre of the cases of Zac Adan and Femi Nylander mentioned in the introduction. Reflecting on Adan’s experience, Teighlor (UoM) posited that:

[...] they were probably picking on certain people and using the excuse [...] I think they felt entitled to come in all the time because there were a lot of complaints that people, like locals, were coming in; like young people to either drug deal or just to come into parties basically and a lot of them started fights, were involved in fights. I think some people got scared of that and probably told security so that was an excuse I think they used basically all the time. I’m coming here for your safety but obviously no-one felt safe.

Given how racially minoritised people are more likely to be stereotyped as ‘drug dealers’ and as ‘outsiders’ on university campuses, it seems likely that – as the previous section suggests – the ‘certain people’ that Teighlor refers to are more likely to be from racially minoritised backgrounds. This is the wider context in which Zac Adan was subject to racial profiling.

While students like Teighlor clearly raised serious concerns, as detailed in the previous chapter, there were other participants who placed value on the role security services play in keeping ‘outsiders’ off campus. Without security personnel, Meera (MMU) argued, ‘literally anyone could just walk in’ noting that she is ‘not sure if that’s safe’. A survey respondent put it more plainly, saying that security services play an important role in ‘keep[ing] the riff-raff off-campus’. Relatedly, in her interview, Vanessa (MMU) explained that she ‘liked the security things’ her university had in place, like ‘swiping your card

to get into [university buildings]’ because it made her feel like ‘they’re only letting non-dodgy people in.’ Though others questioned negative assumptions about non-students and their right to belong on campus – with participants like Clover (UoM) insisting that campus should be ‘public space’ – it is worth acknowledging here that there is some demand from students for universities to engage in boundary policing. These demands are often, as per the reference to ‘dodgy people’ and ‘riff-raff’, classed and racialised.

Though reliant upon a relatively small sample size, data from the project’s interviews suggest that there may be differences between how securitisation operates on different campuses, and boundary policing may be a feature in this. For example, suggesting that the UoS takes a comparatively ‘lighter touch’-approach, Zee (UoS) explained:

[...] a lot of rich kids go to MMU and UoM, a lot of out-of-towners, the fact that the campus [of MMU and UoM] is part of the gentrification of South Manchester and is based in communities that are heavily racialised and working class, and actually it backs onto Rusholme and Moss Side and Hulme which have, like, really bad stereotypes around like gangs and that kind of stuff. So I do wonder whether that influences the way that they manage their campuses.

Here, Zee suggests that the local dynamics (including differences between residential and commuter campuses) can determine the extent to which security officers and universities more broadly choose to engage in boundary policing. The ways in which the two Manchester city universities (UoM and (MMU) sit alongside and within local working-class, racially minoritised, and stigmatised communities – juxtaposed with the perceived relative wealth of many students – may impact upon how security services operate on the campuses. This seems to be a critical issue, given that the universities continue to expand into those communities, extracting low-wage labour,

engaging in real estate development⁵² and setting in motion a process of studentification that has a significant impact on the affordability of housing.⁵³

From individuals to institutions

Interviewees highlighted both the individual attitudes of security officers and institutional cultures in order to explain the issues confronting racially minoritised students. In terms of individual attitudes, Omar (UoM), for example, spoke of ‘the level of ignorance of these security guards’ and described how security officers appear to have ‘no knowledge or no experience on how Black people actually suffer from racism on a daily basis’. Gavin (UoM) recounted how, on several occasions (and particularly during student occupations), students had witnessed security staff ‘watching online hate videos’ from Far-Right groups such as Britain First, a claim also made by other interviewees.

Perhaps in light of experiences like Omar’s and Gavin’s, Cooper (MMU) suggested the issues were often a consequence of individuals, arguing that ‘it depends on the security person’. Olivia (MMU) likewise noted:

I’ve had other campus security people who have been very kind and very welcoming and then there’s those individuals that are the opposite. I think it’s down to personality rather than what the university is telling them to do.

This account conveys a sense that not all security officers engage in behaviours that disproportionately target and/or harm minoritised students. However, Henry (UoM) suggested that certain ‘types’ of people were often hired as security officers at his university. These officers were, Henry observed, often ‘ex-police or ex-military [...] you know where they stand politically, they’re all about law and order, they’re all about buying into these belief systems which use racialised stereotypes’.

While some of the accounts and experiences shared suggest that concerns about individuals are well

founded, the majority of participants were keen to direct their criticisms at the institution rather than, or in addition to, individual officers. This was perhaps best epitomised by Omar (UoM) who, reflecting on his own direct encounter with security personnel, elaborated on his point above about individual security officers:

[...] to be honest, I am more angry at the university than the individuals [...] I would have forgiven them for what they had done, because, yeah, they made a mistake [...] So, now what you've got to look at is, why is it that they made those decisions? [...] So, if I had never, ever received any emails or any confirmation or any, like, notice from anyone else within the university that this had ever happened and it was just one isolated, single thing, I would have just looked at those three guys and said, they were just idiots on the night it happened [...] But that's not the case [...] they had been given permission to do [it] [...] And, also, in the way that the university have tried to defend the security staff is also, like, it just shows that this is more of an institutional problem.

While Omar and others felt that individual officers should be held accountable for their actions, they drew attention to the collective failings of universities as *institutions*. If these harms were not institutionally driven, Omar suggests, they would be less widespread and, significantly, prompt a very different institutional response. Such understandings are consistent with more critical work on education and policing, and with traditions of radical anti-racist activism. The concept of institutional racism does not deny the role of individuals, but rather – to borrow from the late A. Sivanandan – demonstrates how racism ‘resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture’ of universities, ‘reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn’.⁵⁴ An institutional lens perhaps goes some way towards explaining how, as Chapter 8

will show, the initial harm experienced by individuals who have negative encounters with security officers often continues through engagement with the institution in the aftermath. Understanding the role of the institution is significant for shaping the kinds of interventions needed to address the issues facing students, as the report explores in Chapter 9.

Conclusion

Noting a wider context of rampant institutional racism in higher education, this chapter demonstrated how racism manifests with specific regard to the securitisation of campuses. Across both survey and interview data, it showed a widespread perception among students that those who are racially minoritised are particularly likely to have encounters with both security services and police on campuses. It also considered how the discrimination that racially minoritised students face is in part driven by a desire to ‘boundary police’: to keep (assumed) ‘non-students’ off campus. It then explored student views regarding the extent to which these issues are driven by individuals or institutions, ultimately arguing that an institutional lens is important in seeking change.



Chapter 4: Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence refers to forms of harm that target people because of their gender,⁵⁵ although broader definitions also include harms perpetrated against a person because of their sexual orientation.⁵⁶ Because gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequality, these forms of harm are typically directed towards cisgender women, transgender and/or non-binary people. In recent decades, the issue of gender-based violence on university campuses has increasingly attracted the attention of student and staff activists, the media, campus-based unions⁵⁷ and researchers. This attention has demonstrated that there is a pervasive acceptance and normalisation of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, sexual assault and everyday sexism on campuses.⁵⁸ While the encounters of women students' have traditionally been the focus, pockets of research and activism have shown that gender-based violence disproportionately affects minoritised students and staff, particularly trans and non-binary people.⁵⁹ In line with discussions in Chapter 8, research has also revealed the barriers to seeking redress, including by highlighting how universities' responses to gender-based violence are driven by concerns over reputational damage and a desire to dissuade potential complainants, and function to detach individual incidents from the wider social-structural contexts in which they occur.⁶⁰

This chapter grows out of previous research and activism to situate gender-based violence as a key area of concern in relation to the securitisation of campuses. It first explores participants' perceptions of safety on campus, before examining experiences of transphobia and misogyny at the hands of security officers. Next, it considers the response of security services when students encounter gender-based violence on campus from peers and/or the public. Finally, the chapter reflects on the important notion that students' views on and encounters with campus security are not universally shared.

Feelings of safety

As Figure 6 shows, perceptions of whether security services and police on university campuses keep

students safe vary by participants' gender. Less than a quarter (22.6%) of trans or non-binary students – or those who identified as an 'other' gender identity – reported feeling that campus security keep students safe. This percentage drops further to 21.0% when the category is expanded to also include respondents who identify with a different gender than that assigned at birth. Women were only slightly more likely to feel that campus security keep students safe (29.1%) and, although men were the most likely gender to feel that campus security keep students safe, less than half (39.8%) reported feeling this way. When it comes to a police presence on campus, fewer students overall felt that police keep students safe than those that feel campus security keep students safe. Only 7.7% of trans/non-binary/other students, 17.8% of women students and 21.8% of students who are men reported feeling that police on campus keep students safe.

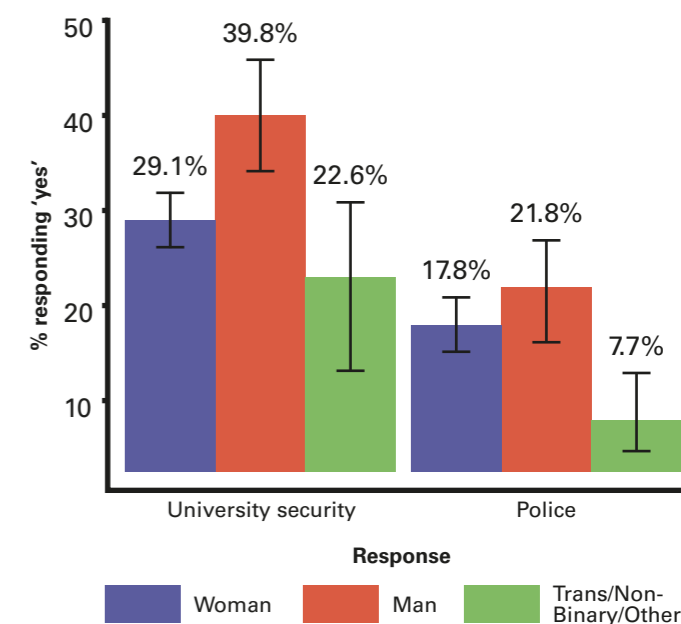


Figure 6: Comparison of survey responses on whether respondent feels that campus security and police keep students safe, split by gender; *n* (university security) = 385 women, 118 men, 53 trans/non-binary/other, *n* (police) = 354 women, 110 men, 52 trans/non-binary/other.

Survey questions: i) 'Do you think that university security on campus keep students safe?' ii) 'Do you think that police on campus keep students safe?'

Direct harms by security personnel: transphobia and misogyny

Some participants reported encountering transphobia and misogyny from security officers on campus. Henry (UoM), for example, believed that security personnel were responsible for abuse he faced online during direct action on campus:

I organised a sit-in [...] I read out the conclusions of the police report into a mic and it was live streamed on YouTube. Some security were watching the live stream on their phones, we could see through a window. And the comments on the livestream called me homophobic and transphobic slurs.

In a similar vein, survey respondents reported being 'subjected to hostile racist transphobic microaggressive attitudes' and being 'constantly misgender[ed]' by security staff, and that at one 'anti-transphobic protest on campus, security were derogatory and aggressive to trans students peacefully protesting'. What is clear from both the latter survey respondent here and Henry's account above is that student protests on campus – which the report considers in the next chapter on activism – appear to be a key channel (though not the only site) through which security personnel engage in transphobic behaviour. Explaining how experiences of transphobia shape perceptions of safety on campus, Billie (UoM) noted that her 'trans friends have really, really felt, like, actively unsafe around [campus security]'.

Women survey respondents shared accounts of encounters with security personnel that were underpinned by misogyny. One, for example, said:

Campus security were constantly flirting and making inappropriate comments towards the female students (one has asked me if I like BDSM and made other disgusting comments) and making unwarranted advances on us.

Another noted that she had been told by 'a security person in the student union' that 'new security/

bouncers were approaching girls and asking for their numbers'. She explained that this made her feel very insecure.

Experiences of transphobia and misogyny on campus were not only perpetrated by security officers but also police on campus. Reflecting on how a police presence on campus affects feelings of safety, one survey respondent explained that police 'might keep some students safe but I've found that marginalised students (Most often BAME and Queer/Trans students) have had poor experiences with the police'. Another respondent argued that police:

'appear more threatening than helpful. They are institutionally racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic etc etc and cannot claim to be equipped to protect the diverse student body.'

Importantly, these participants – like many others – draw attention not only to the existence of sexism and transphobia but also how they intersect with other systems of oppression, such as racism, to create forms of oppression which are greater than the sum of their parts.

Security services' response to sexual violence and drink spiking

Other participants focused less on explicit abuse and hostility from security officers and more on the response of security services to harm on campus, particularly in relation to sexual violence and drink spiking. In this regard, a common perception was that security officers' responses were inadequate, inappropriate and/or harmful. While this focus on responses to sexual violence and spiking represents a shift in focus from the discussion above, misogynistic attitudes continue to underpin many of the interactions explored below.

A key concern raised by participants pertained to responses to sexual violence on campus. One interviewee, Nicholas (MMU), noted:

I have quite a few friends that have been involved in some incident

involving sexual assault or rape. And, quite often, they've felt just not heard, be that by security or police.

The observation that victims of sexual assault on campus are not listened to or believed when they report sexual violence has been made countless times elsewhere. Phipps and Young's research with the National Union of Students (NUS),⁶¹ for example, notes that students often feel dismissed and under-supported by and within their universities.

In addition to not feeling listened to, participants also expressed disappointment at the inaction of security services in relation to reports of sexual violence. Olivia (MMU), for example, reflected on an occasion when her friend had been assaulted and security officers had not been helpful 'at all'. She explained:

And security, they should have the measures to be able to... If somebody's calling [f]or help, shouting for help, the security should be there to remove the person who's causing the issue and then to offer to support to the person who has been assaulted or has been harmed or has been spiked, and they don't do that.

While elsewhere in the report some participants viewed security personnel as being overly aggressive and punitive, here it is clear that some felt that security staff do not take incidents of sexual violence seriously enough. A similar dynamic is discussed in the NUS Liberation policy entitled 'Sexual Violence On Campus: Beyond And Against Policing And Carcerality', where it is noted that 'security exists to protect the property of the university and enforce the management's policies against students, not to protect students from harm. Often, they fail to respond properly to real harm committed against students, such as break-ins, thefts and sexual assault, while enforcing harmful drug policies.' It is of vital importance that sexual violence is taken seriously by those who are often first responders in universities. However, to address these issues, universities cannot rely on carceral approaches which 'simply perpetuate

further violence[...] instead of addressing the deep seated issues that enable sexual violence'.⁶²

Participants also raised concerns about how security services respond to incidents of drink spiking on campus. Sarah (UoM), for example, recounted her experiences of having her drink spiked and a security officer disbelieving her:

One of the bouncers, who was actually a woman, which makes this whole story so much worse [...] The bartender was like, this young lady thinks she has been spiked. Then she was like, "she definitely hasn't, she is lying. She has only been there ten minutes." [...] I kind of took comfort in the fact that she was a woman and I thought she would have a bit more sympathy and understanding for what I was going through. Wrong. I was wrong to say that.

Once again, security personnel are seen not to believe students in relation to forms of harm often – albeit not exclusively – experienced by women. As Sarah points out in the quote above, this harm was intensified for her because it was initiated by a woman security officer, from whom Sarah assumed she would receive greater empathy.

Sarah went on to explain that security personnel also blamed her for her own victimisation:

She was like, 'this is your fault, if you didn't want to get spiked you shouldn't have left your drink unattended [...] you need to be more careful.' I just start bawling my eyes out. [...] a few bouncers ran after me and [friend's name] and go, 'Are you two okay? What has happened?' I explain that I have just been spiked and the bouncers are all laughing at me. I am saying this fairly audibly, like I am violently crying and they repeat the same thing to me again, 'Oh, well did you leave your drink unattended?'

Here, victim blaming attitudes are apparent not only from the woman security officer involved in the initial encounter, but later from other security officers too. This points to a problem that extends beyond the bad practice of an individual member of staff. It also demonstrates that distress as a result of having a drink spiked can be exacerbated by the reaction of security officers.

It was not just women participants who had encountered a negative response from security personnel when they had their drinks spiked. Ryan (UoM) also spoke about his experience of having his drink spiked and explained that he too had been met with a lack of concern for his safety and disavowal of his experience. He told us that:

There was a time when I was spiked on a night out [...] I wasn't drinking excessively, I didn't do any drugs, I was just there to have a good time. And then I got to the state when I couldn't stand, I couldn't walk and talk, so I managed to get in a taxi and then come back to my campus, [...] then I saw my two friends, and then they grabbed me and then took me to my flat, they let security know that, 'My friend's been spiked, he's in trouble.' And then they [security] came into my room and then they look at me and say, "Yeah, he's fine, and then just walked out."

Taken together, Ryan and other participants' encounters explored here point to a systematic disbelief of victims of gender-based and sexual violence on campus, an underplaying of the significance of these harms, and a culture of victim blaming that operates to reinforce harm.

Non-universal experiences

This is not to say that all students shared experiences that were understood to be inadequate, inappropriate, and/or harmful: that is, experiences were – as is often the case – non-universal. Eshani (UoM),

for example, told us that when a girl in her accommodation had been spiked, *'the security, like, managed to stay with the person until they were able to get professional medical advice.'* Similarly, while Nicholas (MMU) was critical of how security officers responded to his friend when she encountered sexual violence (see above), he was much more positive about his direct encounter with security officers. Reflecting on an incident in which someone he met in-person (after meeting them initially via a dating app) turned out to be *'very creepy'* and threatened to kill him, Nicholas explained that security staff:

[...] definitely wasn't undermining or anything. Because I've heard of people having that experience of feeling a bit undermined or feeling of concerns were not really helped by security. But he definitely, you know – obviously, he was a bit taken aback by some of the details – but nonetheless, he was quite understanding.

Both Eshani (UoM) and Nicholas (MMU) therefore had experiences in which security staff performed the role of keeping students safe (see Chapter 1) in responding to gender-based violence.

For others, however, things were more complicated. For example, Sariya (UoM) also noted that, as a woman, she feels safer on campus as a result of the presence of security staff. However, as she explained:

I would say from a gender perspective I feel slightly safer knowing that there is security on campus and there are people I can go to if I feel like I'm in danger. But in terms of race I don't think security makes me feel safer on campus.

What is noteworthy here is that the improved sense of security Sariya feels as a woman is disrupted by the heightened risk of negative encounters with security personnel as a racially minoritised student (see Chapter 3). Race and gender therefore intersect in complex ways to shape perceptions of and encounters with security services and police on

campus. While there was a general consensus that security personnel are ill equipped to deal with gender-based violence on campus, the accounts of Sariya, Nicholas and Eshani show that this perception was not universally shared. Indeed, as noted elsewhere in the report, it is important to acknowledge that while there are individual examples of good practice amongst security officers, there remain generalised problems with regard to a variety of areas of concern.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on gender-based violence and safety on campus. It has shown that there is a general sense of doubt regarding the ability of campus security to keep women, trans, and non-binary students safe. These doubts are even greater in relation to the police. The chapter has also revealed participants' reports of direct transphobia and misogyny from security personnel, as well as their reflections on the inadequacies of and harms caused by the responses of campus security services to sexual violence and drink spiking. To capture the mixed feelings and experiences of students, the chapter also noted some evidence of positive experiences with security personnel. This evidence does not, however, suggest that increasing the numbers of security and/or police on campus is an effective way of responding to gender-based violence, not least because security and police are themselves sources of violence. As Chapter 9 explores, there is significant appetite from students for non-carceral alternatives to securitisation on campus.



Chapter 5: Policing of student activism

Student activism has a long and rich history of pushing for social justice, both internationally and in the UK.⁶³ The seismic student protests of 2010 saw a resurgence of this activism⁶⁴ and, although not reaching the same levels of mass mobilisation, the years since have seen a steady stream of campus-based activism often punctuated by the onset of multiple crises and deepening injustice. However, at various junctures, particularly when they have been at their most powerful, student movements have been met with strong opposition and repression.⁶⁵

As discussed in the report introduction, in recent years, a number of high-profile media stories have shown how campus security and police respond to student protests. Over a similar period, it has also been possible to observe an intensification of the British state's wider attacks on protests, as evidenced by the passing of the *Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022*,⁶⁶ the *Public Order Act 2023*⁶⁷ and the draconian policing of recent protests.⁶⁸ Against this backdrop, it is perhaps not surprising that the response of police and campus security to student activism emerged as a key area of concern in this research project. This is the issue that is taken up in this chapter. Though there is often considerable overlap and collaboration between the two, the chapter first considers encounters with campus security and then encounters with police on campus.

Encounters with security during student activism and protests

As discussed earlier (see Chapter 1), the survey conducted as part of this project asked respondents to identify which factors were most likely to affect the likelihood of students having encounters with campus security and police. While the options were predetermined and did not include activists,⁶⁹ several respondents used the 'other' option to identify activists as a group who are particularly susceptible to encounters with police and security officers. That they did so without prompting reflects the significance of this issue.

In the qualitative responses to both interviews and surveys, a number of students reported having

experienced harm directly or having witnessed others experience harm at the hands of campus security and/or police. At the University of Manchester, Gavin described how, during protests on campus, security officers were 'very aggressive, shouting at students, swearing [...] extremely unfriendly [...] very hostile'. He continued to suggest that security acted as 'aggressors' during protests and were 'not willing to try to facilitate peaceful protests'. Henry (UoM) recalled security officers having 'assaulted two of [his] friends during the protest' with both having to go 'to A&E with neck injuries'. This, among other incidents, led him to conclude that 'they're actively a danger'. Kit (UoM) told of having been 'assaulted by uni security twice and threatened with assault another time', each interaction occurring during a student protest.

Kit also explained how student activists had 'unearthed a network of security guards on Twitter who would just give us abuse', while also posting content that shows them to be 'very out-and-out Far-Right'.⁷⁰ In 2023, the student campaign group UoM Rent Strike announced that, following suspicions over two years, they were now able 'to confirm the identity of these accounts as UoM employees', including a 'senior manager in estates and facilities'⁷¹ and that they had collated evidence to submit to the university,⁷² with the expectation that the institution would 'take urgent action'.⁷³ UoM Rent Strike confirmed to the authors that they were informed by the UoM that investigations would be launched into two of four employees that they submitted evidence on, but that no update has since been provided. The UoM told the authors that '[a] comprehensive review of that evidence was completed by the University during February 2023 and appropriate steps were taken.' The UoM went on to explain that it was unable to share any further information 'because of the confidentiality obligations owed to individual members of staff'.

Issues around activism and protest were not unique to the UoM, though it certainly seems to have been a site of particular concern. Responses to the national survey attest to the policing of student activism as a

more widespread concern. For example, one survey respondent described how, when ‘asking for directions, help or information’ interactions have generally been ‘pleasant and polite interactions on both sides’. However, when interactions have been in the context of protest or occupation, security officers have been ‘very hostile, abusive and at times violent’. As they continued to explain:

In 2021 we tried to occupy a building and a security guard assaulted me. He kned me in the thigh leaving a bruise that was there for a week or two and then threw me to the floor before climbing on top and pinning me to the ground. Throughout the occupation security were verbally abusive to us, one called me a ‘fucking cunt’ I think.

Another respondent wrote that students had been ‘handing out leaflets about the increasing rent on campus’ with a ‘mega phone and a banner’, and three members of security staff were there to respond as well as ‘one in a van’. This, the respondent argued, was ‘so oppressive and pointless and disproportional’. As such, student accounts suggest that student activism and protests attract responses from security services that sit in stark contrast to the relative non-response to gender-based violence (see previous chapter).

Encounters with police during student activism and protests

Drawing attention to the relationship between campus security and police, specifically in relation to protest, another survey respondent remembered an occasion when:

Security interfered with a banner-making session we held in support of UCU [University and College Union], asking us whether we were students or not and attempting to disperse us for no reason. Half a year later, when a group of student activists protested outside a professional services

[administration] building belonging to the uni, security cooperated with Metropolitan police who were called to the scene (for no reason, given the protest was a peaceful one).

Similarly, another survey respondent referred to an incident in which:

Someone from the university called the cops on peacefully protesting students. It also happens like clockwork that for some reason cops turn up to events held by the Friends of Palestine society.

A clear concern for both of these respondents is the ways in which universities work with the police in relation to protest. Other respondents also drew attention to how student protests were a key factor in bringing police on to campus. In his interview, Henry (UoM) explained that protest was, alongside Covid (as discussed in Chapter 7), one of the factors that brought police onto campus: ‘The other time when the police were on campus that wasn’t Covid-related was when there was the protest... and that was when there were three riot vans.’

Key concerns raised by participants in relation to a police presence on campus relate to both the nature and consequences of interactions with students. Gavin (UoM), for example, described a ‘history [...] particularly at Manchester, of police being extremely violent and aggressive towards protesters’. Indeed, a survey respondent concurred, arguing that ‘the disproportionate and heavy-handed response to recent peaceful student protests on campus raises alarm for students’ right to protest and safety of expression’. This was also the case for students who were not even involved in the protests in question: Teighlor (UoM) described police ‘forcing us all inside our flats’ in response to a protest, even though she was ‘literally having a cigarette outside’.

Henry (UoM) linked the policing of student protests to the wider socio-political context. As he put it:

I know a student who’s been kicked off a university course because of a

criminal record that she got from a protest and I think we’re going to see that more and more targeting of Leftist activists with the PCSC Bill⁷⁴ and the new bills about terrorism and stuff. I think that’s very likely that’s also going to be applied to activism. So yes, I think university policies need to change on that and students need to organise around that.

As Henry (UoM) suggests, given the profound consequences that criminalisation can have, there is a serious need for universities to consider the role that they play in enabling the criminalisation of students. In mentioning policy, here, Henry is clear in understanding the policing of activism to be driven by institutions.

Given how racism operates not only in the securitisation of campuses but also in the criminal justice system, and in courts specifically, it is again worth noting the heightened threat posed to racially minoritised students.⁷⁵ This may be particularly pertinent when considering that for many students, the right to protest is of deep importance to them as individuals and to their conception of the university. As Gavin (UoM) argued:

you’ve got whole departments where you’ve got people who write things and they study things, and it’s all about... a lot of it’s about challenging other people’s ideas and seeing other perspectives [...] I think protesting or at least raising your concerns about certain things it’s integral to university [...] So I think as much as people think...associate universities with students who are particularly political, particularly Left-leaning, or anti-this, anti-that, actually the very idea of having university education and academia about seeing... seeking radical ideas or challenging existing ideas, it’s built into the very fabric of it.

Here Gavin suggests that the university should be a space that encourages the ‘challenging [of] existing ideas’. As such, rather than opposing and criminalising it, higher education should encourage and enable protest as a vehicle through which to change the status quo.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 has highlighted the policing of student activism as a key area of concern. This reflects a wider context in which the right to protest is under sustained attack, and subject to heavy policing. Across the survey and interviews, there were many instances in which students reported experiencing direct harm at the hands of security officers or police, and witnessing others experience harm, in the context of protests and activism. The harms detailed are wide ranging, including physical and verbal assaults, and online abuse. Participants raised concerns about the gravity of the consequences for students who came into contact with the police on campus, while there was also insistence on the importance of activism for a healthy academic culture. From the perspective of many of the students who feature in this chapter, universities (and therefore security services) should support rather than inhibit students’ right to protest.



Chapter 6: Mental health

The prevalence of mental health issues among students is widely understood to be a growing problem. Data collected by the Office for Students – the regulator for the higher education sector in England – shows that the number of students disclosing a mental health condition to their university in England in 2020/21 was nearly seven times higher than a decade earlier.⁷⁶ In a survey conducted by the mental health charity Student Minds in 2022, 57% of student respondents reported a mental health problem and 30% of respondents noted that their mental health has worsened since starting university.⁷⁷

While there are a complex range of social, psychological and biological factors that contribute to students' poor mental health, key issues include: academic pressures, financial worries, moving away from home and the absence of familiar support networks.⁷⁸ Research has also demonstrated that the Covid-19 pandemic generally, and periods of 'lockdown' particularly, had a profound impact on students' mental health.⁷⁹ There is, therefore, significant (and growing) demand placed on campus-based counselling and wellbeing services, with one study indicating that demand increased by 94% between 2012 and 2017.⁸⁰ This has led the National Union of Students and other student activists to lobby for more funding for wellbeing services.⁸¹

This chapter explores mental health as another key area of concern as it pertains to security services and police on campus. As noted in Chapter 2, a review of job descriptions and security policies at the three Greater Manchester universities reveals that the key roles of security services include serving as a *first point of contact* and administering *emergency first aid*. Students reflected on how they saw these roles manifest in action, including in relation to mental health. Here, the chapter first explores participants' experiences of interactions with campus security in the context of security services operating as first responders to mental health incidents on campus. Next, it examines the impact of encounters with security personnel and police on campus on students' mental health and wellbeing.

Security as first responders to mental health incidents

In a context in which demand for university wellbeing services far outstrips supply, participants spoke about how security officers are often the first responders to mental health incidents on campus. Vittoria (MMU), for example, reflected on the positive experience of one of her friends who had '*overdosed and tried to kill herself*' on two occasions, explaining:

[...] security started checking on her. So, they were taking care of people, sometimes if there were issues. They were sometimes washing their hands [disengaging and not taking responsibility] but, in that case, I remember the security were coming and checking on her [...] Sometimes they were going and knocking on her door and if she wasn't opening it, they were opening it to check if she was alright. They were actually really nice with her.

Although perceiving that security officers do not always adopt this approach, Vittoria makes clear that security staff were supportive and caring in the case of her friend. Vittoria was not alone in highlighting the practice of security services engaging in welfare checks on students – generally understood as security officers visiting students at their accommodation – with several survey respondents also having either called security services to perform a welfare check on another student or having had a welfare check performed on them.

Reflecting on their own encounter with security personnel after suffering a '*severe mental health episode*', one survey respondent described security staff at their institution as '*exceptional*', explaining:

Security treated me with kindness and patience, which was a welcome change from the behaviour of preceding individuals who provoked

my episode (my employers in widening participation, ironically). Two security officers attended; one stood back to observe as the other talked me down from my self-destructive eruption. They provided me with a space to come back to myself, a cup of tea and company. I was grateful for the humanity of the encounter. They escorted me to a local mental health community space as soon as it opened in the evening.

Once again, the kindness of security staff is noted, as well as their sensitive handling of the situation. It is significant that in this account the respondent juxtaposes the behaviour of security personnel with that of other university staff, who are described as having provoked the mental health incident. Reflective of overstretched and under-resourced wellbeing provision on university campuses, it is also significant that the respondent points to dedicated mental health provision not being available at the time of the incident.

While the experiences outlined above demonstrate that individual security staff can be effective first responders, many other respondents in this study reported less positive experiences. Wider literature has noted how first responders are often perceived by people experiencing mental health crises to lack relevant competence, skills, knowledge and training to perform the role adequately.⁸² With first responders often not affording mental health crises the seriousness they deserve, responses – particularly when insensitive, threatening, unprofessional or stigmatising – can exacerbate harm.

With this wider context in mind, questions ought to be asked about why this critical role in higher education is being performed by security staff rather than wellbeing teams that should have the specialised skills and knowledge to respond to mental health incidents. The following accounts underline the importance of asking such questions. One survey respondent, for example, said:

two of these encounters took place in 2017, they were so called 'welfare checks' at my campus accommodation when I had been triaged by the university medical centre for seeking support for suicidal ideation. By turning up unannounced, campus security triggered me into having a panic attack on one of the occasions.

As this participant – and others – noted, security personnel can not only be ill-suited to dealing with welfare issues, but their response can in fact exacerbate the situation, in this case causing the student to have a panic attack. Another respondent expressed concerns in a similar vein:

[...] when I was distressed/suicidal on campus (I have mental health issues) and other students went to tell security and security came and talked to me and then took me back to my accommodation. I found them quite intimidating and scary and the big bulky police-type uniform they wore made my distress worse – it felt like I was in trouble and everyone was looking at me because I was with security.

Here too, it is apparent that the response of security personnel worsened the student's distress. This is in no small part a result of the role conflict identified in Chapter 2, and thus driven by institutional factors. Indeed, the respondent's experience appears to be shaped by an understanding that security services exist to maintain order on campus, as is reflected in and reinforced by their 'police-type uniform'. As such, rather than being perceived as a support mechanism, security officers were regarded by this participant as an intimidating presence and thus inappropriate at dealing with mental health incidents on campus.

Other survey respondents drew attention to how security staff fulfil the role of first responder in as far as they arrive on the scene quickly but that their subsequent actions are insufficient or inappropriate. One respondent wrote:

we are signposted to call security if we need emergency mental health support as they are apparently first aid trained. They were unable to do anything for me.

That security officers are ill-equipped to deliver mental health support is not unsurprising because they are not required to undertake extensive training in mental health and wellbeing, nor could they reasonably be expected to do so given their wide-ranging, and often conflicting, roles. Once again, this raises serious questions about whether security officers are best positioned to undertake the first responder function as it pertains to mental health. Indeed, an insensitive and inappropriate response from security staff characterised another participant's account:

They arrived quickly but dealt with the situation poorly. They told her she had done something 'silly', this was while she was still on the floor with a rope round her neck. I couldn't believe it.

Once again, the first responder role is shown to oblige security officers to engage in encounters with students with mental health problems – in this case a suicide attempt – for which they are ill-equipped. As a result, the response of security officers is perceived by this student both to lack sensitivity and an understanding of the severity of the situation.

As noted in Chapter 2, in addition to serving as a first point of contact, security officers are expected to perform the role of liaising with police and other emergency services. Reflecting on this role in action, one survey respondent drew attention to how this may be another channel through which security personnel's lack of understanding of mental health manifests:

a guy...unfortunately tried to harm himself by walking into a lake on campus and someone called an ambulance. But because he wasn't hurt (just cold, and clearly mentally unwell), security fined him for unnecessarily calling an ambulance onto campus.

The respondent explained that at their university there is a policy that students should not directly phone for an ambulance but rather that they should first contact security services who will decide if it is 'urgent enough'. This approach is common across many universities. This raises questions about what is regarded as 'urgent' and, in the case recounted above, demonstrates that mental ill health is not only regarded as not meeting the subjective criteria but that it incurs a punitive response.

The impact of encounters on mental health and wellbeing

In addition to reflecting on experiences of security officers as first responders to mental health incidents, participants also noted the longer-term impacts of encounters with security personnel and police on mental health and wellbeing. Henry (UoM), for example, reflected on how negative interactions can cause heightened anxieties around the presence of security officers on campus:

I think it's a matter of how safe you feel in your day-to-day life. For people in halls where security are so much closer than the police are when you live in Oak House, if you feel like they're a threat to your safety because they've attacked you or they've come inside or whatever, that's like a constant anxiety that you're going to have to live with.

As Henry (UoM) alludes to, students' sense of safety on campus, and particularly in student accommodation, is thwarted when they have negative experiences with security personnel in the places where they are living and studying, places where they expect to feel safe. Here, then, it is observable that encounters with security staff that are unrelated to mental health in the first place can contribute to mental ill health among students at a later date.

Similarly, a survey respondent noted the deep and long-lasting impact of encounters with security officers and, as a result of their co-working, the police.

They explained:

security found me in a large group with people who had drugs. I was flagged up for this both times where several men present were not (they remained silent, I was told I had to talk and [because] of my autism and the social pressures I thought this was actual fact) [...] I felt really threatened when they came into my room unannounced [sic] SEVERAL times, especially when I was a female, autistic and had experienced sexual assault while at university [...] In these interactions the security were not sympathetic to my condition nor the fact I was panting, screaming and crying [...] I was given a police record. [...] The interactions where I was written up for drugs left me really traumatised and every time even now there's a heavy knock on the door I can often get flashbacks or a pit in my stomach remembering the times they had burst into my room. It makes me cry now even writing this.

Here too, interactions with security staff – particularly when characterised by responses that students perceive to be unjust, inappropriate and/or intrusive – are shown to risk leading to students experiencing trauma that goes on to shape their everyday lives.

Finally, it is not only direct interactions with security services that contribute to poor mental health and wellbeing among students; rather, harms can arise indirectly too. This was most evident in relation to the case of racial profiling involving Zac Adan (referred to in the report's introduction). While Adan has himself spoken out about how the experience has affected his mental health and wellbeing, participants made clear that it was also distressing for students who had witnessed the interaction or heard about the case too. For many racially minoritised students, Adan's case was understood as a poignant reminder of how they are treated by security services and universities

more broadly. Reflecting on his feelings after hearing about Adan's interaction, Ryan (UoM) recalled that when a video of the incident went viral:

I messaged the girl that video recorded it and spoke to her quite a bit and then I watched the video and I literally cried. I was so visibly like broken-hearted, seeing that happening, like round the corner from my old accommodation.

As Ryan notes, harmful encounters with security staff on campus are not only experienced on an individual level but rather have ramifications for the wellbeing of the student body more widely. Moreover, Ryan's emphasis that this happened 'round the corner' from where he had once lived suggests that experiences such as these make students, Black students especially, feel unwelcome in a space where they should feel at home and part of a community.

Conclusion

Following on from Chapter 2, this chapter has shown that the role of security staff on university campuses often involves being first responders, including in relation to incidents concerning student mental health crises. There were accounts from students that detailed positive experiences with security services who acted with compassion and professionalism. Many others, however, suggested that security personnel are often ill-suited to responding to welfare issues and, in some cases, have made issues much worse, including through involving the police. It was also demonstrated that the very presence of security staff (and police) on campuses can have a negative impact upon the mental wellbeing of some students, particularly those with previous negative experiences with security services, or those that have (directly or indirectly) witnessed such experiences.



Chapter 7: Covid as a time of crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic witnessed a transformation in the role of security services as officers at many universities were tasked with the surveillance and patrolling of student residences to monitor compliance with coronavirus legislation. Activists and journalists documented key aspects of this pandemic-era intensification of campus securitisation, including the role of security services in 'locking down' students in residence halls, conducting high-visibility patrols, entering student accommodations unannounced and filing reports that resulted in disciplinary action and fines. A pioneering report by the University of Manchester-based activist group Cops Off Campus also spotlighted the growth in police presence on campus as well as a worrying trend toward increased 'collaboration' with security officers.⁸³

This chapter builds upon this nascent literature, and draws upon student accounts, to highlight how the pandemic-era intensification of campus securitisation impacted students. It begins by briefly outlining the wider socio-political backdrop against which some universities deployed security personnel to systematically monitor and control student populations in a manner that exceeded their civilian power and compromised students' sense of safety, privacy and rights. The subsequent section chronicles students' accounts of the specific strategies of containment employed by security services as well as their role in calling police to campus. Most troublingly, student accounts amplify the findings of the UoM Cops Off Campus report that security officers used their controversial right-of-entry to student homes to extend access to police who would otherwise have needed a warrant. These practices, combined with regular joint patrols between police and security officers, contributed to a deepening of existing inequalities and a growing perception among a broad cross-section of the student population of campus as a carceral space.

Returning to campus in the age of coronavirus

The return of students to university campuses in Semester 1, 2020/21 coincided with significant

changes in the UK government's approach to handling the coronavirus pandemic. On 3rd September 2020, Independent SAGE released its report recommending that all university courses be offered 'remotely and online, unless they are practice or laboratory based' to protect the safety of students, staff and wider communities.⁸⁴

Despite these warnings, many universities, including the University of Manchester (UoM) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), began preparing to welcome thousands of students back onto campuses. However, by the last two weeks of September, Covid-19 outbreaks were reported in student accommodations across the country with university leaders urging students to self-isolate. By early October, universities had halted most in-person activities and a new regional three-tier system of Covid-19 restrictions was introduced placing large parts of the country under tight regulations, enforced by police empowered to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Particularly at large residential campuses, university leaders were faced with key decisions about how to manage student populations. In the city of Manchester, these decisions were made in conjunction with the Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) via the city's Student Strategy Partnership.⁸⁵ It was against this backdrop that the role of campus security officers was transformed and spatially shifted to focus on the monitoring and controlling of students, particularly in halls of residence. Early signs of this transformation were evident at MMU in late September when 1,700 students in Birley Fields and Cambridge Halls were told to self-isolate and campus security were deployed, in partnership with local police, to stop students from leaving the premises. Students found to be breaching the lockdown were subject to disciplinary action. While many condemned the MMU lockdown as draconian, other universities soon followed suit adopting a containment strategy that included locking down halls, stationing officers at entry points, and increasing security patrols often in tandem with local police.⁸⁶

Survey data and interviews conducted with students who attended universities during and immediately following the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate the frequency and normalisation of encounters with security staff and police. While this was a national phenomenon, Figure 7 shows that the effects of securitisation were disproportionately experienced by students attending the UoM and MMU. This distinction may be indicative of different institutional approaches to securitisation and police presence during the Covid-19 pandemic. When asked whether they had ever had an encounter with police on campus, survey respondents from UoM and MMU were twice as likely to answer affirmatively (15.4%) than their counterparts from other institutions (7.3%). Similarly, when asked whether they had ever had an encounter with university security on their campus, more than half (51.5%) of survey respondents who had attended one of these two universities answered affirmatively compared to 44.4% from other institutions (this difference was not statistically significant).

Accordingly, this chapter draws on national survey data but also interviews conducted with students who attended the UoM and MMU to better understand their lived experience of security services and policing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Strategies of containment: Security checks, patrols and perimeter fencing

Interviews shed light on this transformation in security practices and how they were experienced by students living in residence halls. Alex, Vittoria, Valentina and Olivia were all first-year students at MMU during the pandemic and recall the stationing of security officers at entrances to halls to control student movement. Valentina (MMU) recalled the anxiety this provoked during the first days of the MMU lockdown in September and the inability to leave for food or exercise: *'I felt very much like they just caged me in, and they were like stood at the gate of our accommodation, so you just couldn't get out.'* Alex (MMU) similarly described it as *'basically [a] massive prison cell thing'*, while Anna (MMU) recounted how, among the restriction of other supplies, some girls *'that needed tampons'* were not

able to get them. Unsurprisingly, the MMU lockdown fostered animosity between students and security with many spelling out slogans on the windows of their residence halls which management subsequently asked them to remove.⁸⁷

Many of these practices continued after the MMU lockdown of student halls was lifted with security staff serving, in Olivia's (MMU) words, as *'gatekeepers'* and *'aggressively'* questioning students about their movements. Interviewees from the UoM described similar practices with security staff placed at the entrances to the Fallowfield campus

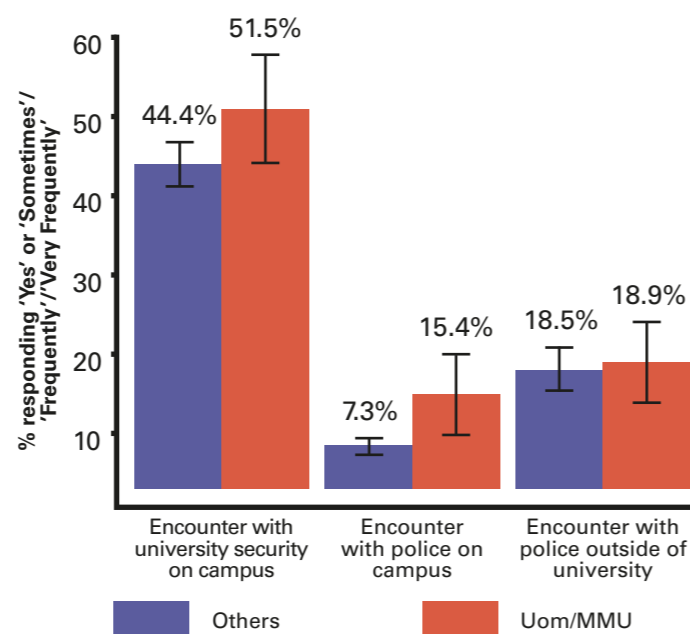


Figure 7: Comparison of survey responses on encounters with university security and police on campus, and with the police outside of the university context, for Manchester universities vs all other UK universities; N= i) 101 UoM/MMU, 529 Others, ii) 91 UoM/MMU, 478 Others; iii) 90 UoM/MMU, 466 Others.

Survey questions: i) *'Have you ever had an encounter with university security on your university campus, by which we mean a one-to-one or group interaction?'* ii) *'Have you ever had an encounter with a police officer or police officers on your university campus, by which we mean a one-to-one or group interaction?'* iii) *'Have often have you had encounters with the police outside of the university context, by which we mean a one-to-one or group interaction?'*

and students being subjected to regular ID checks and questioning. Sarah (UoM) recalls there being:

a point where if you wanted to leave the campus [...] you had to sign your name on a clipboard and the security had to take your name and details so when you came back in they could check that you had come back.

Students created a cardboard sign in protest referring to the security practices as *'Checkpoint Charlie'*.⁸⁸

In addition to ID checks, security staff also conducted regular patrols in and around residence halls. Melanie, a first-year student at the UoM in September 2020, described security staff as being *'constantly around'* and it feeling *'quite intimidating [...] especially on campus where it's supposed to be where you're staying, where you're going to be sleeping'*. Gavin (UoM) agreed, citing the presence of *'large groups'* of security officers *'driving round the campus in a very sort of threatening and intimidating way towards students'* as having caused considerable distress. As Sarah (UoM) put it, *'They [security] were just harassing everyone'*.

Sarah was partly right. This transformation of the role and spatial location of security services was experienced by all students, but it also served to exacerbate the underlying inequalities in securitisation discussed in previous chapters. Gavin (UoM) recalled how the increased presence of security personnel and frequent ID checks affected *'nonwhite students who'd come in and they'd often be stopped, and they'd have to spend a lot longer checking their student ID cards'*. Daisy (UoM) confirmed that security officers were *'everywhere'* but specifically targeted Black and South Asian men.

In early November, senior leaders at the UoM engaged in a further escalation of their efforts to control student populations by deploying additional security officers and erecting perimeter fencing around residence halls⁸⁹ – an act that, for Nasir (UoM) was *'quite stupid'*. In their accounts of the fencing incident, interviewees repeatedly emphasised the

temporal proximity of this development to the suicide of a student in residence halls just a few days earlier. As Ryan (UoM) explained:

When I first saw it, I thought, what the fuck are they thinking, just in that, like, a student had killed themselves a couple of days or a week or so before they put the fences up [...] it was just completely, completely the wrong thing to do. Students already felt like caged in or like mentally or physically, then to put fences around them [...] rattled me the wrong way.

On the morning the fences were erected, Sarah (UoM) recalled walking around looking at them in *'absolute disbelief'*:

Everyone is still kind of in shock that someone around them, in such close proximity, has committed suicide. There were ambulances everywhere outside of Unsworth [residence hall]. Then about four days later you wake up and I remember opening my curtains and there just being a fence in front of it.

Within hours of the fences being erected, more than a thousand students armed with signs – some describing the halls variously as *'HMP Fallowfield'* and *'The most expensive prison'* – staged a mass demonstration culminating in the fences being torn down and the UoM president and vice-chancellor subsequently issuing an apology.⁹⁰ In the apology, Rothwell asserted that the introduction of fencing was not intended to *'prevent students from entering or exiting the site'*, but in *'response to a number of concerns received over recent weeks from staff and students on this site about safety and security; particularly about access by people who are not residents'*.⁹¹ In the weeks and months that followed, however, students would face a new strategy of containment in the form of increased police presence on campus.

Student experiences of police on campus during Covid-19

Interviews with students from the two City of Manchester-based universities (UoM and MMU) indicate that police were a regular and visible presence on campus during the Covid-19 pandemic. 'You'd walk past the gate and there would just be five policemen, not checking anything, just, sort of, stood there staring at you, like, intimidating', Alex (MMU) reported. Teighlor (UoM) asserted that she had 'never interacted with police so much in my life'. For students who had been on campus prior to the pandemic, the heightened police presence constituted a significant change in their experience. As Billie (UoM), a third-year student, explained 'I never used to see them [police] until coronavirus and then after lockdown started happening and tier three, and all of that, then... we were literally seeing them every week, twice a week, in Fallowfield'.

Prior to the pandemic, university security services had tended to handle most incidents in residence halls including noise and anti-social behaviour complaints. However, with the introduction of Coronavirus restrictions, police were more frequently called onto campus. Following the announcement of a second national lockdown in November 2020, GMP adopted more proactive measures staging their own surveillance operations and campus-based patrols. Ryan (UoM), who had initially viewed police as being present 'to support security on campus', now described a significant 'escalation' to the point where 'there was almost like a militant type presence of police on campus'.

Interviewees repeatedly emphasised the 'unnecessary' and 'disproportionate' nature of the police response, which included mounted and vehicular patrols, police dogs and the deployment of tactical aid unit vans. Omar recalled that it 'was as if they were, like, in a riot zone [...] They had riot shields, they had helmets, they had a huge number of them walking, like groups of six or seven, it's, like, this is [...] a university. It's a university'. Ryan (UoM) echoed Omar's disbelief and outrage: '[I]t was just like, you don't need this many police officers and this

many resources for a student accommodation'. Students experienced these encounters, in Kit's (UoM) words, as 'a show of dominance' by police that exacerbated the mental health risks outlined in Chapter 6, with significant negative impacts on students' well-being. Indeed, Billie (UoM) reported that the heavy police presence made students 'feel really unsafe' and led to an increase in reports of 'anxiety attacks' and other mental health crises. Sarah (UoM) felt the intensified police presence was 'a power play' that placed her constantly 'on edge'.

According to some students, the heightened police presence also bolstered the authority of security staff who were observed working in close partnership with their counterparts in GMP. Billie (UoM) believed this collaboration with police 'emboldened' security staff, making them 'feel a bit more powerful and so they started being much more hostile'. By the spring semester, Ryan (UoM) described seeing:

police and security almost becoming one in the fact that the security thought they had the authority that the police did and the police thought that they could just come into people's flats and kick the doors through [...] it was just like, we have autonomy to do what we want and I felt that from the police and the security.

Here, Ryan points to role convergence between security personnel and the police. At MMU, Alex suggested that 'security [...] think they're policemen [...] they think they've got the power to do whatever they want'.

Such experiences with police were not isolated to the City of Manchester-based campuses. National survey respondents reported increased and sometimes violent encounters with police on campus during the pandemic. Two respondents reported being handcuffed by police and left with bruises after leaving their friend's accommodation during lockdown, despite fully cooperating. Another who was employed as a Student Union Officer during the pandemic recalled that officers were 'often extremely aggressive' describing an incident in which:

a student was attacked by the police (physically beaten) and then arrested for resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer [...] The student firmly believed it was racially motivated. I was in touch with the student's parents and know that eventually the student had to plead guilty to one charge and pay a large fine. However, he was traumatised by the experience and had missed almost the whole of the academic year because of this, with pretty much no support from the uni.

As this example illustrates, the increased police presence – and intensification of the securitisation of campuses – also had a disproportionate impact on Black and other racially minoritised students who were already more likely to be subject to police powers like stop-and-search. As a study by Harris et al. has shown, this is related to the pre-existing patterns of racialised and classed policing, only exacerbated by the expansion of police powers during the pandemic.⁹² Survey responses and interviews suggest similar developments on university campuses with racially minoritised students experiencing sometimes violent police encounters and the discriminatory application of fines as described in the case of Daisy (UoM) in Chapter 3 whose student accommodation was raided by police and fines issued only to the Black occupants.

Indeed, an outcome of this normalisation of a regular police presence on campus and increased collaboration with security services was a spike in police-issued fixed-penalty notices as well as university disciplinary cases and fines. By the end of Semester 1, 2020/21, *The Guardian* reported that UK universities had fined students more than £170,000 for breaking university, local and national Covid-19 rules.⁹³ At the UoM, the number of student disciplinary cases reported by the Division of Residential Services which undertakes discipline cases in respect of misconduct in halls increased by nearly 350% from 313 in 2019/20 to 1,404 in 2020/21. A significant proportion of these cases were found to have no merit. Of the 1,404 cases, 569 (41%) were

found not to have breached the regulations following a disciplinary hearing compared with 6% of all hearings in 2019-20. One student was expelled from their accommodation and fines totalling £70,350 were issued.⁹⁴

According to Kit (UoM), the strategies outlined above were responsible for fostering an increasingly 'antagonistic relationship' between students, police and security services. Teighlor (UoM) agreed, 'If we saw police or security, they were like the opposition. They were not here to support us at all'. Rather, students viewed police and security officers as 'working together with the intent to persecute as many students as they could'. Consequently, students at the UoM began to autonomously organise to defend themselves forming an organisation called Cops Off Campus (see Chapter 9) and training students to serve as legal observers.

Security, police and the right-of-entry to student accommodations

Cops Off Campus legal observers were instrumental in identifying the increased cooperation of security services and police in making unjustified entries into student residences during the pandemic. According to their 2021 report, senior leaders at the UoM had exercised their power as landlords to afford access to security officers who in turn routinely afforded right-of-entry to the police without a warrant.⁹⁵ Survey responses and interviews from this project confirm Cops Off Campus's findings and demonstrate that the practice of police entering students homes uninvited was not unique to the UoM but rather was widespread.

Participants from several different universities reported members of security services entering their accommodations unannounced often under the auspices of ensuring compliance with Coronavirus regulations. Alex (MMU) described how security staff 'had this master key' to enter any room, with one student waking up to a security officer 'standing over them'. They 'have the literal power just to be able to go do that', Alex explained. Nasir (UoM) shared concerns about the entry of security staff into student accommodation: 'if you lived in a house,

you expect the police to knock on your main door, you don't expect them to come through your main living room'. Survey respondents at other institutions reported similar interactions with security staff entering homes to 'question us on what we were doing and if we all lived there'.

There appears to have been little oversight or scrutiny of this controversial right-of-entry power leading to the potential for widespread abuse. Teighlor (UoM) described it as a 'strange atmosphere' in which there appeared to be 'no rules in terms of personal space and basically the security were allowed to do anything'. She recalled several incidents in which security officers entered her residence, and the residences of other students, with 'no reasonable cause', including – as in Alex's account at MMU – while they were sleeping:

Security came into my room – it might have been like seven o'clock in the morning – I was asleep and literally I woke up to a man standing in my room and I was like, 'what the fuck is going on'? He was like, oh, sorry, I just came, basically a window was open in my flat and someone saw... allegedly saw someone climbing up it [...] Like didn't knock, it was seven o'clock in the morning, obviously we were all asleep, literally came into my room. Like, I was alone, it was really scary to wake up to.

Teighlor (UoM) did not report her experience because it 'was just kind of given that security would walk into flats [...] it just kind of became normalised'. Teighlor's experience was not an isolated one. Gavin (UoM), who volunteered as a legal observer during the pandemic, also reported an incident in which 'security entered the bedroom of a girl who was getting changed'. Moreover, a survey respondent reported a similar experience at Durham University in which a member of security personnel entered their residence 'whilst we were sleeping at around 2am, waking us up and freaking us all out'. When the student raised a complaint with the principal, she was informed that the 'security team was not allowed into our flats without a porter

present or us inviting them in, and she [the principal] wasn't sure what happened that night'. According to the student, no further action was taken by the university leaving her 'terrified for several weeks'.

At some institutions, this power of entry seems to have been extended to an even wider group of university staff. One survey respondent, for example, described how a friend had awoken to a porter in her bedroom: 'He had let himself in under the justification that he needed to, for covid reasons. I do not see why he had to be in a room with a sleeping woman, because of the virus'. These incidents raise serious concerns about the powers afforded by university leaders to security services and, indeed, other university staff during the pandemic, reinforcing apprehensions raised in Chapter 4 about the role of security in protecting students from gender-based violence.

As shown in Chapter 2, security staff at the UoM and other institutions employed this controversial right-of-entry to enable police officers to conduct warrantless searches. Several interviewees from the UoM recalled security staff providing police officers with keys to student accommodations or opening the doors themselves. Sarah (UoM) described the system as a legal 'loophole' in which 'security open the door and then police walk in'. According to Gavin (UoM), there was a spike in students reporting police entering their accommodations beginning in January 2021:

a lot of students [were] messaging us and saying, look we've had the police come in, they've come into our student flats, they've illegally entered our rooms, they've been harassing us. We've had police come and fine students even if they've not been breaking lockdown rules.

Similar incidents were reported in media accounts by students in Sheffield, Leeds, Northumbria, Sussex and Bristol.⁹⁶ These repeated invasions of student homes, in a context where the national government had mandated that people 'Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives', created a 'discomforting and hostile environment', according to many respondents.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the securitisation of university campuses intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic, and how this impacted negatively upon students. Though there were differences across campuses, it showed that students were subject to a range of strategies of securitisation, including security checks, patrols by security officers and the erection of fencing. For many students the restrictions were difficult and excessive, and interactions with security staff were hostile and confrontational. The chapter also details a significant police presence on campuses during this period: this was seen as intimidating and harmful by many participants. Particular concerns were raised about how security services and police worked together, including through security officers granting police right-of-entry to student accommodation. This, for some participants, was seen to be an abuse of power. Concerns, such as the disproportionate impact on racially minoritised students, raised in other chapters re-emerged here and were seen to be exacerbated by responses to the pandemic.



Chapter 8: University complaint processes and anti-democratic structures

It has been shown in existing research⁹⁷ and popular commentary⁹⁸ that university complaint processes are a recurring source of frustration and dissatisfaction among many students. This chapter explores students' accounts of accessing and navigating university complaint processes and experiences of wider anti-democratic structure with specific regard to the securitisation of campus. Thus, while earlier parts of this report have outlined how initial encounters with security personnel and police can be harmful for students, many of the accounts that follow show that initial experiences of harm are often exacerbated through the way that universities as institutions handle, mishandle or don't handle, student complaints. This chapter first considers barriers encountered through complaints processes, and then the wider antidemocratic cultures shaping universities.

Searching for justice through complaint processes: hitting barriers

While some interviewees like Zarwa (UoS) felt that the university 'would take it seriously' if harm occurred, the majority – and particularly those with direct experience of engaging institutional complaint processes – were much more doubtful. In the first instance, there was a sense of uncertainty among many interviewees as to whether there was a complaints process at their institutions and, if so, what that complaints process entailed. As Billie (UoM) explained, 'it would be really hard to find who you would raise that complaint to [...] there's not like a designated website or email address [...] and if there is it's not easy to find'. The consequence of this, she suggested, means that:

if it's a minor thing maybe people would feel like, oh do you know, it's not worth the hassle [...] so [...] they can say it's not a problem when I think there definitely is.

Billie was not alone in believing that difficulties in accessing university complaints processes

discouraged students from reporting negative experiences regarding the securitisation of campus. Sarah (UoM) spoke to the difficulties in accessing the complaints process: 'the way that those processes are made out, established, it is almost like trying to book a doctor's appointment, it is so hard to do. So, then you just give up'.

While it is clear that accessing the complaints process seems to present an initial barrier, interviewees also noted that when students are able and willing to access it, the complaints process itself presents additional barriers. As Sarah (UoM) continued to explain:

I think [The University of] Manchester rely on the fact that their processes are annoying and disheartening and so much that they make you not pursue it. It makes you feel that you can't be arsed.

Seeming to illustrate Sarah's point, Kit (UoM) lamented having to wait over 'six months' for a meeting to be scheduled after filing a complaint following an incident in which, as they described, a security officer 'threatened to knock me the fuck out'. This was a significant issue that, as Kit put it, constituted 'a decent amount of time for any CCTV to be thrown away'. Kit's cause for frustration was not confined to a long wait time. When their case was eventually heard, Kit explained that 'the uni and the security guards all covered for each other' and the 'complaints process completely refused to acknowledge that there could be any collusion between security guards'. Ultimately, 'nothing was done' with Kit describing the process as a 'complete crock of shit'. What emerges here is a sense that harms enacted by security officers are institutionally enabled. Henry (UoM) echoed this, insisting that 'the complaints process was completely terrible'. Similarly, Omar (UoM) conveyed a view that the processes were structured in such a way as to disadvantage students, 'their rules and their systems which they've put in place, are completely against me and I've got no chance of winning'. Many of the

experiences discussed thus far are reflective of what Sara Ahmed has referred to as ‘strategic inefficiency’, a concept that captures how delays and difficulties are not necessarily ‘the failure of things to work properly’ but how things are designed to work.⁹⁹

Chapter 4 discussed Sarah’s (UoM) negative experience with security personnel at her Student Union after her drink had been spiked. As was the case for others, the ensuing complaint process significantly worsened her experience. After sending an email explaining what had happened, Sarah received a reply and was asked for her phone number. She spoke to somebody from UoM who was ‘*profusely apologising*’ and ‘*outraged at what had happened*’. Sarah recalls him saying that he ‘*will fire her*’ [the security officer], even though Sarah noted that, owing to her conviction that this was ‘*a manifestation of a bigger problem*’, this ‘*is not necessarily*’ what she was ‘*asking for*’.¹⁰⁰ The member of staff who called said he would be in touch the next day, but no contact came. A day later, with still no further contact, Sarah contacted him and was told that ‘*the lady has been fired [...] nothing like this will ever happen to another girl*’. Satisfied that the case had been handled, even if conflicted and disempowered about the course of action, Sarah was left feeling ‘*fine about the situation*’. However, as she recounted:

Two weeks later there is a gig on at the SU and I am walking past, I turned back from uni and the woman who had harassed me outside is still there. She is doing her security job and she still had a job, so the uni lied to me and told me that she had been fired even though she hadn’t.

Recontacting the person with whom she had liaised previously, she was told that it ‘*is a third party security hiring*’ and that it was therefore more difficult than anticipated. This demonstrates that through outsourcing, responsibility has been shifted away from the university, making things more difficult for students to seek accountability. Sarah persisted, offering to advise ‘*on ways to improve security’s training*’ and directing to ‘*third-party organisations*’

who could help, but was ignored. After following up on two more occasions in an attempt to see what changes, if any, had been made, she was again ignored and eventually ‘*just gave up*’.

Damningly, but in keeping with several of the accounts in this section so far, Omar (UoM) described his institution as ‘*probably the worst place to ever try and ask for help*’, noting that after making a formal complaint, his ‘*experience only got worse from then on*’. A survey response encapsulated this sense that complaints processes were structured in ways that disfavour students. Instead, the respondent wrote, the process ‘*wholly relies on the testimony of campus security and skews any expectation of due process where the student is presumed guilty*’. Even ‘*when the complaints process results in the students favour*’, they continued, ‘*there’s no accountability for all the harm that has been caused by campus security*’. This is perhaps because, as Henry (UoM) put it, ‘*large institutions tend to protect their own interests and their own wellbeing above the wellbeing of the marginalised people within them*’. Again, the practices of security are legitimated and enabled by the institution.

So far, this chapter has detailed a general sense that complaints processes are not made visible or accessible to students and highlighted the profoundly negative experiences that some students have had at various stages of those processes. These factors perhaps contribute to a general lack of faith in the ability and willingness of universities to respond adequately to student complaints. It is not surprising then that following an incident in which they had their electronic speaker confiscated by a police officer at a student protest, a survey respondent from the University of Manchester (UoM) explained that they ‘*didn’t report it because what’s the point? For UoM to pretend to care? To signpost me some links?*’ The lack of faith encapsulated in this response goes some way in explaining why official counts for complaints are so low, despite a clear sense of dissatisfaction among students.

Findings from the Freedom of Information requests that we submitted showed that at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) only one formal complaint against security services was recorded between

2018/19 and 2021/22. For the same time period at the University of Salford (UoS), five formal complaints were recorded, and at the UoM just two official complaints were recorded (and not upheld). Importantly and concerningly, this figure at the UoM is actually lower than the number of students in the project who report having complained during that period. As Sara Ahmed warns, many complaints may not be received or recorded as complaints: because of ‘*the requirement to fill in certain forms, in a certain way, at a certain time*’.¹⁰¹ Whether due to students choosing not to enter complaint processes through a lack of faith in the system or attempting to complain but not being recorded as an ‘*official*’ complaint, the evidence here should caution universities against presuming low numbers of formal complaints as an indicator that problems do not exist.

Despite – or owing to – often insurmountable difficulties in finding resolutions through university processes, interviewees emphasised that there were other routes that students could explore. While student responses are considered in more depth in the next chapter, for now it is simply worth noting that these included the writing of reports and formation of student activist/advocacy groups, as per the example of UoM Cops Off Campus;¹⁰² connecting with ‘*other [non-campus] organisations that you can talk to for support*’ (Gavin, UoM); providing ‘*Know Your Rights training*’ (Zee, UoS); and crucially, as in the case of Zac Adan discussed in the introduction, ‘*going public*’. Sarah (UoM) recalls being advised by a friend who had been left disappointed by complaint processes that ‘*you need to threaten the uni to go public if they don’t respond to you*’. On this matter, Gavin (UoM) suggested that:

even if you can’t hold them to account, you can still send this to local press and stuff. And at that point then at least the senior leadership team will [...] take note of it because of course that’s their reputation all of a sudden.

Similarly, Zee (UoS) described being ‘*blackballed*’ when raising concerns regarding the UoS’s then-new partnership with Greater Manchester Police, but

after taking to Twitter to ‘*quote tweet*’ a ‘*Salford Uni announcement*’, the university contacted her ‘*within a day*’ to request a meeting. While Zee (UoS) was understandably sceptical about the purpose of that meeting, it does at least show that, perhaps owing to University concerns about reputation and image, taking issues into the public domain can be a route to prompting an institutional response. There are two important factors to consider here, though. First, the increased visibility that can come with making one’s story public may have a significant impact on the individual, as has been highlighted in wider research around policing.¹⁰³ And, second, research has noted that going public is, like formal complaints, rarely productive of substantive institutional change.¹⁰⁴

A wider culture of antidemocratic structures and the need for institutional transformation

As well as the inadequacy and harm of complaint processes, some students also pointed to wider university cultures in which students were often not consulted or informed about changes taking place, and their voices not taken seriously. Zee (UoS) described how ‘*Salford University snuck in a police training programme during Covid*’, amidst a lack of engagement with students which, according to Zee (UoS), ‘*shows that consultation and peoples’ opinions don’t matter when it comes to decisions universities make and the money attached to those decisions*’. Describing the controversial erection of fences on the UoM campus, Teighlor (UoM) also conveyed a sense that students are not adequately engaged with decisions and changes:

They also didn’t email anyone so if they really cared they at least would have put something out saying, you know, one, these fences are going to go up tomorrow, you might feel unsafe, this is why, [the university] didn’t say anything.

Cooper (MMU) spoke about an initiative which saw two police officers spending time on campus each week:

They just appeared, like magic. Like, no email was sent [...] the university has all of our emails [...] no email,

nothing. No communication. No interaction whatsoever. Just one day, every Thursday, on that Thursday, there's two policemen there.

This frustration about not being engaged in decision making, or even informed after decisions were made, was prevalent across many of the accounts. Furthermore, although Student Unions are often seen as a vehicle through which student views can be expressed and no doubt have a role to play in transforming student experiences with regard to the securitisation of campus and other issues facing students, they were not always seen to perform a positive role in these instances. This is perhaps unsurprising given wider suggestions that Student Unions are occupying an ever-closer relationship to university management,¹⁰⁵ and thus are becoming increasingly constrained and co-opted.¹⁰⁶ Vanessa (MMU) spoke of not feeling as though she was able to 'connect' with her Union, for example, and Henry (UoM) described how students had 'very low trust' in his Student Union, which:

was basically functioning as an excuse for the university to say, look, we speak to students, we listen to student voices, we take them into account, but the student union officers themselves were not listening to students.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Zee (UoS) in relation to the university-GMP partnership at the UoS.

Focusing on university management, Gavin (UoM) recounted how, after he and fellow students had tried to contact 'the senior leadership team and ask them more about what exactly it was they were asking the police to do', they were met with 'very limited responses [...] they don't respond [...] they shut themselves off and there's almost no accountability'. This is why Gavin argued that students are often moved to 'protests and demonstrations, because that's the only way we can do it'. Participants felt problems in the University required transformation on a large scale, not just of complaints procedures but of relations between institutions and their

students (and perhaps also their staff). Sarah (UoM) spoke powerfully to this:

they would need a whole institutional reconfiguration of how they deal with their students [...] I feel like changing the way that they operate in terms of perceiving their students [...] rather than seeing what their students can bring for them, see what they can bring for their students. Obviously, it is part of the fact that universities are privatised, it is all about money. But at the same time a selfish individualistic way of operating university doesn't necessarily have to be the case.

Sarah's remarks speak to the marketisation of universities and the repositioning of students as sources of income, and suggest that it is these deep structures which are the problem which requires much more than just a policy fix.

Conclusion

Chapter 8 has shown that the initial harms that students experience through encounters with security personnel are often exacerbated by institutional complaint processes that leave students frustrated and dissatisfied, and constitute an institutional endorsement of harmful practices. It was noted that there are initial barriers in entering complaint processes, and that – should a student file a complaint – they are often subject to blockages and inefficiencies. It was also argued that official counts of complaints mask the extent of student concern not only because many students choose not to complain due to a lack of faith in the institution, but because not all student complaints are counted as official complaints. The chapter also discussed the wider culture of antidemocratic structures in universities that mean many students do not feel like they have a say regarding changes, specifically those involving the role and presence of police on campuses. Students speak of a need for institutional transformation in the way universities operate and engage with students (and staff).



Chapter 9: Student-led responses, reforms and alternatives to security services and police on campus

Since the 1960s, universities have facilitated the securitisation of campuses including by initiating a frequent police presence as part of a wider arsenal of tools with which to ‘repress, delimit and co-opt the energy’ of student movements.¹⁰⁷ In response, a rich tradition of student-led resistance to security services and/or police on campus has emerged. In December 2013, for example, students held a national day of action over police violence on campus, with a well-attended march taking place in London and smaller demonstrations across other parts of the UK complementing digital activism under the hashtag #copsoffcampus.¹⁰⁸ More recently, the National Union of Students (NUS) passed policy to limit police on campus, including in its ending securitisation, surveillance and ‘Prevent’ policy passed at its National Conference 2020.¹⁰⁹ In its policy to end sexual violence on campus passed at the NUS Liberation Conference 2022, the NUS pledged that its ‘students’ unions and institutions will reject the police [and] refuse to work with them’ in favour of non-carceral approaches that centre care and healing.¹¹⁰ At a local level, the University of Manchester Students’ Union Assembly passed a motion in October 2022 in favour of limiting the police (and military) from entering the Students Union (SU) building.¹¹¹ Significantly, particularly in light of the context detailed in Chapter 5, the motion states that ‘the SU will not call the police on protesters unless there is a threat to safety or the law is being broken’.¹¹²

This chapter first explores student-led opposition to security services and/or police on campus. Next, it centres participants’ views on reforming security services, before exploring participants’ reflections on where they would like to see university investment – including in non-carceral alternatives – in order to improve students’ (sense of) safety on campus.

Student opposition to security services and/or police on campus

Participants reflected on a range of ways in which they and other students oppose security services

and police on campus. Some interviewees engaged in passive forms of resistance, often to protect their own wellbeing. Zee (UoS), for example, explained that although she is actively engaged in organised resistance to policing outside of the university-setting, she had disengaged from campus life since the university announced its contract with Greater Manchester Police:

Since it got announced in 2021, I’ve been to campus four times. I’m not going, and I made it really clear as well, like, I’m not going to campus because they’re there, in the same buildings as my lectures [...] in my third year I taught myself, because once I know that you’re complicit in something, I can’t be dealing with you, and I’m not going to be receptive of what you’ve got to say.

For Zee, withdrawing from the physical campus allowed her to avoid coming into contact with police officers involved in the UoS Policing Education Qualifications Framework programmes but it is also clear that she felt alienated from her (non-policing) lecturers whom she perceived to be complicit in the police-university partnership. Reflecting on his experiences of being harmed by university security personnel, Omar (UoM) similarly explained that he ‘really [doesn’t] want anything to do with the institution anymore because of what [he’s] been through’.

Other participants advocated for responses that aim to directly challenge security services and/or police on campus. Growing out of the rich tradition of police monitoring in the UK, interviewees reflected on student-led responses that involve monitoring security services and police, particularly their interactions with students. As has been mentioned, the University of Manchester Cops Off Campus group was formed in November 2020 following particularly intrusive and repressive policing during Covid

lockdown periods (see Chapter 7).¹¹³ Reflecting on the process of setting up, Billie (UoM) recounted:

We were in touch with Green and Black Cross¹¹⁴ because a few of us are quite used to protesting [...] we were just messaging them all the time being like, 'can you get to Fallowfield Campus? It's really urgent, something really bad is happening. We need legal observers' and it just got to the point where we thought we might as well just have our own legal observers.

As Gavin (UoM) went on to explain, 'we set up a group to do legal observing and we got some legal observing training [...] they advised us to do shifts on Friday and Saturday nights on the main campus'. Undertaking shifts from 10pm to 2am – 'the same shift that the police were doing' (Henry, UoM) – Cops Off Campus members would observe the police (and their co-working with security services, including in the accessing of student halls), document police-student interactions¹¹⁵ and offer support to students in the aftermath of their encounters with police.

Henry (UoM) explained that the wider student body was appreciative of the group. He noted, 'students constantly would come up to us and be like, "thanks so much for doing this, it makes us feel so much safer"'. Sarah (UoM) expressed a similar sentiment:

It was comforting to see those high vis jackets because it was like, the police were there and then there were these four students with clipboards behind them [...] I know a lot of people took comfort in the fact that they were there.

It is clear then that student resistance was seen as a necessary and valued response, in a context where students in Greater Manchester, particularly those attending the UoM and MMU, had encountered heavy-handed Covid policing (see Chapter 7). The necessity of student-led responses to securitisation is exacerbated in a context in which university complaint processes are difficult to access and navigate.

Reforming security services on campus

When reflecting on what a safe campus looks like and/or areas that require university investment, interviewees identified a range of things. Some pointed to reforms to security services such as removing outsourcing: 'It may actually be better if they were actually employed by the university because then that might make them feel more connected to the community' (Cooper, MMU). Others called for security staff to change their uniform so that they do not 'walk around in these huge, big stab-proof vests and stuff' (Gavin, UoM). On the issue of uniform, Billie (UoM) explained that she believed that:

because they dress like the police, they act like the police [...] if they were rebranded as a wellbeing team with the uniform and training that was to go with that then I think that might have a really positive impact on how they act and how they're seen.

Here, Billie situates the security services uniform within a broader context. She suggests not only a change in uniform but a rebranding – or redefining – of the role of security services to centre student welfare. As noted in Chapter 2, some interviewees felt that the role of security services needs to be clarified because 'a lot of the time, students don't know what security are supposed to do [...] what they're allowed to do' (Melanie, UoM).

Several interviewees spoke about improved or extended training for security staff. Vanessa (MMU), for example, said:

I definitely think more training. I don't know what training they get, they might already have it, but, you know, for like equality and diversity and stuff like that, so they're making sure they're treating everyone fairly or not reacting inappropriately in certain situations.

While Vanessa's focus was on equality and diversity training to address instances of discrimination or

disproportionality in securitisation, Nicholas (MMU) and Sarah (UoM) advocated for enhanced training around responding to sexual violence on campus. Indeed, Sarah bemoaned 'the real lack of gender sensitivity training' and Nicholas called for security staff to be 'far better trained at stuff [...] more aware of issues relating to consent'. In a similar vein, some interviewees called for more diversity in representation of security staff. Eshani (UoM) described this as 'kind of an advantage', and Melanie (UoM) thought a 'bit of diversity might make a small difference'. Likewise, Carol (UoS) thought that having a woman officer accompanying male security staff might make students feel safer; although, this was not the case for Sarah (see Chapter 4) who recounted being disbelieved by a woman security officer after an incident of spiking. Alongside Sarah's experience, wider critical interventions have noted the limited capacity for tweaks such as diversification and training to produce meaningful change in institutions,¹¹⁶ and thus offer a cautionary note against taking these suggestions as the totality of what needs to be done.

Investment beyond security: Alternatives to the securitisation of campus

Demonstrating that students' understanding of safety provision is not limited to campus security, interviewees advocated for investment in other things beyond security services, either as an alternative to or in addition to security staff. Jack (UoM) suggested 'an app or a line, like they do for domestic violence'. Melanie (UoM) recommended 'rape alarms [and] cup covers', and several interviewees, including Valentina (MMU), wanted to see more investment in 'late night-type transport [...] going back and forward from halls on nights out'. Others called for more investment in non-security initiatives such as Residence Life (ResLife).

A very common theme to emerge both from the interviews and the national survey was that participants would like to see more investment in wellbeing and counselling services, which were regarded by many as being under-resourced. Indeed, FOI data from this project reveals that the combined budget for campus security services across the three

Greater Manchester universities in this project was over £8 million compared to just £3 million for counselling and mental health services in the most recent year for which data was available (2020/21).¹¹⁷ The comparison between security services and counselling was considered by Sarah (UoM):

I can firmly say that I would rather have no security on campus and all of that money to go to the mental health services at the uni because Manchester students need it, they just do. The counselling services- I don't know if you know this, but you are allowed five counselling services [appointments] in your three years and if you go past five they then refer you to an NHS or Greater Manchester based public programme in which the waiting line is like two years [...] It is like you have to pick your time if you need help and if you really need it. Which is so bad.

Showing the under-resourcing of student support to be a problem not confined to Greater Manchester, one survey respondent similarly noted that they would like to see funding for security services redirected to 'literally anything. In the case of Warwick our student wellbeing services are massively underfunded'. Another respondent explained that they wanted funding to be redirected from security services to 'out of hours support that isn't delivered by a team based around security. My university recently cut its out of hours welfare support to save money meaning the problem is getting worse.' This points back to an issue identified in Chapter 6: student support in relation to mental health is too often left to security staff, who are regarded by many students to be ill-prepared, ill-equipped and ill-suited for the task.

One interviewee, Kit (UoM), however, raised concerns about the redirecting of resources from security to wellbeing services:

I think to funnel money into mental health services without considering the

very, very massive power imbalances that often operate in those systems, would be perhaps less harmful, but still harmful to a sense. And I think that that would also need a lot of work before I think that's a fit solution to the problem.

Recognising that investment in wellbeing services may be 'less harmful' than security services, Kit alluded to the inequalities that pervade systems of care and that operate to shape marginalised students' access to, and experience of, counselling and wellbeing. Kit then went on to explain that it would be beneficial to see financial resources directed away from security services and into the hands of students directly:

Just, actually, financial capital to students. Because if I look at the strains that have been on my network recently, all financial [...] I think money there for people that need it, with no real questions asked...I mean, it's very easy to go to a counsellor and they go, oh, yeah, you know, take a bath. Like, chill out a bit [...] but no counsellor has actually got the solution if you go, yeah, I'm incredibly anxious because I'm struggling to put food on the table.

What Kit draws attention to here then is that financial support for students is required to address the immediate, often material, challenges that they face (which have been exacerbated recently by the cost-of-living crisis). Mental health issues (see Chapter 6) are thus driven and/or exacerbated by material conditions that must be addressed by the university and at a societal level. Counselling alone cannot address the root causes of students worsening mental health and wellbeing.

Survey respondents were asked directly whether they would like to see more or less funding given to university security. As Figure 8 shows, the majority of respondents felt that funding for security services should remain the same as now (43.8%). Just over a quarter of respondents wanted less (14.0%) or much

less (12.8%) funding for university security, while a slightly higher number wanted more (26.4%) or much more (3.0%) funding given to campus security.

Those who responded that they would like to see less, or much less, investment in university security were asked to provide an open text answer about what they would like to see money invested in. Responses were varied; many wanted to see investment in education, whether that be 'making university education free', 'better pay for staff', 'ending the bame and gender paygap', 'better facilities' or 'grants and bursaries for students'. Others wanted more investment in university infrastructure, including 'an acceptable standard of accommodation', 'creating more study spaces' and improved 'IT services'. And others still wanted to see investment in the wider communities in which universities are situated:

As a key stakeholder in the community universities should contribute to every part of public life. Our VCs are on upwards of £200,000. universities should be investing in local social housing funds, drug rehabilitation schemes, adult education

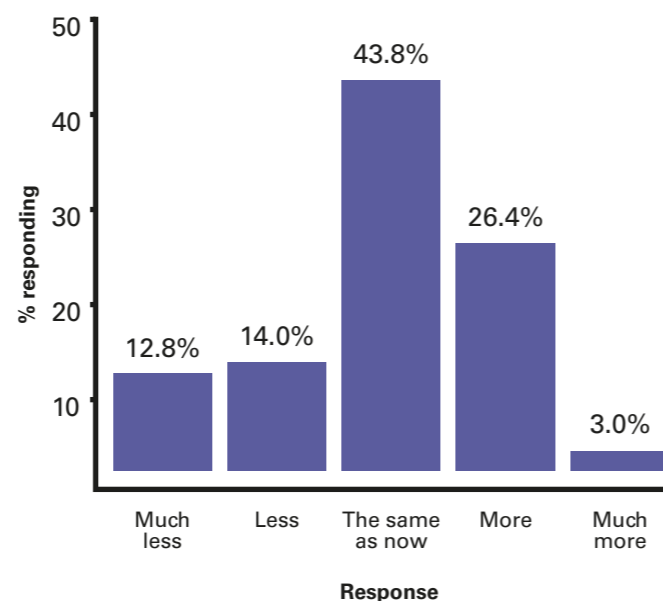


Figure 8: Response to survey question 'Do you think that your university should dedicate more or less funds towards university security?' (n=470)

programmes, community enrichment + therapy practices, the list is endless – they should stop spending their money on adverts telling us how good they are and start making their communities better instead of trying to entice the children of oil magnates.

As in the above account, it was clear that some respondents found it galling that universities were often not integrated within wider communities but rather operated to symbolically and physically exclude community members, something touched on briefly in Chapter 3.

A common survey response was that investment should be redirected from security services to explicitly non-carceral responses to addressing harm – that is, initiatives designed to minimise harm without doing more harm. As one survey respondent put it, 'I think instead of putting more money to security, the university should fund services and initiatives aimed at tackling the problems that cause "security issues"'. For many, this work of addressing the causes of harm on campus required the university to disband partnerships with police in favour of building new (non-carceral) partnerships, including with: mental health organisations; anti-racism groups; sexual health services; groups working with survivors of sexual violence; sex workers' rights groups; substance abuse organisations; and groups that support and assert the rights of queer, trans and/or disabled people.

Conclusion

This chapter first highlighted a significant wave of student resistance to securitisation on campuses. It noted the prevalence of the UoM Cops Off Campus student activist group, while also outlining individual responses from students to the presence of police and security services on university campuses. It then considered a range of ideas that students shared with regard to how issues concerning the securitisation of campuses might be addressed. These ideas were grouped into reforms and alternatives. The reforms to security services on campus

included redefining the role of campus security alongside more specific changes to uniforms and the diversity of personnel. The proposed alternatives to campus security were diverse but included improved transport infrastructure at night and more investment in initiatives like ResLife. Students raised real concerns about universities prioritising securitisation over wellbeing, as reflected in comparative investment. Accordingly, some students suggested better mental health and wellbeing support was needed. Calls were also made for investment to make education free, to pay staff fairly and equitably, to improve accommodation and facilities, and to be positive contributors to local communities.

Six key observations

This final chapter pulls out some of the key findings arising from this mixed-methods, multi-scalar study. Rather than restating the long list of important findings identified in each chapter of the report, it makes six broader observations that pertain to the project's aim of better understanding students' views on, and experiences of, security services and police on UK university campuses.

Reflected in both the survey and interview datasets, **students perceive that UK university campuses are subject to intense securitisation.** Students identified a particular uptick in the presence of police on campus during the pandemic, with security personnel collaborating with police to enable uninvited entry into students homes. The University of Manchester's own inquiry into the erection of fencing at student halls of residence confirms students' observations that additional security patrols were deployed during the same period. However, as both high-profile media reports and the accounts of participants demonstrate, intense securitisation is not confined to the Covid-19 context. The introduction of the Policing Education Qualification Framework in 2020 also offers increasing scope for universities to enter into formalised partnerships with police forces via the delivering of training programmes, such as the ongoing multimillion pound partnership between the University of Salford, the University of Central Lancashire and Greater Manchester Police. These collaborations sit alongside the long-standing trend of university-police partnerships in research.

As well as the intense securitisation of campuses, **we are seeing an expansion in the roles of security services with security personnel expected to perform a range of competing duties.** The resultant role conflict manifests most acutely in relation to two key areas: mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. In relation to mental health, it is clear from our review of job descriptions and security policies that security personnel are expected to serve as first points of contact and administrators of emergency first aid on the one hand, and yet are tasked with patrolling and maintaining public order on campus and monitoring and controlling access to campus buildings/facilities on the other. For some participants,

the latter (enforcement oriented) roles are perceived to make security personnel ill-suited and ill-equipped to perform the former (welfare-oriented) roles, with some mental health incidents noted to have been exacerbated by the intervention of security staff. In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, security services were often tasked by universities with the surveillance and patrolling of student residences to ensure compliance with Covid-19 legislation, a practice frequently undertaken in collaboration with police and regarded by participants to cause notable harm. This enforcement-oriented role thus sits in tension with what students believe the key function of security services ought to be: keeping students safe.

Despite an expansion of securitisation on campus, **students are unclear about whether security services keep them safe, with some understanding campus security to be a direct threat to student safety.** Those with protected characteristics are particularly likely to question the effectiveness of security services in keeping them safe. Students are even less clear about the effectiveness of police at keeping students safe and most students feel that police are not necessary on campus in other ways either. The securitisation of campus is felt to have a disproportionately negative impact on racially minoritised students, including through racial profiling. The discriminatory treatment of racially minoritised students, and specifically Black students, is in part driven by an institutional desire to keep non-students off campus. Another key area of concern pertains to gender-based violence with students reporting direct transphobia and misogyny at the hands of security officers, as well as encountering inadequate, inappropriate and/or harmful responses when reporting harms such as sexual violence and drink spiking. A third area of concern relates to the policing of student activism, with student activists reporting wide ranging (physical, verbal and online) harms from security personnel, and raising concerns about the gravity of the consequences of police intervention. While some participants reflected positively on individual security officers' handling of mental health incidents on campus, others raised significant concerns around the risks associated with security officers performing the role of first responders and

administrators of mental health support alongside their enforcement-oriented roles.

The Covid-19 pandemic saw a broad cross-section of the student population affected by the increased securitisation of campuses, but racially minoritised students were impacted disproportionately. Participants' accounts demonstrate that security personnel were deployed to systematically monitor and control students living in residence halls in ways that compromised students' sense of safety, and their privacy and rights. While universities adopted different approaches, students were subject to a range of strategies, including patrols and surveillance by security personnel, ID checks, the erection of fences and security staff and police entry to student residences without a warrant. These strategies were often perceived by students as hostile, aggressive and intimidating, and gave rise to an increasingly antagonistic relationship between students, security staff and police. Students therefore mobilised to resist the increased securitisation of campus via protests, direct action and the formation of new activist groups. While the transformation in securitisation during the pandemic-era was experienced by all students, it disproportionately impacted Black and other racially minoritised students, who were already more likely to be subject to police powers. Racially minoritised interviewees and survey respondents spoke of sometimes violent police encounters and the discriminatory application of fixed-penalty notices for breaking Covid-19 regulations.

Furthermore, **existing university complaint processes neither confront the risks nor repair the harms associated with the securitisation of campuses.** Students report that difficulties in accessing institutional complaint processes mean many give up on submitting a complaint. Those that do pursue a complaint report encountering lengthy delays and inadequate responses from their institution, and are left feeling that there is little recourse to accountability with complaint processes often offering a tacit endorsement of harmful behaviours enacted by security services. These challenges lead students to feel that the system is intentionally set up in such a way as

to deter, disadvantage and dispirit complainants. It bears repeating that more participants in this project reported submitting a complaint to the University of Manchester than the University's own records show for the same period, as revealed via the project's FOI. Whether due to students choosing not to enter complaint processes through a lack of faith in the system or attempting to complain but it not being recorded as an official complaint (due to bureaucratic requirements to complain in a particular way), universities would be misguided to take low numbers of formal complaints as an indicator that problems do not exist. At the same time, as evidenced throughout this report, the problems are far greater than those pertaining to complaint processes. To only introduce a new complaints process, and not radically transform security services, would be to ignore the issues.

Arising in part due to a lack of faith in university complaint processes, **a range of student-led responses have emerged to resist the harms of securitisation, and participants recommend a range of other reforms and/or alternatives to security services and police on campus.** Participants reflected on the formation of Cops Off Campus at the University of Manchester to monitor security staff and police on campus; an intervention that was understood by participants to be necessary in the context of heavy-handed Covid policing. Others advocated for their own withdrawal from campus life as a way of protecting mental health and wellbeing. Some students advocated for a number of reforms to security services on campus, which include: removing outsourcing, changes to uniform, greater training particularly in relation to equality and diversity and responding to sexual violence (although the effectiveness of this training is questionable), and a redefinition of the role of security services to (re)centre student welfare. Most transformationally, others would like to see investment diverted from security services to other (non-punitive) interventions to improve student safety and wellbeing, including initiatives such as Residence Life, enhanced counselling and wellbeing services, and direct financial assistance for students.

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Whose campus, whose security?
