

Counselling Service Bulletin

2013/14



This Bulletin gives a brief outline of some of the developments in the Counselling Service provision. It also presents some of the key findings from our annual Student Evaluation Survey and the annual statistics of student use of the Counselling Service.

2012/13 saw an increase in student numbers using the service by 11%, which is in line with a year on year increase in students accessing university counselling services nationally over the last five years. However, the Counselling Service was able to develop the range of provision offered as well as improving service delivery.

Student Evaluation Survey 2012/13

Of the 1,627 students who made an appointment, 130 did not attend their initial session. Out of the 1,497 students who attended counselling sessions, 550 completed the evaluation survey which is a response rate of 37%.

91% of students reported the wait before their first appointment to be 'Easy to Manage/Manageable'.

Before coming to counselling 22% of students considered withdrawing or suspending from the University, whereas after counselling this figure had dropped to 5% of students.

79% of students on first coming to counselling rated their level of emotional difficulty as 'Severe'. After counselling this figure had dropped to 9%.

87% of students felt the number of sessions to be 'about right', 10% felt it to be 'too few'.

94% of students rated the Counselling Service overall as 'Good/Very Good'.

At the end of the evaluation form there is space for more qualitative feedback from students. The vast majority of the comments were very positive about the service as a whole or the counselling they had received and how important it had been for them. The main themes for negative feedback concerned the length of waiting time for a first appointment and that some students would have liked longer-term counselling.



Key Statistics for the Counselling Service 2012/13

	10/11	11/12	12/13
Number of students who contacted	1521	1733	1940
Total number of students who made an appointment	1319	1465	1627
Average wait for 1st appointment (number of working days)	9.7	7.9	7.1
Average number of individual counselling sessions per student	4.3	4.4	4.6

Percentage of clients seen within range of sessions	10/11 %	11/12 %	12/13 %
1 – 3 sessions	54.6	51.5	48.1
4 – 7 sessions	32.4	35.3	36.6
8 – 16 sessions	10.7	11.1	11.9
17+ sessions	2.3	2.2	2.5

Academic status of students as a percentage of total clients	10/11 %	11/12 %	12/13 %
Undergraduate total	54.5	54.8	56.7
Graduate Total	43.4	43.1	41.7

Waiting times for first appointment	10/11 %	11/12 %	12/13 %
0-5 working days	30.8	44.6	45.4
6-10 working days	24	27.3	31.4
11-15 working days	30	16.9	19.2
More than 16 working days	16	11.2	4.0

Service Evaluation: Comparative Data on Waiting Times - 2011/12 *

- **Primary Care Counselling in the NHS:**
average waiting time between referral and first session 84 working days.
- **University Counselling Services Nationally:**
average time between referral and first session 16 working days.
- **University of Oxford Counselling Service:**
average time between referral and first session 7.9 working days.

Service Evaluation: Comparative Data on Clinical Effectiveness - 2011/12 *

- **Primary Care Counselling in the NHS:**
71% of service users showed clinical improvement.
- **University Counselling Services Nationally:**
75% of service users showed clinical improvement.
- **University of Oxford Counselling Service:**
87% of service users showed clinical improvement.

*Patti Wallace, 'The impact of counselling on academic outcomes: the student perspective': Association of University and College Counselling Journal, November 2012.



Peer Support Training for 2012/13

The Peer Support Programme has been running for 21 years, having grown from a single training of welfare officers each year to running 18 trainings a year for undergraduates and graduates in 31 colleges, the Medical School and Said Business School. The thirty hour training and subsequent mandatory supervision sessions are run by counsellors who are qualified peer support trainers. The training enables students to support their peers in an effective and contained way. During the past year, 220 students were trained, and at any given point there are 350 trained peer supporters in the University. The Peer Support Programme staff work closely with a Designated Link Person in the colleges/departments with whom they are connected, ensuring that the scheme runs efficiently and safely.

The programme celebrated the 21st birthday at the Annual Peer Support Conference in November 2012 attended by peer supporters from each college, peer supporters from LSE and a counsellor from Queen's College, Belfast. The conference, entitled Common Ground: Diversity in the Peer Support Community, offered participants the opportunity to reflect on the myriad issues related to the topic, and, through experiential learning, to engage with complexities of diversity. Filda Abelkec-Lukonyomoi, from the organisation BK.Luwo, spoke about her experiences of seeking asylum in the UK. She emphasised the importance of being able to get support from those around you in the face of adversity, whatever that may be, which resonated strongly with the ethos of peer support.

For more information about peer support, or for a list of colleges involved, visit our webpage: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/peer>.

Group and Workshop Programme for 2012/13

The group work programme of longer-term support groups for PGRs, PGTs, and UGs as well as the six session Mindfulness group we run each term, continue to be very popular. Last academic year we developed a lunchtime workshop programme, on such themes as: 'Can't Work: overcoming academic procrastination', 'Overcoming Social Anxiety', 'Overcoming Insomnia' 'Dealing with Stress through Relaxation'. These workshops have proved to be very popular and we are planning to expand the range of workshop themes in the next academic year. The full range of the group and workshop programme can be seen on the [Counselling Service website](#).



Comments from the Head of Counselling

Despite the 11% increase of student numbers accessing the Counselling Service, as demonstrated in the figures on the previous page, we have been able to maintain a very high standard of counselling provision. The drop in waiting times from 7.9 working days in 2011/12 to 7.1 working days in 2012/13, as well as the drop from 11% of students waiting for their first appointment for over 16 working days in 2011/12, to 4% of students waiting for this period in 2012/13 demonstrates a significant level of efficiency. This means that 96% of students in 2012/13 were seen for their first appointment within 15 working days. When these figures are compared with figures for the equivalent psychological services in the NHS or national figures for university counselling services, it shows the high level of efficiency and effectiveness of the University of Oxford Counselling Service. It also shows the huge dedication, hard work and levels of expertise in both the clinical practitioners and administration staff of the service.

However, we are always looking to develop the Counselling Service's effectiveness through implementing more evidence-based therapeutic interventions and to increase the level of satisfaction of those students who use the Service in many different ways. We want to promote greater collaboration with the wider collegiate university and have closer working links with college welfare provision. We would welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have about the Counselling Service or if you would like any further information please get in touch directly.

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