



University of
Nottingham

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Annual Report 2017-18

University Counselling Service



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Executive Summary

- 2135 clients (students and staff) seen*.
- Over 8100 appointments were offered and attended during the academic year
- 5.5% of total student population accessed counselling.
- 3.7% of University staff accessed the service; a slight increase on 2016/17.
- 60% of students and 78% of staff survey respondents stated that counselling had improved their overall well-being significantly or very significantly.
- 26% of student survey respondents said that counselling had improved their employment skills. An increase of 6% on 2016-2017.
- 82% of survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the counselling they received. An increase of 8% on 2016-2017.
- 6-9% an overall average increase in client (students and staff) satisfaction ratings this year.

Of the 2135 individual clients:

- 40.6% attended for 1 appointment only
- 20.0% attended 2 appointments
- 34.5% attended for between 3-8 appointments

Groups and workshops programme

59 workshops were offered on University Park and Sutton Bonington campuses. 429 students attended the workshops. Specialised workshops were offered on the Derby campus for Health Sciences students.

Therapy groups

3 short term (8 weeks), and 3 long term (year-long) therapeutic counselling groups were provided at University Park.

Pilot workshops offered

'Breathe Here Now' - a lunch-time drop-in offering a version of Mindfulness/meditation practice was held fortnightly during semester 2.

'Being Outdoors' workshops for staff and students and a bespoke version for staff on request.

Support groups

The University Counselling Service (UCS) provided consultation support and guidance to individual Schools and Departments following critical incidents and events affecting staff groups and individuals in staff teams.

* A decrease of 4.9% on 2016/17. See Head of Service report "Response to demand".

Head of Service report

Service data available this year shows a continued increase in demand for access to University Counselling Service provision coupled with reported notable increases in the complexity of assessed needs. This trend is reflected nationally across the Higher Education sector.^{1,2}

The University Counselling Service team has:

- Offered a safe, secure confidential space on all campuses.
- Worked hard to innovate and develop provision using and adapting resources available and responded actively to the feedback received.
- Offered over 8000 appointments this academic year.
- Been able to keep the waiting time for first appointments each week to under 10 working days on average over the year.
- Shown an overall average increase of over 6% in client satisfaction ratings

Response to demand

Our data shows that there was a 4% drop in clients seen compared to last academic year. The recorded decrease was likely due to two factors: reduced counselling hours and counselling resources available resulting in days 'lost' during industrial action taken in February and March 2018 and the decision to delay recruitment of a counsellor to replace one who had retired in December 2017. Calculations of projected data show that without these factors there is likely to have been a reported 4% increase in the number of clients seen.

Also noted is a 4.5% increase on last year in the number of clients who attended for 3-8 appointments. This has had an impact on capacity and resources available.

Student counselling

Overall, there is little change in the main issues that students come to counselling with. Media coverage over the past year has highlighted a reported rise in levels of anxiety and those medicated for depression amongst young people and university students in particular. Some of these reports, although not necessarily substantiated by longitudinal data available¹ have resulted in a great deal of anxious talk about student mental health. It may be that in some cases what could be considered a reasonable reaction to being confronted with a difficult situation or a life crisis is being labelled as a mental health problem.

1. Student Mental Wellbeing: Current Priorities and Future Challenges, Woburn House, 6th March 2018, London: Universities UK. Conference speakers: Sir Simon Wessely, John De Oury, Prof Steve West, Paul Jenkins.
2. BACP Universities and Colleges Annual Survey of Counselling Services 2016-2017

The University Counselling Service provides a therapeutic intervention for those experiencing a wide range of difficulties. Clients can use the space and time to think, have a chance to be listened to and be understood, and empathised with. This basic human need is for some young people a rare commodity in a busy and demanding life where speed is of the

essence and the drive towards doing it 'better and faster' is ever present. High expectations of themselves to achieve their very best can lead some students to believe that only perfection at all times, will do at the expense of their physical and mental health.

This attitude can sometimes be transferred as an expectation of the University Counselling Service. It is not unusual for students attending the Service to expect to 'sort out' long-standing emotional, psychological and relationship issues or recently diagnosed 'anxiety and depression in an instant.

Some clients may experience counselling as 'disappointing' at this juncture but exploration of this initial feeling may lead to a better understanding of their predicament, how it has arisen and what could help to alleviate their current situation to enable satisfactory functioning and relationships. This may at times involve further sessions to work with the long-term impact of difficult early experiences.

Counsellors may recommend engagement with university support services before crises develop and avoiding isolation from others through group activities such as university sport and societies, as well as pursuing previous hobbies and interests and connecting with supportive family and friends.

At UCS, there has been an increase in the number of requests for support with claims for extenuating circumstances some of which may be linked to the toll of the demands of perfectionism. This has a knock on effect on administrative work for the Service and at times of peak demand, a reduction in appointments available.

This year the Service team has strengthened its links with the Student Union Welfare and related groups through regular communication with elected and employed officers (Laura Bealin Kelly and Katie Roberts), and attendance at the newly established SU Welfare network and involvement with a range of initiatives and projects. Through these communication channels we have been able to inform students about Counselling Service provision and availability with greater accuracy and regularity which has helped to encourage realistic expectations of the Service.

[Staff counselling](#)

The Service is an important and valued resource for staff at all levels. The 20% rise in use of the Counselling Service by staff in 2015-2016 has remained since then with an increase in the percentage of the total clients accessing the service this year.

Over 50% of staff surveyed stated counselling was significant in helping them stay at work, return to work and function better in the workplace.

[Bereavement Groups](#)

In recent years, the Counselling Service has offered ad hoc support groups on request from senior managers and staff groups providing a facilitated supportive space to enable reflection on the impact of critical incidents such as sudden bereavement.

UCS presence and input into a variety of forums including Senior Tutor Network, seminars and staff training events has enabled staff to use this input for personal support and for their support roles with students. Where possible, UCS intends to continue its work of

establishing networks which will help to inform and support key staff with student welfare roles as well as providing one-off groups on aspects specific to counselling, such as “building resilience”.

Groups and workshops

Following a counselling consultation, we encourage students to participate in the groups and workshops programme offered either in addition to one-to-one contact or, in many cases an alternative to further one-to-one support.

The Counselling Service groups and workshops programme has expanded to meet the needs of students. Our regular efforts to improve provision have yielded good results. Attendance rates for groups and workshops have improved as have the satisfaction rates.

We have had some success experimenting with open access to students and staff for the Breathe Here Now and Being Outdoors workshops. It has been gratifying seeing students and staff working together. This is the Counselling Service’s contribution to what we know to be an expanding area of research and practice in to Mindfulness which is happening in various pockets within the university community and globally.

The success of the weekly therapy group (Open Group) offered as a pilot last year has led to the establishment of a second weekly Open Group providing a therapeutic resource of this kind on two days of the week.

A year-long Managing Depression group has evolved from a one-off workshop and is proving successful.

Internal Liaison

Team members in the University Counselling Service continue to attend termly meetings with Cripps medical health professionals and the Mental Health Advisory Service team. The meetings are used to discuss current issues, trends in demand and share information about developments in the services and primary care support.

The Counselling Service team has worked towards developing stronger relationships with Welfare Support and Student Support Teams through attendance at meetings, sharing practice and partnerships. Team members continued to convene a termly Student Support Forum for Welfare support staff and tutors at which colleagues could share ideas and reflect on practice as well as network.

The Counselling Service continues to work closely with Mental Health Advisory Service team colleagues in supporting students in crisis and/or where relevant joint working or referrals. The teams have also held joint training meetings during the academic year at which there has been an opportunity to discuss whole university initiatives on mental health and wellbeing and the external referral systems and review mental health resources available to students in the local area.

Since February 2018 members of the University Counselling Service team have joined Mental Health Advisory colleagues in the delivery of training supervision sessions for Welfare support staff.

The Head of Service attends the Senior Tutor Network and updates the network on Counselling Service provision as well as receiving information for circulation about tutoring matters and other developments connected to the welfare of students.

This year, two members of the Counselling Service presented a seminar 'View from the Counsellors Chair' to Graduate School PhD supervisors. This event was successful and another seminar has been requested and planned for next year.

University health and wellbeing strategy

The increased interest and focus on mental health and well-being has led to a closer examination of what constitutes mental health and wellbeing and how best to foster this in the university community. The Head of Service has participated in a number of sessions led by the Campus Life Director (Andy Winter) and other senior colleagues who together with a broad range of stakeholders within the University have a role in assisting and informing the development of the University's Health and Wellbeing strategy.

Sexual Violence Support Service pilot

From September to December 2017 the Counselling Service hosted a pilot drop-in and specialist counselling service provided by Topaz a city-based counselling service for those who have experienced sexual assault. University Counselling Service data showed a rise in the reporting of sexual assault during 2017-2018.

Changes and developments

This was the first full year of using, the Service's client record management system Titanium. The implementation of Titanium has proved popular with the counselling team reducing replication of processes. The system has been useful in supplying accurate reporting of data throughout the year which in the longer term will help with capacity planning and demand management. The data available in this report has changed the way we produce statistical summaries. It has the potential to increase our analysis and understanding of the data.

Extended opening hours

The UCS is now open from 8am for appointments each week day. During term, the service is open late on Wednesdays for appointments until 7.30pm. These extended hours are to accommodate students on placements and staff who are unable to attend during normal office hours.

Deputy Head of Service

In late August 2018 Lucy Rowley was appointed as Deputy Head of Service. This newly created post was in part developed and converted from the vacancy arising on the retirement of the Counselling Co-ordinator Heather Nelson at the end of August 2018. This new role will enable enhanced day to day clinical management of the Service team as well as assisting the Head of Service in all aspects of management, development and the monitoring of provision.

Counselling Co-ordinator

The team are sad to lose Heather who over the past 22 years made a big contribution to the overall development of the Service. In her co-ordinator role Heather played a pioneering role in establishing excellent counselling services to Health Sciences and Biosciences students studying at the university in various locations and on placement throughout the East Midlands. She also enhanced support to staff working in those locations.

Throughout, Heather developed a strong reputation and influence which stretched from the counselling room to the curriculum, as a counsellor, workshop provider, trainer, and educator known for going the 'extra mile' to meet the needs of clients and where necessary advocating on their behalf through forming strong partnerships with teaching and support staff. Heather also had a leading role in creating and developing unique self-help booklets for the Service. A provision which was much praised and emulated by other higher education counselling services in the HE sector.

Administration

The bid for an increase in administrative staff has been successful. The Reception team has been fully staffed from early February 2018. This has enabled Counselling Service clinicians to be released from some of the administrative tasks to work on their core tasks. The Reception team have been fully inducted and play a valuable role in our response to clients.

China campus links

Regular communication between the Heads of Service in Nottingham and China continues and this has enabled a sharing of expertise and experience which is of benefit to both services. The Head of Service has assisted with the recruitment of counsellors through short-listing and interview panel work.

The Counselling Service had a visit from Patti Wallace's (Head of Service, Ningbo campus) in July 2018 during which she was able to meet with key members of Welfare and Administrative support staff in Nottingham.

Malaysia campus links

Since the Head of Service visit to the Malaysia campus last year, UCS Nottingham has maintained a link with the acting Head of Service. This has included assisting with recruitment and offering some organisational support on request.

Provision of training and work experience

Through the expertise available within the staff team we are able to offer a very good training placement to counsellors in advanced training and to qualified practitioners. Our team of qualified counselling supervisors gives placement counsellors an excellent grounding, improving their employability potential. This year we hosted two placement counsellors one of whom moved in to permanent employment in a university counselling service and another established her own professional service. In total, this year we provided training for four counsellors (Julia, Jackie, Katerina and Anna) two of whom have worked here on placement for two academic years.

Placement counsellor feedback

I have really valued working with a diverse client base. I have worked with people from a variety of cultural, social and economic backgrounds. I was also rather worried about working 'back to back' but I have actually really enjoyed this.

The placement has helped me to develop confidence as a counsellor, I have also had plenty of opportunity to put theory into practice and to reflect on this. There have also been some positive outcomes of the work from the client's perspective. I have become aware of how the service works in the context of a large institution and how the administration around counselling needs to operate

Nothing beats personal experience. No matter how much theory is read, engaging with other human beings is where the real learning comes from in addition to the theory and ethics. My confidence and competence has grown massively around safeguarding issues, ethical dilemmas etc. I use the policies and counselling team to support me, as well as supporting others in the team myself. I have also come to personally experience first-hand the limitations of my theoretical model as I perceive them to be, and feel much more skilful at learning, offering and exploring additional theories and techniques.

Higher Education links and visits

- VC Shearer West – Campus Life team visit hosted by UCS
- Walter Brownsword III, University of Vermont UCS, visiting counsellor and scholar
- Louise Knowles, Head of University Counselling Service, University of Sheffield
- Visit to Trinity College Dublin in July holding a series of meetings with specialist leads within the Service as well as sharing practice and development ideas with Head of Service Dr Deirdre Flynn.

Contributions to research and academic scholarship

Morris-Roberts, K. (2018) Working Outdoors - A Review of Ecotherapy in Practice: A Buddhist Model by Caroline Brazier, London: Routledge, 2017 in British Gestalt Journal 27(1): 56-58

Continuing professional development

The following training qualifications have been successfully completed by members of the team:

- ILM Level 3 Award in Leadership and Management: Davina Malcolm
- BACP Senior Counsellor Accreditation: Lucy Rowley
- ILM Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management : Lucy Rowley
- Team CPD: Exploring Suicidality with Antonia Murphy
- Team members also attended a variety of external individual CPD activities, such as compassion focused therapy, attachment-informed psychotherapy, repercussion of dyslexia.

Plans for the academic year 2018-19

- Pilot and implementation of a tool for outcomes measurements
- Counselling Service to host a CPD workshop.
- Continued improvement to signposting and web presence

- Further exploratory and development work in using digital technologies to broaden the scope of provision
- Continued Service participation in the work being done on the university's Health and Wellbeing strategy
- Enhancing links with departments to explore further preventative strategies
- Further work and investigation into online counselling support for students
- Recruitment and training of bank counsellors to deal with peak periods of demand
- Continued work on enhancing links with Student Welfare, Student Union officers and other relevant support staff teams.
- To continue with Equality Diversity and Inclusion work begun in 2015/2016
- To pilot a support group for International students
- To investigate Service accreditation

Consultancy

The Counselling Service team has been working with development consultant, Martyn Patterson from March - September 2018 to review the Service as a whole to identify and clarify its purpose and positioning as a resource for the University community. This has involved a closer examination of our annual plans, working on long term objectives, priorities and areas for development as well as refining some of our provision.

All areas of our work have been examined with the intention of ensuring quality of provision for clients, accountability for the use of resources; sustainability and integrity of the service and harnessing relevant technologies whilst holding true to the tenets of ethical professional practices and relevant university long-term strategy.

Challenges for 2018-2019

Staff in the Counselling Service have consistently provided emotional and psychological support in a safe, confidential space. We have successfully dealt with challenges not unfamiliar to many if not all support services, namely, managing increase in demand with limited resources, dealing with large scale structural change and adapting to personnel and system changes. Where possible, we have worked to protect Service users from the disruptive effects and noise of nearby construction work, the impact of flood damage in the Orchards building and staff shortages at various points in the year.

Further staffing changes will take place during 2018-2019 through the recruitment of three new counsellors. This has the potential to bring new ideas and energy to the team and has implications for the time needed for induction and introduction to the service and university

Our sustained optimism, energy and passion for the work and a desire to provide the best service that we can enables us to deal with the many challenges faced by the University community.

The comments in the client feedback report give a picture of client response which is reflected in the increased satisfaction ratings. The comments strongly indicate that the university community values the service provided. The feedback we received this year shows increased satisfaction ratings and strongly indicates that the University community values the service provided.

I am grateful to my team of colleagues for their dedication support and creativity as we continue to work on managing the tension between maintaining quality of provision in the face of the increase in demand.

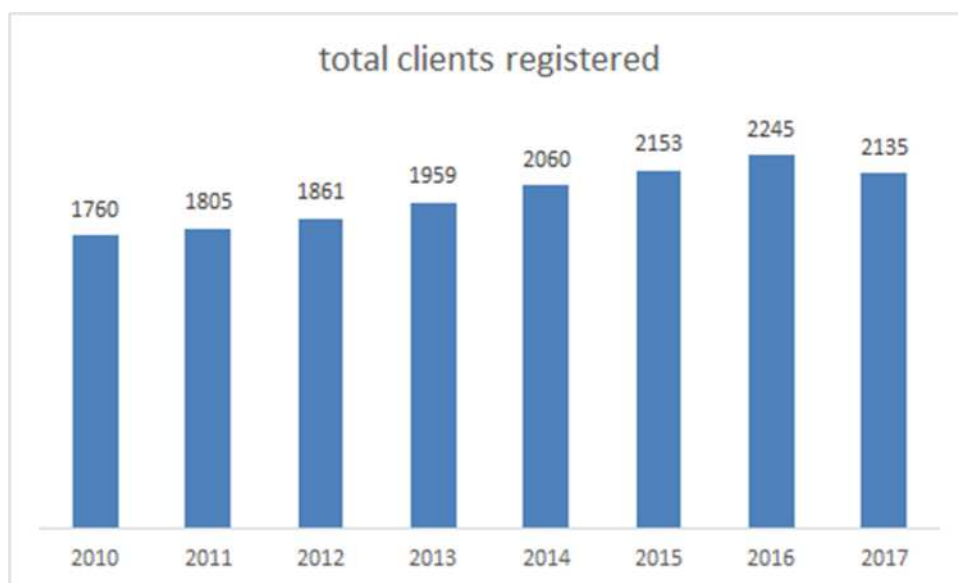
Val Watson
October 2018

Statistics

The statistics reported in this section are drawn from comprehensive data recorded for each student and member of staff who contacted the University Counselling Service (UCS) and attended at least one appointment. We also collect parallel data for students who attend our therapeutic groups and workshops, and these statistics are included in the groups and workshops section of the Annual Report.

The data recorded this year was obtained through the new client management system which was implemented at the beginning of this academic year. This has allowed us to collect some new information about our work. In addition, some of the data that we have routinely collected has been captured and analysed in a slightly different way.

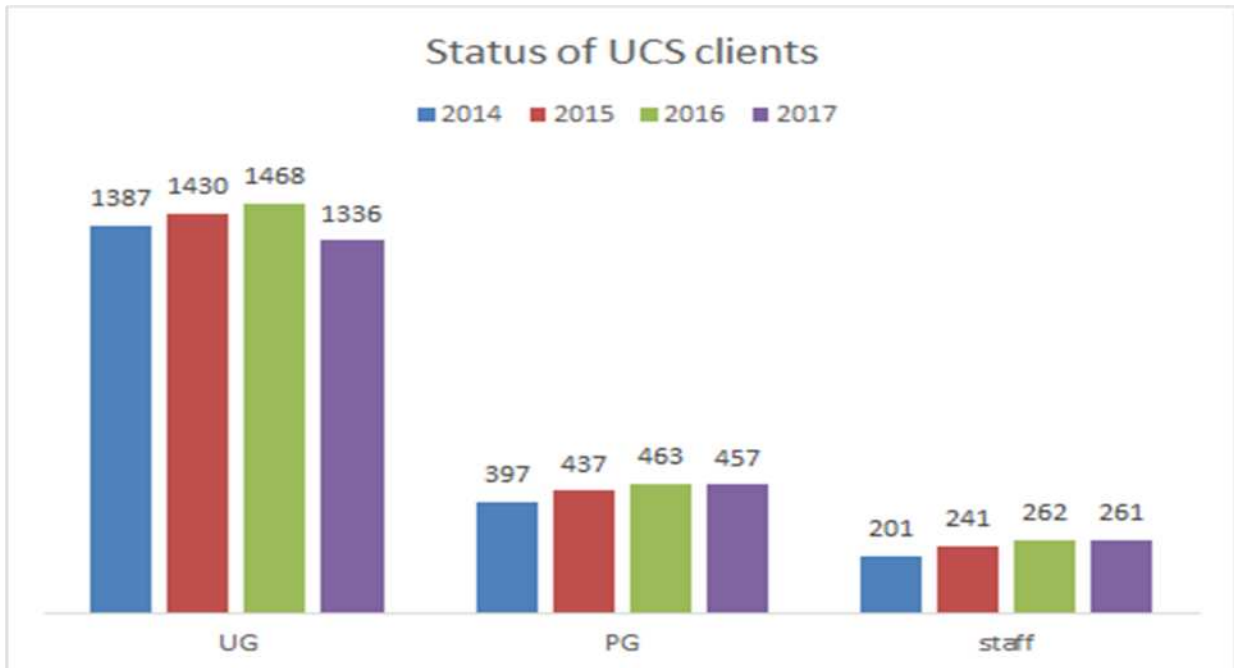
Numbers of clients registered



UCS registered 4.9% fewer clients than last year. We do not interpret this as a reduction in demand. New registrations were up in August-November but, due to several operational reasons there were fewer appointments available in the first half of semester 2 reflected by lower registration numbers between December and March. Numbers registered in from April to July were very similar to those from last year.



We recorded demographic and clinical information from 2123 of our clients, 97% of the total registered.



The drop in total clients is reflected in the drop in the numbers of undergraduate students seen, for the reasons outlined above. As in previous years, the data collected confirms that all students from all Schools and Departments use the Service.

Around 13% of UCS clients were University staff members (261 in total, 3.7% of the staff population). It is important and encouraging that staff from all areas of the University use the Service - academics, senior managers, administrative staff, operations and facilities staff.

A third of UCS clients were male, and the numbers of mature, international and postgraduate students seen were the same as last year.

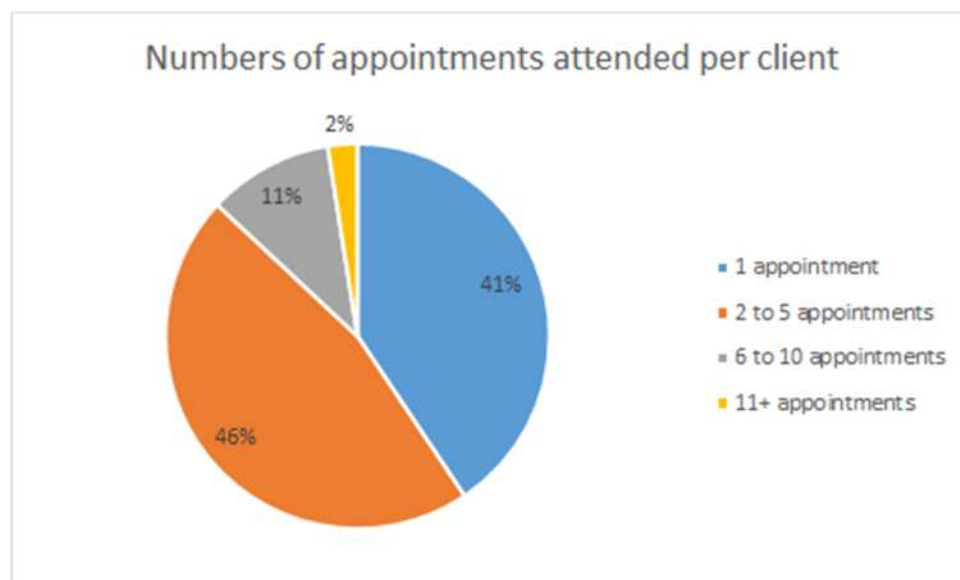
Waiting times

This year we have been able to record waiting time for an initial appointment. This is the time between scheduling the appointment and the date the appointment is offered/accepted. The average wait was 8.2 working days for a total of 2011 initial appointments.

When clients were offered an ongoing counselling contract the waiting time between the initial appointment and the second appointment offered was recorded. A variety of ongoing contracts were offered following assessment, including follow-up, regular weekly or fortnightly contracts. The mean waiting time for 824 client contracts, recorded for these various contracts was 3.4 weeks, and the median was 3 weeks. Some clients are offered intermittent contracts; these are not included in waiting time calculations.

Number of appointments offered

UCS offered a total of 8107 appointments, 6186 (76%) of which were attended. 866 (11%) of these appointments were offered at our satellite sites, with a similar attendance rate.



41% of clients attended for one appointment. This represents those students and staff who only need to come for one appointment to resolve their situation, as well as those who were referred to one of the University Counselling Service groups, workshops or to other sources of help within the University and beyond where this was appropriate. This figure also

includes those who were offered additional appointments but only attended for one. There is always a proportion of students who attend UCS for one appointment only to request extenuating circumstance evidence.

46% of students and staff came for between two and five sessions. This is a combination of those who came for short term therapeutic work which gives opportunity for working through moderate emotional and mental health problems, and other clients, mostly students, who attend for intermittent appointments spaced out during the academic year with the aim of maximising the effect of counselling in support of their academic study.

11% of staff and students were seen for six to ten sessions and 2% for more than 11 sessions. The pressure of demand means that this extended work is only offered to those with the more serious concerns. We believe that it is important to continue to offer this where needed.

Presenting problems – a summary

(There may be more than 1 concern presented by each client).



The numbers of clients reporting rape/sexual assault as a presenting issue has increased, from 44 last year to 70, and is now the 20th reported problem.

Client feedback

Highlights

- 82% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the counselling and other service they received, up from 74% last year.
- 36% of student respondents said that counselling was “an important factor” or “the most significant factor” in helping them stay at university, up from 26% last year.
- 48% of staff respondents said that counselling was “an important factor” or “the most significant factor” in helping them stay at work or get back to work, up from 40% last year.
- 59% of students and 78% of staff respondents said that counselling had improved their overall well-being significantly or very significantly (new measure for this year).
- 26% of students felt that counselling had improved their employment skills, up from 20% last year.
- 52% of staff respondents said that counselling had been a significant or very significant factor in helping them function better in the workplace and/or develop skills which might enhance employment prospects, up from 43% last year.
- 86% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the non-counselling aspects of the service, up from 83% last year

How we get feedback

All students and members of staff who use the Counselling Service are sent an invitation to complete an anonymous SurveyMonkey® questionnaire shortly after their counselling has ended.

In 2017/18, 1730 invitations to complete the survey were sent out and 239 responses received; a response rate of 14%. This shows a slight decrease compared to 2016/17 (18%). We registered 2135 clients during 2016/17, which means that 11% of our total client group gave us feedback. This is a slightly lower figure than in 2016/2017 (12%) which could be partly attributable to the transition to a new method of requesting feedback following the introduction of the Titanium appointments system as well as some technical issues with Surveymonkey®.

Feedback submitted via Surveymonkey® is reviewed on a regular basis, and comments are recorded for information purposes if the respondent has given explicit consent to do so. Any individual counsellor identified on a feedback form will then receive a copy of their feedback. Clients wishing to receive a response to their feedback are invited to provide an email address. Their form is then passed on to the Head of Service for further action. We see client feedback as an extremely valuable resource, informing decisions around service management and access as well as providing individual counsellors with opportunities to reflect on their practice.

The comments on the next page give a flavour of the type of feedback we receive:

Sarah Olds
University Counsellor

'Basically I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank you. You helped me through some very difficult times and, whilst I'd be a fool to say it was gone completely, I hope life starts improving for me'

I came in feeling suicidal. Over 7 sessions I confronted my ideas about masculinity. Left with a bright view of the future and have now started dating men. 10/10.

I can't thank you enough for your support this term. Your guidance and never-ending supply of tissues have meant more to me than you'll know.

My Counsellor is extremely nice and welcoming. I actually love going to talk to him. The waiting times can be quite long but this is something to be expected

I just wanted to give you some positive feedback from one of our students who attended the Anxiety workshop on Tuesday: "The workshop was very insightful and reassuring, lots of people were experiencing the same or similar things so it helped a lot. I feel much better today" She came to my office on Tuesday, very tearful and anxious, and the workshop was running that afternoon so we signed her up straight away - great timing!

Counselling provision at other campuses

In addition to the service based at 'The Orchards', the University Counselling Service provides individual counselling (and occasional workshops) to students and staff at Jubilee Campus, Sutton Bonington Campus and the School of Medicine and Health Science at Derby Royal Hospital.

These services mainly serve the student / staff community on site, but the option of counselling at the satellite sites is also available to staff and students who are on placement, or who live nearby, or who wish to access counselling away from their place of work / study.

Derby Campus

The service is based in the Medical School at Royal Derby Hospital, it has sole use of a discreet counselling room.

Counselling appointments are offered on 2 days per week, throughout the year. From September 2018, counselling days will be **Tuesdays and Wednesdays**.

Clients attended 249 appointments (of the 332 appointments offered) at Derby in 2017/18, of which 90 were initial counselling consultations.

The service is used mainly by graduate entry nursing (GEN) students; graduate entry medical students (GEM); undergraduate students in Medical Physiology and Therapeutics and University academic, administrative and research staff based at Derby.

Workshop provision: 76 GEN students attended a workshop 'Resilience and maintaining the capacity to care' in Derby on 17th April 2018, facilitated by the Counselling Service.

There have been changes in staffing at Derby in 2017/18: Patricia Eschoe left the Service in September 2017 and Sarah Hinds joined Heather Nelson in working at Derby in January 2018.

Heather will be retiring at the end of August 2018 and **Jane Titterton will be joining Sarah Hinds at Derby** in September 2018. Jane has worked at Derby previously and her appointment to this role will ensure continuity.

Jubilee Campus

Counselling appointments are offered by appointment, every Friday throughout the year.

Clients attended 118 appointments (of the 168 appointments offered) in 2017/18, of which 62 were initial counselling consultations.

The service is used mainly by international students, with a high proportion of mature and post-graduate students, and staff.

UCS has use of a counselling room, offering privacy, with a nearby waiting area.

Adrian Langham is the counsellor at Jubilee.

Sutton Bonington Campus

Counselling appointments are offered by appointment, every Wednesday and Friday, throughout the year (2 days per week).

Clients attended 294 appointments (of the 366 appointments offered) in 2017/18, of which 115 were initial counselling consultations.

The Counselling Service offered a drop-in bereavement group in May 2018, for students and staff affected by the sudden death of a student.

The service at Sutton Bonington mainly serves the students and staff of the Schools of Veterinary Medicine and Biosciences.

The counselling room at Sutton Bonington is situated on the top floor of the Main Building, with an adjacent waiting area, which offers a private, quiet space. It can also accommodate workshops for small groups of students.

Sarah Olds and Jane Titterton provide counselling and student workshops at Sutton Bonington.

Workshop provision: Sarah and Jane offer 'lunch time bites' - a regular, well established programme of short lunchtime workshops, specifically designed for the students at SB, who have limited timetable availability. The programme is constantly evolving in response to student / staff feedback and this year the counsellors offered workshops on resilience, sleep strategies, mindfulness and creative techniques for stress management.

Heather Nelson
Counselling Co-ordinator

Groups and workshops

The University Counselling Service has continued to develop its programme of groups and workshops during 2017 -18. Our aim is to provide easy access to a wide range of helpful resources that are designed to enhance student wellbeing and productive study.

Numbers

A total of **497** students and staff attended our workshops programme and **66** students attended our therapeutic groups over the past year.

These numbers are a substantial increase on previous years.

Overview

2017/18 has been an interesting and innovative year for our programme with several new initiatives being successfully piloted and some of our established workshops and groups being developed further (see below).

We have also welcomed Sarah Olds as a new Program Co-ordinator following the departure from our service of Anne Brewin who had been a Co-ordinator for two years.

Open Groups

Following the successful launch of our first Open Group - a therapeutic group for clients presenting with more complex difficulties - in 2016/17, we have now introduced a second Open Group which started in February this year. Our Open Groups offer places for up to 25 clients who are in need of longer term support and who might benefit from the experience of peer support as well as counsellor input. Both groups have attracted a steady rate of referrals and have been well attended.

The establishment of these groups enables our Service to provide a substantial therapeutic intervention to clients who may lack the usual support structures in their personal lives that other students have. Groups are often a better developmental 'fit' for clients whose problems are longer standing as they are more likely to benefit from a collective therapeutic process.

Being Outdoors/Breathe Here Now

Over the past two years the Service has been piloting two new workshops for staff and students: 'Being Outdoors' and 'Breathe Here Now'.

'Being Outdoors' offers an opportunity for participants to explore how nature can support emotional health. The workshops take place at University Park and are a mixture of mindfulness and eco-therapy approaches. There are four per year to coincide with the seasons and we have adapted them to provide shorter interventions that have proved more manageable during the working day. The outdoors' workshops were particularly successful with international students, postgraduate students and staff members, although undergraduate students are also welcome to attend. 'Being Outdoors' will be incorporated into our other initiative, the 'Breathe Here Now' workshops which are offered on a drop-in basis and provide a 30 minute lunch-time space to stop and paying attention to breathing. These sessions have been attended by a total of **68** people over the year and are

open to all, staff and students. They incorporate a variety of interventions: mindfulness, meditation, grounding practice, body awareness and creative practice in order to grow an experience of 'present moment awareness'. The 'Being Outdoors' and 'Breathe Here Now' sessions will be part of the main programme of workshops for 2018/19.

(Kathryn Morris-Roberts)

Managing Depression

These workshops are delivered three times a year in a two session format. Over the past two years a monthly support group has evolved from the workshops as a response to the connection that participants had made with each other and the facilitator, and which had given them an opportunity to share experiences and find ways of moving forwards. Following each new workshop, membership of the support group has grown.

(Rob Sharp)

Looking after yourself at work

A one-off workshop for welfare officers was delivered in June. Evaluation showed the workshop was well received and valuable feedback has provided for further initiatives that could be offered in support of staff who work on the front line of University Welfare. **The Student Support Forum** – a discussion space for staff who have roles in supporting students in difficulty - has also taken place 4 times this year and was well attended with lots of discussion around the changes staff have experienced and the impact of these changes. A mixture of academic staff and welfare staff attended the last meeting of the year and there was a useful exchange of ideas and experiences.

Looking Ahead

We have made adjustments to the workshops programme for the coming year hoping to provide a more flexible and responsive input to students and staff on a wide range of issues. We hope to be able to take the workshops out to locations where students can more readily access them and to offer events that are tailored on the day to meet the needs of attendees. This is a challenging change but one which may improve attendance as currently, despite attracting a lot of interest and high numbers of places being booked, we have a 39% 'no show' at our workshops. Investigation suggests that whilst this is not an uncommon figure for events for which there is no monetary charge, it might be possible to improve 'take-up'.

We are also planning to increase the online library of resources that are available to students and staff to support their emotional and psychological wellbeing. We are considering ways in which these resources can be more interactive and improve accessibility for those students who cannot necessarily attend live events.

Lucy Rowley

Groups & Workshops Coordinator

Groups and workshops feedback

Highlights

- 94% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the workshop they attended (81% in 2016/17)
- 97% of students said they would recommend the workshop to another student (98% in 2016/17)

Where did respondents hear about the workshop?

UCS Website	37%
Counsellor recommendation	31%
Other*	21%
University communication	14%
Leaflet	8%
School or department	5%

(*including: colleague, GP, Welfare Officer, Sports Centre/Guild promotion, wellbeing day, university Intranet home page, Twitter)

Selected comments from feedback forms

Self-Esteem

What people liked:

“Talking through with other students who have the same problems”

“The learning about what contributes to low self-esteem”

Suggestions:

“As everyone was struggling with low self-esteem, there wasn't much feedback from the exercises. Maybe asking individuals if they would like to contribute or not would have helped with this.”

Mindfulness

What people liked:

“Introducing me to other mindfulness techniques that I had not considered before.”

“The informal nature of it and the fact that you got to talk to people in the workshop and interact instead of having it be a lecture.”

Suggestions:

“Maybe could have included bit more info on where to start with the resources”

Anxiety & Stress

What people liked:

“Being able to engage in conversation with people who are experiencing the same thing. Able to share experiences and share coping mechanisms.”

“Talking through exercises with others was helpful and reassuring to know that other people felt the same way and that I wasn't alone.”

“The way the counsellor guided group discussion and adapted the content of the workshop to the emerging group dynamics, the TED talk we watched”

Suggestions:

“to differentiate anxiety and stress and also some relaxing strategies”

Managing depression (2-part)

What people liked:

“It reminded me that I'm not alone; everyone suffers in their own ways. Yet, though we all have pain, what defines us is how we choose to handle it.”

“The workshops offered a variety of different tools which I can explore in order to manage my depression such as through challenging my negative thoughts and eating well. There was also a great amount of further material to read through and look into once the workshop was over”

Suggestions:

“Can benefit more if it was more than 2 sessions.”

“I would also find it helpful if the workshops shared stories of people who suffer from depression and what tools they found very helpful. It would make me feel more hopeful that there are people just like me going through the same thing.”

MCBT (Mindfulness Cognitive Behaviour Therapy)

What people liked:

“The practical elements and the resources list. Being in an engaging session, surrounded by people in similar situations where we can all relate to each other. The overall outcome of the session was great and I personally left the session feeling much better for the rest of the day compared to the morning.”

Suggestions:

“I do think that it should also be a two part course whereby the first time around you focus on learning and then the second time you address problems and discuss progress.”

Procrastination

What people liked:

“Having the chance to speak and reflect. The facilitators were really empathetic to the range of struggles in the room.”

“What does procrastination actually mean and why it is not always bad if managed well. Also they gave good suggestions about how to manage it.

“The trainer/counsellor was really great, the practical tips about how to deal with procrastination and how to become more aware of the feelings that lead to procrastination behaviour “

Suggestions:

“Perhaps it could have been shorter. I felt the workshop took up quite a bit of time while the useful content could have been covered in an hour or so.”

Perfectionism

What people liked:

“I found practical advice on how to approach perfectionism really helpful.”

“Handouts were a really good tool as they allowed me to analyse my problem and find a solution on how to accept and learn from my failures and move forward in life.

Academically, the workshop allowed me to finally move on with my essay as I found myself writing one paragraph for over a week - getting more and more frustrated with not being able to understand everything.”

“Focusing on not punishing ourselves”

Suggestions:

“I would like more practical solutions for the problem”

“As briefly mentioned during the session, it would be really helpful to have a fortnightly/monthly group that meets up to discuss perfectionism and solutions to perfectionism, in a way that can't be covered in a single two-hour session.”

“I feel that there because perfectionism is so varied in presentation, it's hard to make a single session that will tick all the boxes for sufferers' issues.”

Being Outdoors

What people liked:

“The inclusive, accessible approach. Taking time out of the day to really focus my thinking.”

“I liked the very practical aspect of the workshop, in other words we were practicing mindfulness techniques and not just talking about them. I found the contrast between the indoor part and the outdoor part really interesting - from the point of view of the contrast of feelings I had and was able to identify.”

Suggestions:

“Would definitely recommend running more of these sessions for staff, I think it's very important to take time out....Just taking a small amount of time to not rush around or sit on my phone was really liberating. “

Sleep Better

“Handout of tips you can do to improve surroundings and what to do before going to bed etc”

Men's Group (Paper feedback forms)

What people liked:

“When the group was first suggested the idea horrified me. However having taken part in it I have found it a useful forum in which to share and a safe space to talk.”

“The extra level of perspective I think I achieved by engaging in therapy in a group setting rather than one-to-one. It really is different, in a good way!”

“I really enjoyed the way the group was facilitated. There was a positive push-and-pull dynamic between the facilitators and the participants in which we asked for help when we wanted it, and sometimes got pushed to answer things we hadn't thought of or might not have answered ourselves.....I also liked the thematic approach the sessions took.”

Sarah Olds
University Counsellor

Student Support Forum (SSF)

The SSF has been in existence for many years as a place for staff with student-facing roles to come together and talk about their work with students who are experiencing psychological and personal difficulties.

It developed as a follow-up to the Listening and Responding training, provided by staff from the University Counselling Service to enable those who had done the training to continue to meet and exchange ideas.

Since then there have been changes in the way the University provides support to students. The establishment of Welfare Officer posts has been a welcome addition to the University's provision.

Other staff members still engage with students and their problems on a regular basis, for example, academic staff with personal tutor roles, and staff in Student Service Centres and halls of residence.

During the past year, the Student Support Forum has met on four occasions and has offered:

- A confidential space to come together to discuss some of the challenges of this work and support each other with these challenges
- An opportunity to share ideas, experiences and good practice
- An opportunity for reflective practice in order to facilitate learning and development and to maintain resilience in the role
- A consistent meeting point during times of change and transition.
- A chance for staff in various student-facing roles to network and share information from different parts of the university.

The SSF has no external or managerial agenda. In this respect it is a unique space in which valuable communication and support can occur. During the April meeting, those attending expressed a wish to widen the reach of the group to encourage more academic staff in personal tutoring roles and staff based around Student Service Centres to attend. As a result, the June meeting was larger and more diverse.

Lucy Rowley and Myra Woolfson
Co-facilitators

Continuing professional development

As part of the team's working standards all individual counsellors complete their CPD in accordance with the guidelines set out by their relevant accrediting bodies such as UKCP and BACP. This not only sets a standard for good practice, but also enables counsellors to incorporate training that meets their needs and ongoing development.

Team members have attended CPD events around a variety of subjects. These include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a third wave cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approach incorporating mindfulness and compassion with behavioural activation. This approach works well as it is collaborative and facilitative in eliciting change. Other team members have completed supervision training which has been advantageous to the Service as we offer in house supervision for associate and placement counsellors. Team members have completed training on understanding and working with the dynamics of group work.

In addition to the CPD undertaken by individual counsellors we hold several in house training events annually. We aim to provide training that meets the Service needs and offers practitioners the opportunity to explore and reflect on their practice in a collaborative environment.

This year's main in-house CPD event was working with suicidality in our student population. There has been a lot of media coverage in the past year about students suicides and it seemed timely to refresh our thinking. This training built on our existing understanding and experience of the subject, whilst facilitating us to explore ways of working with the difficult and complex subject of suicidality whilst assessing and managing risk.

We also had training about working with Trans students, exploring contemporary thinking around the fluidity of gender and identity against the backdrop and pressure of a learning environment.

Future training events are being explored related to Equality and Diversity Inclusion and Strategy 2020.

Adrian Langham
CPD Lead

Appendix 1 – Our staff

This year has seen a number of staffing changes due to administrative staff leaving and counsellors retiring.

Current staff – Counsellors

Alison Hammond, BACP, UKCP, UKAPI, BACP-UC
Sarah Hinds, BA (Hons), PGDip Counselling, Cert Ed (PCE), BACP
Adrian Langham, BACP
Rob Manners, UKCP
Kathryn Morris-Roberts, UKCP
Sarah Olds, BACP-UC, UKCP
Daniel Pitt, UKCP
Lucy Rowley, BACP – Senior Accredited, BACP-UC. Deputy Head of Service
Rob Sharp, UKCP, Survivors UK, PTUK
Jane Titterton, HCPC, BPS, AHPRA
Val Watson, BACP – Senior Accredited, UKCP, HEA Fellow, RPiO Head of Service
Affiliations: BACP-UC, BAPCA, BACP (Workplace), C&YP, HUCS
Myra Woolfson, UKCP
Mel Wright, BACP – Senior Accredited, Be Mindful Registered Mindfulness Teacher

Current Staff – Reception

Jane Hoddinott
Davina Malcolm, Administration Coordinator
Nicolette Poyzer

Trainee / Placement counsellors

Katerina Flynn
Julia Palmer
Jackie Philippides
Anna Urbanska

Temporary administrative staff

Caz Stevenson
Emily May

This year we also said goodbye to the following staff members:

- Ryan Bennett-Clarke, Bank Counsellor
- Anne Brewin, Counsellor
- Joshua Chandler, Bank Counsellor
- Katerina Flynn, Trainee Counsellor
- Emily May, Reception Team
- Heather Nelson, Counselling Coordinator (left 31 August 2018)
- Julia Palmer, Trainee Counsellor
- Jackie Philippides, Trainee Counsellor
- Anna Urbanska, Trainee Counsellor
- Caz Stevenson, Reception Team,

We wish them all the best with their futures.

External activities

Adrian Langham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottinghamshire Pride Committee • Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Service Steering Committee Panel member • Male sexual violence counsellor • Peer support HIV liaison group
Kathryn Morris-Roberts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Examiner to Gestalt Centre London • Equine Assisted Psychotherapist
Sarah Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nottingham Counsellors Group Training coordinator and committee member
Lucy Rowley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor for Metanoia trainee
Val Watson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith in Families Social Work Team Consultant-voluntary • Contacts Counselling – supervisor - voluntary
Myra Woolfson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of East Midlands University Jewish Chaplaincy Board

Internal roles and activities

Alison Hammond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Green Button Coordinator • Statistics Lead • Titanium Implementation Team • Team meeting Chair
Sarah Hinds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor at Derby Medical School • Outcome measures group • Workshop facilitator • Managing relationships co-facilitator
Jane Hoddinott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titanium Implementation Team • Outreach stall at Medical School
Adrian Langham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD Coordinator • Jubilee Campus Counsellor • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee • Medical School outreach stall • Healthy U roadshow
Davina Malcolm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator Coordinator • Health and Safety Officer • DSE Assessor • First aider • Titanium Implementation Team

Kathryn Morris-Roberts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead for Breathe Here Now drop in sessions and Being Outdoors • Open Group Co-facilitator • Outreach liaison lead • UCS Social Committee • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee • Stalls: International and UG fresher's fairs
Heather Nelson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinator for satellite sites • Derby campus counsellor • UCS Policy Reviewer • Staying the Course presentations (nursing / midwifery) • Bereavement support sessions for CLAS and Sutton Bonington • Training and project development of the Bridge Project
Sarah Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback Coordinator • UCS Social Committee • Groups & Workshops Co-Coordinator • Self-help apps list researcher and updater • Liaison with SB welfare officers • School of Psychology research project: Dating diaries • Clearing volunteer • Outreach: International students welcome week, SB welcome week, Mental health awareness week, Vet school wellbeing week • Sutton Bonington campus counsellor
Daniel Pitt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titanium Implementation Team • Groups & Workshops planning meeting chair • Open Group Co-facilitator • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee • SU, MHAs and GP Liaison • UCS Social Committee • Facilitator: Men's Group and Open Group Thursday • Outreach stalls: Welfare, health registration, international students welcome, Healthy U (Jubilee)
Lucy Rowley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Head of Service (from August 2018) • Groups and Workshops Coordinator • Student Support Forum Co-facilitator • Supervisor for trainees/placement and associate counsellors • Trainee Placement Co-ordinator • Trainee supervisor • Outreach stalls for UCS at Sherwood Institute of Psychotherapy Training (SPTI) and Metanoia Institute. • Outreach stalls at University Park and Sutton Bonington • Open Group Co-facilitator • Outreach workshop / seminar co-facilitator

Rob Sharp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair • Open Group Co-facilitator • Trainee Placement Co-ordinator • Trainee supervisor • Students' Union Liaison • Hall Tutor training • Supervisor for trainees/placement and associate counsellors • EDISS Committee Meeting • Nightline Staff supervision and training
Jane Titterton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutton Bonington campus counsellor • Groups & workshops marketing and social media coordinator • Research (student and academic) network responder
Val Watson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Service • Senior Tutor network • Widening Participation - • BME staff Network Chair • SEDC Committee member • Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee • University Mentor
Myra Woolfson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Support Forum Co-facilitator • UCS Publications editor

Appendix 2 – Client survey results

From April 2018, we had a hard copy survey in our waiting area which could be completed by clients before or after their appointment, the results of the survey are below.

Bookings

How did you find out about the service?

Website	Tutor	Welfare	GP	Other	Other included: word of mouth, student support, mentor
40%	13%	13%	7%	13%	

Is this your first appointment at the University Counselling Service

Yes	No
7%	93%

How satisfied were you with your experience of making an appointment for your counselling consultation (CC)?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
73%	27%		

Environment

Was the waiting area suitable?

Yes	No
87%	13%

How important is it for you to have the counselling service located in its own building, away from other Student Services?

Very important	Important	Not very important	Of no importance
73%	13%	13%	

Website

Did you use the Counselling Service website?

Yes	No
53%	47%

How helpful did you find the information on the website?

Very helpful	Helpful	Not very helpful	Very unhelpful
20%	33%		

Social Media

Are you aware the Counselling Service uses social media to share information

Yes	No
	100.0%

Workshops and groups

Are you aware that we offer a programme of groups and workshops for students?

Yes	No
95%	5%

Are you aware that any UoN student can attend the workshops whether or not you have had counselling

Yes	No
53%	33%

We provided some free text spaces and some selected responses are provided below.

Booking your counselling consultation

What would make it better?

- Offering an emergency service or on-call service
- If initial appointments could be made online, as telephoning can be daunting
- Faster appointments

Environment

What would make the waiting area better?

- A larger space
- Hot drinks
- Video of inspirational, motivational or TED talks
- Removing some leaflets
- A pencil sharpener (there are colouring books and pencils in our waiting area)

Website

What would make the website better?

- Online bookings
- More downloads

Social media

There was appreciation for the twitter account, but apprehension of following due to being judged

Groups and workshops

The majority of respondents were aware of our Groups and Workshops programme. There were also suggestions for future topics which will be reviewed as part of the next programme and also highlighted areas to provide additional resources.

There were some quick wins which could be carried out immediately, such as removing some leaflets and adding a pencil sharpener. Other suggestions require some further research, such as online appointment booking.

Davina Malcolm
Administration Coordinator

Appendix 3 – Abbreviations & acronyms

Appt(s)	Appointment(s)
AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
BACP	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
BACP-UC	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (Universities and Colleges)
BAPCA	British Association for the Person-Centred Approach
BPS	British Psychological Society
C&YP	Children and Young People (BACP Division)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EDISS	Eating Disorders in Students Service
FTE	Full Time Equivalent (36.25 hours)
GP	General Practitioner
GPTI	Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HUCS	Heads of University Counselling Services
IAPT	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies
IGA	Institute of Group Analysis
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
MHAs	Mental Health Advisory Service
NCG	Nottingham Counsellors Group
PTUK	Play Therapy UK
RPiO	Reflective Practice in Organisations
SB	Sutton Bonington campus
SEDC	Staff Equality and Diversity Committee
SU	Student Union
UCS	University Counselling Service
UEB	University Executive Board
UKAPI	United Kingdom Association for Psychotherapy Integration
UKCP	United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy
UKRC	United Kingdom Register of Counsellors
UNMC	University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus
UNNC	University of Nottingham Ningbo Campus (China)



Rob Sharp, Counsellor, collecting his Vice-Chancellor Award medal from Shearer West



Val Watson, Head of Service, collecting her Vice-Chancellor Award medal from Shearer West