



The University of
Nottingham

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University Counselling Service

Annual Report 2013 - 2014

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Contents

Head of Service Report	2
Statistics for the Academic Year 2013-14	4
Counselling provision at other University of Nottingham Campuses	7
Groups and Workshops Report	8
Client Feedback	9
Appendix 1	11

Head of Service Report

Increase in Demand

In 2013/14 the demand on the University Counselling Service (UCS) increased even though the University's student numbers remained broadly similar to the previous academic year. This is the twelfth consecutive year in which we have recorded an increase. We have also witnessed an increase in the severity of problems presented.

This increasing level of both demand and severity has been recorded by other university counselling services around the UK. This is also evident in the wider population. Making an appropriate response to the rising levels of mental health problems is currently higher than previously on the political agenda and several reports launched by MPs this year have been the result of close collaboration with professionals working in the mental health field including those in the HE sector.

Staffing and Funding

In April 2014 the University's Executive Board granted a funding bid to develop the role of Associate Counsellors – a bank of professionally trained and accredited staff who could work term time and offer flexibility at times of peak demand. The Associate Counsellors form part of the clinical management system which UCS has developed during the last year to respond to increases in demand. We are pleased to report that using this system we have maintained waiting times within our service aims.

Ningbo campus

The counselling service at the University's campus in Ningbo, China which was founded five years ago, is today embedded in campus life and well used by Chinese staff and students and international (non-Chinese) staff and students. During the past five years, close working links with UCS at Nottingham have been important. This has been achieved through regular telephone meetings with Gayle Chell, Head of Service at Ningbo.

Staffing

Successful delivery of the service is dependent on strong working links with colleagues in the University. Over the last eleven years I am grateful for the collegiate working and professional support of many people – Robin Dollery, Head of Student Services; Stephen Dudderidge, Director of Student Operations and Support; the team of Mental Health Advisors; the GPs at Cripps Health Centre; colleagues in the Student Services Management team; Professor Sue Pryce and the Senior Tutor network; Gary Stevens and Stuart Croy in Security and the Hall Wardens.

This is my final Head of Service report as I retire from the University at the end of 2014. It has been a privilege and an honour to work in the University community over the eleven years that I have been in post. There is much to celebrate in what has been achieved in this time. UCS at the University of Nottingham is highly regarded. We are now based in accommodation in The Orchards which is well suited to our work. We

continue to offer a high quality service to staff and students of the University; we have found ways to respond to increasing demand over the years. My work both as Chair and on the Executive Committee of the Heads of University Counselling Services in the UK and Southern Ireland (HUCS) has helped to raise the profile of the work of the service.

Dr Val Watson, who was appointed as a Counsellor to the UCS team in 2004, will succeed me as Head of Service commencing at the start of January 2015, and I wish her and the whole UCS team the very best in their future work.

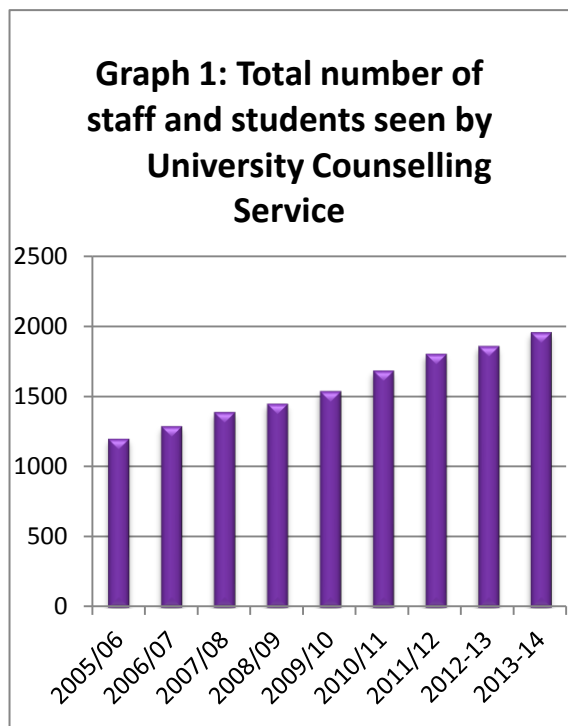
Pat Hunt
Head of the University
Counselling Service

Statistics for the academic year 2013-14

Introduction

The statistics reported in this section are drawn from comprehensive data recorded for each student and member of staff who contact the University Counselling Service (UCS) and attend for 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.

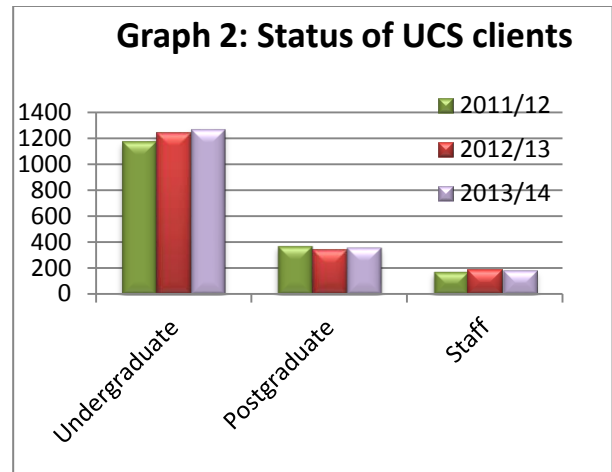
Increase in numbers



We saw a total of 1959 staff and students between 1st August 2013 and 31st July 2014. This was a 5.26% increase on the previous year when the total was 1861.

1959 staff and students is 4.85% of the University population (4.6% in 2012/13). The number of under-

graduate students who came for appointments is 1271, and this is 5.36% of the undergraduate student population (5.1% in 2012/13). The number of postgraduate students who came for appointments is 364 and



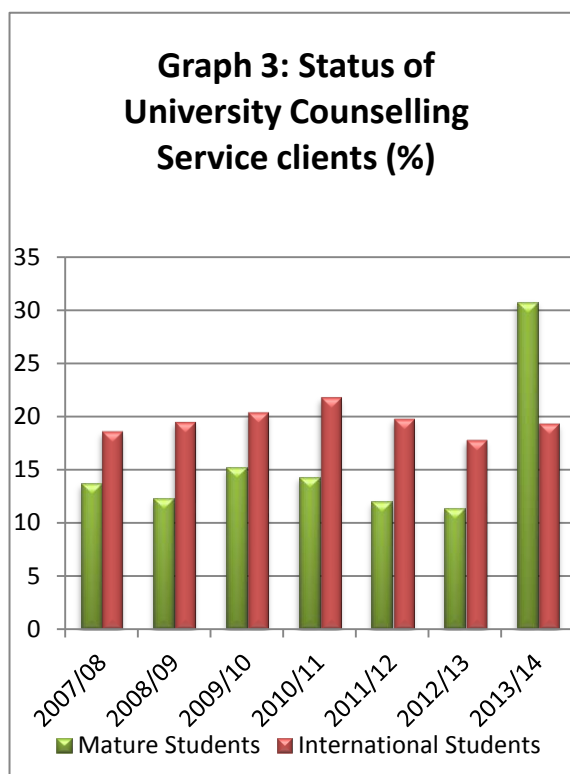
this is 4.46% of the postgraduate student population (4.2% in 2012/13). We record the School and Department that undergraduate and postgraduate students come from, and the data confirms that all Schools and Departments use the Service.

The number of University staff members who came for appointments was 188 (2.68% 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, security staff and cleaners.

The proportion of male students and staff coming for appointments has been steadily increasing over the last seven years from 29% men and 71% women in the year 2005/06 to 35.61% men (32.1% in 2012/13) and 64.39% women in 2013/14. Initiatives such as the Men's Postgraduate group which has been

run each year for the last four years may have encouraged male students to use the service.

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 19.34% in 2013/14. It is important to continue to ensure that international students are well informed about the existence of the Counselling Service and what we provide. UCS has offered this through a presentation given to students as part the International Students Welcome Week organised by the International Office and we believe it is important that this continues.



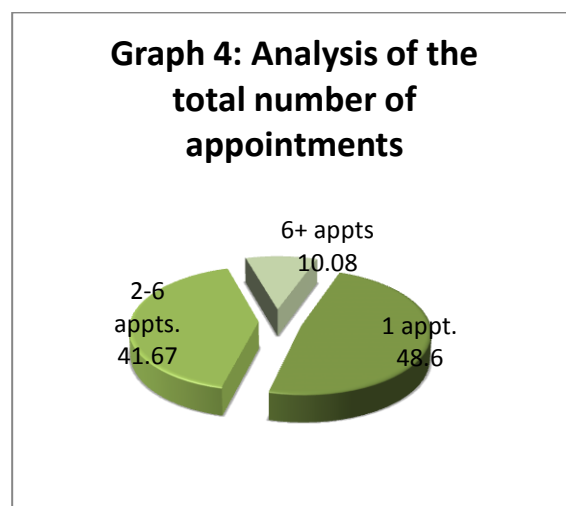
The percentage of mature undergraduate students who used the service is 13.4%. The percentage of mature students in the undergraduate student population is 5.4%. This is an interesting over-representation of mature students in our client group and perhaps reflects that they experience additional problems in student life and often

attend the Counselling Service for help with unresolved problems from earlier in their lives. Mature students also have additional responsibilities including families and aging parents. In addition, the proportion of mature students in the School of Nursing is high.

Waiting times

The average waiting time for an initial appointment was 6.24 days. The waiting time between the initial appointment and the first ongoing appointment was recorded during the year. 52.61% of clients were offered an ongoing appointment within 4.0 weeks of their initial appointment. 95.41% of staff and students were offered an appointment within 12 weeks of their initial appointment. These figures represent shorter waiting times than in previous academic years.

Number of appointments offered



48.65% of clients attended for just one appointment. This represents those students and staff who only need to come for one appointment to resolve their situation, and those who were referred to one of the University

Counselling Service groups or workshops or to other sources of help within the University and beyond where this is 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 who have come to request extenuating circumstance evidence.

41.27% of students and staff came for between two and six sessions. This is a combination of those who came for short term weekly therapeutic work which gives sufficient 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. Due to ever increasing levels of demand on the service (Graph 1) we reduced our offer of short term sessions to 5 in 2013/14.

10.08% of staff and students were seen for more than eight sessions. The pressure of numbers means that this extended work is only offered to those with more serious concerns. We believe that it is important to continue to offer this where needed.

Presenting Problems

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

Anxiety/Panic	479
Depression	399
Family problems	396
Low Mood	351
Relationship problems	296
Bereavement	233
Anxiety about academic work	213
Stress	173
Perfectionism/procrastination	123
Eating difficulties	69
Suicide attempt/thoughts	68
Self harm	53
Abuse	38

Pat Hunt
Head of University
Counselling Service

Counselling provision at other University of Nottingham campuses

The University Counselling Service provides a limited counselling service and some workshop provision to students and staff at several University sites.

Derby, Lincoln, Boston and Mansfield

The Counselling Service has been monitoring the changes and liaising with centre staff to continue supporting the remaining students and staff through the transition:

- The School of Nursing at Lincoln closed this summer and the counselling provision ended in September.
- The School of Nursing at Boston has closed and the counselling provision ends in December 2014 as the last students complete their courses.
- There will be no further pre-qualifying nursing courses at Mansfield, so the counselling provision ends in December 2014.

The long transition has generated anxiety and uncertainty for the students and staff involved. There is a profound sense of loss amongst those dedicated lecturers and administrators who created high quality learning and positive career opportunities in less privileged communities. Staff in these centres offered a learning environment which supported and encouraged students from non-traditional backgrounds to become caring professionals.

UCS will continue to offer a counselling service and workshops at

the Royal Derby Hospital, serving the medical and nursing students and University staff.

Jubilee Campus

Students and staff continue to make good use of the service on this campus. The statistics over the past three years show a steady figure of 45 clients accessing counselling. Feedback about the availability and quality of the service remains positive.

Three workshops were offered at Jubilee this year: Staying Calm, Perfectionism and Procrastination and Self-Esteem; these were well attended.

Sutton Bonington

The demand for counselling support on the Sutton Bonington campus has continued to increase. Provision of an "all year" service has been welcomed by students and staff. Additional provision, in operation since February 2014, has increased the service on campus to 2 days a week which has helped meet the demand and throughout the year a prompt and flexible response to student and staff requests for support was maintained.

In addition to the one to one counselling provision, this year workshops have been provided for students. These have been well attended and the feedback received has been positive and appreciative of the support provided.

Heather Nelson Counselling Co-ordinator

Groups and Workshops

The Groups and Workshops programme continues to offer students choice in their access to therapeutic support. A range of relevant themes are covered in order to assist students who may be having emotional or psychological difficulties during their time at the University Nottingham but who don't necessarily want 1:1 counselling. We review and develop the programme annually to ensure it is a good fit with student need using the statistical data we collect throughout the year and also the qualitative feedback we request after each event.

This program consistently attracts significant numbers of students and we offer workshops at various sites in order to ensure that all students who need to, can access this kind of support. The *Procrastination and Perfectionism* workshops are particularly popular and the *Staying Calm* series of workshops which run throughout the academic year are a useful resource in the run up to exam times. Our therapeutic groups offer students the opportunity for personal development in a group context and we have been pleased to see that the *Men's Group* has been well attended for the past 4 years. This is particularly noteworthy as male students are traditionally less likely to seek counselling and we know there has been a steady rise in the overall number of students attending counselling services.

One exciting new development this year is the introduction of a new administrative system for the program. This has been implemented by Sarah Brumpton our groups and workshops administrator. The

'Eventbrite system' will enable students to find out about and manage their workshop booking process online. This will ensure that our programme remains as accessible as possible to all students.

A further innovation is that we will be offering an 8 week Mindfulness Course facilitated by one of our counsellors, Mel Wraight, during the Spring term in 2015. Mindfulness - a mental health and wellbeing intervention is a mind-body approach to well-being that can help someone change the way they think about experiences and reduce stress and anxiety. It is now delivered by a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services. Mel has undertaken specific training in this area and during the past year we have been able to plan successfully for a course to be piloted on this year's program. We will apply a process of evaluation and review to ensure that what we provide is the best fit for the University Counselling Service client group.

Client feedback 2013–2014

Highlights

- 78% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service
- 79% of student respondents said counselling improved their overall experience of university
- 70% of student respondents felt that counselling had helped them do better in their academic work
- 76% of staff respondents felt that having counselling helped them do better at work

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 to help the counsellors to reflect on their individual practice and the quality of the Service. Complaints are considered seriously and acted upon where possible. It also provides an opportunity for clients to reflect on their experience and the outcomes of counselling.

Methodology

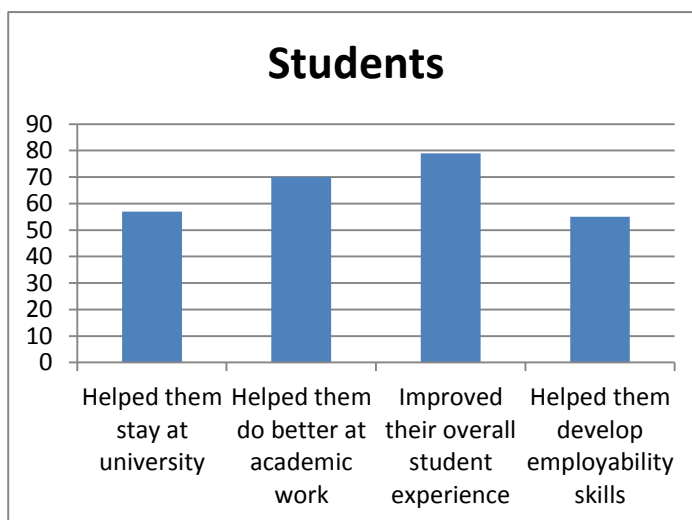
We use secure software provided by 'Survey Monkey' to create an accessible, online survey which is efficient to administer and anonymous.

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 elicits both quantitative and qualitative data. Comments in this report are quoted with the permission of respondents.

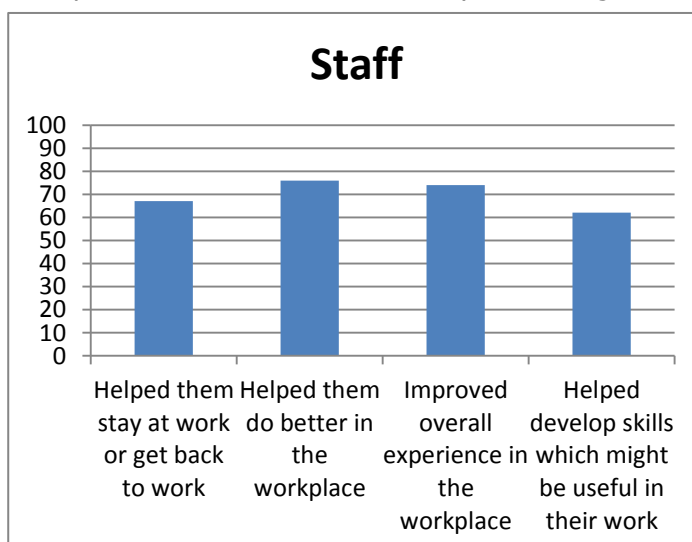
Response rate and respondent profile

This year (between 1 August 1 2013 and 31 July 2014) 1427 clients were sent an invitation to leave feedback and 413 did so: a 29% response rate. This means that we received feedback from 21% of our total client group (1959).

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.

Some of the issues raised by those were not satisfied were:

- too long a wait for ongoing counselling;
- not enough sessions were offered;
- wanted more frequent workshops;
- wanted a separate waiting area for staff;

Many made positive comments:

"This has been a positive experience and helped me not just cope but succeed in other areas of my life, not just work. I

would definitely recommend the counselling service to friends/colleagues."

"I was at crisis point and the counselling halted this and my circumstances began to turn around because of the help I was receiving. Knowing that each week I had someone to talk to in confidence helped me get through the week."

"I met with a counsellor for several one-on-one sessions and she also referred me to a group workshop. Both one-on-one support and the group workshop I attended were of very high quality; I felt I was heard and taken seriously in both contexts, and I was introduced to new ways of thinking about and dealing with my difficulties."

"Encouraged a sense of perspective, novel ways of thinking about problems, empathized with who I was as a person"

"Counselling helped me come back from a very dark place, thank God you were there."

"It prevented me from committing suicide and self-harming. It helped me realise that Uni wasn't right for me at that particular time"

"The counselling has helped me recognise how issues from my past are actually impacting how I respond emotionally to things now. I felt that my counsellor very quickly picked up on how I thought and seemed to understand me."

"Personal help rather than help focussed completely on uni improved my entire quality of life which has then improved uni!"

"Counselling has empowered me to take care of myself. I have been able to identify long standing behaviours that have been detrimental to my mental health and general wellbeing. It has also given me the tools to improve my

resilience and coping strategies in times of difficulty. Importantly the counselling service has helped me obtain access to the appropriate healthcare professionals who have been instrumental in management of my mental health problems. Without the tremendous support I have received from the counselling service I don't believe I would be a functioning member of society."

"I don't even know where to start! Lots of things, but generally- provided compassion and support as well as helping me to develop techniques to improve my emotional well-being."

**Anne Brewin
Counsellor**

Appendix 1

Staff

Head of Service

Pat Hunt (UKCP, BACP, HUCS, BACP-UC)

Counselling team

Anita Bartys (BACP)

Anne Brewin

Marion Dillon (BACP, BACP-UC, UKRC)

Alison Hammond (BACP, UKCP, UKAPI, AUCC)

*Helen Kerry (UKCP, GPTI)

*Jon March (BACP, IGA - student Member)

Heather Nelson (BACP)

*Sarah Olds (UKCP)

Daniel Pitt (UKCP)

Lucy Rowley (BACP, AUCC)

Rob Sharp (UKCP, Survivors UK, PTUK)

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

Myra Woolfson (UKCP)

Mel Wraight (BACP – Senior Accredited, Be Mindful Registered Mindfulness Teacher)

*Associate counsellors

Administration & support staff team

Ruth Kneale

Sarah Brumpton

Bev Gwaza

Professional association abbreviations

ACW	Association of Counselling in the Workplace
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
CCYP	Counselling Children and Young People
GPTI	Gestalt Psychotherapy Training Institute
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HUCS	Heads of University Counselling Services
IGA	Institute of Group Analysis
BACP	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
PTUK	Play Therapy UK
UKAPI	United Kingdom Association for Psychotherapy Integration
UKCP	United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy
UKRC	United Kingdom Register of Counsellors