

Counselling and Wellbeing (C&WB) – Service Report 2015/16

The Counselling and Wellbeing Service (C&WB) directly supports the student experience by providing professional counselling and mental health support. We also help to ensure that there is an organisational wide understanding of mental wellbeing and appropriate responses to mental ill-health by providing consultation, training and awareness raising to staff and leading on process such as Fitness to Study and Cause for Concern.

Key headlines

- **Increase in demand:**
Number of registrations with the C&WB– 1291 (14/15 - 1232) – increase of **5%**.
Between academic years 2010/11 and 2015/16 there has been a **137%** increase in the number of students registering with the C&WB Service (from 544 registrations to 1291)
Total number of individual interventions –5706 (15/16 - 5371) – increase of **6%**
Since 2012/13, when we began recording individual interventions, there has been an increase in interventions of **48%** (from 3852 to 5706).
- **Evidence that the service supports retention:**
Feedback shows that C&WB continues to make a direct contribution to student retention. Of those accessing the service who had said they had been missing lectures, considering or planning to intermit or drop out, **89%** said that the support they received changed this.
- **Evidence that our online CBT platform is effective and helping us to meet the increase in demand for support**
Silver Cloud was introduced to help us meet the increasing demand for support from students with 'low-level' mental health conditions. In 2015/16, 62 students used this platform in conjunction with guidance from C&WB and further 109 used it for self-guided therapy. Clinical based 'before and after' measures of depression/anxiety show 31% 'recovered' and 54% showing reliable positive change.
- **High levels of satisfaction with the service and its effectiveness.**
98.5% of respondents said they were satisfied with the support received and this was also evident in qualitative feedback.
To assess impact, students accessing therapeutic support are asked to complete before and after scores against factors such as concentration, motivation and confidence.
Overall % report positive improvements on a range of factors:
 - Improvement in concentration – **74%**
 - Improvement in motivation – **83%**
 - Improvement in confidence – **86%**
 - Improvement in ability to study – **74%**
 - Improvement in anxiety – **78%**
 - Improvement in depression – **77%**
 - Improvement in other – **87%**

Commentary

The main challenge for the C&WB service is the year-on-year increase in demand for counselling and mental health support. This is reported across the HE sector. In 2015/16 we secured additional hours for Mental Health Advisers in Cambridge where demand is greatest, however, demand continues to outstrip the capacity of the service and a waiting list for support (Cambridge) was in place from semester one and 70 students remained on the list until it was cleared in summer 2016. Our online CBT platform is enabling faster response times for low-level mental health needs and is proving to be effective for users. We also extended drop-in sessions in Cambridge.

We continue to provide CPD and support and advice to staff across ARU to understand mental health issues amongst students and their role in supporting and referring. A total of 80 staff attended sessions in Mental Health First Aid/Lite, Dealing with Crisis and Mindfulness. Feedback from these sessions shows 100% satisfaction and highly positive comments:

"The knowledge and expertise of both the course content/slides and the facilitators experience is wonderful and really useful. I feel equipped with practical techniques for dealing with distressed students. This course should be mandatory for all academic staff, academic support staff and security staff. It would dramatically improve the student experience"

In addition to the general increase in demand there has also been an increase in cases of severe mental health problems that require immediate attention and involve significant time and potential risk.

Crisis Intervention: Cambridge 89; Chelmsford 19

Cause for Concern: Cambridge 74; Chelmsford 10

Fitness to Study: Cambridge 3

Looking ahead:

We have identified staff budget within Student Services to appoint an additional term-time counsellor. We will also acquire consultancy time with a psychiatrist to support C&WB staff with serious mental health case-reviews and risk assessment.

Our collaborative project with Student Minds/SU and student volunteers will begin in semester 1 2016. 12 students have been recruited and trained and will deliver peer support groups for Positive Minds and Eating difficulties.

A new online booking system for the facilitation of registration and access to a consultation with a counsellor will be introduced.

We will be introducing additional staff training for Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness.

To assist with the increasing number of high risk situations and their increasing severity, we are reviewing protocols and additional ones to aid risk assessment and decision making.