

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Registered Charity No 1119599

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10 September 2026

Dear Student Union President,

Re. Distribution of Self-Swab Test Kits to University Students

We are writing to make you aware of a serious and ongoing concern for the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) that we believe should also be of concern to students, student support services, and student unions across the UK.

In 2025, universities were informed by the company Enough that self-swab DNA kits for use after sexual assault had been designed *“with help from the UK’s top forensic experts, including the FFLM.”* We want to be absolutely clear that this is not correct.

The FFLM was approached in 2023 to support a self-swab product but made it clear that we could not endorse or support it. In 2024, we discovered that the names of our Senior Officers had been used in promotional material without our permission and requested that these be removed. Since then, along with other key professional bodies, we have published a joint statement ([Joint Position statement on forensic self-swab services after sexual assault or rape with FAQ](#)) outlining our concerns. This was co-signed by organisations including the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV, forensic scientists from King’s College London, and others.

Despite this, our name and reputation (as well as those of other organisations) are still being inaccurately associated with these products.

In October 2025, we wrote an [open letter](#) to University Vice-Chancellors to highlight our concerns; this letter was supported on-line by numerous organisations including [Rape Crisis England & Wales](#), [The Survivors Trust](#), and [Victim Support](#). Those concerns were later reflected in a formal regulatory ruling following complaints made to the Advertising Standards Authority.

In May 2026, the ASA upheld three complaints against Enough, specifically ruling that its claim that the kits could be used in rape trials was misleading. Enough was also found to have misrepresented and overstated statistics concerning the prevalence and likelihood of rape. The ruling supports concerns continually raised by us, Rape Crisis England & Wales and other organisations working within the sexual harms sector.

Taken together, these developments show that our concern is not simply about the misuse of FFLM’s name, but about the real-world consequences for students who may be encouraged to rely on products that cannot provide the care, safeguarding, or forensic assurance available through specialist services.

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Why This Matters To Students

We understand that students may seek immediate options after a traumatic experience such as sexual assault. However, self-swab kits can unintentionally cause harm and lead to false reassurance. This includes:

- Loss of vital medical and psychological care – Self-swabbing does not provide injury assessment, emergency contraception, HIV or Hepatitis B post-exposure medication, mental health care, or safeguarding. All of these are available free and confidentially at Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs).
- Risk of contaminated or unusable evidence – Without specialist training, equipment and environments, there is a high risk that any DNA collected could be contaminated or forensically invalid, which may undermine future criminal investigations.
- Misleading claims of expert approval and effectiveness – Some organisations promoting these kits are selling a false sense of security, suggesting that using such kits is a safe and sufficient step after sexual assault. They also imply that having these kits available may act as a deterrent to sexual violence, yet there is no evidence to support this.
- Misrepresentation of professional support - Communications have falsely implied that forensic and medical experts, including the FFLM and the Forensic Science Regulator, support or co-designed these kits, which is not true.

These concerns are not ours alone. There are already [reports of cases collapsing](#) where these kits have been used, denying victims justice. Investigations such as openDemocracy's "[Anti-rape self-test DNA kit fails rape victims, misleads public](#)", "[A start-up says it can 'end rape'. Read the fine print](#)" and "[Anti-rape start-up misled public over self-swab kit claims](#)" have documented how such products can undermine safeguarding, mislead students, and falsely imply expert endorsement. In addition, significant concerns have been raised by [students](#) and their [unions](#), [charities](#), and [forensic science providers](#). Together, these findings echo the risks we have outlined and reinforce the importance of accurate information for student communities.

What Are We Asking Student Unions To Do?

We respectfully ask for your support in:

- Ensuring students receive accurate information—that expert organisations in the field including the FFLM do not endorse or support forensic self-swab kits.
- Encouraging students to seek care from their local SARC, regardless of whether they wish to report the incident to the police.
- Being cautious of commercial or university messaging that promotes self-swab kits as an alternative to professional care or suggests they have proven deterrent effects.
- Promoting trauma-informed, safe, and evidence-based approaches to supporting survivors.

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Who We Are

The FFLM is recognised by the Home Office as the body responsible for setting and upholding standards for healthcare professionals involved in forensic and sexual offence medicine. Our role is to protect patients' wellbeing and the integrity of forensic evidence.

We strongly believe that students deserve access to compassionate, comprehensive care and accurate information after sexual assault—not products that risk their recovery or justice.

Thank you for your time and for your continued efforts to support your student communities. We would be very happy to provide further information, answer any questions, or work with your union to share accurate resources or messaging.



Halita Obineche
Chief Executive Officer, FFLM



Dr Alex Gorton
President, FFLM