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Executive Committee, 2013/14

Dr D Good (Chairman)  VC’s Deputy; Dir of Education, Biological Sciences
Mr PJ Brindle  Bursar, Darwin College
Ms P Brown  Counsellor, UCS
Dr J Bunbury  Senior Tutor, St Edmunds College
Ms G Dufour  Head of Service
Mrs M Gardiner  Bursar, St Edmund’s College (until 01/14)
Mr M Gross  Bursar, Emmanuel College
Dr J McLarty  Senior Tutor, Wolfson College
Dr C Lea-Cox  General Practitioner
Dr P Linehan  General Practitioner
Ms H Hoogewerf-McComb  CUSU Welfare Officer
Ms B Watts  Secretary to Committee (in attendance)
Mr R Smith  UCS Financial Administrator (in attendance)

Staff in the Student Counselling Service

Head of Service
Géraldine Dufour  Registered member BACP Senior Accredited

Senior Counsellors
Jane Cooper  Registered member BACP Senior Acc (until 12/13)
Hanya Czepkowski  Registered member BACP Accredited
Lisa Halpern  Registered member BACP Senior Accredited

Counsellors & CBT Therapists
Polly Brown  BACP Reg Practitioner
Anna Churcher (part-time)  UKCP Reg Psychotherapist
Tim Ellis  UKCP Reg Psychotherapeutic Counsellor
Jo Levy (part-time)  BACP Reg Practitioner (until 06/14)
Sally Swain (part-time)  BACP Reg Practitioner

Mental Health Advisor
Juliet Bristow  Reg Social Worker (HCPC)
Beverly Wilson  Reg Mental Health Nurse (NMC)

Associate Counsellors (training placements: half- to one day per week)
1st year: Hattie Graham-Campbell, Susan Jacques, Emma Lockhart. 2nd year: Julia Cooke

Psychiatric consultations
Dr Alison Jenaway (part-time)  Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy

Support Staff (shared with Staff Counselling Service)
Sam Wenham (part-time)  Computing Officer
Robert Smith (part-time)  Financial Administrator
Sue Geeson  Office Manager
Hazel Sanderson (part-time)  Administrator / Receptionist
Jo Whittington (part-time)  Administrator / Receptionist
Executive Summary 2013/2014

The University Counselling Service:

- Continued trend of high number of students coming to counselling: 1592 (+2%)
- High proportion of students access counselling: 8.5% of the total population
- Students requiring urgent help are fast-tracked for counselling
- High number of new referral daily during term time~ 50/70 a week
- Range of workshops and counselling groups during term ~ 12 a week
- Increased staffing for Mental Health Advisors resulted in an increase in the number of students and staff supported

Key facts for 2013/14:
- The Service offered counselling to 1592 students, who were seen an average of 5 times
- Around 180 - 220 individual counselling sessions were offered each week, and there were a further 30 - 60 group attendances per week during term
- We also responded to numerous requests for support and guidance from tutors, nurses and others in colleges or departments, as well as from GPs and others in the mental health field.

We were pleased that the Service achieved a Cambridge University Green Impact Silver Award for its work during 2013-14 in saving energy and recycling.

Staffing during the year

There were a number of major staffing changes throughout the year.

A new head of service started, Géraldine Dufour. Géraldine is new to Cambridge but an experienced head of university counselling service. She is also chair of the Special Interest Group Heads of University Counselling Services (HUCS), a member of its executive committee and a member of the executive committee of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists University and College Division. She sits as HUCS representative on the Alliance for Student-Led Wellbeing.

Hanya Czepkowski started as new Groups and Outreach Senior Counsellor. She worked previously at Warwick University, where she ran many of the counselling service groups and workshops. She is a graduate of the Institute of Group Analysis where she completed the Group Work Practice Diploma.

Many valued members of the team left during the year. In November 2013, Mark Phippen, the former Head of Service retired after seventeen years. He was followed by Jane Cooper, Senior Counsellor for groups and outreach, a very experienced member of the team, who had been there almost as long as Mark. In June, we said good-bye to Jo Levy, one of our skilled part-time counsellors. Fiona Allen, our Senior CBT Therapist, a very experienced member of the team, who had been there for eleven years left in July 2014. Finally, in early October, Jo Whittington a great member of our reception and admin team left. All will be missed.

We were helped out throughout the academic year by Susan Norman and then by Sophie Leader who worked as a locum Counsellors, and very ably filled gaps in our staffing. Two new counsellors and one new CBT therapist are starting in Michaelmas 2014.
Placements for Associate Counsellors

Each year we offer placements to a number of Associate Counsellors, who are in the late stages of their professional counselling, psychotherapy or cognitive behavioural therapy training. Their work is carefully supervised and undertaken within professional guidelines recommended for professional counselling placements. Clients allocated to associates are carefully selected and they can request not to be seen by an Associate if they prefer.

Hattie Graham-Campbell, Susan Jacques, and Emma Lockhart, joined the team at the start of the year, and Julia Cooke continued for a second year in the Service. All Associates worked between half- to one-day per week.

We believe that this programme benefits both the Service, by bringing in fresh ideas and energy, and the trainees, who experience working in a highly professional service.

Counselling Work

Individual counselling

Although the Service offers a wide range of ways to support students, individual counselling remains the core of our work.

There was little change in the incidence of problems about which students came to seek help. While many of the numbers are similar to the previous year, there was a particular rise in the numbers presenting with issues related to anxiety, depression, welfare issues, relationships and issues related to physical health.

While much of the work we do is fairly brief, we continue to offer some on-going support to students. We are careful to work efficiently and keep waiting times for counselling as low as we can, and we make judgements with each client about how long to continue counselling.

All referrals to counselling are triaged and those requiring urgent appointments are prioritised.

Counselling Groups and Workshops

As a Service we have a national reputation for our group work. During this year again we ran many workshops and group sessions for students (1319).

Our ‘returners’ group for undergraduates returning from intermission has become well established and we will be running it at the start of Lent as well as Michaelmas next academic year. We ran some very popular groups this year: A new support group for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual students, our well-established “Learning to be Assertive”, “Introduction to Mindfulness”, “Healthy Self Esteem” and “Exam Preparation” groups and workshops. During the summer we reviewed our group programme to make sure that all the groups we run for students are well-attended, relevant, and available to as many students as possible.

Mental Health and Psychiatric Support

Mental Health Advisor (MHA) work

With two advisors the work of the MHAs is evolving. Contact with staff in colleges is more frequent. There has been an increase in referrals during this academic year, with more requests for mental health
assessments and advice for the most appropriate intervention. Requests for guidance regarding the management of students' mental health issues have also grown.

This has allowed an increase in the number of students benefiting from MHA support, as well as staff across the University accessing more MHA guidance on the management of students with complex mental health issues.

Most students are seen for 1 - 3 sessions; however both MHAs carry a caseload of students that are seen for ongoing appointments.

Students who are considered to be in crisis are offered appointments on the day of referral or the day after if the referral arrives late.

The majority of referrals come from A&E/Home Treatment Team/GPs/Tutors and College Nurses.

To develop the MHA role further, Juliet Bristow has completed the Mental Health First Aid (England) training programme. This certification allows her to provide essential training to staff across the Collegiate University in Mental Health First Aid, helping them to effectively support students who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

**Psychiatrist Support**

Dr. Alison Jenaway, an adult psychiatrist and Consultant Psychotherapist, continued to be available to the service for half a day per week during term-time to offer consultations to students about whose mental health we were concerned.

We remain grateful to the Distributors of Cranes’ Benefaction and to the Colleges, for supporting the mental health and psychiatric support work of the Service.

**Preventative & Outreach Work**

The Service saw 8.5% of the student population during the year. We recognise that not everyone wants or needs face-to-face counselling, consequently we put considerable effort into providing resources that students can access themselves, which offer self-help support, or quite specifically aids students in the successful completion of their academic studies.

We recognise that College Tutors, Nurses, Chaplains and student welfare officers in Colleges, as well as the CUSU and the Graduate Union are in the front line of supporting students. Consequently we work closely with these groups to ensure ‘joined-up’ support is available.

The Service website ([www.counselling.cam.ac.uk](http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk)) contains information and booklists on everything from reducing levels of anxiety or dealing with procrastination. We believe it is the leading student counselling website in the UK and receives around 1,000 page-views per day.

**The Peer 2 Peer Project**

The Service continues to guide the development of the Peer 2 Peer scheme through an Advisory Group meeting termly. This student-led scheme is doing an excellent job in the Colleges in which it operates.
Accountability

Clinical Responsibility

The service works within the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy’s ‘Ethical Framework’. This covers issues such as codes of ethics and confidentiality, and the levels of clinical supervision necessary for the counselling work undertaken.

All UCS staff are qualified and professionally accredited counsellors or therapists. Counselling is an emotionally demanding job. Therefore it is a professional requirement for accredited / registered counsellors to have professional clinical supervision of their practice. This ensures that staff continue to work to the highest professional standards.

Service Evaluation

We conduct a follow-up survey of all users of the Service following the end of their counselling. This year our return rate was 17.5%. The comments are mostly very encouraging, and reveal high levels of satisfaction with students’ experience of the Service, with the main results shown below:

1. To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you to stay at university?
   63% indicated that this was an issue for them, and of these 45% said counselling was ‘an important factor’ or ‘the most significant factor’.

2. To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you do better in your academic work?
   88% indicated that this was an issue for them, and of these 43.6% said counselling was ‘an important factor’ or ‘the most significant factor’.

3. To what extent would you say that counselling has improved your overall experience of university?
   95% said that counselling had helped with this to some extent; with 48.8% saying counselling was ‘an important factor’ or ‘the most significant factor’.

4. 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 self-confidence, assertiveness)?
   70% said that counselling had helped with this to some extent, with 37.8% saying counselling was ‘an important factor’ or ‘the most significant factor’.

Overall, 97% said that counselling had helped them deal with their difficulties, with 85% saying counselling helped ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a great deal’.

All the responses we receive, including any negative comments, are reviewed by one of our senior team and, unless the response is anonymous, also given to the counsellor concerned. In this way these comments inform and modify our practice.

Executive Committee

The service is accountable to an Executive Committee, chaired by Dr David Good, the VC’s representative. This committee contains representatives of the University Council, Senior Tutors’ Committee, Bursars’ Committee, Students Unions and two GPs, as well as a counsellor from the Student
Counselling Service and the Head of Service. In turn the Executive reports through the University Health and Wellbeing Committee to the General Board.

The full membership of the Committee is shown at the start of this report. We are especially grateful to Dr Good and the members of the Executive for their continuing support at this period of transition in the service with the appointment of a new head of service.

How our work is financed

Because responsibility for student welfare is vested in the Colleges, funding arrangements exist whereby they finance the direct costs of counselling, with the balance paid by the University Chest for service administration and facilities. The sum quoted also includes an amount from Cranes Benefaction for a Mental Health Advisor and a session of psychiatry.

Under these arrangements each college paid a per capita sum of £20.78 to the Service for each registered student in residence. This amount was proposed by the University Counselling Service Executive Committee and approved by the College Bursars’ Committee.

Those Colleges whose student bodies were higher users of the Service paid an additional ‘user-related charge’ in accordance with a formula agreed by the University Counselling Service Executive Committee and the College Bursars’ Committee and at a level proposed by the former and approved by the latter.

Crane’s Benefaction

The Benefaction of John Crane has supported the Counselling Service for many years in our work with students who have mental health problems. We are grateful to the Distributors of the Benefaction for their continued funding of psychiatric consultations within the Service conducted by Dr. Alison Jenaway, and also for continuing funding a Mental Health Advisor position in the Service.

The Madeleine Davis Fund

The Madeleine Davis Fund is a bequest enabling the Service to see students who have intermitted their course, and who would otherwise have been ineligible to use the Service when they are not in residence. Such students are thereby enabled to have access to counselling at the very time that problems cause them to degrade or intermit. We are very appreciative of this on-going support.

Health & Safety

The Service’s Health & Safety Committee met regularly through the year and the topic featured on team meetings. A variety of minor risks were identified and addressed. We are pleased that there were no significant accidents during the year, but remain vigilant to emerging risks.

Géraldine Dufour
Head of Service
October 2014