

Mental Health at Queen Mary: Freedom of Information data

Like many universities, Queen Mary University of London's student wellbeing services receive many 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. See Appendix One for details of this data since 2016/17.

The categories we currently 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 Experience Directorate. As such, there is no one, distinct department which provides mental health services/support to students at Queen Mary.

The Advice and Counselling Service (ACS) offers welfare advice, as well as counselling, CBT and group therapy. It also offers support for students with emerging and pre-existing mental health conditions through our Mental Health Advisers and Student Wellbeing Advisers.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service (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 diagnoses 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.

Advice and Counselling Service Staffing

Queen Mary's counselling service 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.

2019/20 - 10.2 FTE Plus weekly psychiatry clinics, PLUS Drug and Alcohol clinics twice a week

2020/21 - 10.26 FTE (including Cognitive Behavioural Therapists, a Group Therapist, as well as weekly psychiatry contracts delivered through a local NHS Trust)

*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. T

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

In AY 2020/21 the total spend on the salaries in the counselling service within ACS was £535,949.

In AY 2021/22 the total spend on the salaries in the counselling service within ACS was £551,205. We also spent £256,401 on our Mental Health Advisers and Student Wellbeing Advisers.

Following an internal re-organisation, our Mental Health Advisers moved to the Advice and Counselling at the end of the 2020/21 academic year. We have also recruited a Senior Mental Health Adviser and three Student Wellbeing Advisers. Accordingly, the breakdown of staff within Advice and Counselling who support students with mental health and emotional difficulties is now as follows:

Role	FTE	Notes
Advice and Counselling Service Manager	1	
Counselling Manager	0.92	
Senior Counsellor	2.8	
Counsellor	5.2	
Cognitive Behavioural Therapist	2.4	(These were all vacant posts as of July 2022, but have since been filled)
Group Therapist	0.34	
Mental Health Adviser	3	In addition to the two existing Mental Health Advisers, we recruited an additional post for the 2021/22 academic year
Student Wellbeing Adviser	3	These posts were agreed for the 2021/22 academic year

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. The service also employed a Mental Health / Autistic Spectrum Disorder Adviser (Grade 4 previously, Grade 5 from 2016/17 until 2020/2021).

In 2019/20 the service recruited two new Mental Health Advisers, both full-time, both permanent. As such, in AY2019/20 the service had:

- 1 FTE Mental Health Co-Ordinator (Grade 6)

2.6 Mental Health Advisers (Grade 5)

In AY 2020/21 we still had the 2.6 Mental Health Advisers, but the post of Mental Health Coordinator was deleted following an internal re-organisation with effect from October 2020. This was replaced by a Grade 5 Disability Adviser (Mental Health). The Mental Health Advisers remained in post, although they were moved over to our Advice and Counselling Service.

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 £4,244 (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

AY 2020/21

We spent £30,200 on specialist mentoring support for international students, which equates to approximately 515 hours. We also spent £2,333 on 'interim' specialist mentoring support, i.e. support for students waiting for confirmation that they have access to funding from the Disabled Students' Allowances. This equates to around 40 hours' worth of support.

This support was provided by two organisations: Equality Focus and the University Mentoring Organisation.

The Queen Mary staff spend within student wellbeing for 2020/21 were:

- Advice and Counselling Service: £1,174,887
- Disability and Dyslexia Service: £631,258
- Student Life: £278,131

AY 2021/22

As of the start of the 2021/22 academic year, the DDS had two Disability Advisers (Mental Health), both full-time and permanent roles.

The Queen Mary staff spend within student wellbeing for 2021/22 were:

- Advice and Counselling Service: £1,405,737
- Disability and Dyslexia Service: £718,077
- Student Life: £245,625

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
2019/20	884±
2020/21	2,753
2021/22	2547; 469 of these were 'intake' appointments. In addition to 843 'Did Not Attends' (DNAs)

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

±The lower figure for this academic year reflects the time it took the counselling team to attain the requisite accreditation to deliver online support in the wake of the first Covid-19 lockdown from March 2020.

Academic Year	No. of student appointments with Mental Health Adviser(s)
2021/22	867 (and 213 cancellations / DNAs)

Disability and Dyslexia

Academic Year	No. of student appointments with the Mental Health Co-ordinator / Mental Health Adviser(s) / Disability Advisers (Mental Health and
2015/16	495 (in addition to 51 DNAs and 25 cancellations)
2016/17	744 (in addition to 109 DNAs and 45 cancellations)
2017/18	860 (in addition to 143 DNAs or cancellations and 60 drop-in appointments)
2018/19	844 (in addition to 203 DNAs or cancellations and 30 drop-in appointments)
2019/20	1,029 (in addition to 198 DNAs or cancellations)
2020/21	990 (the Mental Health Advisers left the DDS at the end of the 2020/21 academic year) +134 appointments which took place within the ACS

2021/22	503 (in addition to 102 cancellations of DNA appointments). NB: this figure is now made up exclusively of appointments with Disability Advisers (Mental Health and Autism)
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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 (equates to 1,626 hours of support)
2020/21	243 (equates to 3,414 hours of support)
2021/22	256 (equates to 3,547.75 hours of support)

*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 have 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.

Appendix One: HESA disability returns since 2016/17

2016/17

Disability	Number of registered students
Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Asperger's Syndrome	60
Blind/Partially sighted	22
Deaf/Partial hearing	25
Learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)	1,037
Mental Health	512
Multiple disabilities	90
Unseen disability (e.g. diabetes, sickle cell anaemia)	173
Wheelchair/Mobility difficulties	45
A disability not listed	169
TOTAL	2,133

2017/18

Disability	Number of registered students
Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Asperger's Syndrome	88
Blind/Partially sighted	30
Deaf/Partial hearing	38
Learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)	1049
Mental Health	637
Multiple disabilities	118
Unseen disability (e.g. diabetes, sickle cell anaemia)	180
Wheelchair/Mobility difficulties	42
A disability not listed	179
TOTAL	2,361

2018/19

Disability	Number of registered students
A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	78
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	24
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	43
Specific learning difference (e.g. dyslexia)	1,001
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	713
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	141
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	44

A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	155
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	205
TOTAL	2,404

2019/20

Disability	Number of registered students
A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	97
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	35
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	58
Specific learning difference (e.g. dyslexia)	1,198
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	957
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	233
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	54
A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	211
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	233
TOTAL	3,076

2020/21

Disability	Number of registered students
A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	1,134
A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	111
A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	227
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	914
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	56
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	42
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	41
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	201
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	193
TOTAL	2,919

2021/2022

Disability	Number of registered students
A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	1,180
A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder	141
A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	262
A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder	945
A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches	51
Deaf or a serious hearing impairment	44
Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	40
Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions	214
A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above	240
TOTAL	3,117