



UNIVERSITY of  
**BRADFORD**

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Counselling Service

# The Counselling Service

## Annual Report

2015/16

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## Counselling Service Team

### *Head of Service*

Penelope Aspinall

### *Permanent staff (core team)*

Yvonne Messenger, senior counsellor (0.6 fte)

Peter Wakefield, senior counsellor (0.5 fte)

Gill Barlow, counsellor (1.0 fte)

Sarah Farnell, counsellor (0.6 fte)

### *Administrative Staff*

Gilly Butcher, administrator, (0.55 fte)

Helen Trevisani, administrator (0.6 fte)

### *Sessional Counsellors (casual hours)*

Agnes Ndebele

Barbara Rundle-Smith

Brian Lambert

### *Associates and trainees*

In addition to paid permanent counsellors, we use a team of associates and trainees to deliver the service. Associates are qualified counsellors who work on a voluntary basis in order to gain more experience and accrue the necessary hours in order to be eligible for BACP accreditation (or equivalent). Trainees are counsellors in training who, as an essential part of their training, need to be on a placement in order to gain the necessary experience as a course requirement. Both associates and trainees are provided with appropriate extensive supervision, training, mentoring and support in order to ensure that they provide the best service for our clients. In 2015/16 we had seven associates and six trainees in the team.

## **Introduction**

2015/16 was another busy year, which also saw a lot of change. In total, 1129 people used the service for individual counselling and workshops. 1003 clients registered with the service for one-to-one counselling, we saw 871 individual clients and offered 4982 appointments, very similar to the previous year. In addition we introduced new workshops for staff and students, including a monthly lunchtime Mindfulness session for staff, which has proved very popular.

We were delighted to welcome three new members of staff to our team. Gill Barlow and Sarah Farnell joined the counselling team in September. Helen Trevisani filled our vacant administrator post in January. All three have contributed greatly to the success of our team.

One major change was that we went over to using electronic records for all our client records. This has been a big success all round and has greatly increased administrative efficiency. We also introduced an outcome measure, CORE (Clinical Outcomes Routine Evaluation) 10 for all clients using the service.

We continued to develop our provision for staff, making the service more responsive and appropriate to the needs of the University and College staff.

## **About the service**

The Counselling Service provides counselling and psycho-educational training for the students and staff of the University of Bradford and Bradford College. We are a busy service, and in order to accommodate the numbers of clients and minimise waiting times, we usually offer a brief therapy model of up to four sessions in the first instance, after a 25 minute intake interview to assess need and/or offer immediate help. We will always endeavour to extend this contract when appropriate, in cases of risk, for example, or where the work cannot be usefully or ethically contained in four sessions. Most counselling takes place at our premises in Student Central, although we do run a service where students can be seen for pre-booked Intake appointments at Bradford College three times a week. We also developed links with FLM and have reintroduced our service at Emm Lane, so that clients can be seen for pre-booked Intake appointments there. Prospective clients need to access the service through an on-line registration form; they will then be offered an Intake appointment.

In addition, we run a series of psycho-educational workshops for students as well as contributing to the People Development programme for staff and training for course reps and sabbatical officers.

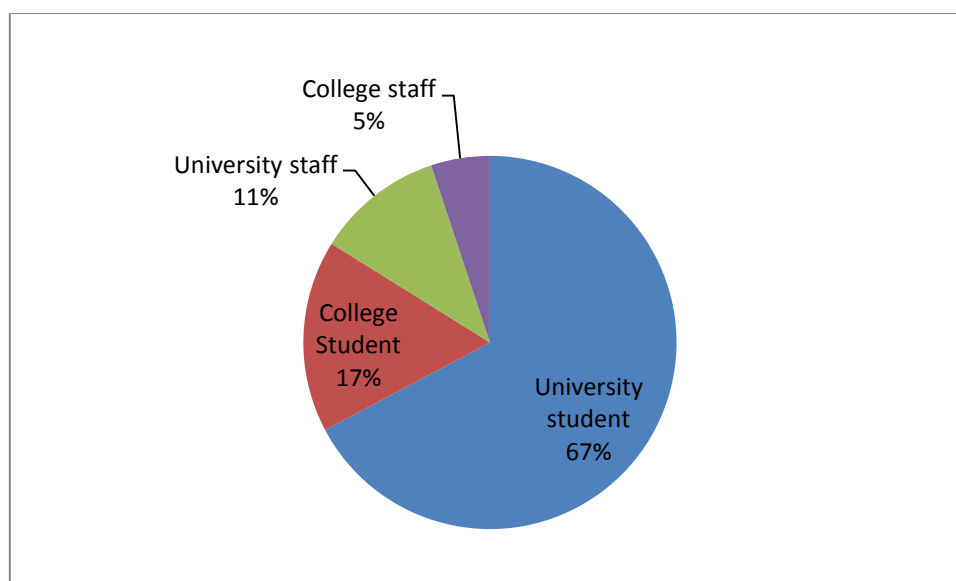
## Service Use

### Headline Statistics

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	2014/15	2015/16
Individual Clients registered	1059	1003
Individual Clients seen	871	855
Appointments provided	4982	4616
Appointments attended	3244	3076
Workshop attendees	185	258

*Figure 1: Service use*

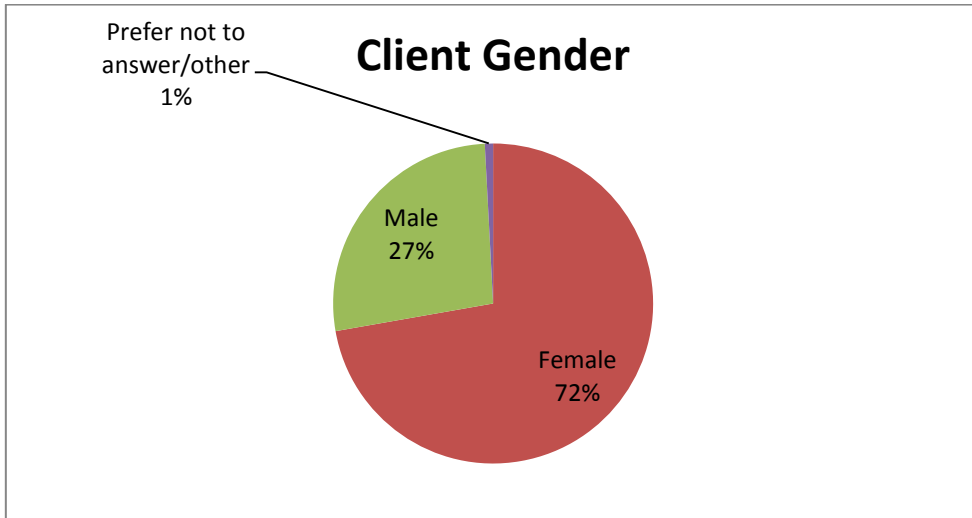


As can be seen in *figure 1*, the majority of clients are University students (577 individual students attended) Numbers show a very slight decrease over last year. When looking at the figures, it needs to be recognised that some clients attend for more than one contract in a year. There were 158 clients who registered but did not actually use the service (ie they did not attend or respond to an offer of a first appointment). We also took active

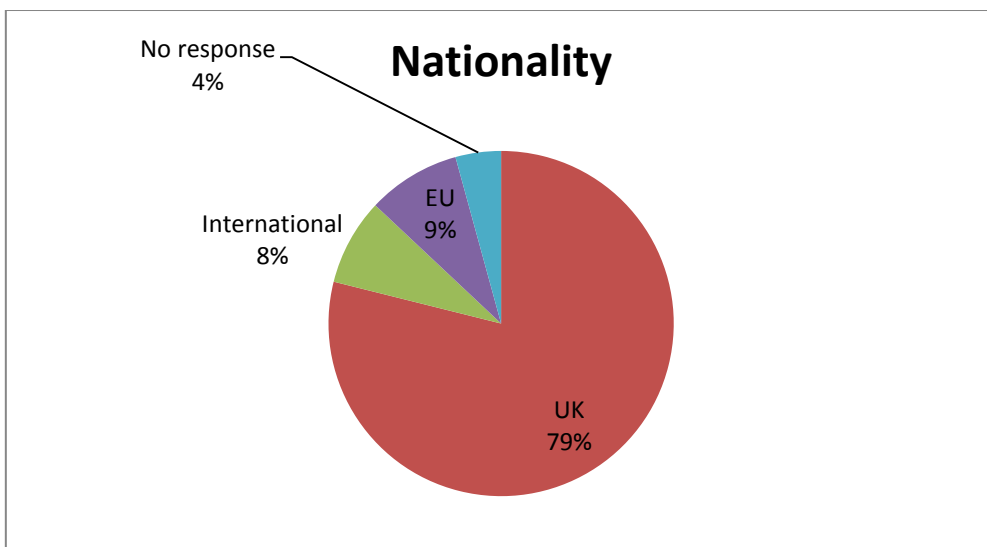
steps to reduce our non-attendance (DNA) and cancellation rate. This has proved successful with an overall DNA rate of 10% and cancellation rate of 14%.

**Demographics**

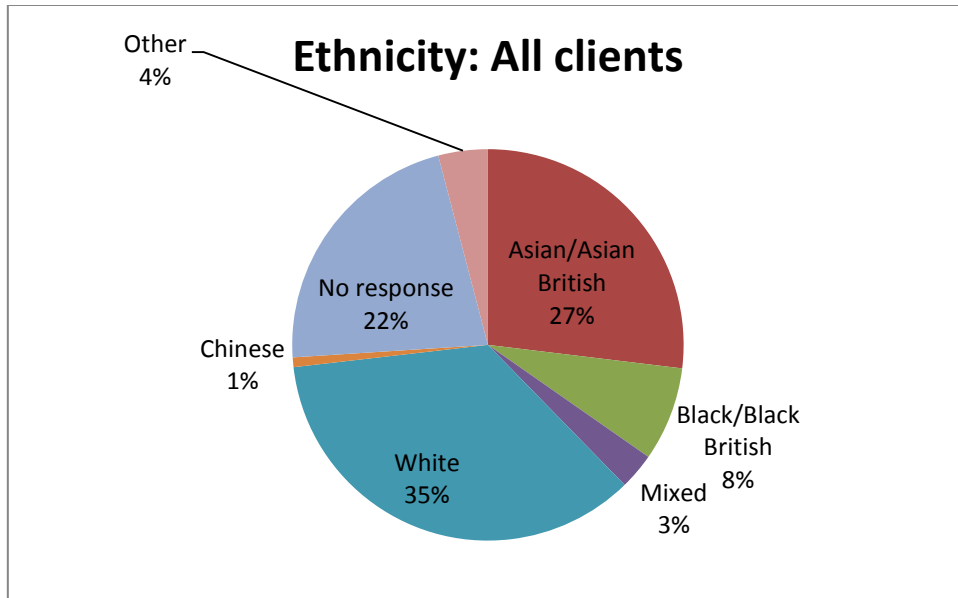
The majority of our clients are female (72%), though the ratio of female clients to male was higher with staff than students. This is typical of Counselling Services across the sector.



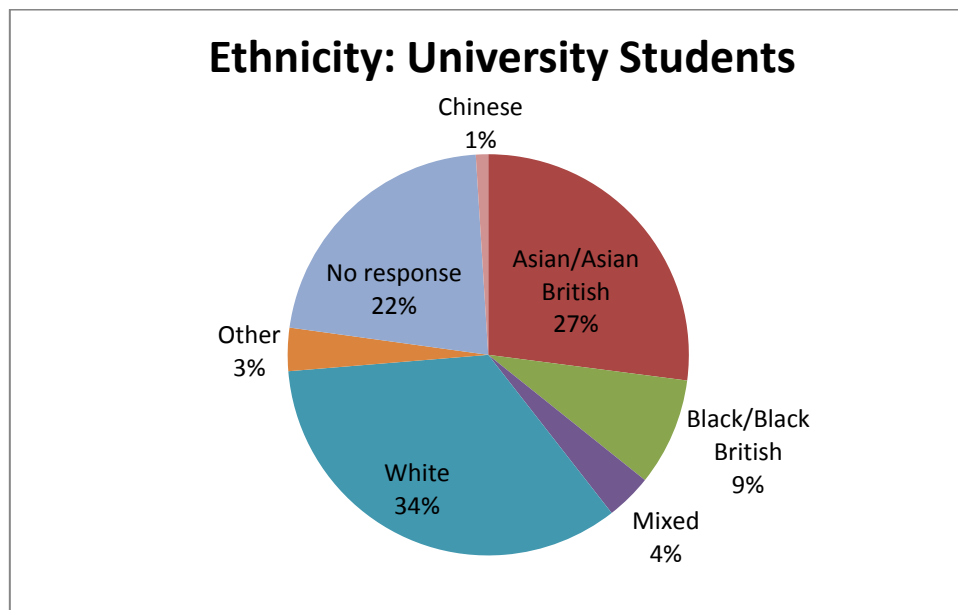
Looking at all our clients, 79% are from the UK, with 17% from EU or International and 4% giving no response. This changes slightly when we look at only clients who are university students. Here 22% are International or EU, representing the demographic of the University as a whole.



In terms of ethnicity, 22% (220) of clients registering to use the service chose not to respond. Of the remaining 78% (783), 35% described themselves as white, 27% as Asian or Asian British, 8% Black or Black British, 3% as 'mixed' and 1% Chinese (8 students) and a further 4% as 'other'. This reflects the rich diversity within the University and College and the client group we work with.



This changes only very slightly when we look at the ethnicity of University Students, our main service users.



## Presenting Issues

The main presenting issue was anxiety, followed by depression, relationships and loss. However, most of our clients are complex with multiple problems. 'Presenting issue' is what is identified by the counsellor on Intake as being the primary initial problem.

1. Anxiety	33.4%
2. Depression	26.0%
3. Relationships	14.4%
4. Loss	10.8%

## Outcomes

In 15/16, we introduced an outcomes measure, Clinical Outcomes Routine Evaluation (CORE) 10. Clients complete a simple outcomes measure questionnaire at their first and last appointments. This helps counsellors assess client severity and risk. It is also a powerful tool for clients to see their improvement over the course of the counselling contract, often with dramatic results. It is not unusual to see people reduce their score from, for example, 28 (out of 40) to 4. The average score for people coming into the service was 20.61 and this reduced on average to 10.66. As the clinical cut-off point is 12 (ie 12 or below is what you would expect from the non-clinical general population) this demonstrates substantial improvement after a brief counselling intervention.

## What we have done

In addition to one-to-one counselling, the service has been involved in training and outreach initiatives.

### *Group work*

The service saw 258 students and staff as part of its groupwork programme. The people we saw were a mixture of previous clients and entirely new contacts. The programme was revised to include Mindfulness for staff, which has proved very popular. We introduced a monthly lunchtime *Space to Breathe* for staff, which we will continue to run in 2016/17. We also revised our programme of psychoeducational workshops for students responding to requests from students and the SU. We introduced a monthly *Mindfulness for Students* session, which will run weekly from September 2016, and a monthly *Creative Space* workshop, where students can learn to cope with difficult feelings through creative media.



### ***Training events***

The service has delivered training packages across three distinct areas.

- Staff Development/People Development training packages: *Introduction to Mindfulness, Space to Breathe, Introduction to Assertiveness* and *Taking Care of Self, Taking Care of Others*
- Bespoke training for HR staff, College staff, SABS and Student Reps covering topics including *Mindfulness Tasters, Setting Boundaries, Assertiveness* and *Introduction to Mindfulness*.

### ***Open days and wellbeing fairs***

We have focused on widening our participation and presence at university and college open days and wellbeing fairs this year, attending evening and weekend as well as daytime events. We have developed a more interactive approach to engaging with students and staff. Our little bunches of University of Bradford lavender and our 'tree' proved particularly popular.

### **Staff counselling**

155 staff members applied to the Counselling Service this year, 106 from the University and 49 College staff. The majority (35%) were administrative, followed by academic (30.3%) and 'Other' (14.8%). 13.5 were academic related, 3.9% ancillary and there was no response from 1.9%. Most (69.4%) were at work throughout, with 9% off work at the start and then returning, 4.5% off work throughout and 3.5% off work at first and then returning. This field was not completed by 17.1%. 79% of these clients were described by the counsellor as experiencing anxiety, depression, stress or a combination of these. 36% (40 clients) saw this primarily as work-related.

Building on from the improvements developed in 2014/15, we streamlined the staff provision by ensuring that each staff member who contacted the service was offered a priority Intake appointment with an experienced practitioner. Using members of our highly skilled experienced associate team is particularly beneficial where there might be a potential boundary issue with a core team member having contact with the staff member in other contexts.

In addition we have continued to provide a staff only drop-in at 8.30 on Friday mornings and the monthly lunchtime mindfulness sessions (*Space to Breathe*). These are bookable via the People Development website and have proved to be very popular.

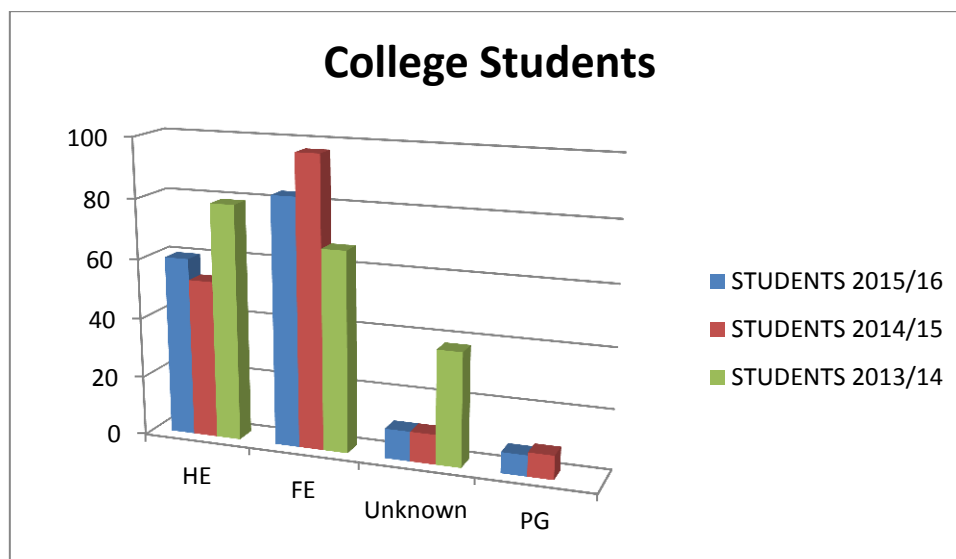
As we are keen to provide a join-up approach to delivering the right kind of support for students, we introduced a reflective practice group for Faculty Welfare Advisers to share good practice and provide support for each other. This group met 3 times in the autumn

term but then time commitments led to it ending due to participants' inability to attend. We will be visiting this again in 2016/17.

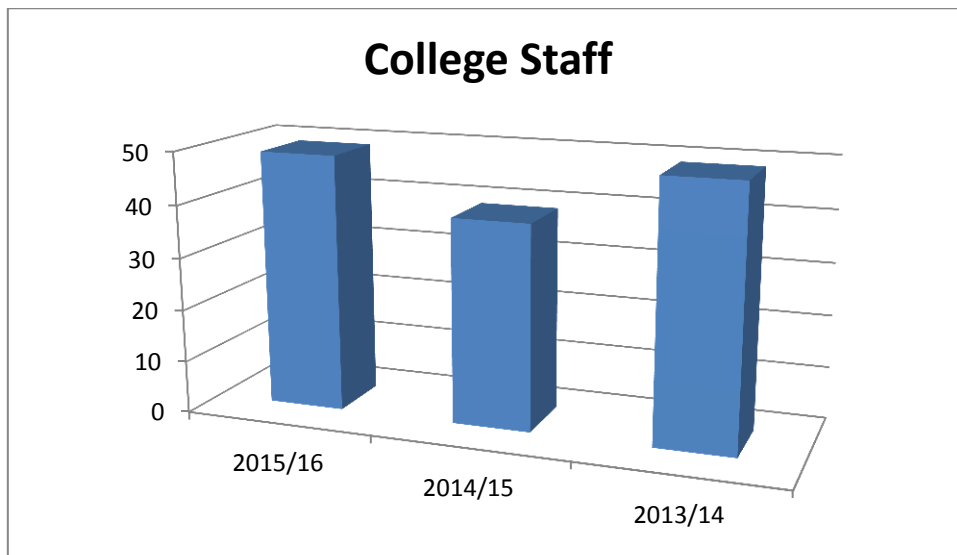
## Bradford College

### *Overview of Service*

Once again the service has been busy, with 135 students and 49 staff members registering to use the service.



This represents a decrease in student numbers but an increase staff using the service. There is also a problem with missed appointments. 30% of appointments offered to College students were either cancelled or the client did not attend. This is higher than the student average with is only 26% and 24% across the whole service. We are constantly striving to at reduce this as it represents a considerable waste of resources. We continue to use the Madiba room, which has proved to be very successful with many students choosing to have their Intake appointment at the college. Clients will need to pre-book their Intake appointment, registering on-line in advance, if they wish to be seen at the college. They can, of course, use the drop-in at the Counselling Service premises if they want to attend without an appointment.



#### ***Liaison with support staff***

We value our good working relationship with all Bradford college staff with a pastoral responsibility for students. We provide consultation for staff members concerned about a student's wellbeing and strive to work closely with student welfare advisors, the safeguarding officer and mental health advisor. To this end we had useful team meetings with the Safeguarding Officer and the Mental Health Advisers, to ensure that we are all familiar with each other's systems and ensure close working links.

#### ***Workshops***

In addition to one to one counselling, college students are eligible to attend all our workshops. We have also run a series of *Introduction to Mindfulness* tasters at two of the college staff TAP days with excellent feedback.

#### ***Inductions and Open days***

This year the service has taken a full part in the Induction programme for new students and Open Days, in order to have a greater presence within the College. We also successfully contributed to the Well Fair, with a stand aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of looking after your mental health.

### **Equality monitoring**

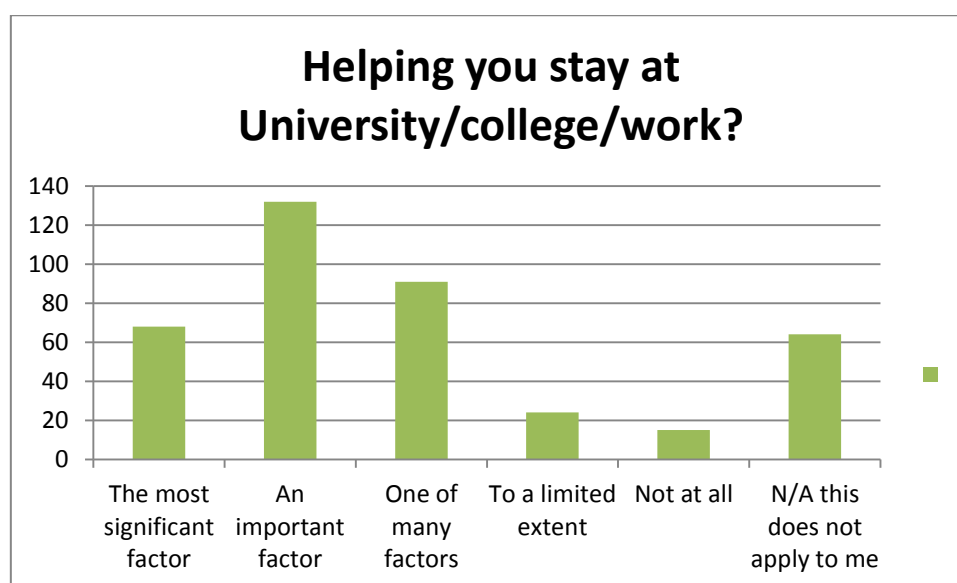
As with most Counselling Services, the majority of clients both students and staff are female. We do, however, see a sizeable proportion of male clients who engage with and benefit from using the service. We continue to monitor all aspects of the way we deliver provision in order to ensure that the service feels accessible to all who might benefit from using it.

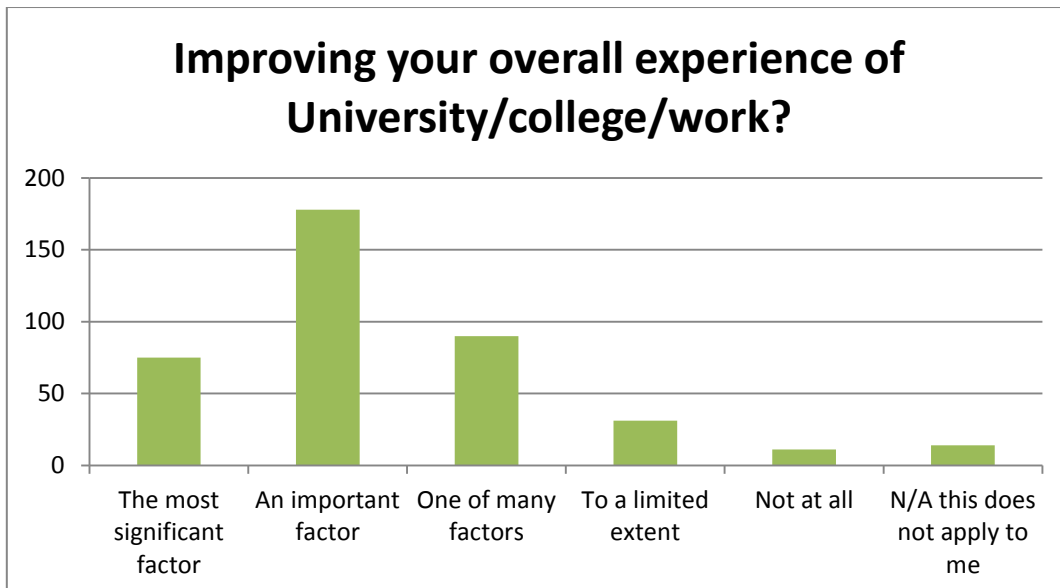
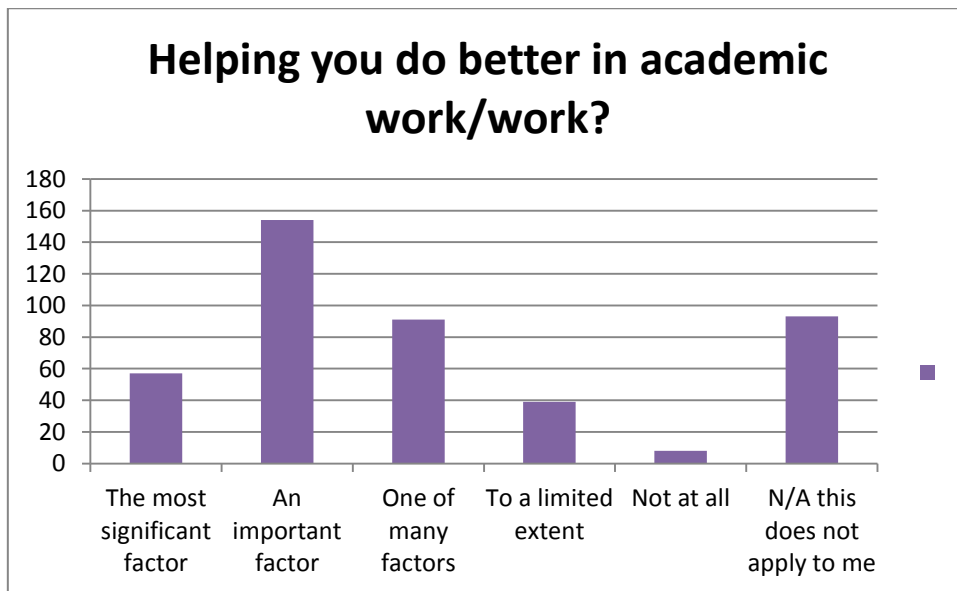
## Evaluation

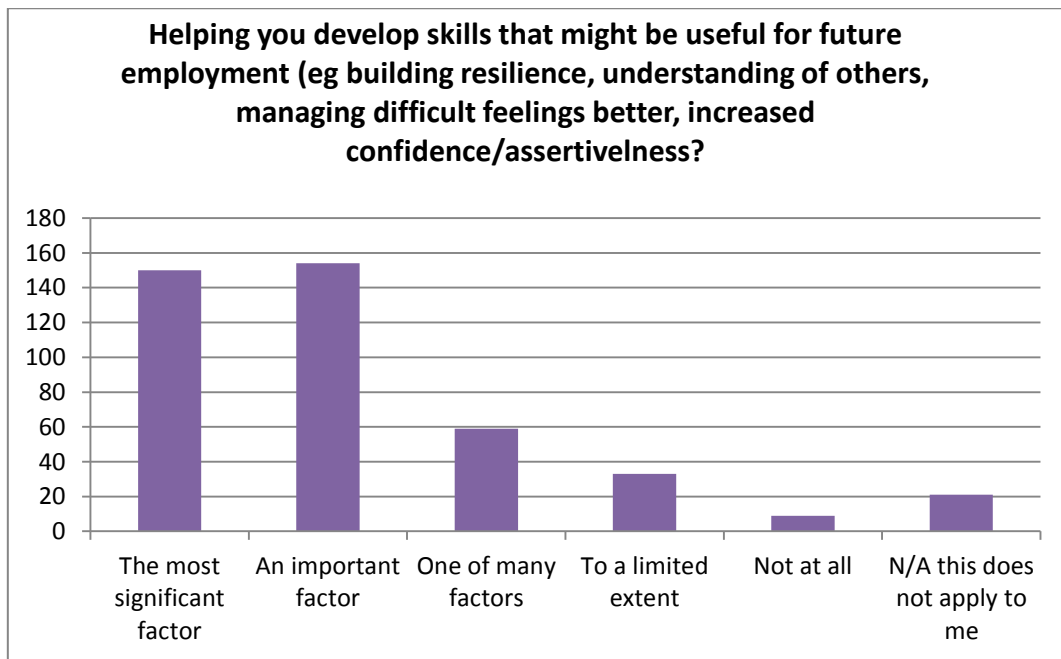
As we found that we were getting very low return rates on the evaluation forms we sent out by email at the end of counselling, we decided to change our approach last year. In April 2015, we introduced a simple feedback post card which clients can complete at the end of their contract or at any time during their use of the service. The post card gives a quick and easy snapshot of the client's experience of the service as well as collecting data. This has proved to be a popular way of getting feedback, which has been overwhelmingly positive. In addition to this, we had a 'snapshot week' in each term where every client using the service that week was invited to complete a questionnaire. People can also give us feedback via our website, although this happens very rarely. Our new system has been highly successful with feedback from 53% of clients coming for one-to-one counselling. This proved very encouraging with 96% either strongly agreeing (75%) or agreeing (21%) that that they had a positive experience of the Counselling Service.

As well as questions about client satisfaction with the service, we ask questions based on the 2012 BACP-UC (Wallace, P 2012 BACP) research looking at retention and employability. This tool, CIAO (Counselling Impact on Academic Outcomes) is used by many universities in the UK. The following results, gathered through using a Bristol Online Survey, show that for many of our clients, the counselling had a very strong impact on their ability to stay at university, their academic performance, their student experience and employability.

**To what extent would you say that counselling is:**







**2015/16 responses: Total: 451**

Postcard (263)

Student Snapshot (154)

Staff Snapshot (34)

## What the clients say about us (comments from feedback forms)

These are just some of the very many extremely positive comments about the service:

*I've never experienced counselling before but with the support of my counsellor and giving myself the much needed head space I required, I have faced and overcome personal challenges I wouldn't have thought possible 6 months ago*

*The counselling service has helped me going thru my most lowest state. My confidence, self-esteem and ability to concentrate on things. Thank you.*

*I have never sought help before as I was scared, not sure what to expect or how counselling could help. Each time I come here I relax more. I feel supported, heard & cared for. Thank you for giving me hope, choices, relaxation & a life*

*Most helpful with dealing with everyday problems. Information related to study/learning. Peaceful environment. Safety issues, self-care – invaluable.*

*Such an amazing employee benefit. Kept me at work and stopped me going off sick*

*Came wanting to develop useful strategies. Have better understanding of why I feel the way I do. Hoping to put new techniques into practice. Thank you*

*An empowering life-changing service*

*The counselling service has helped me come through a very difficult time. I was on the verge of depression. I now feel able to move on and able to deal with anything life throws at me. Thank you.*

*Excellent service helped me turn my life around*

## Suggestions for improvement

We take all feedback very seriously and where possible try and address problems and concerns. This year there have been very few critical comments about the service on our feedback forms and post cards. The main one voiced by a few clients is about the location and that sometimes it can be daunting to get here. Occasionally, clients are dissatisfied with the time-limited (4 session) model but we find that this is the fairest system enabling us to see the maximum number of clients with limited resources. The text reminders have proved popular and on the whole our systems seem to be working well. Most people (83%) found our registration system easy to use and 94% agreed they got an appointment quickly enough.

Further statistics on service use and evaluation can be obtained from the Head of the Counselling Service.