

University Counselling Service

Annual Report 2011-12

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Head of Service Report

Research collaboration

This year we have contributed to a national research collaboration into the impact of counselling in higher and further education. Through the national network of Heads of University Counselling Services (HUCS) data was gathered from over 5000 students at 42 Universities between September 1st 2011 and July 1st 2012. The University of Nottingham results are reported in full in the Client Feedback Report on page 11, and I will report on the national findings in this report.

In the national survey the quantitative findings were that 58.3% of all student respondents indicated that counselling was an important factor in helping them stay at university. 51.9% of all student respondents indicated that counselling was either an important factor or the most significant factor in helping them do better in their academic work. 57.1% of all students indicated that counselling was either important factor or the most significant factor in helping them to develop skills useful for obtaining employment. Although this is an analysis of feedback questionnaires which have not been independently administered, the findings of the research are encouraging.

In a parallel study staff were asked similar questions and the findings were 80% of staff had found counselling was an important or the most significant factor in continuing

their work at the University and to be able to fulfil their roles better. These are encouraging results confirming the important role that the counselling service can play in the lives of some of the staff of the University community.

Feedback from a different source came this year from a student alumnus who had received counselling from us and wrote about his experience in Impact magazine. I can reveal this student's name as he has done so himself. Ed Tarlton wrote the article – <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling/self-helpresources/index.aspx> - and this has been shortlisted for the Mind Young Writer of the Year award 2012.

Move to The Orchards

The University Counselling Service has been located in Trent Building for eight and a half years. The impact of this space allocation on the quality of counselling service provision has been very positive, has contributed to a well embedded relationship between the service and the University community which it serves and has helped to enable it to be a well integrated University service. The service has been on a central corridor and yet is very discreet. Students and staff have said they felt safe in the service, and that it had a sense of privacy. The strict professional and ethical requirements of our codes of ethics and practice

were fulfilled in the Trent Building. The walls were thick and sound proofed, and thus there has been no threat to confidentiality.

Management Board decided to re-locate the service to The Orchards Building, and we moved during the Christmas vacation 2012/13. The Orchards will provide a new and exciting challenge to us as a service. It is a generous space allocation, and we will be able to continue to grow as a service and to deliver workshops and therapeutic groups within our own building which is a distinct advantage. It will be fascinating to see the ways in which this new accommodation shapes the service which we offer to the University.

Mental Health Review

A panel chaired by the PVC Professor Karen Cox conducted a review into the development of the role of Mental Health Advisor (MHA) and its impact on the mental health provision within the University. UCS was invited to contribute to the Review as we work closely with the MHAs. This gave an opportunity to reflect on the complementary nature of the work of UCS and the MHAs, and that their work enables UCS to specialise in its own area of professional competency and draw maximally on their own areas of skill and expertise.

Integration with the University community

Being embedded within University life is an important element of the work of UCS. During 2011/12 linked

working with the GPs and Business Manager at Cripps Health Centre has become even stronger. Training sessions and consultancy have been offered to the Human Resources department, Hall Wardens, Hall Tutors, the Senior Tutor network, Academic Services, Work and Wellbeing Review Group and Students Union Officers. Within the Student Operations and Support Division of the Registrar's Department we work closely with Robin Dollery and Stephen Dudderidge, and close working with the Student Services Management team and the other Student Services continues to be an important and effective. Flexibility is important in building these relationships and effective working networks

As a service we are available for consultation to staff concerned about students' well-being. This can reduce staff anxiety about students and help them to judge whether or not a referral to the Counselling Service and/or to their GP is appropriate. Provision of support and advice in this way often enables academic staff to continue helping students without overstepping the boundaries of their roles. In addition we continue to offer specific training in the form of day workshops on "Listening and Responding to Students in Difficulty" to all staff. We also facilitate the Student Support Forum for Student Support Officers which meets three times a year. Parents of students contact us increasingly frequently, particularly at the start of the academic year, and whilst we cannot give information about students who are attending the Service, due to

confidentiality, we are able to offer information and advice in response to their concerns.

Ningbo campus

A University Counselling Service has now existed on the Ningbo campus for three years. Gayle Chell, the University Counsellor, has continued to work closely with Professor Nick Miles, Provost of the Ningbo campus, in developing the service. Professional support and liaison with Nottingham is vital to Gayle in her very challenging work, and I have offered this through fortnightly phone meetings and this has matured into a good professional collaboration.

In February 2012 Robin Dollery and I visited the Ningbo Campus for a week. It was fascinating to visit both the service and campus, and experience first hand the cultural differences and nuances and the very exciting pace of change in China. We conducted a Positional Audit of the service, and this identified that the next stage of development of the service would be to appoint a Counsellor able to offer sessions in both English and Mandarin. This has now been achieved and Ching Ting Huang began work in August 2012, establishing a new and very welcome phase in the life of the service.

The service in Ningbo has continued to be well used by both students and staff. In 2011/12 there was a 6% increase in client numbers from the previous year. This increase corresponds with a 7% increase in student registrations indicating that the percentage of staff and students using the service has remained at just over 2% (130+ clients in total). The problems which students and staff bring to the service in Ningbo are varied, with anxiety about academic concerns and relationship difficulties being the most common, and the service is well used those who experience mental health problems including depression. 67-70% of clients are domestic Chinese students. While undoubtedly there are challenges, there are also exciting possibilities as we continue to develop what is becoming a valued counselling service in a Chinese context.

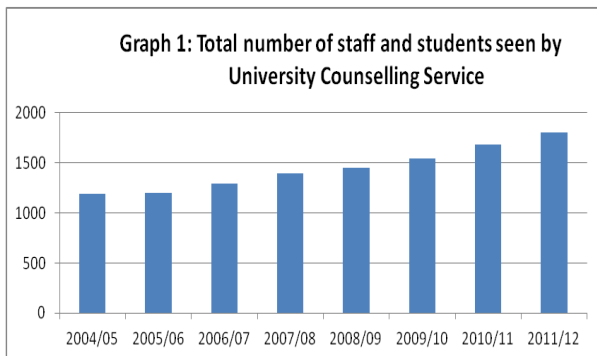
Pat Hunt
Head of the University
Counselling Service

Statistics for the Academic Year 2011-12

Introduction

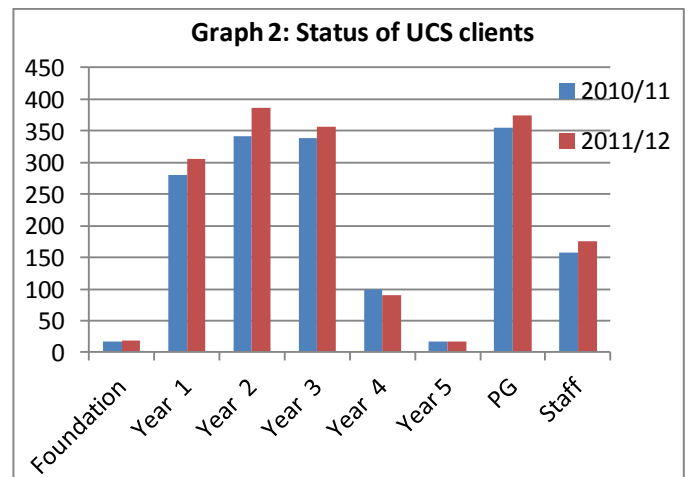
The statistics reported in this section of the Annual Report are drawn from comprehensive data recorded for each student and member of staff who contact the University Counselling Service (UCS) and attend for an appointment. Within the last three years we have in addition begun to collect parallel data for students who attend the therapeutic groups and workshops which we run, and these statistics are included in the Groups and Workshops section of the Annual Report.

Increase in numbers



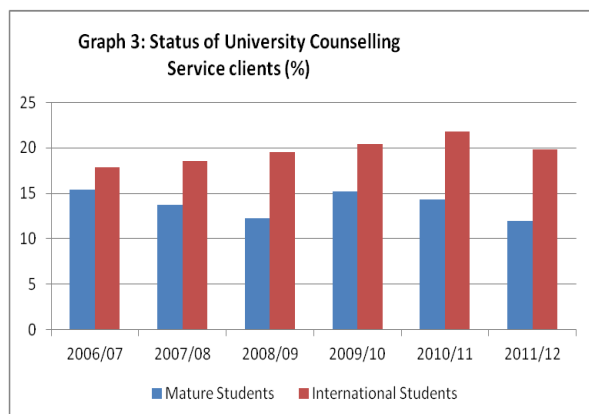
We saw a total of 1805 staff and students between 1st August 2011 and 31st July 2012. This was a 7.5% increase on the previous year when the total was 1686. 1810 staff and students is 4.58% of the total University population (4.27% in 2010/11). The percentage of undergraduate students who came for appointments (1166 students) is 4.75% of the total undergraduate student body, and for the postgraduate population this figure is 4.61% (374 students). We record the School and Department that undergraduate and postgraduate students come from, and the data

confirms that all Schools and Departments use the Service.



The proportion of male students and staff coming for appointments has been steadily increasing over the last six years from 29% men and 71% women in the year 2005/06 to 34.9% men and 65.1% women in 2010/11. The proportion of men who attended UCS in 2011/12 was 32.9%. Last year the gender balance within the total University student population was 47.1% male and 52.9% female (the staff gender balance is not

known), and so the proportion of men seen by UCS when corrected for this is slightly higher than 32.9%. The School of Nursing has for the last few years been one of the biggest users of our Service and it has a very high proportion of female students and staff.



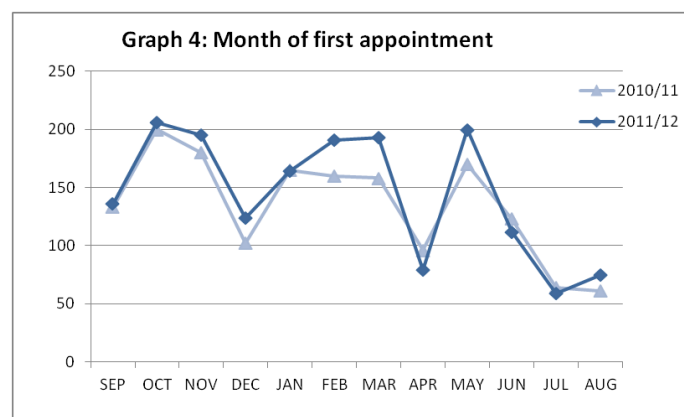
Both the number and the proportion of international students who attend UCS has increased steadily over the last few years – from 15.7% in 2005/06 to 21.8% in 2010/11. In 2011/12 the percentage of international students attending for appointments was slightly lower at 19.8%. The overall percentage of the student population that were international students within the University last year was 24.6%. A key principle of the University Counselling Service is that it is available for the whole University community when needed, and it is pleasing to note that international students use the service so well especially as many of them come from cultures where counselling and psychotherapy might not be available.

We have begun to record ethnicity data and the graph below records this

data. It is not possible to collect ethnicity data for staff and for a proportion of students for whom this is not known or not recorded. The University ethnicity data for students for 2011/12 is as follows:

White	55.4%
Mixed	2.2%
Asian/British Asian	7.7%
Black	3.1%
Chinese	3.3%
Other	3.2%

Peak periods

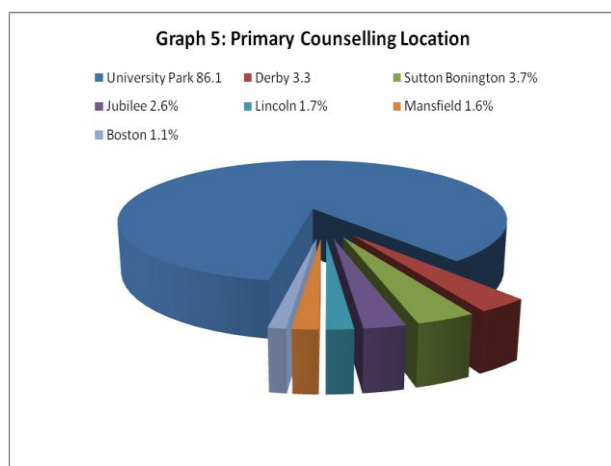


The peak months for attendance for initial appointments were October, November, January, February, March and May. The very late ending date of the Easter term had two consequences for the service. The first was that demand remained very high right up until the end of term (193 in March), and then with only a very brief pause over Easter demand then rose prior to the start of term and rose to 200 in May during the few short weeks before the exams began.

In 2011/12 during term time we offered evening appointments on two days and an early appointment on one day in each week. These early

and late appointments are extremely well used by staff, PGCE students in the School of Education and medical students. The University Counselling Service remains open during the vacations and it is noticeable that staff, postgraduate students and international students especially contact us in these months.

Counselling location



We record the primary counselling location for each client, and as in previous years the majority (86.1%) of staff and students attended for counselling at University Park. The number of staff and students using our service at Sutton Bonington was 64. This figure has increased each year over the last five years in tandem with the development of the School of Veterinary Medicine, and we are currently reviewing our service to the Sutton Bonington campus in response both to increased demand and also the outcome of the Mental Health Review.

The combined attendance from the Boston, Derby, Lincoln and Mansfield campuses is 7.7% of UCS clients with

Derby having the largest attendance of 3.3%(57). In Derby staff and students from both the School of Nursing and Midwifery, and also the Graduate Entry Medicine course use the Service to its full capacity. With the announcements of future changes to the structure of the courses offered in the School of Nursing at Boston, Lincoln and Mansfield, the UCS provision to these sites will require close monitoring over the next two years.

Waiting times

The average waiting time for an initial appointment was 5.4 days. The waiting time between the initial appointment and the first ongoing appointment was recorded during the year. 50% of clients were offered an ongoing appointment in 4.0 weeks, the same figure as 2010/11 and well within our Service objective. The 90 percentile figure was 12.7 weeks.

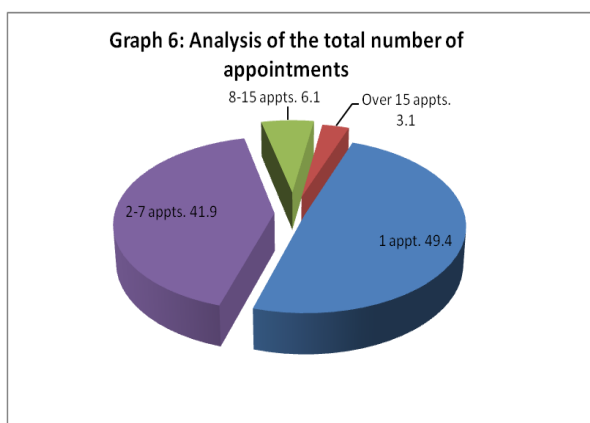
Number of appointments offered

91.7% of students and staff were seen for the first time, and this is an interesting increase from the previous year when this figure was 74.8%. It is possible this indicates that students and staff who use are service are receiving the help they need and therefore do not need to re-contact us. 8.1% were continuing counselling from the previous academic year.

Half (49.4%) of the students and staff who contacted us came for one appointment only, and they either received the help that they needed to

resolve their situation or were referred to one of the University Counselling Service groups or workshops or to other sources of help where this was appropriate. There is always a proportion of students who attend for one appointment only who have come to request extenuating circumstance evidence, however last year this number reduced.

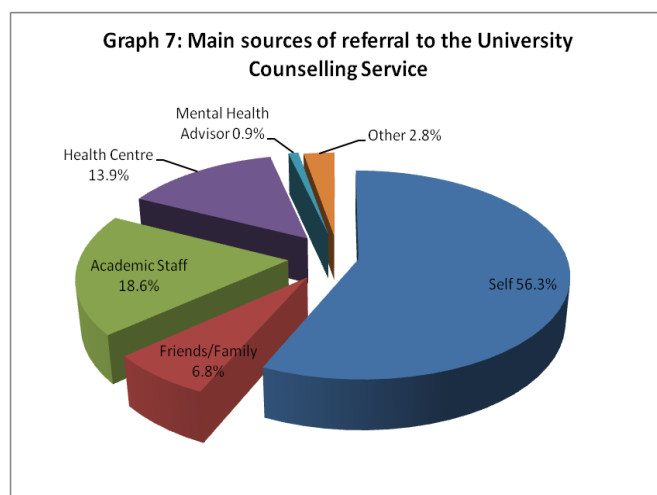
41.9% came for between two and seven sessions, weekly appointments with a time limited, focussed therapeutic frame which gives sufficient opportunity for working through moderate emotional and mental health problems. 8.7% of staff and students came for more than eight sessions, enabling therapeutic work with more serious mental health problems which is an important area of our work to continue to conduct.



Sources of referral and contact with other agencies

The Mental Health Advisor post has now been in place for more than three years, and UCS has developed an effective, direct liaison between counsellors and the Mental Health

Advisor. The number of students referred from the Mental Health Advisor last year was 15. Referrals from Cripps Health Centre increased to 13.9%, and was for the first time higher than the referrals from personal tutors (13.0%). Taken in conjunction with the fact that the number of extenuating circumstance evidence request reduced it seems clear that fewer tutors referred students to UCS for EC evidence last year. This is a welcome development and a consequence of changes to the Quality Manual, which enable tutors and staff in departments to present evidence themselves where the student’s situation is well known to them.



Presenting Problems

20.2% of the problems presented were academic or work related. This includes anxiety about academic work and exams, considering leaving the University or transferring course, work related problems for staff, and requests for evidence of extenuating circumstance. This area of our work in particular contributes to the retention figures for the University,

and many students state that the help they receive from our Service enables them to continue with their academic work and studies. 35.9% of presenting problems were personal and emotional. This is a very broad category and includes acute anxiety, compulsive behavioural problems, stress, depression, serious mental health problems, suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts. In 2010/11 there were 69 presentations where suicidal thoughts and/or a suicide attempt were one of the presenting problems. The number of suicidal presentations was 43 in 2011/12, and it is a relief to see this reduction. With all clients who have suicidal thoughts and attempts we continue close co-operative work with Cripps Health Centre.

29.4% of concerns were about relationships and this includes current relationships with family, unresolved conflicts and difficulties with family of origin, relationships with spouse and partner, and bereavement. The final category of presenting problems is specific concerns, and includes sexual and physical abuse, assault, domestic violence, alcohol and drug use and eating disorders. 14.5% of presenting problems were in this category.

Pat Hunt
Head of the University
Counselling Service

Off campus counselling provision (UK)

The University Counselling Service offers individual counselling to students and staff based at Sutton Bonington, Jubilee campus, Derby, Lincoln, Mansfield and Boston. The University Counselling Service aims to offer a consistent and accessible service on one day a week (one and half days at Derby) at each of the different sites.

Derby, Lincoln, Mansfield and Boston

The service at these centres largely serves the nursing, midwifery and medical students and the Counselling Service aims to provide a prompt and flexible response to their needs.

In addition to the programme of workshops and groups at University Park, workshops are offered for nursing and midwifery students at the different sites on 'Effective Communication on Placement' and 'Building Resilience and Maintaining the Capacity to Care'. Counsellors also offer a presentation on 'Staying the Course' to the new intakes of nursing and midwifery students.

This has been a year of significant changes in the School of Nursing, as the final intake of Diploma students was admitted in 2011. The Counselling Service remains committed to providing a service to those students and staff remaining at Mansfield, Boston and Lincoln.

The School of Nursing at Derby moved to newly built premises at the Royal Derby Hospital in September 2012, joining the University of Nottingham Medical School at Derby. The counsellor was also re-located to an office at the new site.

Jubilee Campus

This is the fourth year that an on site service has been available to students and staff at Jubilee campus, including during vacation periods. In 2011/2012 forty-five individuals accessed counselling at the Jubilee Campus site; a 36% increase on the numbers attending the previous year.

This year the workshops: 'Staying Calm and Being Effective' and 'Mindfulness' have been offered at Jubilee, and both were well attended.

Sutton Bonington

Sutton Bonington site has been well used again this year, by students and staff. The Service is now well established within its new location in the Main Building. Appointments are organised centrally, which works very well, but the provision of the waiting area within the Student Services office is most welcome. This provides a warm and welcoming environment for our clients while they wait for their counselling appointment.

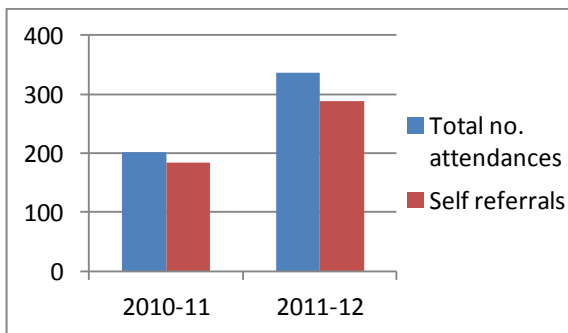
Heather Nelson
Counselling Co-ordinator

Groups and Workshops

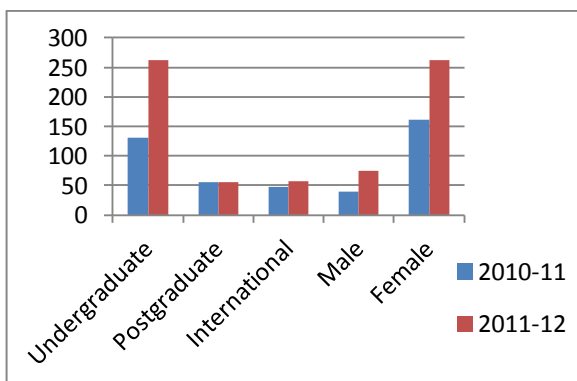
The Programme

The Counselling Service annual programme of Groups and Workshops is an integral part of our Service available to students at the University of Nottingham.

Each year the number of students attending workshops and groups has risen significantly. Last year numbers rose by 45% including a significant number of students who might not otherwise have made contact with our Service.



The Programme attracts attendees from across the student body and is aimed at facilitating a rewarding and productive experience of student life at Nottingham University.



Offsite provision

Workshops are available to Nursing and Midwifery students at the Derby, Lincoln and Mansfield centres, and are also available on the Jubilee and Sutton Bonington Campuses.

Provision for Supporting Staff in their work with Students

We offer a one day course to all staff who have contact with students. The course aims to build on the experiences and skills of participants to help them to support students within their professional roles.

Student Support Forum

The forum has met once a term to share information and good practice ideas. It comprises administrative and academic staff with specific student support roles and those with an interest in student support issues. The forum has been a useful source of support and encouragement for the staff involved.

Evaluation and development

Each year the Groups and Workshops programme is reviewed and developed through participant feedback questionnaires and statistical data collection and analysis.

Lucy Rowley
Groups and Workshops
Co-ordinator

Client Feedback 2011–2012

Summary

- 72% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service
- 42% of surveyed students said counselling played some part in helping them to stay at university
- 60% of surveyed students said counselling improved their overall experience of university
- 45% of surveyed students felt that counselling had helped them develop skills which might improve their employability
- 70% of surveyed staff felt that having counselling helped them do better at work
- 67% of surveyed staff felt that counselling had improved their overall experience of the workplace

Why we ask for feedback

The University Counselling Service is committed to providing a high quality service that is responsive to the needs of the University community.

The primary aim of this exercise is to obtain feedback from clients to help the counsellors to reflect on their individual practice and the quality of the Service. It also provides an opportunity for clients to reflect on their experience and the outcomes of counselling. Clients are given space in the feedback form to leave longer comments and with their permission some of these are anonymously quoted here.

This year the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) commissioned a study: The Impact of In-House Counselling on

Academic Outcomes. Running in parallel was a study of the impact of counselling services on university staff. This counselling service was part of a group of 53 institutions who submitted data to be analysed in both parts of the study.

Methodology

We use secure software provided by 'Survey Monkey' to create an accessible, online survey. This has proved efficient to administer and produces a good response rate.

Students and members of staff who use the University Counselling Service are invited to complete an online questionnaire approximately one month after their final contact with us. The questionnaire invites clients to comment on their experience. Qualitative data available

in the comments respondents were invited to leave provides a more detailed picture of how counselling can help and ways in which counselling or any aspects of the service had been found unhelpful. Some of these comments are quoted (with permission) in this report. Respondents may remain anonymous or give their name if they wish.

Response Rate

This year (August 1st 2011 - July 31st 2012) 1363 clients were invited to leave feedback and 433 did so: a 32% response rate. This means that we are receiving feedback from 24% of our total client group (1805).

Respondent Profile

The respondents are a self selected group in that the completion of questionnaires is entirely voluntary. The make-up of respondents to the questionnaire reflects broadly the usage pattern of the Service.

Male	28.2%
Female	71.8%
Student	84.2%
Staff	16.9%

NB: The status of some respondents is both student and staff

Counselling and Academic Outcomes

Students were asked for their views on the impact counselling had had on four academic outcomes: retention,

achievement, overall student experience, and employability.

Retention

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you to stay at university?

Response	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	23.8%
"one of many factors"	18.6%
Total	42.2%

Achievement

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you do better in your academic work?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	28.2%
"one of many factors"	19.7%
Total	47.9%

Student Experience

Question: to what extent would you say that counselling has improved your overall experience of university?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	29.8%
"one of many factors"	30.4%
Total	60.2%

Employability

Question: to what extent would you say counselling has helped you develop skills that might be useful in obtaining future employment? (e.g. self-understanding, understanding of others, managing difficult feelings better, increased confidence, assertiveness)

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	23.2%
"one of many factors"	21.4%
Total	44.6%

Counselling helped me talk through and understand the difficulties I was having, offering insight into the causes and how I could handle them.

Counselling and Employment Outcomes

Staff respondents were asked for their views on the impact counselling had had on four work related outcomes: absenteeism, performance, experience of the workplace, professional development.

Absenteeism

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you stay at work or get back to work?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	34.6%
"one of many factors"	16.3%
Total	50.9%

The way I felt I wanted to just resign from my work as it made me so unhappy. They helped me understand that it was maybe not the best time to make such a decision feeling the way I did.

Performance

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you do better in your workplace?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	36.5%
"one of many factors"	34.1%
Total	70.6%

Provided a space to talk about difficult issues, which helped me to cope with work the rest of the time

Experience of the workplace

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has improved your overall experience in the workplace?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	45.5%
"one of many factors"	21.5%
Total	67%

Professional development

Question: To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you develop skills that might be useful to your work?

Responses	%
"an important factor" or "the most significant factor"	40.4%
"one of many factors"	27.7%
Total	68.1%

Client Satisfaction

72% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had received from the University Counselling Service.

I found it really helpful to talk to an independent person about a difficult personal situation that I am going through at the moment

It helped me acknowledge that I have suffered traumatic experiences and gave me a place to talk about them.

Complaints tended to focus on the time clients had to wait either for a first appointment or ongoing counselling appointments. The amount of time people felt it was reasonable to wait was very variable, and many comments were balanced by an acknowledgement of their understanding that the service is very busy.

It took a while to get an appointment which meant that once I'd accepted I needed help I had a longer wait to actually start getting help

Feedback comments were diverse and both positive and negative comments are reflected on by the counselling team, individually and as a service.

Mel Wraight
Counsellor

Appendix 1

Staff

Head of Service

Pat Hunt (UKCP, BACP, HUCCS, AUCC)

Counselling team

Anita Bartys (BACP)

Marion Dillon (BACP, UKRC, AUCC)

Alison Hammond (UKCP, UKAPI, AUCC)

Helen Kerry (*UKCP, GPTI*)

Heather Nelson (BACP, AUCC)

Daniel Pitt (UKCP)

Lucy Rowley (*BACP, AUCC*)

Rob Sharp (UKCP, Survivors UK, PTUK)

Val Watson (BACP, BAPCA, HEA, ACW, UKRC, UKCP, AUCC, CCYP)

Myra Woolfson (UKCP)

Mel Wraight (BACP)

Administration & support staff team

Ruth Kneale

Sarah Brumpton

Professional association abbreviations

ACW	Association of Counselling in the Workplace
AUCC	Association for University and College Counselling
BACP	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
BAPCA	British Association for the Person-centred Approach
CCYP	Counselling Children and Young People
GPTI	Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HUCCS	Heads of University Counselling Services
PTUK	Play Therapy UK
UKAPI	United Kingdom Association for Psychotherapy Integration
UKCP	UK Council for Psychotherapy
UKRC	United Kingdom Register of Counsellors

Appendix 2

Professional Activity

External commitments

- Consultancy and professional support for University Counselling Service at UNNC (PAH)
- Member of Hallam Institute of Psychotherapy (PAH)
- Member of HUCS (National Heads of University Counselling Services) Executive Committee, Meetings & Mentor Scheme (PAH)
- Independent Adoption panel member, Faith in Families (VW)
- Membership of Integrative Psychotherapy professional development group (HJK, RJS)
- Open House Post-Natal Depression Support Group (SEB)
- Presenter, Samaritan's Purse International Relief (RK)
- Therapy reading group (MMD)
- Voluntary Supervision consultant - Contacts Counselling (VW)
- Published chapter 'Handbook of Transcultural Counselling and Psychotherapy' (VW)

Meetings/networking

- EDISS Working Party (RJS)
- Management Information System Group (SEB, AH, HJK, RK, DP)
- Meetings with Cripps Health Centre GPs (all counselling staff)
- Meetings with SU Equality & Welfare Officer (PAH)
- Meetings with Head of Student Operations and Support & Head of Student Services (PAH)
- Podcasts for UCS website (LR, MCW, RJS)
- Staff BME Network convenor (VW)
- Student Support Forum (MW, VW)
- UCS Team Forum – Chair (LR)
- Meetings regarding the Strategic Review of Nurse Training

Policy/steering groups

- International Students Research Project Steering Group (PAH)

- Student Services Management Team (PAH)
- Groups and Workshops Working Group (MMD, LR, RJS, VW)
- Mental Health Advisor Steering Group (PAH)
- SEDAG (Staff Equality and Diversity Advisory Group) (VW)
- Work and Wellbeing Review Group (PAH, DP)

Publicity talks/fairs

- Training for HR Advisers (PAH)
- Training for Hall Wardens (PAH)
- International Students Welcome Week induction presentation (PAH)
- International Students Welcome Week fair (MMD, AHH, RK, DP)
- New students welfare event, Sutton Bonington campus (ALB)
- Welcome presentations to nursing, midwifery students at Nottingham and Derby, Boston (HN, RJS)
- Welcome Event for new staff (RK, VW)

ALB	Anita Bartys
SEB	Sarah Brumpton
MMD	Marion Dillon
AHH	Alison Hammond
PAH	Pat Hunt
HJK	Helen Kerry
RK	Ruth Kneale
DP	Daniel Pitt
LR	Lucy Rowley
HN	Heather Nelson
RS	Rob Sharp
MW	Myra Woolfson
MCW	Mel Wraight
VW	Val Watson

