



Counselling Services' Annual Report 2015.16 and Plans 2016.17

ANNUAL REPORT

Achieving Departmental Objectives:

Headlines:

- Consistent with previous years just under 500 students approached the Service for counselling, drop-in sessions and online, of which 412 (388) engaged with us face to face, up 6% on last year, plus 15 online students.
- The total number of students seen by the Service, including face to face and online counselling students, as well as students attending workshops was approximately 700, which rises to 970 if we include the pre-induction sessions, 1240 if we include the icebreakers events to international students and a great deal more if we include shout-outs at the unismart events.
- **65** (74) students were seen at Walsall, down by 12%, although last year's figure was up by 35% on the previous year. Students are no longer seen at Burton campus.
- Individual sessions booked throughout the year, were up 12% at **2034** (1810), **236** (226) of these were at Walsall, up by 4%. It is interesting to observe that clients attended for more sessions each this year.
- **121** (111) individual students used the drop-in service, available at Walsall and City campuses, with 147 drop-in slots used, another figure similar to last year's which was 145. Most of these students converted to on-going clients with 24 clients who were exclusive to the drop-ins.
- At **23** (23) the same number of students approached the Service as last year for online counselling of whom **15** (15) engaged with us, and this year, as with last year **6** (6) of the 15 tried out real time online counselling, 2 of whom converted to face to face counselling, with the remaining **9** taking up the email online provision. Online counselling reaches those students who may have been unable to engage face to face for a variety of reasons: feeling too inhibited or more at ease behind the screen of a computer. For some students counselling online is more accessible in terms of convenience and practicality.
- **64%** (75%) of students are seen in **less than 5** working days, with **89%** (90%) seen within 10 working days. These figures reflect high demand from students from November onwards when students had to wait slightly longer for an appointment than has been the case hitherto.

- Despite the increased demand for sessions, and unusually, a need for students not able to be offered an immediate appointment at peak times, cancellation rates were the same at 15%, while dna rates fell by 1% to 14%.
- The University Counselling Service has attempted to increase our accessibility and visibility by including counselling topics on WOLF, promoting the Service on E:vision, Twitter and Facebook, using the internal web-based magazines, by developing our relationships with LIS, the Students' Union, Chaplaincy, Residential Services and the MHWBA, and promoting our Service via our faculty link schemes. The workshops and relaxation classes also raise the profile of the Service.
- The figures produced for the annual report will continue to monitor our success in reaching the varied student population at the University.

➤ **CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation)**

✓ **88%** (90%) of students who were given a pre-counselling CORE form were above the clinical cut-off.

✓ **81%** (91%) completed pre and post-counselling-OMs.

✓ **56%** (55%) improved at a statistically significant level after counselling. Importantly benchmark figures indicate that in HE the median recovery rate is 56%, with 25% of services having recovery rates of lower than 52% and 25% rates in excess of 65%. When we look at planned endings **57%** of students improved at a significant level.

(CORE outcome measures are not given to students who drop-in, do not attend or cancel their first appointment and two students chose not to complete CORE).

➤ **Student Satisfaction**

INTERIM RESULTS (1/8/15 – 15/7/16) (KINDLY PRODUCED BY) TO BE UPDATED IN SEPT
Levels of Satisfaction remain outstandingly high.

The Service asks students at the end of their counselling to complete a level of satisfaction survey:

- ✓ **95%** (93%) (92.5%) (93%) of students who completed end of counselling 'Level of Satisfaction Surveys', indicated that the problems they had brought were **more manageable after counselling**.
- ✓ **99%** (99.5%) (100%) (99%) of students would **recommend the Service to a friend**.
- ✓ **99%** (95%) (93%) (96%) **would return for counselling** if they felt they needed to.

➤ **Retention & Progression**

INTERIM AS ABOVE

Results from the 2015/16 annual survey to individual students counselled revealed that:

- ✓ **89%** (85%) (77%) (80%) of students indicated that counselling had helped them *stay at the University*. (Nationally this figure is 81%¹).
 - ✓ **88%** (78%) (73%) (74%) indicating that counselling had helped them to *do better on their course*. (Nationally this figure is 79%).
 - ✓ **93%** (76%) (76%) (70%) indicated that counselling has helped them to develop skills which might be useful in obtaining future employment. (National figure is 78%).
 - ✓ **94%** (84%) (77%) (83%) indicated that counselling had helped improve their overall experience of university. (National figure is 83%).
 - ✓ **94%** (85%) (91%) (97%) indicated that counselling had *improved their self-esteem*.
- The ethnicity of students seen at the Counselling Service is representative of students throughout the University whose background is other than 'white British' or 'European'. For example **11%** (10%) of clients classify their ethnic origin as 'Black African', with **9%** (9%) 'Indian'.
- The Service has seen a slight increase in the number of international students this year at **5%** up from 4%.
- Gender figures remain similar with **33%** (34%) of our clients men.
- **5%** (3%) of our student clients study part time.
- Most clients are undergraduates, **80%** (85%), with figures in the undergraduate levels, 4, 5 and 6, similar. The proportion of foundations students increased from 3% to **6%**, with post grads at a similar level to last year at **12%** (10%).
- As in previous years students with declared disabilities are over – represented, **38%** (36%) of students seen by the Service declared a disability.
- Student clients are coming to us roughly in proportion to their faculty size, although students from FSS are under-represented with those from the FoArt slightly over represented.

¹ Wallace, P. 2012 *The impact of counselling on academic outcomes in further and higher education: the student perspective* BACP Publications, Rugby

- Interestingly we get few students coming to see us who are 18 or under, most coming for the 21-25 age bracket **(40%)**. The figures suggest that older students access the Service more.
- Again, almost half of students **48%** (48%) self-refer.
- As with all years anxiety; relationships; work/academic; self-esteem; depression and bereavement are the most frequently cited reasons for coming to counselling.

Workshops

A direct interaction with students in the academic setting has a positive impact on progression and achievement. Attendance at our workshops has declined this year to **198** compared to last year's figure of 325 with an additional **269** (563) attending the 'Time management' event for pre-induction students.

In addition a further **270** or so students (320) attended our international 'Ice breaker' events although this figure goes up and down frequently.

| | 11.12 | 12.13 | 13.14. | 14.15 | 15.16 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| WORKSHOPS – STUDENTS | | | | | |
| Icebreakers | 400 | 460 | 200 | 320 | 270 |
| Pre-induction | 53 | 75 | 200 | 563 | 269 |
| Annual programme | 133 | 102 | 53 | 49 | 38 |
| Bespoke/Tailored | 244 | 221 | 164 | 177 | 100 |
| AA's/RA's | 16 | 19 | 14 | 16 | 24 |
| Post Grad (Intro) | - | 31 | 30 | 40 | 30* |
| Post Grad (Resilience) | - | - | - | 10 | 10 |
| Relaxation | | | 16 | 11 | 8 |
| International (Workshop) | 14 | 25 | 50 | 22 | 5 |
| Mindfulness | - | - | - | - | 13 |

Some Schools and Departments asked the Service to deliver workshops to students during timetabled seminars or lectures:

| Faculty | No. of students | Topics |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FEHW Inst. of Ed. | 22 (48) (20) | Resilience and stress, Working in groups |
| FEHW Inst. of HP | 64 (51) (95) | Emotional health and well-being, managing stress, working in groups |
| S.U training | 11 | Managing personal stress; group dynamics; learning to be assertive; responding to students in distress |

Other events are provided to departments annually:

| Dept | No. of students | Topics |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| International Office | 270 (320) | Icebreaker warm-up sessions |
| International Office | 5 (22) | Acculturation workshops |
| Residential Services | 24 (16) | Being an 'RA' workshop/training event |
| Pre-Induction | 269 (563) | Becoming a university student - Time management |
| Post - grads | 30 (40) | Introduction to the UCS* |
| Post - grads | 10 (10) | Resilience |

*These are more substantial workshops than our usual awareness raising events to new students.

Other workshops are offered as part of an annual programme:

| Annual Programme | No. of students | Topic |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sems 1 & 2 | 38 (49) | Self-confidence; stress management and relaxation; assertiveness; procrastination; working in groups; delivering presentations; exam stress; mindfulness |
| Monthly relaxation sessions to staff and students | 8 (11) | Guided relaxation - 6 sessions. (Terminated in Sem1) |

Links

The counselling team forge links with different departments and faculties. In particular we have had a good working relationship again this year with the LIS and residential services while developing new and productive links with the MHWB adviser, . The links with faculties have been particularly through the interns, student offices, attendance at various student council meetings and through developing special relationships with individual members of staff.

Link work this year has been hampered due to the increased demand in face to face counselling.

has been developing our Facebook activity this year and gained more 'friends' as a result of postings and sharing articles. has been actively using WLV Insider and the Students' equivalent to promote the service. is a member of the Stress, StartRight, Wellbeing and Personal Tutoring groups and a member of the revised Mental health sub group. has continued to be an active member of the national HUCS' executive.

Strategic Ambitions, priorities, objectives:

- To continue to offer a high quality, accessible, responsive and embedded service, achieved by offering individual counselling via appointments, lunch time drop-in and evening sessions, all with a minimum waiting period, as well as the online email and real-time services.
- To continue to promote the location of the University Counselling Service, highlighting in particular the more discrete location of our Service, which seems to continue to be proving popular.
- To ensure a similarly discreet and popular location for students when we change locations.
- To ensure the integrity of the service.
- Online counselling – to continue to offer online counselling as a way of making the service available to hard to reach students, which will include synchronous as well as asynchronous work.
- To maintain and monitor the counselling provision at Walsall, to provide an on-going synchronous and a-synchronous service to all campuses, particularly Burton campus.
- To continue the development and provision of accessible and awareness raising material through the use of new technologies, and an increasingly interactive web presence.
- To continue to develop further the groups and workshop delivery, separately, to both **staff** and **students**, and in particular be-spoke workshops. Annual workshop programme to continue, to develop resilience and employability skills of students.
- To continue to develop initiatives to promote wellbeing for both students and staff.
- To continue to develop the pre-induction programme, be involved more in the StartRight Programme and attend all unismart events.
- To offer follow-up messages and information to new students, after the first month of their arrival at the University.
- To co-ordinate a more holistic delivery with SEC, Chaplaincy, the SU and the MHWBA for students with mental health difficulties.
- Continue to promote the role and value of both the Service and counselling, using the Faculty/School/Institute/Department Link system; interns in student offices; our

relationships with the LIS, SU, Personal Tutors, the Faculty Enabling Tutors (FETs) and the MHWBA.

- To continue to develop the counselling literature, promoting a message, (in progress), which emphasises we are FREE; the service is CONFIDENTIAL; counsellors are PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED; WE RESPOND TO STUDENTS' NEEDS: THERE IS NO NEED TO WAIT; COUNSELLORS HAVE TIME and finally, and according to our surveys, importantly, WE DO NOT JUDGE.
- To continue to consider how to reach under-represented students.
- To maintain final CORE and LOS returns for evaluation purposes, and maintain the high levels of satisfaction.
- To improve CORE responses.
- To continue to monitor student dna's and cancellations, although these have remained obstinately similar year on year.
- To ensure appropriate support for counselling team when dealing with growing number of students with increasingly difficult problems.
- To monitor the introduction of the EAP scheme for staff and renew the intention of the Service to further the Staff Counselling provision by having a permanent staff counsellor position.

Financial/Budget planning 15/16

Supervision costs and other necessary charges (especially print work, other information giving and promotional materials) mean that the budget remains tight. Some supervision costs have risen.

The demand from students at Walsall campus continued to remain high and from near the start of the academic year, we regularly offered two days per week during term time. Demand for our services increased again at Walsall for the last few weeks of the first term, before Christmas, although this was relieved when _____ was able to go to Walsall for three days per week with a replacement, _____, coming to city campus on one day per week. Later in semester 2 _____ had the flexibility to complement the demand at city campus.

Comments

It has been another busy and exciting year for the Service, with the team working very hard to maintain our relative 'no wait' position, particularly as there has been another year of students (and staff in the first semester) presenting with complex issues. Walsall too became busy before Christmas this year, although soon seemed to settle down.

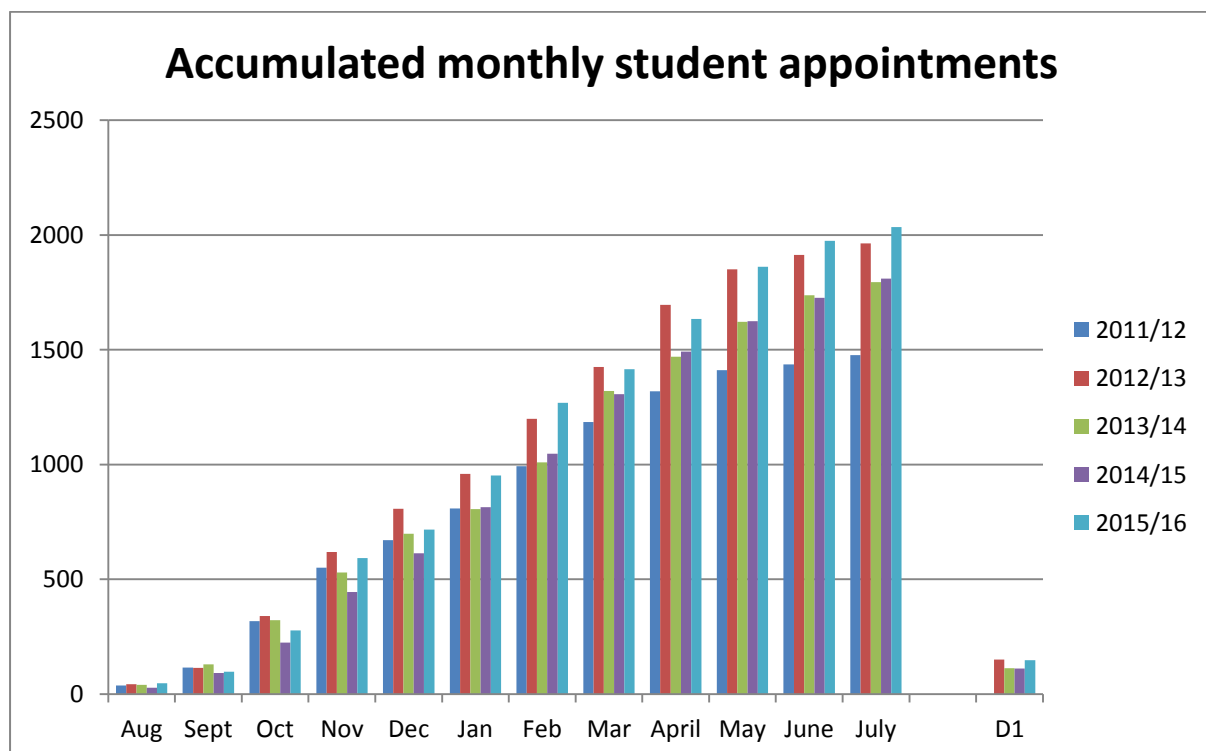
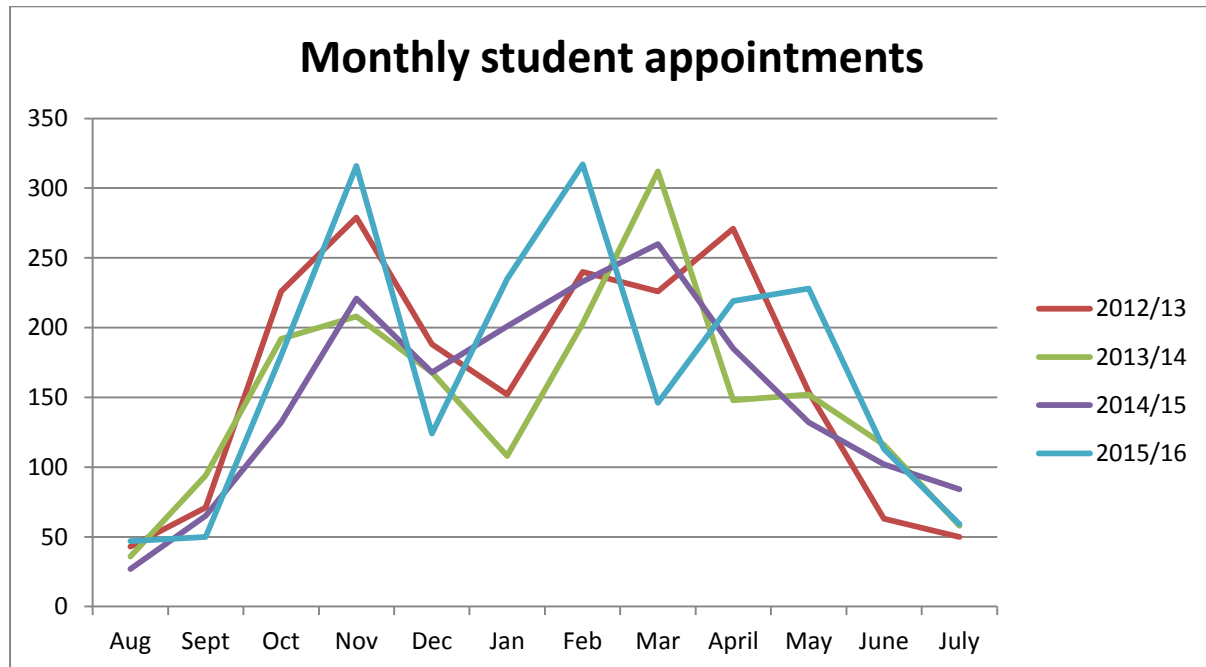
Student numbers for face to face increased by 6 % with appointments rising 12%. Generally speaking the profile has remained similar year on year, although we have seen a rise in the proportion of international students attending, closer to earlier years' levels, as well as students with declared disabilities.

Total workshop numbers to some extent depend upon factors beyond our control. For those we do have an influence over we will continue to try to increase the bespoke workshops while promoting the workshops we run as part of our annual programme. This year, due to high demand for individual counselling sessions this proved impossible. Greater effort should be made, however, to promote the bespoke workshops. While numbers attending those workshops which are part of the annual programme are not large, they are run only if time-effective and continue to be useful to students, and provide another way to raise awareness of the Service.

Our trial of a new bespoke mindfulness course for students, similar to those popular for staff clients, proved very successful.

CORE responses are 'good enough', and difficult to compare with national figures (2010) as our return rates are very high when compared to other HEI's and in particular the NHS. Planned endings having a slightly different impact from unplanned endings on CORE levels at the end. CORE management have indicated these are good figures.

Graphs to show year end and monthly appointments 15.16.



Total student appointments, annually

