



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

University Counselling Service

Student Counselling Service
Annual Report 2015 - 2016

Contents

Executive Committee, 2015/16	ii
Staff in the Student Counselling Service	ii
Executive Summary of 2015/16	1
Staffing during the year.....	4
Placements for Associate Counsellors.....	4
Counselling Work.....	4
Individual counselling	5
Counselling Groups and Workshops.....	5
Mental Health and Psychiatric Support.....	3
Preventative & Outreach Work	7
Accountability.....	5
Clinical Responsibility	5
Service Evaluation.....	6
Executive Committee.....	10
How our work is financed	10

Executive Committee, 2015/16

Prof M Fowler	VC's Deputy; Master of Darwin
Dr M Gross	Bursar, Emmanuel College
Dr J Bunbury	Senior Tutor, St Edmunds College
Ms A Churcher	Counsellor, UCS
Prof L R Gelsthorpe	Council Representative, Pembroke College
Ms G Dufour	Head of Service
Dr J McLarty	Senior Tutor, Wolfson College
Dr C Lea-Cox	General Practitioner, Trumpington St Medical Practice
Dr A Devine	General Practitioner, Bridge Street Medical Centre
Mr A Powell	Bursar, Fitzwilliam College
Ms J Raine	Bursar, Newnham College
Mr R Smith	UCS Financial Administrator (in attendance)
Mr C Allen	Graduate Union
Ms P Ellis Logan	CUSU Welfare Officer
Miss K. Springthorpe	Acting Secretary (in attendance)

Staff in the Student Counselling Service

Head of Service

Géraldine Dufour	Registered member BACP Senior Accredited
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Senior Counsellors

Hanya Czepkowski	Registered member BACP Accredited
Lisa Halpern	Registered member BACP Senior Accredited - until 03/16
Sally Swain	Registered member BACP Accredited - from 04/16

Counsellors & CBT Therapists

Amy Beddows	BACP Reg Practitioner
Polly Brown (part-time)	BACP Reg Practitioner
Anna Churcher (part-time)	UKCP Reg Psychotherapist - until 04/16
Tim Ellis (part-time)	UKCP Reg Psychotherapeutic Counsellor
Richard Geddis	BACP Reg Practitioner until 09/15
Tess Gorst (part-time)	BABCP Accred. Cog. Beh. Psychotherapist
Gudrun Haraldsdottir (part-time)	BACP Reg Practitioner
Vanessa Skinner (part-time)	BABCP Accred. Cog. Beh. Psychotherapist
Barbara Steen	BABCP Accred. Cog. Beh. Psychotherapist

Mental Health Advisor

Juliet Bristow	Reg Social Worker (HCPC) - until 09/15
Jane Gaffa (part-time locum)	Occupational Therapist - HCPC registered (10/15 - 07/16)
Emily Farrar (part-time)	RMN Nurse registered with the NMC from 12/15
Ashleigh St Louis (full-time)	RMN Nurse registered with the NMC from 06/15
Jenny Schiller (part-time)	BABCP Accred. Cog. Beh. Psychotherapist – until 09/15

Mindfulness practitioner

Elizabeth English (part-time)	Member of the British Focusing Association, The Focusing Institute, Centre for Nonviolent Communication
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Locums

Clare Colley, Julia Cooke, Fran Patrick, Roslyn Poole

Associate Counsellors (training placements: half- to one day per week)

First year: Farasat Sadia, Lucy Felton

Second year: Krupali Adathiruthi, Tricia Magee, Mahwish Qamar

Psychiatric consultations

Dr Alison Jenaway (part-time)

Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy

Support Staff

Robert Smith (part-time)

Financial Administrator

Sue Geeson

Office Manager

Fiona Hey (part-time)

Administrator / Receptionist from 02/16

Hazel Sanderson (part-time)

Administrator / Receptionist

Bernie Steptoe (part-time)

Administrator / Receptionist until 01/16

Becky Wright

Administrator / Receptionist



Executive Summary 2015/2016

KEY NUMBERS

For counselling:

- 1573 students accessed individual counselling, for an average of 4.7 sessions
- 8.6% of the student population accessed individual counselling, a high proportion of the student body
- 50 - 70 new referrals were received per week during term time
- 5 - 10 counselling workshops and groups were offered per week during term time
- 180 - 240 individual counselling sessions were offered each week, and there were a further 30 - 60 group attendances per week during term

For Mental Health Advisors (MHAs):

- 138 students accessed individual sessions with the MHAs
- 155 mental health assessments and a further 428 ongoing sessions were offered throughout the year

Mindfulness

- 7 eight-week courses were delivered during the Michaelmas and Lent terms, offering 210 places to students each term
- A series of 4 differently-themed workshops targeting examination issues were offered during the Easter term
- Approximately 25 hours of Individual Mindfulness Support sessions were offered outside of the classes: during Michaelmas 2015 and Lent 2016

KEY FACTS:

- We also responded to numerous requests for support and guidance from tutors, nurses and welfare staff in colleges and departments, as well as from GPs and specialist staff in mental health services
- Students requiring urgent help were fast-tracked for counselling and/or seen very quickly by the MHAs
- The mindfulness practitioner advised welfare staff and students on suitability for mindfulness

WHO USES THE SERVICE?

For counselling:

We have information about 1437 students who accessed individual counselling last year. Of those who replied to these questions:

- 51.1% were undergraduates and 47.7% were graduates
- 35.4% were final year students and 36% were first year students
- 75% had not used the service before and 23.9% had returned to see us
- 64.1% describe themselves as female, 34.9% as male, 0.5% as other or transgender
- 197 students told us that they had a disability they wanted us to know about, 8.3% of students attending the Service stated they had mental health difficulties, 1.9% an unseen disability, 1% Asperger Syndrome/Autistic Spectrum Disorder, 1.8% another disability, adding up to a total of 13.7% disabled students
- 75.3% described themselves as white, 1.5% as black, 8.5% as Asian, 5.5% as Chinese, 6.5% were

from other ethnic backgrounds

- 62.5 % came from the UK, 15.6% from other EU countries and 20.8% were international students

For Mental Health Advisors:

We have information about 138 students who accessed face to face support with the MHAs. Of those who replied to these questions:

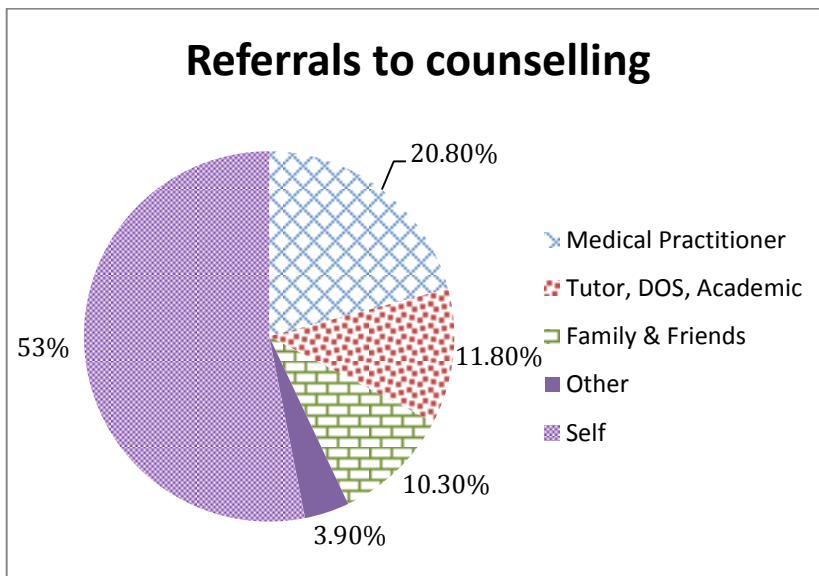
- 66.7% were undergraduate and 31.6% were graduate
- 31.6% were final year students and 40.4% were first year students
- 61.4% had not used the service before and 33.3% had returned to see us
- 64.4% describe themselves as female, 36.8% as male, 1.8% preferred not to answer this question
- 36 students told us that they had a disability they wanted us to know about. 31.6% of students attending MHA appointments stated they had mental health difficulties, 2.6% an unseen disability, 2.6% Asperger Syndrome/Autistic Spectrum Disorder, 2.6% another disability, 1.8% multiple disabilities coming to a total of 15.6% disabled students
- 74.6% described themselves as white, 1.8% as black, 10.6% as Asian, 3.5% as Chinese, 4.4% were from other ethnic backgrounds
- 69.3 % came from the UK, 9.6% from other EU countries and 15.8% were international students

Who comes to Mindfulness classes?

We will be able to present information for this pilot scheme in due course.

WHO SIGNPOSTS STUDENTS TOWARDS OUR SERVICE?

Although all students self-refer to **counselling**, we ask students if anyone suggested that they attend the counselling service. In 2015-16, 20.8% were advised to come by a medical practitioner and 11.8% via their personal tutors, director of studies, or other academic, and 10.3% by their family and friends.



Students are not able to refer themselves to the **Mental Health Advisors**. Referrals may be made by College tutors and nurses, University staff, GPs or mental health services.

Key achievements for the UCS team in 2015/2016

Members of staff at the UCS contribute not only to the good work of the service, but also to that of the collegiate university as a whole, as well as developments in the field of counselling, mental health and mindfulness.

Environmental impact

For the past four years the Service has taken part in The NUS Green Impact scheme, a student-led environmental awards scheme. This year the Green Impact Team, led by one of our therapists, Vanessa Skinner, achieved a Gold award. We were pleased that the Service received this prize for its work in saving energy and recycling.



Staff recognition

Sue Geeson, the Service office manager, who leads a very busy and dedicated team of administrators and receptionists, was nominated for the UAS Employee Recognition Scheme 2015. She was selected in relation to the the UAS value: "We deliver an effective and high-quality service". We were very pleased that Sue's dedication, hard work, and commitment to the work of the UCS was recognised outside our service.

Presentations

Counselling team members delivered many presentations across the university: presenting at departmental and college inductions, as well as international students' inductions.

Géraldine Dufour delivered a session on 'Researcher and Practitioner collaboration: a successful synthesis of complementary roles' with Julieta Galente at the BACP Research conference. She also spoke at Understanding ModernGov delivering a session on "Effectively Support Student Mental Wellbeing"; "Sharing experiences and ideas to improve services for students" for Westminster Briefing and "Mental Illness: Prevention and responses in universities" for The Cambridge MindEd Trust Conference.

Representing the University Counselling Service and the University:

Géraldine Dufour stepped down as the Chair of HUCS (Heads of University Counselling Service) after serving the maximum of 6 years on the executive committee. She continues to sit on BACP Universities and Colleges executive committee as their strategy advisor.

As well as representing the service on different committees and working groups she contributed to other university initiatives by sitting on the Gender Equality Group (GEG) and acting as the Senior Gender Equality Champion for the UAS.

Géraldine was also involved on wellbeing initiatives at the wider collegiate University level, advising and contributing to the development of interventions and policies to address sexual harassment and assault.

Publications:

Géraldine Dufour chapter "Assessment: Laying the Foundation for Brief Therapeutic Work in HE" was published in *Short-term Counselling in Higher Education: Context, Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2015). She also wrote in BACP Universities and College Journal about Cambridge University's proactive approach to "Preventing and responding to rape and sexual violence" (September 2015).

Placements for Associate Counsellors

Each year we offer placements to a number of Associate Counsellors, who are in the late stages of their professional training. Their work is carefully supervised and undertaken within the 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.

First year: Farasat Sadia, Lucy Felton

Second year: Krupali Adathiruthi, Tricia Magee, Mahwish Qamar

All Associates worked between a half and a full day per week.

We recognise that this programme benefits both the Service and its clients, by bringing in fresh ideas and energy, and the trainees who experience working in a highly professional service. Quite a number of trainees have returned to work for the service after gaining accreditation.

Staffing

There were a number of staffing changes throughout the year. We were delighted to appoint two new mental health advisors: Emily Farrar and Ashleigh St Louis, both of them Mental Health Nurses who worked for local mental health services before joining the UCS.

Lisa Halpern retired at the end of the Lent term, after working as a Senior Counsellor in the Service for 9 years, while Anna Churcher left in April, having been a significant member of the team for many years. Both will be missed.

Sally Swain, a very able member of the team who had been working in the service as a counsellor, was appointed as a new Senior Counsellor. A number of new counsellors were appointed at the end of June 2016, ready for the start of the academic year in Michaelmas 2016.

Counselling Work

Individual counselling

Although the Service offers a wide range of ways to support students, individual counselling remains the core of its work. Issues that students present to counselling are fairly static. Last year, the main problems that were brought to counselling were related to anxiety, depression, academic related issues and relationships.

While much of the work is fairly brief, the Service continues to offer some ongoing support to students. Care is taken to work efficiently and keep waiting times for counselling as low as possible, and judgements are made in the case of each client about how long to continue counselling. A total of 6,908 individual counselling sessions were offered last year.

All referrals to counselling are triaged, with those requiring urgent appointments prioritised. All pre-counselling forms were read within 1 working day of receipt and students are prioritised accordingly and

sign-posted to self-help resources and workshops if appropriate. We also direct some students to be seen urgently by the mental health advisors if we are concerned about their wellbeing.

Counselling Groups and Workshops

The Service has a national reputation for group work. During this year many workshops and group sessions were once again run for students, offering a total of 1,104 group sessions.

As every year we reviewed our group and workshop programme for students, and offered an additional bereavement group – loss of someone other than a parent/carer. Our workshops remained popular and we offered a varied programme including our well-attended groups for bereaved students, managing moods, perfectionism and workshops on self-compassion, food & mood, and understanding & managing procrastination.

Returners - in the Michaelmas term we ran two groups for undergraduate students returning to study following intermission. A total of 30 students attended a series of three workshops. We also ran a group in the Lent Term, with five returning students attending.

Mental Health and Psychiatric Support

Mental Health Advisor (MHA) work

With two advisors the work of the MHAs advisors is evolving. Last year they offered 583 appointments in total (511 the previous year). The MHAs offered consultations to welfare and academic staff working across the collegiate university and were in frequent contact with staff in the colleges, offering most support and guidance over the phone and by email.

Students were seen for individual mental health assessments and fitness to study assessment.

Most students were seen for 1 - 3 sessions; however both MHAs carry a caseload of students that are seen for ongoing appointments. Many students considered to be in crisis were offered appointments on the day of referral.

Psychiatric 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 whose mental health was a concern.

The Service once again expresses its appreciation to the Distributors of Cranes' Benefaction and to the Colleges, for supporting the mental health and psychiatric support work of the Service.

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 counselling staff are qualified and professionally accredited counsellors or therapists, working to the

highest professional standards, registered with their professional bodies, and undertaking professional development and engaging in regular supervision of their practice.

Both Mental Health Advisors are RMN Nurses registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Our Mindfulness practitioner is also in the first cohort of participants registered for Bangor University's Mindfulness Teaching Pathway; and a registered member of the British Focusing Association, The Focusing Institute and certified with the Centre for Non-Violent Communication.

Service Evaluation

We conduct a follow-up survey of all users of the Service following the end of their counselling. Overall, 93.7% said that counselling had helped them deal with their difficulties, with 80% saying counselling helped 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal'.

This year our return rate was 12.4%. 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?

70% indicated that this was an issue for them, and of these 30.3% 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 40% 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?

95.4% said that counselling had helped with this to some extent; with 51.4% 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)?

88.4% said that counselling had helped with this to some extent, with 35.6% saying counselling was 'an important factor' or 'the most significant factor'.

Most of the complaints received about the counselling service relate to students having to wait for their appointments, or having a limit to the number of sessions available. Information about current waiting times for counselling can be found on our website.

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

Our admin team is dedicated to the students we support, and go the extra mile to help them and be welcoming, as is reflected in our survey where all but one student who answered were happy about the way in which there were dealt with by our receptionists.

Preventive & Outreach Work

We work closely with colleagues across the university, individual colleges, local GP practices and the Student Union. We recognise that welfare staff in Colleges, as well as specialist student support staff are in the front line of supporting students. Consequently we work closely with these groups to ensure that co-ordinated support is available. In addition, counsellors attend individual colleges for college liaison work.

Counsellors and the head of service delivered and contributed to many training and wellbeing events across the collegiate university: new tutors training, start of the year briefings about the service, and talks to chaplains and deans, to students in Colleges, as well as presentations on wellbeing to Academic Division staff and a presentation at the first teaching forum for the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

Counsellors working in collaboration with the Colleges delivered well-received outreach sessions in colleges to both students and staff. Sessions were also delivered centrally through PPD: Boundaries and Boomerangs and Supporting Postgraduate Students with Mental Health Difficulties which were facilitated with Kirsty Wayland from the Disability Resource Centre. Gudrun Haraldsdottir delivered a workshop on Managing the Relationship with Your Supervisor at the Graduate Union. Polly Brown, worked with the convenor of the Cambridge College Libraries Group to provide College libraries with a small list of key self-help books that might be useful for them to stock, if funds permit.

To offer co-ordinated support to students with mental health issues, we work closely with colleagues at the DRC and attend a joint case conference group twice a term.

Counsellors delivered some well-received reflective practice sessions for staff such as the Disability Resource Advisors, the College Nurses and other welfare staff.

Social Media:

To reach out to students and to better publicise our groups and workshops programme, we also created a Facebook page and a Twitter account:



Find us on Twitter



Find us on Facebook

Mindfulness

The work of Elizabeth English, our mindfulness practitioner, further developed during 2015/2016.

In the Michaelmas and Lent terms, seven eight-week 'Mindfulness Skills for Students' courses were run concurrently across the University, with 30 places on each, open to undergraduates and graduates. Bookings were taken centrally by PPD's Academic Practice team.

Of the 210 places available, most were taken by students signing up for the Mindful Student Study research project, with 5 places per course designated for students not wishing to participate in the research. The courses were kindly hosted by a number of colleges.



Courses were very popular, booking within 24 hours and very well attended (for instance on average participants attended 67% of the sessions, and 70% attended 4 or more sessions out of 8). Since courses were taught concurrently, students were encouraged to switch to another class if last-minute timetable clashes prevented them from attending their designated class. During Lent term, feedback showed that timetable clashes and lack of time constituted the major reason for non-attendance (64%).

Attendance & Participants (academic year 2015-2016)

For the eight-week course in the academic year 2015-2016 (Michaelmas 2015-Lent 2016; not Easter term)

Average for the attendance on the eight-week course in the academic year 2015-2016 (Michaelmas 2015-Lent 2016; not Easter term) is:



On average participants attended 64% of the sessions, and 68% attended 4 or more sessions out of 8.

- This year, on average participants attended 64% of the sessions, and 68% attended 4 or more sessions out of 8.
- (Last year, on average participants attended 67% of the sessions, and 70% attended 4 or more sessions out of 8.)

One obvious difference between this academic year and last is that the majority of participants were research students, but we do not know if this has any bearing on the drop in numbers this year.

Carrying forward the commitment to teaching mindfulness to large numbers in a responsible manner, we continued to refine pre-course information, and to encourage recommendations from University staff (nurses, senior tutors, and counsellors). In particular, individual support sessions were available to students before and after each mindfulness class with Elizabeth, and they became increasingly well-used during the academic year.

During the Easter Term 2016 Elizabeth offered four different sessions focusing on Mindfulness for Exams: Better Sleep, Productive Decisions, Keeping Calm and Improving Attention. As last year during the Easter term, attendance was an issue. The enthusiasm to attend is strong, as we have long waiting lists for each class, but in practice students obviously struggle to make the time for the workshops.

Elizabeth also supported the growth of a lively and independent committee to run the new Mindfulness Society. This has resulted in:

- weekly practice sessions during term

- secured funding and sponsorship;
- an end of term welcome event for new students finishing the eight week courses, who want to take mindfulness practice further; and
- a solid term card of events

The Mindfulness Website pages on the Student Gateway continued to grow and develop: <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/welfare-and-wellbeing/mindfulness-cam>

Support systems were put in place consisting of:

- pre-course information to help students decide for themselves whether it is right for them to learn mindfulness at this time, given other life events; support sessions available on two lunchtimes each week, able to be booked over Google Calendar/Forms via the website after reading the pre-course material (initially a 15 minute phone Skype conversation, with one-to-one time available for individual students if needed); *and*
- recommendations to college nurses, senior tutors and UCS staff regarding the suitability of mindfulness for vulnerable students (i.e., when it is inadvisable to learn meditation).

Feedback from students (with permission):

"I attended the mindfulness course in the final year of my PhD. It was incredibly helpful, enabling me to cope with stress more effectively and create a deeper understanding of myself. Thanks, Elizabeth, for all the guidance you provided throughout the course."

"Learning mindfulness and meditation at Cambridge has undoubtedly been one of the best and most valuable things I've done during my time here. Mindfulness and meditation have now become a part of me, and I will be forever grateful for being given the opportunity to learn with and be taught by the most fantastic teachers and group of people who have now become good friends of mine. It has given me a new outlook on life - has helped me remain steadfast through the difficult times and appreciate the subtle day-to-day smiles that life has to offer."

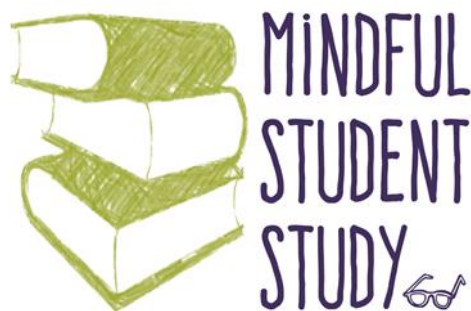
Mindfulness Research

The Mindful Student Study started in October 2015 ran by Dr Julieta Galante and supervised by Peter Jones. The evaluation of the mindfulness courses for students consists of a randomised controlled trial with two parallel arms. The participating students were randomised to either doing the mindfulness course during that term or waiting one year to do it (wait-list control group with one-year follow-up).

In addition, the research team gained extra funding in October to conduct a physiological sub-study. In January 2016, 55 Lent mindfulness study participants gave baseline blood samples to study the impact of examination stress on the immune system, and the buffering effect mindfulness training may have on this impact.

Project profile and disseminating information:

The project is gaining a greater profile with a steady flow of requests to meet Elizabeth English and Julieta Galante, both from inside and outside the University, including requests for further sessions and courses from within the University. Dr Galante has been interviewed on the Mindful Student Study for The Guardian, student press and two local radio stations. She has also presented the study at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre and, as a public lecture, at the National University of Ireland. Dr English has appeared with Ruby Wax at the Students' Union, and receives regular and increasing requests from across the University to deliver mindfulness classes and talks.



Changes to the service in the last year:

Administration

The UCS Staff Handbook which includes all Service policies and procedures was updated, as well as all Service records and documentation.

UCS Leaflets

Following on last year's review, more UCS self-help leaflets for students were updated. Counsellors and CBT therapists took responsibility for rewriting specific leaflets. Hanya Czepkowski oversaw the revision of the UCS self-help leaflets relating to the Service (Information for Students and Guide for Tutors). The Mindfulness leaflets were also updated with the help of the mindfulness practitioner, Elizabeth English. These were sent to the Reprographics and Printing department, which reset all leaflets refreshing the layout and presentation. This new layout followed the guideline for best practice from the British Dyslexia Association's dyslexia style guide.

Executive Committee

The service is accountable to an Executive Committee, chaired by Professor Mary Fowler, Master of Darwin and the Vice Chancellor'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.

How the 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 amounts from Crane's Benefaction for a Mental Health Advisor and psychiatry.

Under these arrangements each College paid a *per capita* sum of £23.24 to the Service for each registered student in residence. This amount was proposed by the University Counselling Service Executive Committee and approved by the Bursars' Committee.

Those Colleges whose student bodies have been higher users of the Service over a five-year period paid an additional 'user-related charge' in accordance with a formula agreed by the University Counselling Service Executive Committee and the 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 its 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 to fund 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 already engaged with the service 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 continuing support.

Development for 2016/2017**College-Based Counselling.**

There is already some well-established provision of counselling being delivered at College level; however a number of Colleges have approached the UCS to provide a service managed by the University Counselling Service within Colleges. A new College-Based Counselling pilot is starting in October to last for three academic years.

The Scheme is additional to the centrally provided Service, and is intended for those colleges who would like to have their own dedicated counsellor working within the college but supervised and managed by the UCS under the Service's monitored professional standards.

Géraldine Dufour
Head of Service
January 2017

With thanks to the members of staff who contributed to this report

