



The University of
Nottingham

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University Counselling Service

Annual Report 2014 - 2015

University Counselling Service

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Executive Summary

Key facts:

- The University Counselling Service (UCS) continued to see a high number of clients (students and staff): 2060, an overall increase of 8.08% on the previous year
- 5.4% of the total student population accessed counselling. The Russell Group average is around 6%
- 2.8% of the university staff population accessed the service. A rise of 6.9%
- Of the 2060 individual clients; 53% were seen for 2 or more appointments
- 92% of clients attended for 6 or fewer appointments
- 47% of clients attended for 1 appointment
- 26 workshops and 3 therapeutic counselling groups were offered during term-time. 321 students attended the workshops and 43 students attended our 8 week therapeutic groups
- The Service also responded to numerous requests for support and guidance from tutors, parents, friends and staff in schools or departments, as well as from GPs and others in the mental health field

Head of Service report

The academic year 2014-2015 was mainly marked by our success in managing the rise in the demand for the Counselling Service whilst adapting to major changes in the staff team which required a substantial amount of time and resources for recruitment, induction and training.

The continued increase in demand by both students and staff is reflected in the statistics which show that 1805 students accessed the service during the year. This is an increase of 8.3% on the previous year. Other university services nationally experienced a similar rise. A noticeable feature was an increase in the complexity of mental health needs and a wider range of combined presenting problems.

5.4% of our total student population made use of the 1:1 service in 2014-2015, an increase of 6.9% on last year.

Around 2.8% of the total university staff population made use of the 1:1 service in 2014-2015, an increase of 6.9% on last year.

We have tried to manage the increased demand through re-structuring our resources. This has involved altering the pattern of provision to include shorter counselling contracts and an increase in intermittent client contact during periods of higher demand. This was done in an attempt to reduce our waiting list for

ongoing counselling and to offer more assessments to students and staff. Overall waiting times for ongoing counselling were reduced: 69% of clients were seen within 6 weeks compared to 60% in the previous academic year.

Staffing and funding

The following staffing changes occurred during the academic year:

- Retirement in December 2014 of the Head of Service (Pat Hunt)
- Retirement in December 2014 of Anita Bartys experienced counsellor in the team for 19 years who had provided counselling at University Park and Sutton Bonington campuses.
- The departure of the University Counselling Administration Co-ordinator (Ruth Kneale) in April 2015 who has worked in the Service for twelve years and at the University for over twenty- five years.
- Two counsellors in the team (Alison Hammond and Mel Wraight) negotiated a reduction in their hours for work/life balance reasons effective by the end of the academic year.

From February - June 2015 the Service was involved in working hard to meet the increasing demand and simultaneously recruiting for a new Administration Co-ordinator (Sarah Marston) and three new part-time counselling practitioner posts. We are pleased to welcome Sarah Olds, Kathryn Morris-Roberts and Adrian Langham. It is important to acknowledge the work and commitment shown by the team and temporary staff who continued to provide an excellent service to the University community during this period of change. See Appendix 1.

The UEB granted funding which helped the service team to manage the increased demand and we were able to recruit two associate counsellors and additional temporary administrative support at various high points of demand during the academic year. This funding enabled us to keep our waiting times for ongoing counselling at a reasonable level.

Liaison, consultancy and training

Our team continues to develop a strong working relationship with support services within the university. We meet regularly with the Cripps Health Service team and learn from each other about current issues, developments and statistical trends within each service. More importantly, we discuss the ways in which we can work together to support the needs of our student and staff service users. My attendance at regular meetings with colleagues within the Student Welfare team (Head of Student Welfare, Senior Mental Health Advisor, Chaplaincy and Health Promotions Advisor) enables the development of co-ordinated and collaborative working where possible.

Throughout the year, the team provided consultancy, guidance, training and support to our university colleagues where needed. This included collaboration in the production and delivery of bespoke training for hall faculties tutors, tutors in the Faculty of Engineering and Health Sciences and the facilitation of forums for shared learning and support of administrative staff.

Ningbo campus

In January 2015, Gayle Chell - Head of the Counselling Service – Ningbo campus, announced that she would retire in July 2015. I was involved in providing support and consultancy to the outgoing head of service and planning for the continued support and consultancy for acting head of service Iris Huang from July 2015.

Prior to Gayle Chell's departure, I visited the Ningbo campus (8th-14th July 2015). The close working relationship between counsellor colleagues at both campuses was enhanced by this visit. During this valuable time in China I was able to learn about the contrasts and similarities of provision, environments and delivery between the two counselling services and develop an understanding of the context in which students and staff live and learn in Ningbo.

Plans for academic year 2015-2016

After many years of core clinical and administrative staff stability, the changes within the team means that a focus for the year ahead is to build relationships as well as identifying the strengths, resources and goals for the Service in the short and long term. This is at a time of change within the University as the results of Project Transform and Strategy 2020 begin to emerge.

The academic year ahead presents the Counselling Service with a number of challenges not least of which is how to best to respond to increasing demand whilst striving to improve and develop the Service. To do this we will make use of our combined experience, areas of interest and expertise and learning arising from attendance on continuing professional development events.

Establishing further links with key staff throughout the University who have specific responsibility for student welfare issues is one area that will be pursued in the coming academic year. This will enable the team to broaden the possibilities for developmental work which will include enhancing the groups and workshops programme offered by the service. We will also be trialling extended opening hours and varying the timings for workshops to improve access for students.

The data and summary of activities in this annual report demonstrates that the Service is well used and highly valued by its students and staff as a separate yet integrated part of the University. This unique and special provision is trusted as a safe space by its users because we are able to offer an accessible and responsive confidential counselling service with highly qualified and experienced practitioners who have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the context of higher education.

I am indebted to the commitment, dedication and hard work of all members of the team and the recruited temporary staff who worked with us during this period of upheaval and transition. All involved maintained the client-focussed and caring role which was appreciated by students and staff who used the service.

Val Watson

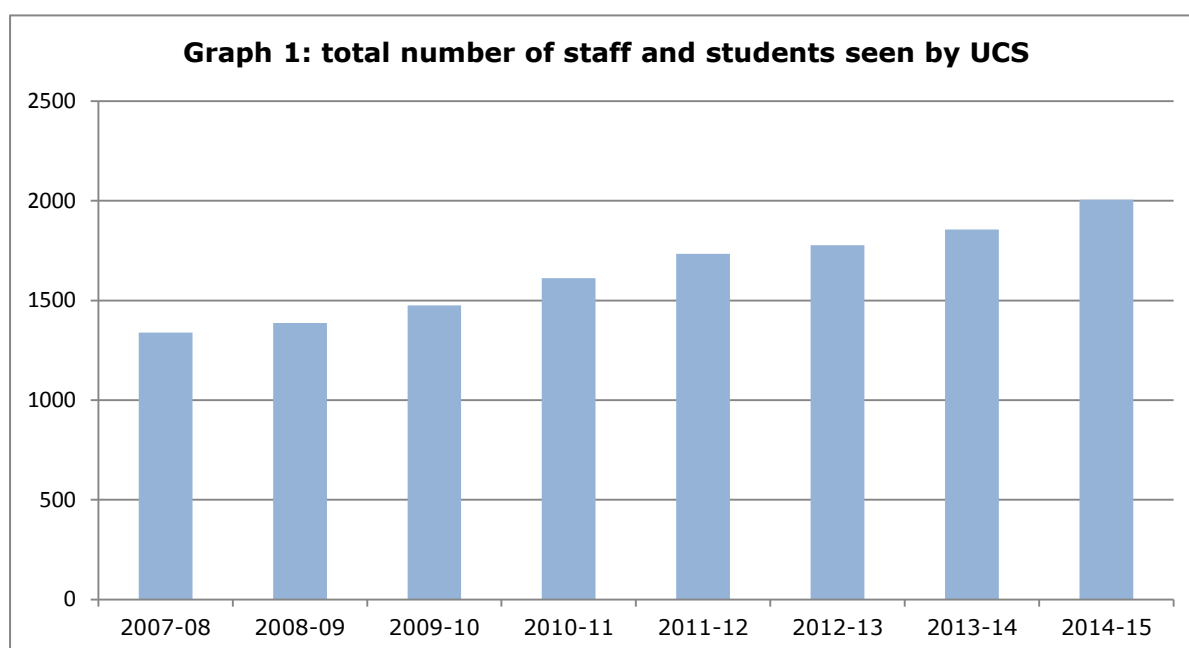
Head of University Counselling Service

Statistics for the academic year 2014-15

Introduction

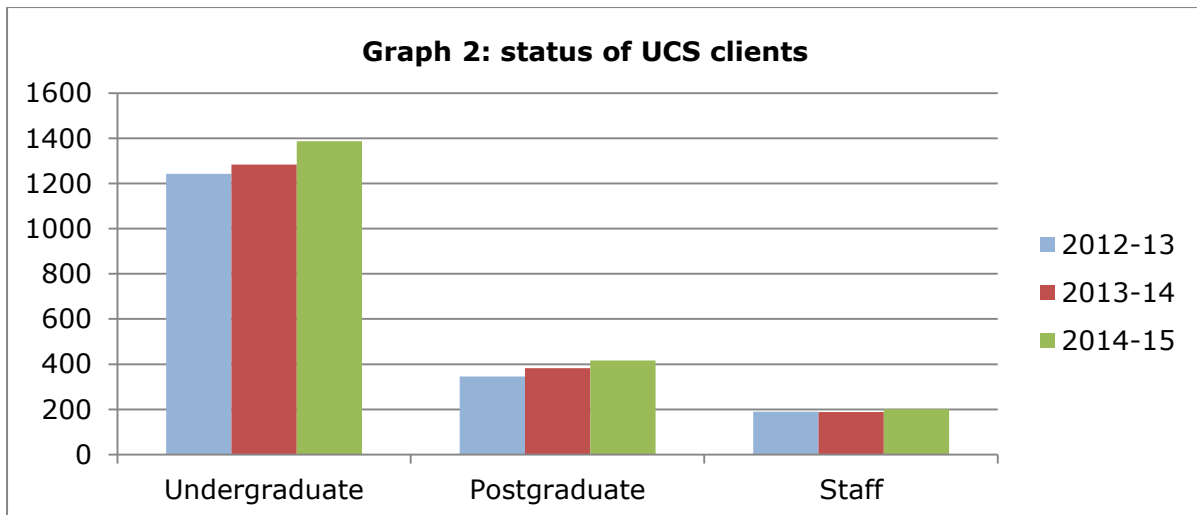
The statistics reported in this section are drawn from comprehensive data recorded for each student and member of staff who contact the University Counselling Service (UCS) and attend for at least one appointment. We also collect parallel data for students who attend our therapeutic groups and workshops,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

Increase in numbers



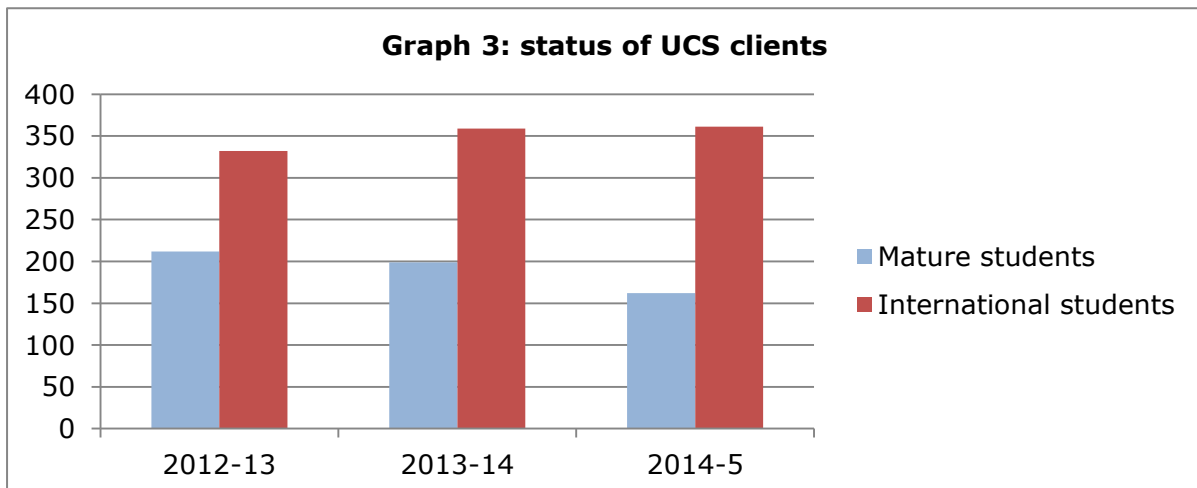
	Total number seen	% of that population	% increase from previous year
Staff & students	2060	5	5.2
Undergraduates	1387	5.86	0.5
Postgraduates	397	5.87	0.4

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 seven years from 33.2% men and 66.8% women in the year 2007/08 to 37.4% men and 62.6% women in 2014/15. Initiatives such as the Men's Postgraduate group which has been offered each year for the last five years may have encouraged male students to use the service.

The proportion of international students who attend UCS remained steady from 18.6% in 2007/08 to 18% in 2014/15. 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 9%. The percentage of mature students in the undergraduate student population is 10%. 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

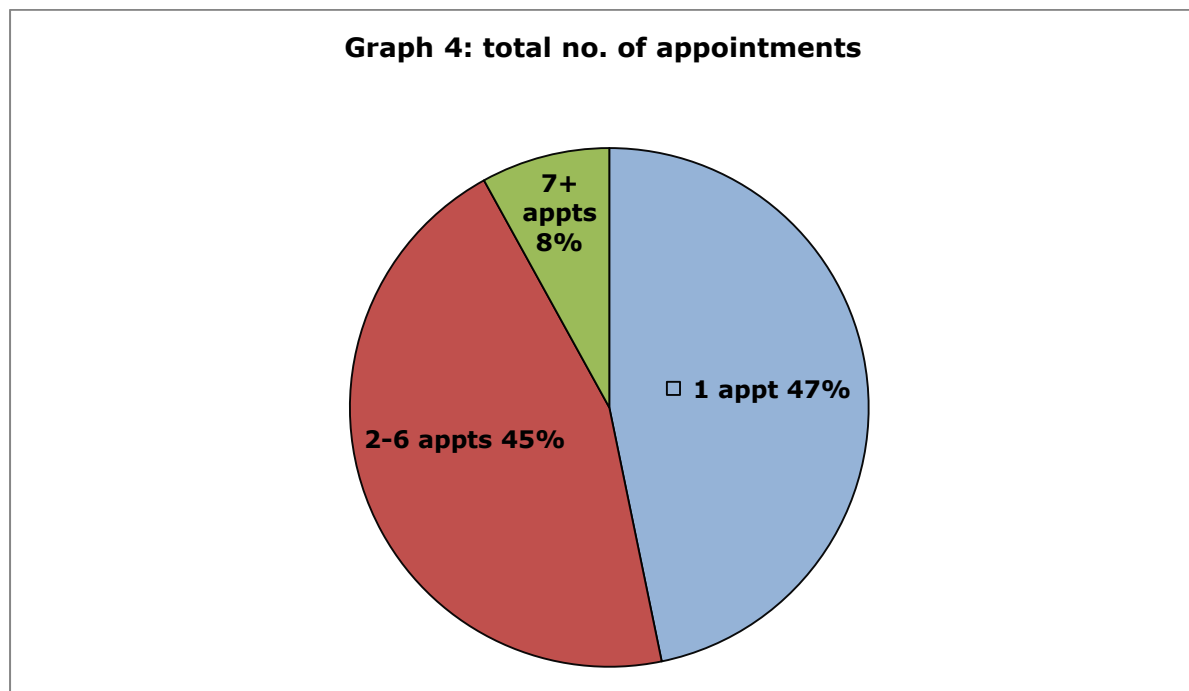
including families and ageing parents. In addition, the proportion of mature students in the School of Nursing is high.

The number of University staff members who came for appointments was 201 (2.7% 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, security, operations and facilities staff.

Waiting times

The average waiting time for an initial appointment was 4.55 days. The waiting time between the initial appointment and the first ongoing appointment was recorded during the year. 59.3% of clients were offered an ongoing appointment within 4.0 weeks of their initial appointment. 96.7% 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



47% 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.

45% 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 contracts to 5 sessions in 2014/15.

8% 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 – a summary

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

Anxiety/panic	538
Family issues	399
Low mood	396
Depression	362
Stress	218
Bereavement/loss	208
Anxiety about academic issues	202
Relationship problems	196
Self-esteem/confidence	168
Perfectionism & procrastination	143
Extenuating circumstances	138
Concerns about / care of others	114
Loss of motivation	110
Relationship breakdown	108
Suicidal thoughts	97
Adjustment to university life	91
Eating difficulties	49

Counselling and workshop provision at Derby, Jubilee and Sutton Bonington sites

Derby

The University Counselling Service (UCS) offers individual counselling, by appointment, on alternate Tuesdays and every Friday (averaging 1.5 days per week), throughout the year, to medical and nursing students and University staff, based at the Royal Derby Hospital.

66 clients used this service in 2014-15.

In addition, UCS delivers occasional lectures and workshops for nursing students at Derby:

'Staying the course'

'Effective communication on placement'

'Building resilience and maintaining compassion'

Jubilee Campus

There have been changes at Jubilee this year, following Val Watson's appointment to Head of Service. Val has been counsellor at Jubilee, since the service was first set up in 2008/09. Counselling is offered at Jubilee every Friday (1 day per week), during term time.

33 clients used the Service at Jubilee in 2014-15.

Sutton Bonington

The Counselling Service offers individual counselling appointments at Sutton Bonington, every Tuesday and Wednesday, throughout the year (2 days per week).

98 clients used the Service at Sutton Bonington in 2014-15.

Heather Nelson

Counselling Co-ordinator

Groups and Workshops

The programme

The University Counselling Service offers a comprehensive programme of groups and workshops for students in addition to the provision of 1:1 counselling support.

Many of the difficulties encountered by students during their time at University are not unusual and could even be described as an inevitable aspect of the challenges of living and studying independently. The task then is to normalise these difficulties: to provide opportunities so students can come together, share their experiences and explore and experiment with strategies for managing or resolving their problems.

It has long been recognised in therapeutic work that sharing emotional resources and enabling individuals to believe in their own capacity to manage their lives is of fundamental importance. In some respects it could be said that society is increasingly risk averse and that this can mean that young adults are discouraged from finding their own solutions to problems lest they fail. Our programme seeks to utilise the resource of shared experience so that students have the opportunity to develop their confidence and self-belief.

Developments

The University Counselling Service staff team has undergone significant change during the past year. This is not without its challenges, but has meant that we have new staff members with skill sets that will inform and shape the way in which the Groups and Workshops programme develops. There is an opportunity for fresh thinking about what we provide and how to provide it. This has already influenced our planning for the year 2015/16 and we have developed the U-Can brand to signify a healthy, positive and enabling approach to providing emotional and psychological support to students whilst they undertake their studies at Nottingham.

Our leaflet for the coming year illustrates our aim of providing resources using different media throughout the academic year with a mix of therapeutic input and experiential work. We have given careful consideration to the timing of events with regard to the academic calendar and resourcing 1:1 counselling provision. The programme evolves each year as we evaluate and review it to ensure that it is a best fit with the needs of our students here at Nottingham. Future considerations may be to think about the ways in which the workshop / group and 1:1 counselling can be used alongside each other to optimise provision so that students can access counselling input in various formats and at key times of the academic year when they are most likely to experience difficulties.

Advertising and booking onto workshops can now be done using the established Eventbrite online booking system. This saves the Service considerable time in terms of administration and gives students increased accessibility.

Mindfulness

In the Spring term of 2015 we piloted an 8 week Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy group which recruited well (16 places). This was a useful introduction to the potential for using Mindfulness in our programme and has enabled us to develop our thinking about future provision. Lucy Rowley and Anne Brewin, the two Groups and Workshops co-ordinators, attended a 'Mindfulness in Higher Education' workshop run by the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. Bearing in mind the popularity and accessibility of mindfulness outside the University, we decided to provide introductory workshops throughout the academic year. This will enable a greater number of students to attend and benefit from this approach, which they can then follow up themselves, should they wish to.

The numbers

394 students booked onto a workshop

321 attended

43 students booked onto and attended our therapeutic groups.

A total of 364 students attended a group or a workshop during the academic year 2014-15.

Lucy Rowley

University Counsellor

Client feedback

Highlights

- 78% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service
- 32% of student respondents said that counselling was “an important factor” or “the most significant factor” in helping them stay at university.
- 40% 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

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 approximately 4 weeks after their last appointment.

In 2014/15, 1697 invitations to complete the survey were sent and 403 responses received; a response rate of 24%. This means just under 20% of our total client group gave us feedback (total clients during year = 2060)

Each piece of feedback is individually reviewed. If a counsellor is named the feedback is forwarded to him or her and general trends and comments are fed back to the team as a whole. Complaints are forwarded to the Head of Service. The feedback enables the service to continuously review satisfaction and make improvements where necessary. It also gives counsellors the chance to reflect on their own practice.

Selected comments

The comments below give a flavour of the type of feedback we receive:

“Postgraduate Men's group provided a great opportunity to voice myself to other people I can relate to safely”

“To stop harming myself and to seek ways to get better sleep to aid depression recovery”

“Someone to talk to following a traumatic event”

“I am so glad the university have been able to provide this service as it has helped me get through an incredibly tough period in my life, as well as helping me to examine older, underlying issues.”

“It was incredibly hard to get an appointment and appointments were often infrequent due to the large numbers students using the service.”

"It definitely made me a stronger person. I no longer have suicidal thoughts and began to come out of my shell. I am more 'me'."

Anne Brewin

University Counsellor

Appendix 1

Staff

Head of Service

Val Watson

Counselling Team August to December 2014	Counselling Team January to July 2015
Anne Brewin (BACP)	Anne Brewin (BACP)
**Emma Cannon	**Emma Cannon
Marion Dillon (BACP, BACP-UC, UKRC)	Marion Dillon (BACP, BACP-UC, UKRC)
Alison Hammond (BACP, UKCP, UKAPI, BACP-UC)	Alison Hammond (BACP, UKCP, UKAPI, AUCC)
*Helen Kerry (UKCP, GPTI) P/T	*Helen Kerry (UKCP, GPTI) P/T (to June 2015)
*Adrian Langham (BACP) P/T	*Adrian Langham (BACP) P/T
**Robert Manners	**Robert Manners
*Jon March (BACP, IGA - student Member) P/T	*Jon March (BACP, IGA - student Member) (to May 2015)
	Kathryn Morris-Roberts (UKCP) – newly appointed
Heather Nelson (BACP)	Heather Nelson (BACP)
*Sarah Olds (UKCP) P/T	Sarah Olds (UKCP) – newly appointed
Daniel Pitt (UKCP)	Daniel Pitt (UKCP)
Lucy Rowley (BACP, BACP-UC)	Lucy Rowley (BACP, BACP-UC)
Rob Sharp (UKCP, Survivors UK, PTUK)	Rob Sharp (UKCP, Survivors UK, PTUK)
Val Watson (BACP, BACP-UC, BAPCA, HEA, ACW, UKRC, UKCP, CCYP)	Val Watson (BACP, BACP-UC, BAPCA, HEA, ACW, UKRC, UKCP, CCYP)
Myra Woolfson (UKCP)	Myra Woolfson (UKCP)
Mel Wraight (BACP – Senior Accredited, Be Mindful Registered Mindfulness Teacher)	Mel Wraight (BACP – Senior Accredited, Be Mindful Registered Mindfulness Teacher)

* Associate counsellor

** Placement trainee

Administration & support staff team August 2014-April 2015	Administration & support staff team May-July 2015
Ruth Kneale	Sarah Marston
Sarah Brumpton	Sarah Brumpton
	***Kate Bolger
	***Wendy Willan
	***Neville Bruce

*** Temporary staff

Professional association abbreviations

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

University Counselling Service

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