

**Specialist Wellbeing
Services
(Counselling
and Mental Health)
Summary Annual Report
2023-24**

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Introduction

Following a period of review and restructure in 2022 - 23, the University Counselling Service (UCS) and the Mental Health Advisory Service (MHAS) merged to form one Specialist Wellbeing Service at the University of Nottingham to strengthen our support offer to students. In addition to a Head of Service and Administrative team, UCS is supported by 6.6 fte Senior Counsellors who each have senior responsibilities and oversight and 6.5 fte Counsellors. MHAS is similarly supported by 4.6 fte Senior Mental Health Advisors and 1.8 fte Mental Health Advisors. The development of one Specialist Wellbeing Service created the important roles of Team and Clinical Leads for both the Counselling and the Mental Health Advisory Service who provide a structure of clinical and operational leadership to the teams ensuring compliance with key legislation and governing bodies.

For further information on staff roles in our services, please visit our [Meet the Team](#) website.

This summary report provides a brief overview of work and data and has been compiled in conjunction with our Senior Team and Administrators to provide an overview of activity across the academic year 2023-2024. As well as disseminating widely to our partners and stakeholders internally and externally, this report will additionally be published on our Counselling Service website and sent directly to students using the Mental Health Advisory Service within the same time-period. For further information, please see our Specialist Wellbeing Services (Counselling and Mental Health) Full Annual Report 2023-24.

Contact details:

Ellie Turner - Head of Specialist Wellbeing Services (Counselling and Mental Health)

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(Currently seconded until January 2025)

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Nicolette Poyzer - Specialist Wellbeing Services Administrator (University Counselling

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Ickrah Chaudhry - Specialist Wellbeing Services Administrator (Mental Health Advisory

Service) and Teresa Rawlings - Specialist Wellbeing Services Administration Officer

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Activity Overview 2023 - 24

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Staff working in our Specialist Wellbeing Service are committed to practicing in ways that are inclusive, accessible and affirming to students from all backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, beliefs, sexualities, abilities, gender identities and socio-economies and we promote and enhance inclusivity through ongoing training commitments. For further information, please see our University of Nottingham Counselling Service [EDI and Accessibility Strategy](#) Pivotal to our EDI commitments are the senior positions of EDI Leads for both the Counselling and Mental Health Advisory Service.

A huge amount of work has been completed in this area during the last academic year including:

- Making new connections and relationships with the wider University including the Head of EDI Managers & Development Lead, the Students Union, Chaplaincy and the University Disability Support Team.
- Engagement with University wide initiatives and sharing knowledge to develop a greater awareness of the student experience
- Improving the physical experience of accessing our Counselling building to ensure it is an inclusive, warm and welcoming space for our students
- Surveys to referrers and international students and focus groups in collaboration with the Students Union in UCS
- MHAS presence at UoN's [People and Culture Committee](#) EDI meetings

Looking forwards, engagement with the student voice and enhancing data collection will be central in improving our specialist support offer to all students and both teams will continue to develop cross-university relationships to ensure student participation shapes our services.

Contact details:

Susie Ward – Senior Counsellor Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

susie.ward@nottingham.ac.uk

Zaqia Ghafoor – Senior Mental Health Advisor Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

zaqia.ghafoor@nottingham.ac.uk

Neurodevelopmental Support

To support our EDI objectives, MHAS has a dedicated Neurodevelopmental Lead. This crucial role supports training for all staff working in wellbeing services and directly supports neurodivergent students using evidence-based interventions. Over the past year, our Neurodevelopmental Lead has been supported to complete post graduate training in Autism. As well as creating an opportunity to forge greater links with external stakeholders, this has additionally identified several gold standards for us to work on and we look forward to reporting back next year on the action taken to achieve these aims.

Gold Standards:

- Promoting an autism friendly service
- Providing clear, accurate and comprehensive pre assessment information
- Training for staff
- Accessible Sensory environment
- Assessment that is relevant to autistic need
- Mental health interventions relevant to autistic need
- Autism adapted safety plans

Contact details:

Andrew Workman – Senior Mental Health Advisor Neurodevelopmental Lead
andrew.workman@nottingham.ac.uk

Training and Development

Specialist Wellbeing Services have two dedicated staff members who have additional senior responsibilities around whole team training, development and induction for new staff. These roles play an important function in securing opportunities, in line with professional training and registration, to ensure skills are kept up to date and staff continue to grow and learn. MHAS runs a program of monthly CPD sessions for all Specialist Wellbeing staff using a mix of internal and external expertise to enable learning related to student mental health and wellbeing. UCS additionally coordinates bi-monthly CPD groups.

Moving forwards, we will seek to devise a skills matrix that maps service needs with competencies and role profiles. Identifying key elements of service roles in this way will help to identify gaps in skills, and training needs so we can plan to address this in a coordinated way that directly supports the student experience.

Contact details:

Lee Wilkes - Senior Counsellor Development and Training Lead

lee.wilkes1@nottingham.ac.uk

Fiona Potter - Senior Mental Health Advisor Development and Training Lead

fiona.potter@nottingham.ac.uk

Groups and Workshops

The University Counselling Service delivers a program of Groups and Workshops during each academic year which provides valuable opportunities for students experiencing a range of difficulties. In academic year 2023-24, 13 Workshops were offered with 104 students attending. In the same time-period, 3 groups were run and had attendance of between 4 and 8 students at each session.

For further information on our Groups and Workshops programme, please visit:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling/workshops-and-groups/workshops-and-groups.aspx>

In the coming year we will be strengthening our Groups and Workshops offer to improve engagement with students that find our services difficult to access and support our EDI objectives. We are excited to see the continuation of our International Students Support Group, and our Black Students Support Group alongside the re-introduction of our Being Male group. We are also looking forward to a programme of specialised workshops for Care Experienced and Estranged Students.

Contact details:

Grace Lake - Senior Counsellor Proactive, Self-Help and Group Intervention Lead

grace.lake@nottingham.ac.uk

BR-UCSWorkshops@nottingham.ac.uk

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Counselling Provision

In 2020, a dedicated Senior Counsellor was appointed to the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, and this has recently increased to include 3 more part time Counsellor and Psychological Support Workers. The team work together to provide a counselling and psychological support service to medical and nursing students who are on placement or preparing to go into placement for their training.

Overview 2023-24:

- Over 110 users have been seen for one-to-one sessions since last August
- Attendance at exam stress, transition to placement, self-care and anxiety workshops
- Mental health training delivered at induction events
- Mandatory participation trauma lectures have been delivered to School of Nursing
- Development of an awareness tool to help neurodivergent students identify their needs on placement
- Piloting use of 'purple card' system to allow neurodivergent students to leave teaching when overwhelmed
- Development of strategies with the hospital sites to support neurodivergent students, for example the inclusive teaching strategy at Derby Royal.
- Staff training delivery on Autism and ADHD

Contact Details:

Beth Hill - Senior Counsellor - Medical and Health Sciences Team and Clinical Lead

beth.hill@nottingham.ac.uk

Referrals and Allocation

The University Counselling Service is a well-used service which has previously struggled significantly with long student waiting times. With acute periods of referral intensity, specific Senior Counsellor roles have been developed to ensure continuous improvement to the referral process. The focus during academic year 2023-24 has been to clarify the process of student referral to UCS, what our appointment offer is, and to monitor our waiting list. These roles have supported changes to the referral form for the coming year to include students' preferred name, pronouns, GP practice and current UK contact number. Work has been completed in connecting with our frequent referrers to enhance knowledge and understanding of the remit of counselling in Higher Education and develop and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders.

In 2023-24, our main referral source was the Support & Wellbeing team (86%). Other referrers (in descending order of frequency) were the Mental Health Advisory Service, the Report & Support team, Disability team, Sexual Violence Liaison Officers, Residential Experience Team, the PG Welfare & EDI officer, Problem Shared, Chaplaincy and Cripps Health Centre.

This academic year we have focused on setting and maintaining high professional standards within the team, communicating these to our wider referring teams and ensuring the service is able to best meet the individual needs of our students. We are committed to this focus into the next academic year.

Contact Details:

Jane Titterton - Senior Counsellor Referral and Allocation Lead

jane.titterton@nottingham.ac.uk

Helen Wordley- Senior Counsellor Referral and Allocation Lead

helen.wordley1@nottingham.ac.uk

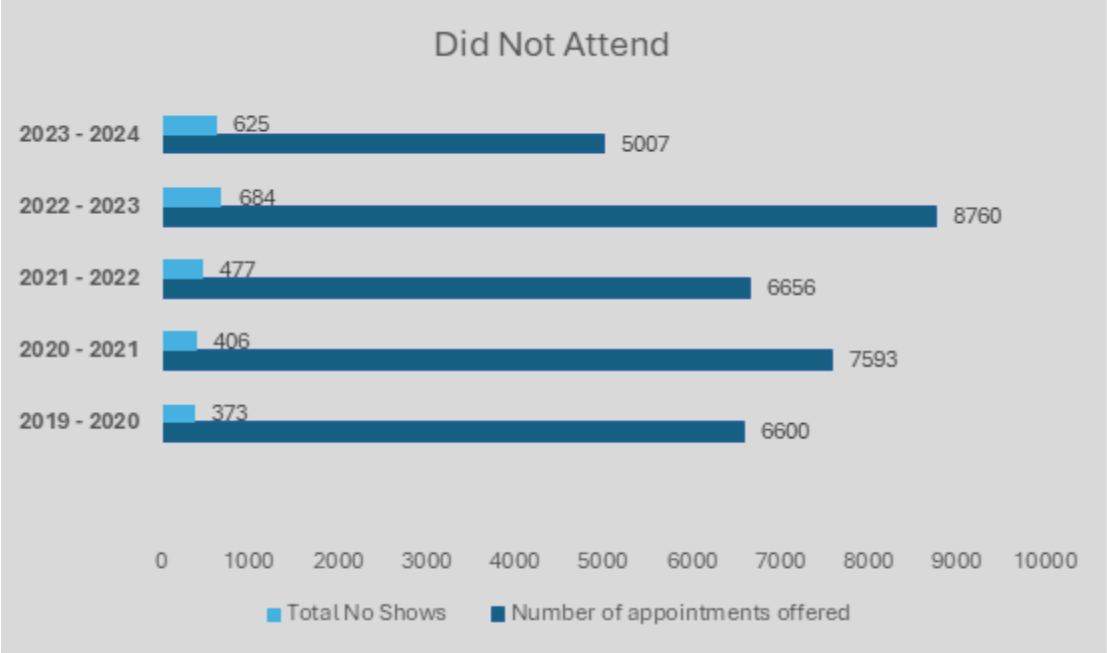
Appendix 1 - University Counselling Service Data 2023-24

Overall Student numbers 2019 - 2024



Academic year	Individuals seen	Number of appointments offered	Average # of apps per person
2019 - 2020	2156	6600	3.06
2020 - 2021	2643	7593	2.87
2021 - 2022	2554	6656	2.61
2022 - 2023	2525	8760	3.47
2023 - 2024	1832	5007	2.73

***Staff were included in these figures up to end of academic year 2022 - 2023.**

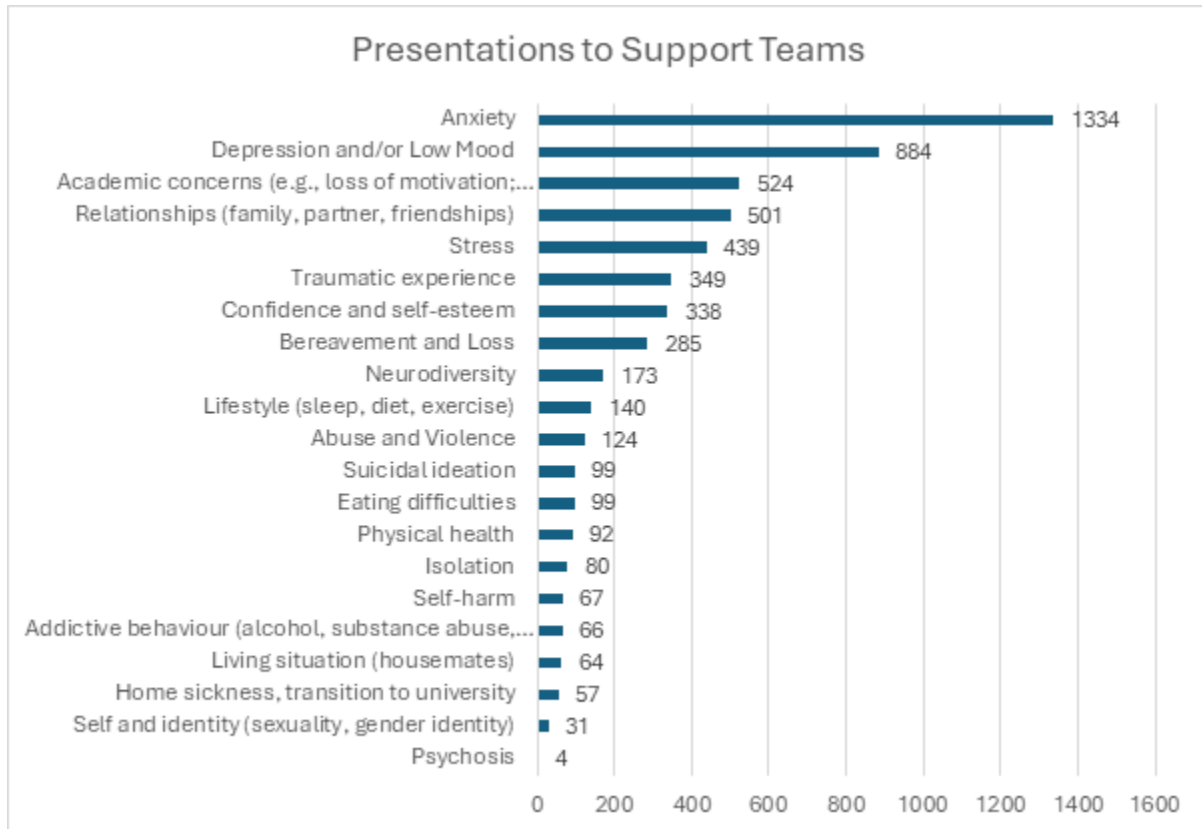


Academic year	Number of appointments offered	Total No Shows	Percentage
2019 - 2020	6600	373	5.70%
2020 - 2021	7593	406	5.30%
2021 - 2022	6656	477	7.20%
2022 - 2023	8760	684	7.80%
2023 - 2024	5007	625	12.40%

***Staff were included in these figures up to end of academic year 2022 - 2023.**

Presentations 2023 – 2024

This academic year has seen a continuation of Anxiety, depression and/or low mood, academic concerns, relationships and stress, continue to be the top five presentations.

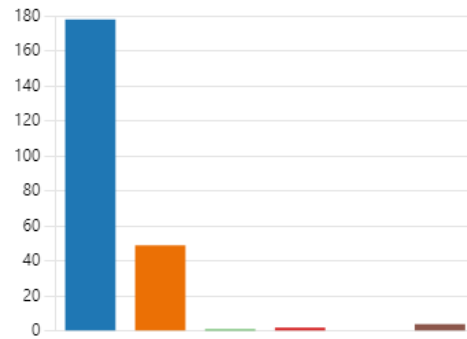


EDI Data

This is data collected from an optional questionnaire sent to all those who access the Counselling Service. Over the next year we will be looking into utilising University systems to improve EDI reporting in the service.

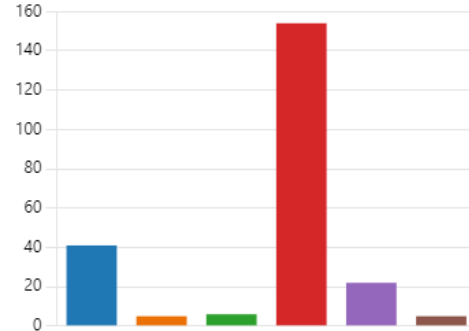
Gender

Female	178
Male	49
Trans Male	1
Trans Female	2
Prefer not to say	0
Other	4



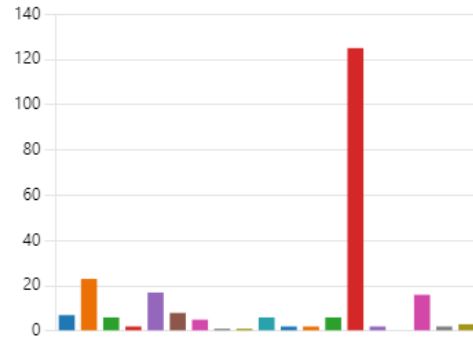
Sexual orientation

Bisexual	41
Gay Man	5
Gay Woman / Lesbian	6
Heterosexual / Straight	154
Prefer not to say	22
Other	5



Ethnicity

Arab	7
Asian/British Asian: Indian	23
Asian/British Asian: Pakistani	6
Asian/British Asian: Bangladeshi	2
Asian/British Asian: Chinese	17
Asian/British Asian: Other Backg...	8
Black/Black British: African	5
Black/Black British: Caribbean	1
Black/Black British: Other Backgr...	1
Mixed: White/Asian	6
Mixed: White/Black African	2
Mixed: White/Black Caribbean	2
Mixed: Other Background	6
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/...	125
White: Irish	2
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
White: Other Background	16
Prefer not to say	2
Other	3



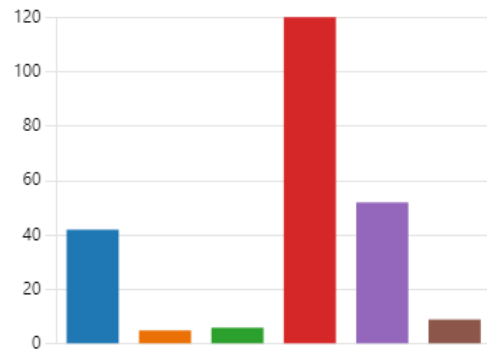
Current level of study

Undergraduate	179
Postgraduate Taught	29
Postgraduate Research	23
Prefer not to say	1
Other	2



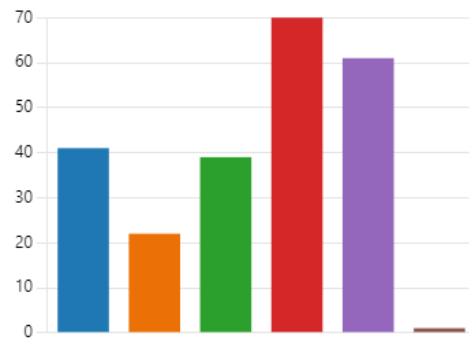
Do you Consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes - specifically mental health ...	42
Yes - physical health impairment...	5
Yes - both mental health and ph...	6
No	120
Unsure	52
Prefer not to say	9



What faculty does your course fall under?

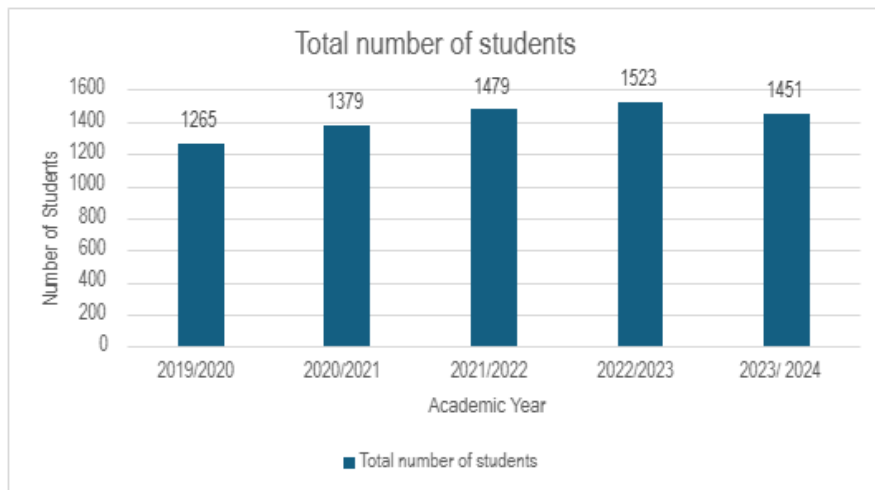
Arts	41
Engineering	22
Medicine and Health Sciences	39
Science	70
Social Sciences	61
Prefer not to say	1



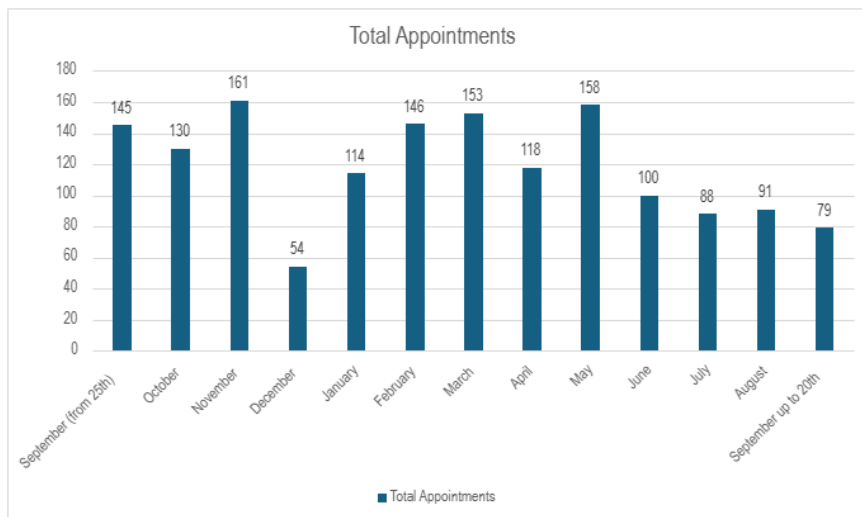
Appendix 2 - Mental Health Advisory Service Data

Over the academic year 2023/2024, the average waiting time for an assessment with the Mental Health Advisory Service has been 4 working days. However, this has fluctuated depending on demand. During peak periods, the waiting time increased to approximately 7 working days, while in less busy periods throughout the year, it dropped to 1 to 2 working days. The service continues to provide a same day response via its duty provision for urgent situations involving the student population.

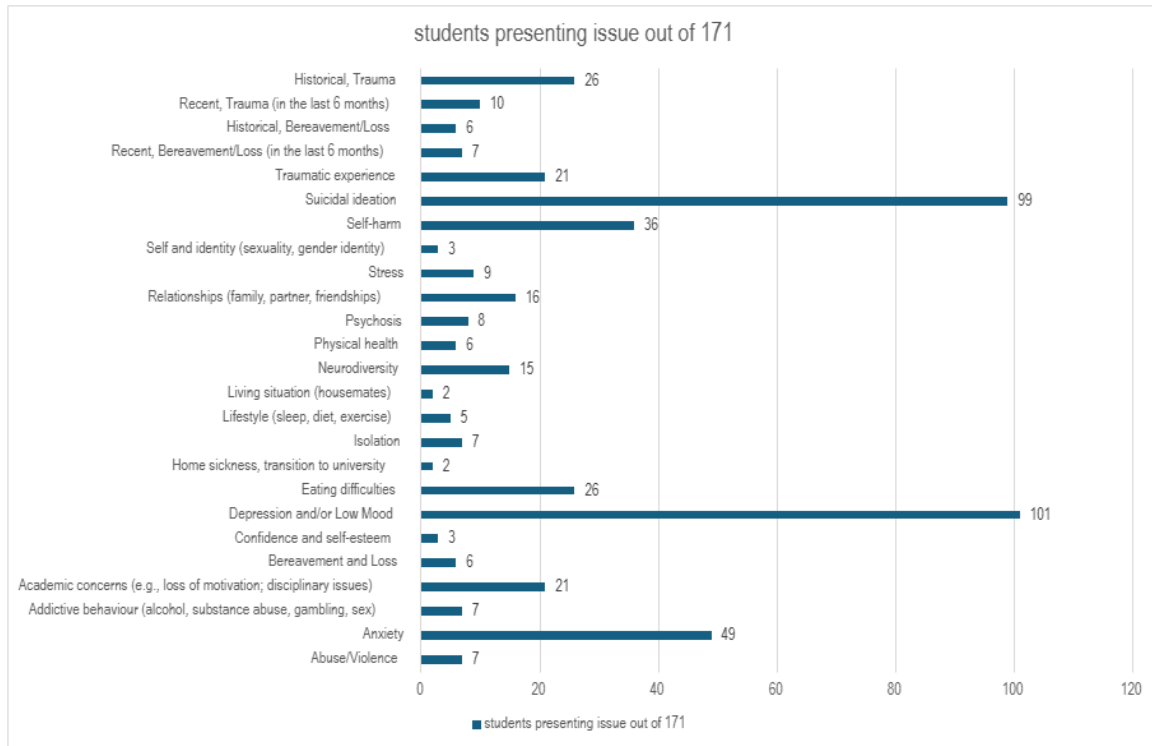
Overall number of students supported



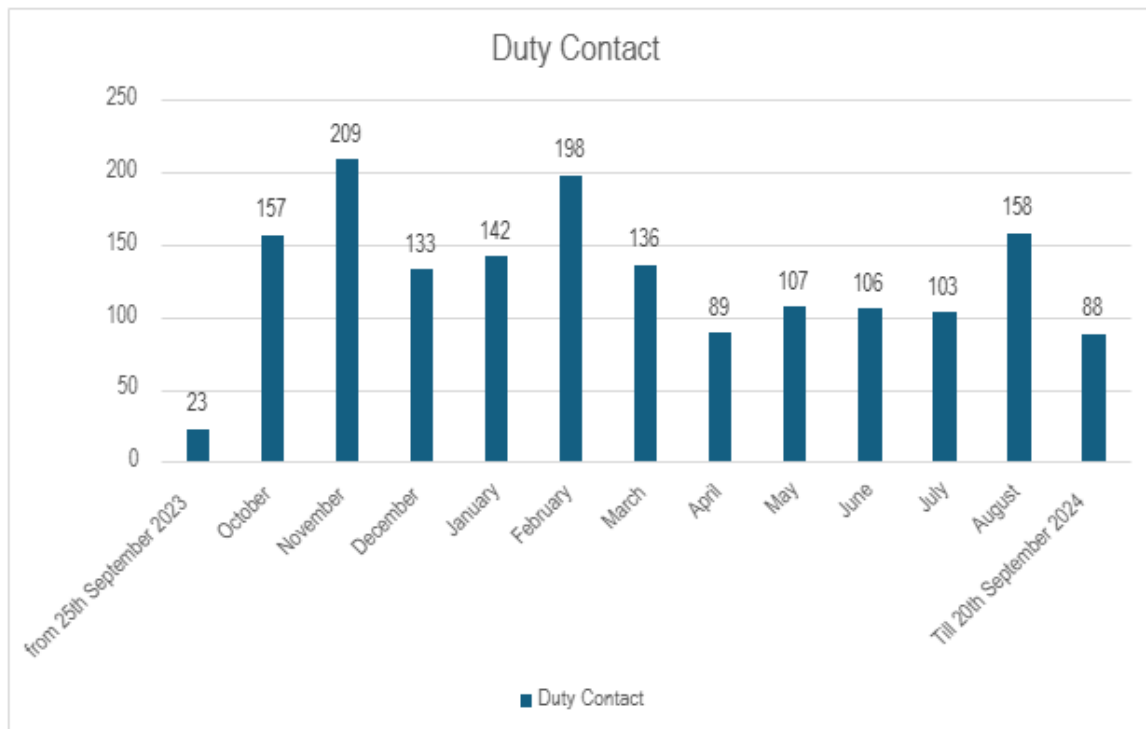
Total appointments attended by month



Presenting issues

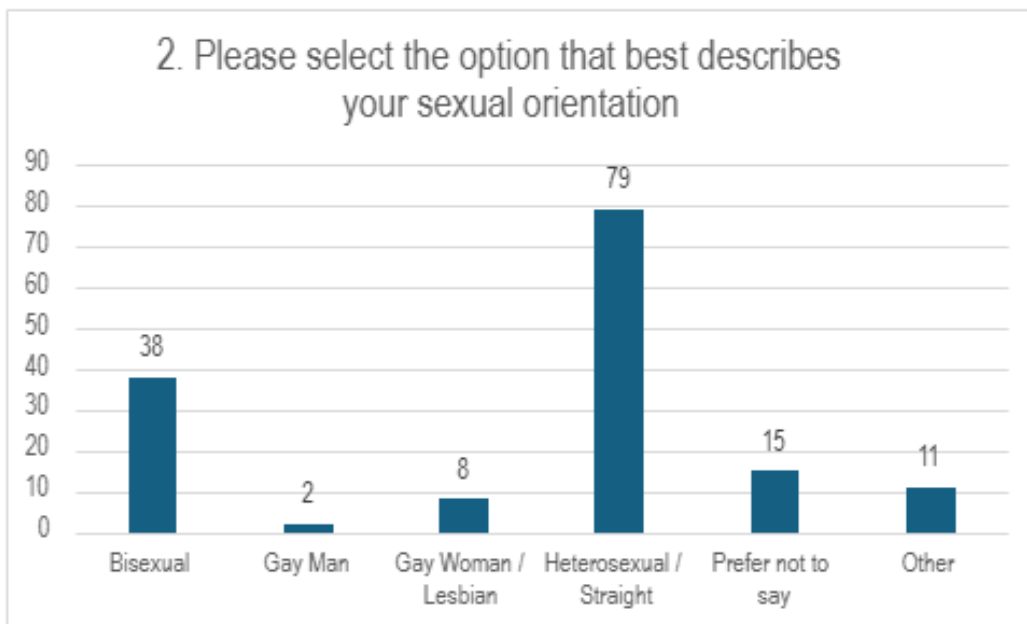
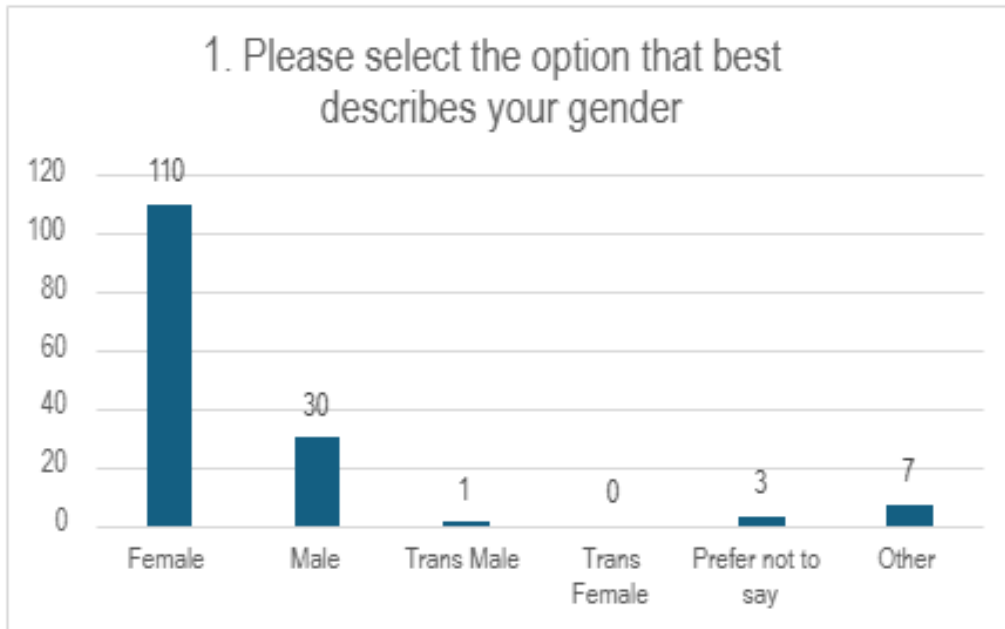


Duty contacts to the service by month

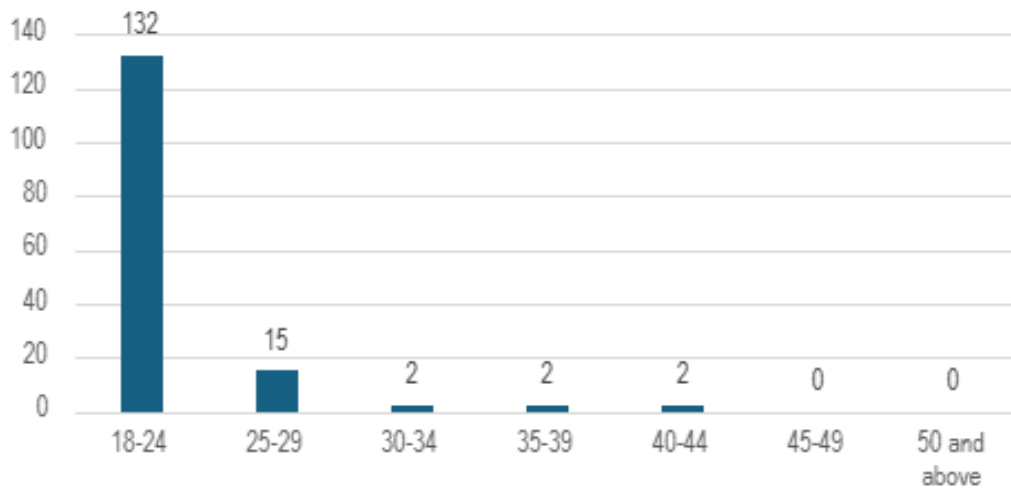


EDI Data

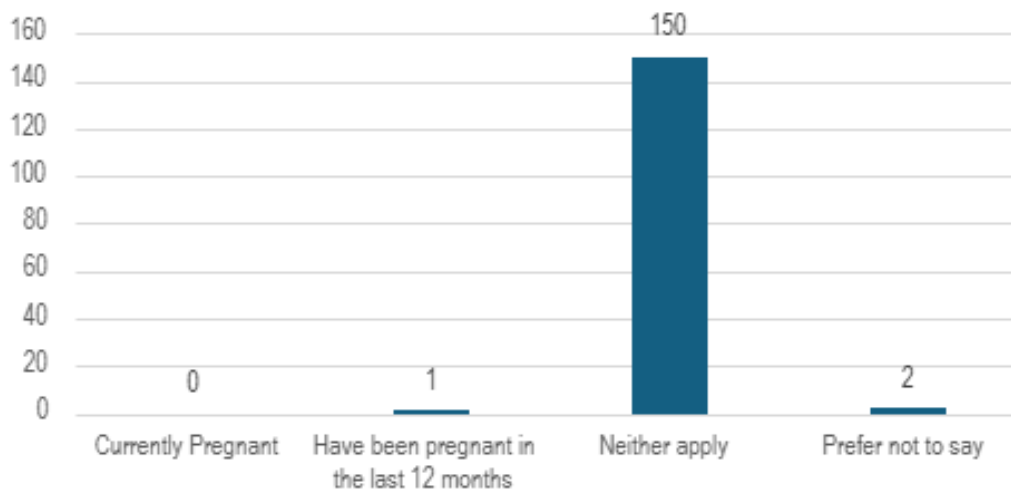
This is data collected from an optional questionnaire sent to all those who access the Mental Health Advisory Service. Over the next year we will be looking into utilising University systems to improve EDI reporting in the service.



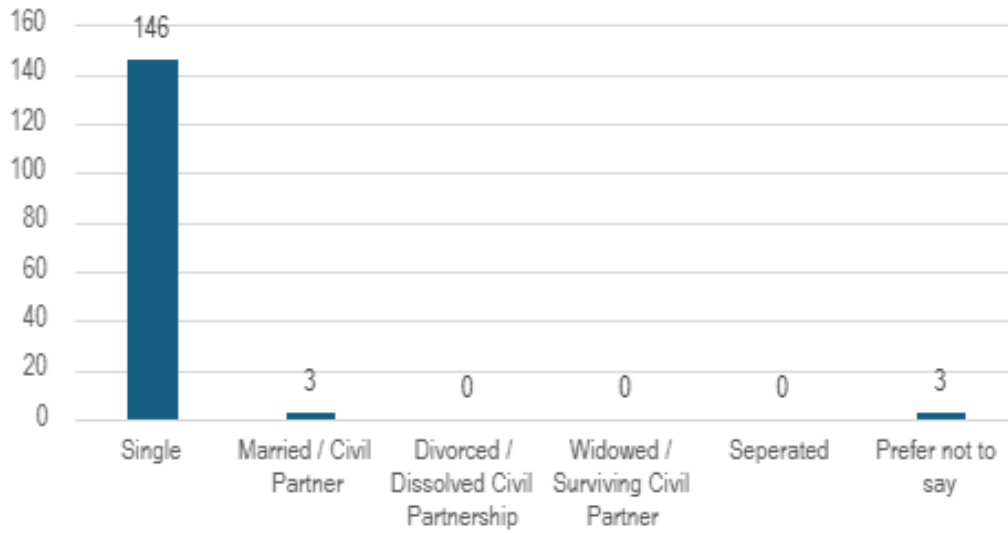
3. Please let us know which age group you fall within



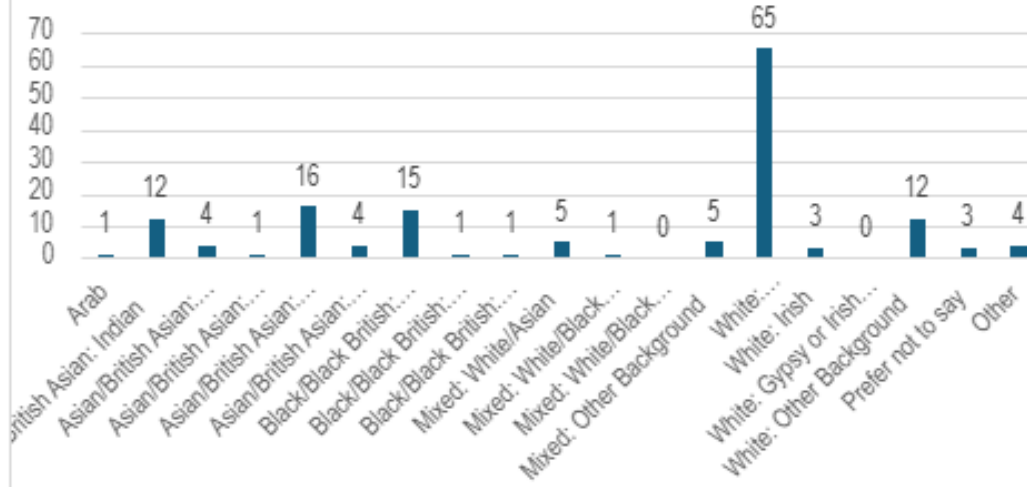
4. Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant within the last 12 months?



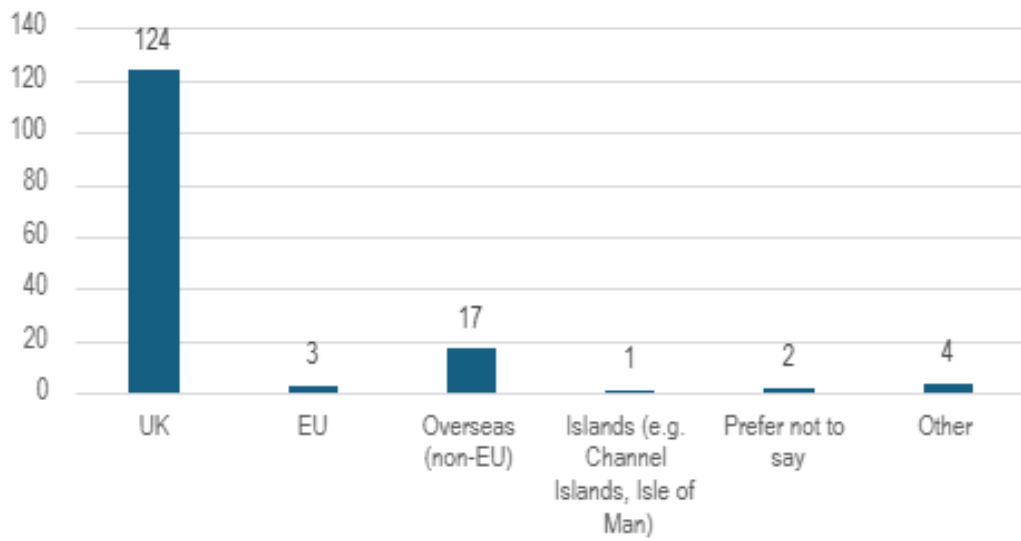
5. How would you describe your marital status?



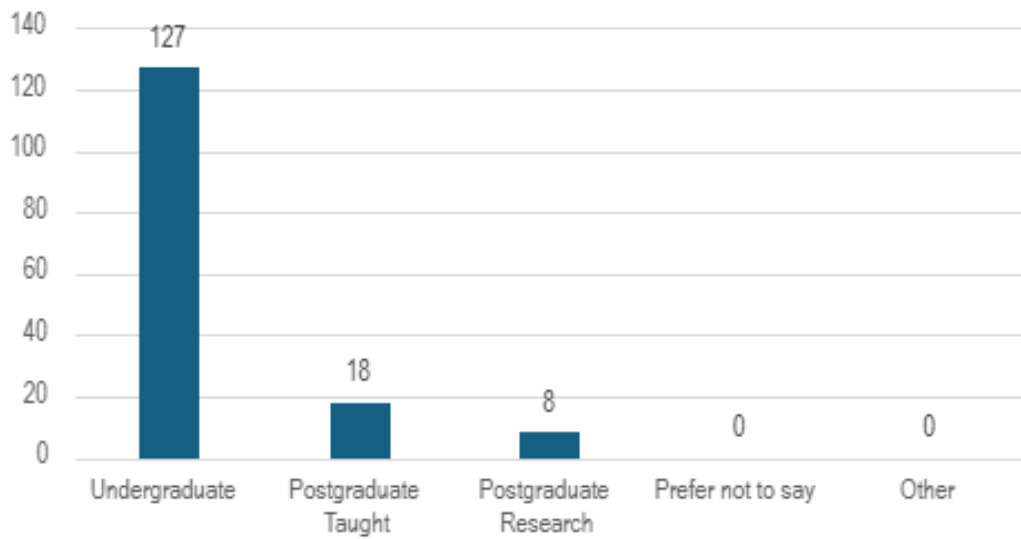
6. Which of these best describes your ethnic group?



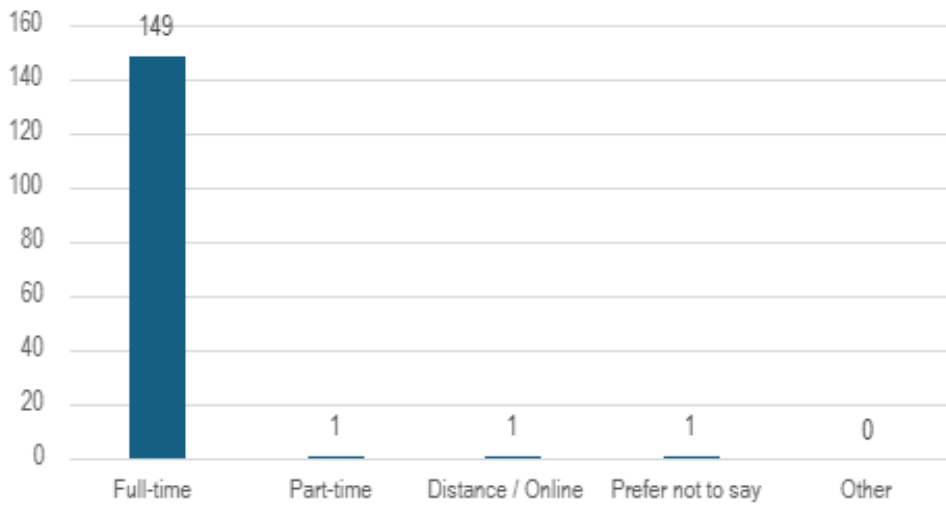
7. Which fee category do you currently fall under?



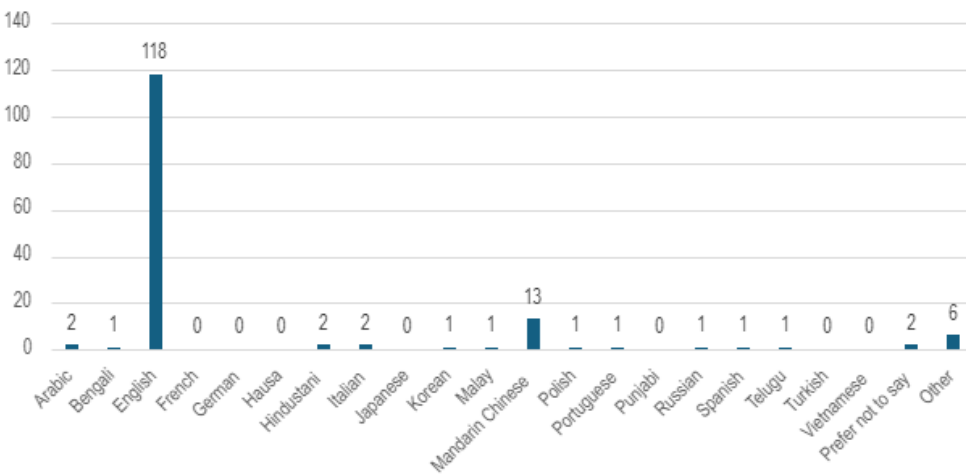
8. What is your current level of study?

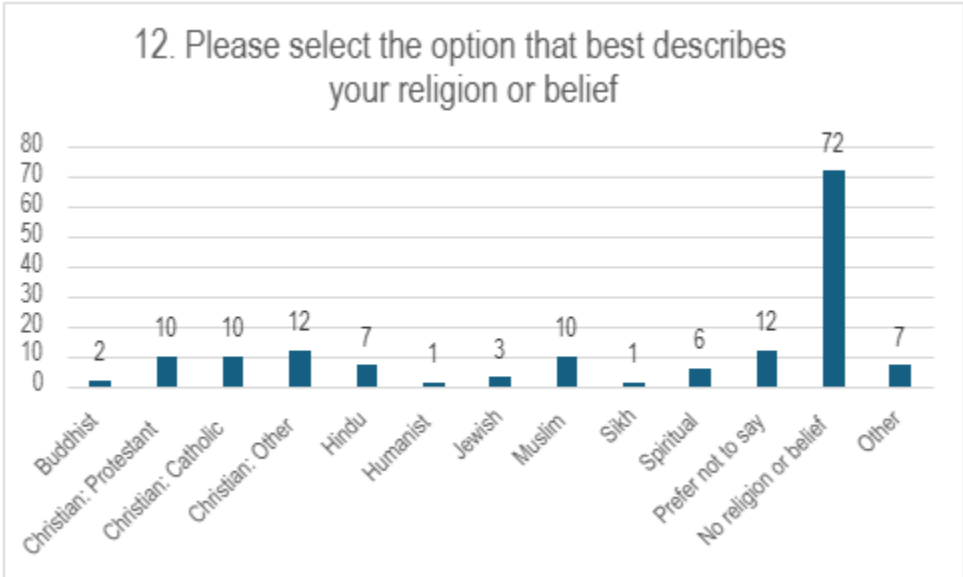
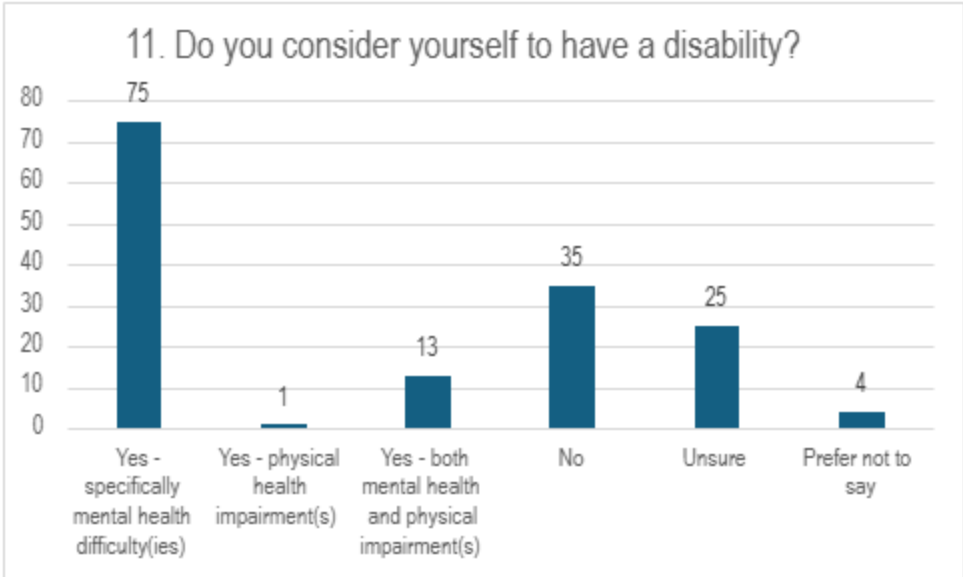


9. What is your current mode of study?

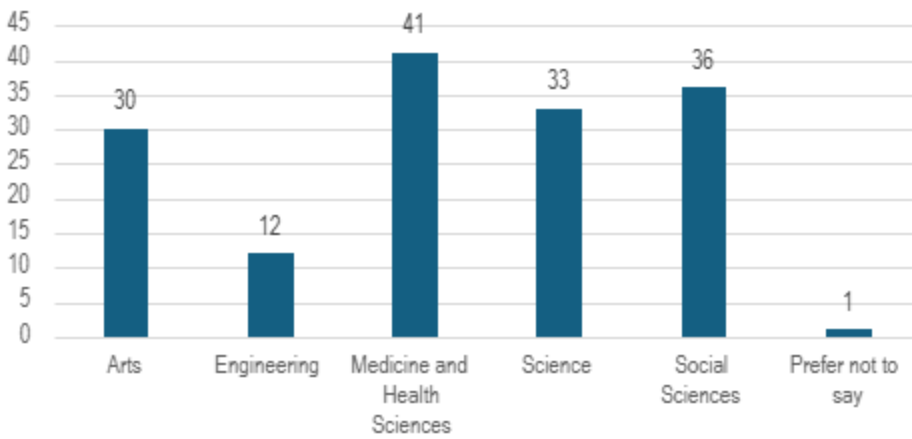


10. Please select your first language

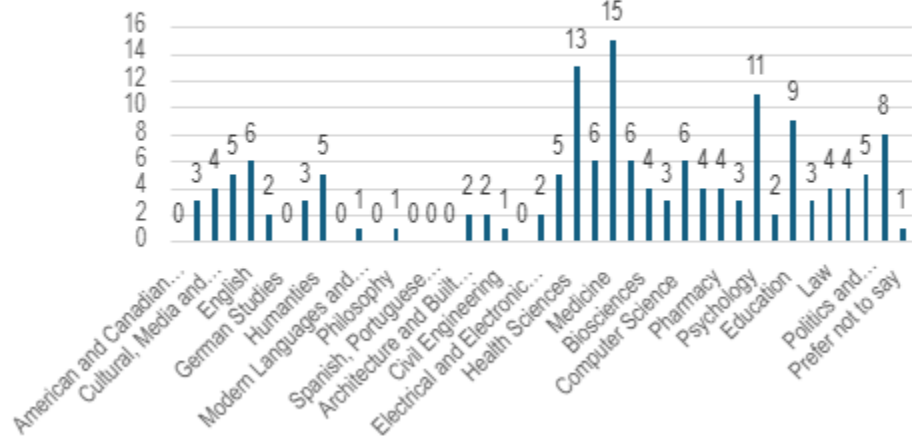




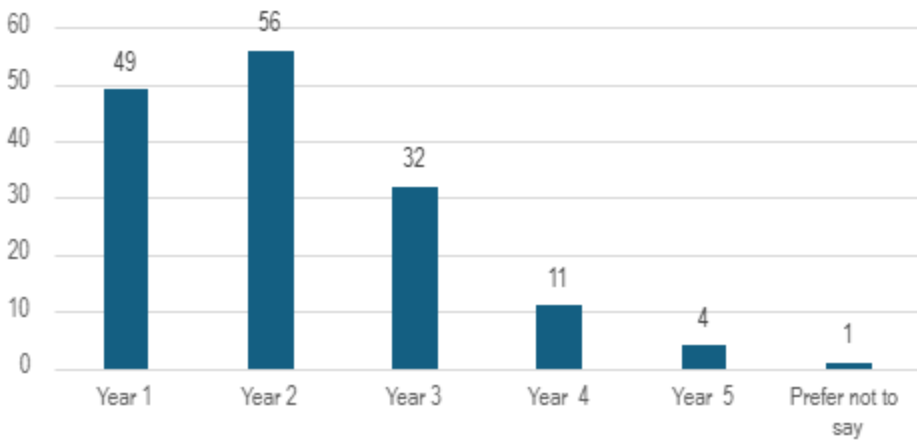
13. Please select the faculty that your course falls under



14. Please select which school your course belongs to



15. Please indicate what academic year of study you are currently undertaking



Appendix 3 - University Counselling Service Feedback

The University Counselling Service offers students who have completed a piece of counselling work with the service, the opportunity to provide feedback. In the last academic year 96 people responded with feedback. We are committed to improving the uptake and quality of feedback to the service as outlined in the introduction of this report and will continue to engage with wider wellbeing colleague and the student voice to achieve this aim. Our overall net promoter score for the service was 4.73 out of 5

How satisfied are you with your experience of the administration of the University Counselling Service.
For example, communication about appointments?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Very satisfied	76
Satisfied	16
Mixed feelings	3
Dissatisfied	1
Very dissatisfied	0



To what extent has counselling improved your sense of well-being?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

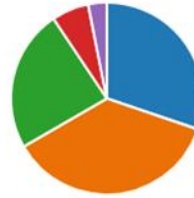
Very significantly	41
Significantly	32
To some extent	20
Not at all	3



To what extent has counselling improved your self-esteem and/or how you feel about yourself?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

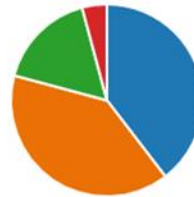
Very significantly	29
Significantly	35
To some extent	23
Not at all	6
N/A	3



To what extent has counselling helped you feel more positive about the future?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Very significantly	38
Significantly	38
To some extent	16
Not at all	4



How satisfied are you overall with the counselling you received

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Very satisfied	63
Satisfied	26
Mixed feelings	4
Dissatisfied	3
Very dissatisfied	0



. To what extent would you say that counselling has enabled you to stay / remain at the University?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● One of many factors	29
● An important factor	25
● The most significant factor	1
● This was not an issue for me	39
● Not all all	2

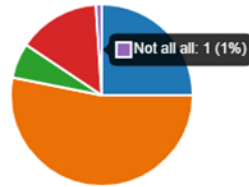


. To what extent would you say that counselling has improved your overall experience of University?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● One of many factors	24
● An important factor	51
● The most significant factor	6
● This was not an issue for me	14
● Not all all	1

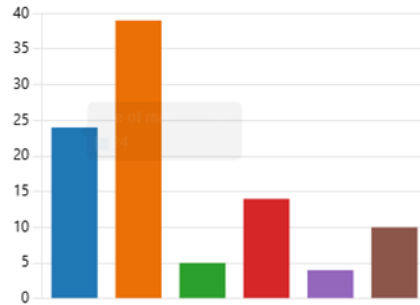


To what extent would you say that counselling has helped you do better in your academic work or on placement?

[More Details](#)

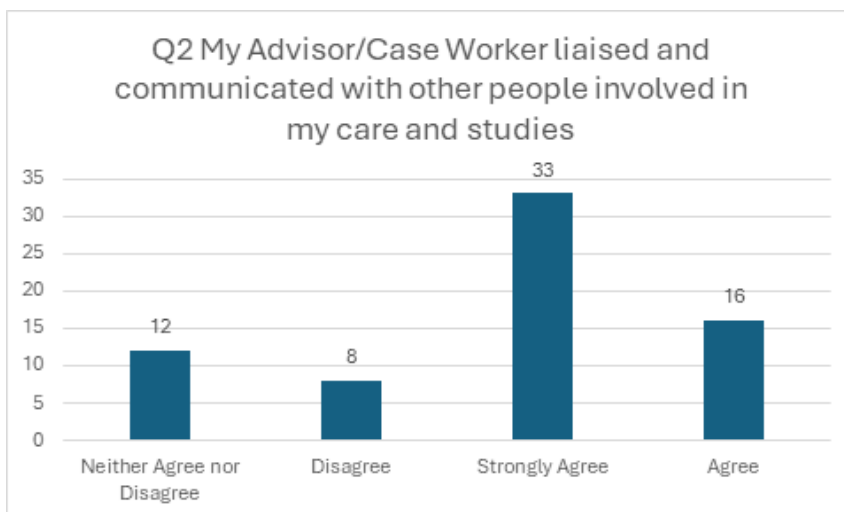
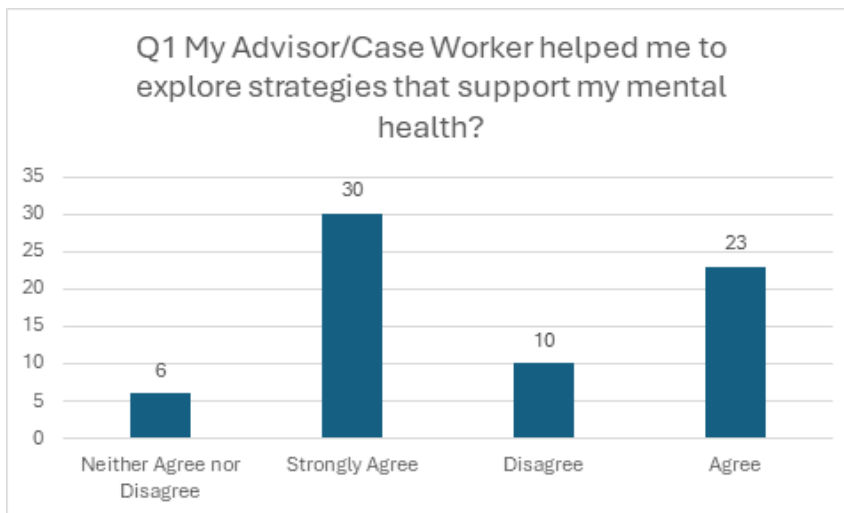
[Insights](#)

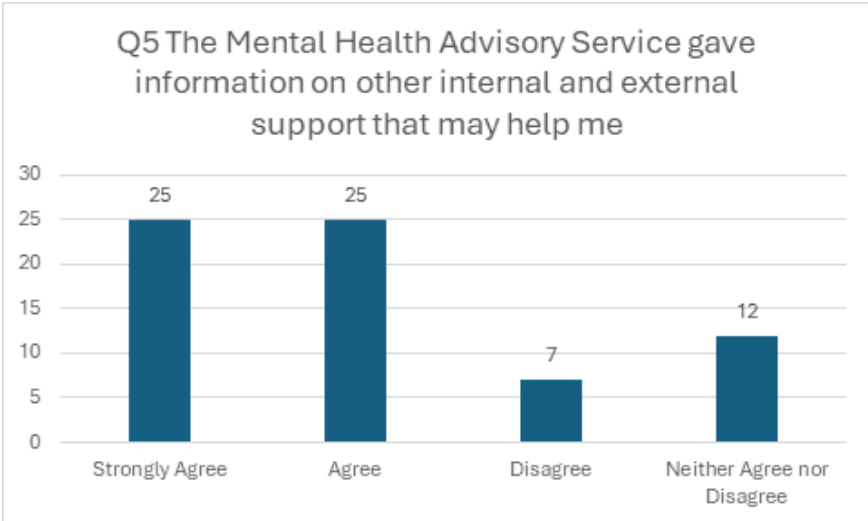
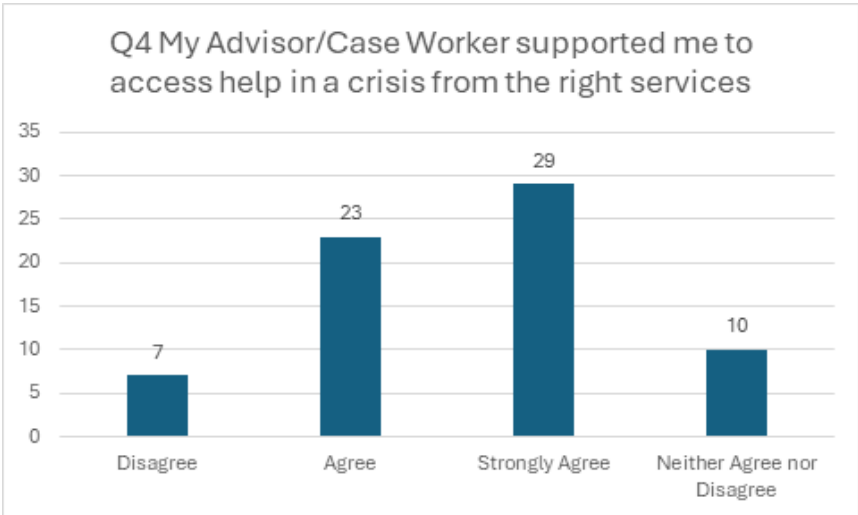
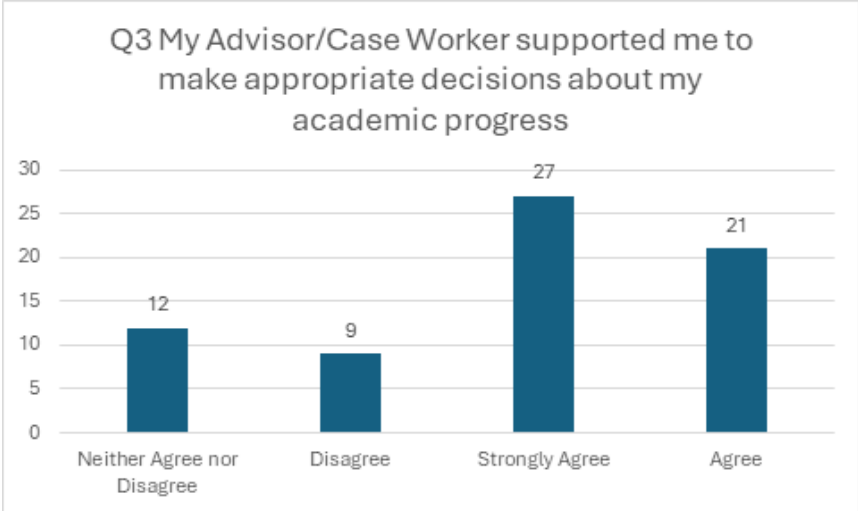
● One of many factors	24
● An important factor	39
● The most significant factor	5
● This was not an issue for me	14
● Not at all	4
● N/A	10



Appendix 4 – Mental Health Advisory Service Feedback

The Mental Health Advisory Service offers an opportunity to all students open to the service to provide feedback each month. In the last academic year, this occurred September to August except for March 2024 due to low levels of administrative support. During this time, 71 students provided feedback. We are committed to improving the uptake and quality of feedback to the service as outlined in the introduction of this report and will continue to engage with wider wellbeing colleague and the student voice to achieve this aim. In doing this we will remain mindful that users of the Mental Health Advisory Service are often experiencing significant difficulties with their mental health and can subsequently encounter reduced motivation and concentration, limited access to IT (for example students who are receiving inpatient care) and other challenges to functioning. Our overall net promoter score for the service was 7.17 out of 10.





Q6 I know what to do if I have problems in the future

