

Mental Health at Queen Mary: Freedom of Information data

Like many universities, Queen Mary University of London's student wellbeing services are inundated with freedom of information requests, particularly with reference to student mental health. While it is encouraging that so many people are interested in how support for students experiencing difficulties with their mental health is resourced and configured, collating responses for external parties is very time-consuming and can take vital resources away from our core business of supporting students. This is particularly true during term-time.

To ensure that interested parties can access key information while not affecting the experience of our students, we have decided to publish as much data as possible on the growing numbers of students with mental health difficulties, as well as the strands of support that they access here at Queen Mary and information about staffing levels in our two chief wellbeing services, [Advice and Counselling](#) (ACS) and [Disability and Dyslexia](#) (DDS).

Notes on the data: student numbers

Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are required to return data to the [Higher Education Statistics Agency](#) (HESA) on how many disabled students they have. To do this, the sector uses specific disability codes, which students select either on application, enrolment, or after meeting with disability services. It is only possible to select one code, but many students have more than one condition, e.g. a specific learning difference (such as dyslexia) and a mental health diagnosis.

The categories we record are:

- A disability not listed
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Blind/partially sighted
- Deaf/partial hearing
- Longstanding illness
- Mental Health Difficulty
- Multiple disabilities
- Specific Learning Difference
- Wheelchair/Mobility difficulties

NB: due to the prevalence of students with dual diagnoses, we cannot provide details of which students have which specific learning differences and/or mental health diagnoses, e.g. dyslexia *and* dyspraxia, or depression *and* anxiety.

Notes on the data: staffing

While the Advice and Counselling Service and the Disability and Dyslexia Service are the two main departments serving students with mental health difficulties (and disabilities) at Queen Mary, the university employs Student Support Officers / Managers in its Schools and Institutes who do vital work in signposting students to specialist services, as well as implementing the support and reasonable adjustments to which students are entitled.

A full list of these members of staff can be found here: [Student support contacts - MyQMUL](#)

The reality of life at a campus-based university is that many staff play a crucial role in supporting the wellbeing of our students, including those based in our Library Services, Registry, Residential Support, Security, [Chaplaincy](#) and a wide array of other departments.

Commonly requested data: the configuration of student support services

Queen Mary's model of student support is to have named contacts in most (but not all) of our Schools and Institutes, along with dedicated Professional Services. These services are situated in our Student and Academic Services Directorate. As such, there is no one, distinct department which provides mental health services/support to students at Queen Mary.

The ACS offers welfare advice, as well as counselling, CBT and group therapy.

The DDS supports all disabled students at Queen Mary, including those with diagnosed mental health difficulties (in addition to specific learning differences such as dyslexia).

The Student Life team is responsible for an array of student-facing provision, including our on-campus [Student Health Service](#), although its staff would not ordinarily meet or have appointments with students.

Both ACS and DDS provide many other services which means there is no one, ring-fenced budget for student mental health. The costs of most specialist support for students with mental health issues is paid for through individual students' Disabled Students' Allowances, the figures for which we do not hold. Queen Mary funds the Student Health Service to support patients, some of whom will have mental health issues.

ACS Staffing

Queen Mary's ACS staffing has been as follows:

2014/15 - 5.4FTE counsellors*

2015/16 - 5.4FTE counsellors*

2016/17 - 5.75FTE counsellors*(increased to 6.55FTE from March 2017)

2017/18 - 6.66FTE counsellors/therapists

2018/19 - 6.66 FTE* PLUS weekly psychiatry clinics, PLUS Drug and Alcohol clinics twice a week.

*ACS also employs, in addition to the counsellors mentioned above, Welfare Advisers who provide a specialist advice, case working and advocacy service for students with mental health needs e.g. disability benefits, welfare benefits, securing appropriate housing, money and debt advice. This would probably push the figures above up by approx. another 1.5 FTE in each year.

In AY 2019/20 the total spend on the salaries in the counselling service within ACS was £570,742.

The breakdown of these staff is as follows:

Post	FTE
Head of Advice and Counselling Service	0.9
Counselling Manager	0.9
Deputy Counselling Manager	0.9

Counsellor	0.8
Counsellor	0.8
Group Therapist	0.34
Counsellor	0.6
Counsellor	0.35
Counsellor	0.46
Counsellor	0.9
Counsellor	0.8
Counsellor	0.35
Counsellor	0.35
Counsellor	0.35
Cognitive Behavioural Therapist (CBT)	0.8
CBT	0.6

DDS Staffing for mental health support

Queen Mary's DDS employed a Mental Health Co-ordinator from 2009 through to 2020. This was a Grade 5 post from its creation but was revised as a Grade 6 as of 2016/17.

DDS also employs a Mental Health / Autistic Spectrum Disorder Adviser (Grade 4 previously, Grade 5 as of 2016/17). In 2019/20 we recruited two new Mental Health Advisers, both full-time, both permanent. As such, in AY2019/20 we had:

- 1 FTE Mental Health Co-ordinator (Grade 6)
- 6 Mental Health Advisers (Grade 5)

In AY 2020/2021 we still have the 3.6 Mental Health Advisers, but the post of Mental Health Co-ordinator has been deleted following an internal reorganisation with effect from October 2020. It will be replaced by a Grade 5 Disability Adviser (Mental Health). The Mental Health Advisers will remain in post, although they will be moving to our ACS.

The total spend on the mental health team within DDS for 2019/20 was £116,854. This was comprised of one Grade 6 Mental Health Co-ordinator, one Grade 5 Mental Health Adviser and one Grade 5 Autism / Mental Health Adviser (0.4 FTE). There was also one Grade 5 Mental Health Adviser paid from the Strategic Investment budget in 2019/20. The staff costs totalled £38,461 (from November 2019). As such, the total cost of the Mental Health situated in DDS for AY 2019/20 was £155,315.

In academic year 2019/20 we spent a total of £36,649 on specialist mentoring for students with mental health difficulties (this was for students without DSA funding, e.g. international students).

We paid an organisation called Equality Focus £32,405 (approx. 1,405 hours of support).

We paid an organisation called University Mentoring Organisation £4244 (222 hours of support).

Overall, the total staff spends for the three 'wellbeing' services within Student and Academic Services for 2019/20 was:

- Advice and Counselling Service: £956,657
- Disability and Dyslexia Service: £545,249
- Student Life: £296,527

Student facing data

Please note that the total number of enrolled students has increased each year, so we would expect to see annual increases in demand.

Advice and Counselling

Academic Year	Number of students who have had at least one appointment for counselling (NB these will not all be for mental health reasons)
2015/16	875
2016/17	664*
2017/18	780
2018/19	1,077

*This fall was due to unforeseen vacant posts / staff absences in 16/17.

We are working on collating figures for 2019/20. The C-19 pandemic has meant we have not been able to do this at end of year as we would normally.

Disability and Dyslexia

Academic Year	No. of student appointments with the Mental Health Co-ordinator / Mental Health Adviser(s)
2015/16	495 (in addition to 51 'Did Not Attends' and 25 cancellations)
2016/17	744 (in addition to 109 'Did Not Attends' and 45 cancellations)
2017/18	860 (in addition to 143 'Did Not Attends' or cancellations and 60 drop-in appointments)
2018/19	844 (in addition to 203 'Did Not Attends' or cancellations and 30 drop-in appointments)
2019/20	1,029 (in addition to 198 'Did Not Attends' or cancellations)

Academic Year	No. of students receiving specialist mental health mentoring*
2015/16	128
2016/17	105
2017/18	182
2018/19	192
2019/20	237

*These numbers reflect the number of students accessing specialist mentoring through the agencies which the Disability and Dyslexia Service has links with. It is probable there will be other Queen Mary students accessing this support but who either not engaged with our service or who have not consented to share this information with the university as they are accessing it via their DSA.

Togetherall

We have had a licence for Togetherall (formerly Big White Wall), since March 2019. This is an online service open to students and staff 24/7/365 days of the year.