

1366 Increase the Funding Of UEA Counselling Services passed 14 March 13

Proposer: Kim Jenkins (Students with Disabilities Officer)
Second: Sam Clark (Community and Student Rights Officer)

The Union notes:

1 in 4 people, including students will experience mental health difficulties during the course of their lifetime¹.

70% of Disabled Students have a 'hidden' disability – i.e. a disability that cannot be seen with the 'naked eye' such as mental health difficulties or high stress levels.

Students with hidden disabilities have difficulty in accessing some University and Union services/activities. The reasons for this vary upon the nature of the 'hidden' disability.

There is currently no group room within the counselling to accommodate group counselling sessions for people in wheelchairs.

Between 2006 and 2012 the number of students who have sought counselling has increased by 19.2%. The student population has increased by 0.9%. The number of exploratory sessions has increased by 21.76%, the number of full sessions has increased by 12.76% and the number of total sessions has increased by 13.98%.

The counselling service's budget has remained static for the last 20 years.

Waiting list for counselling is several weeks long

International students have greater support needs and need more targeted information about support services in comparison to UK students. This is due to a number of different factors, including cultural differences, stigma relating to mental health issues in some countries, and language barriers. These factors can also make an international student reluctant to seek help, especially without the proper guidance.

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/student-services/documents/investigation-into-the-mental-health-support-needs-of-international-students-with-particular-reference-to-chinese-and-malaysian-students.pdf>

The Union Believes

Students should be able to access counselling services if and when they need them.

Counselling services must be adequately funded and staffed to meet with increased demand.

The counselling budget should be increased to reflect the increase in use.

Counselling should be in a building suitable for its needs. E.g. a room suitable for conducting group wheelchair therapy sessions.

The Union Resolves

To lobby the university into increasing the counselling service's budget to increase student support on campus, and decrease waiting lists.

To lobby the university to ensure that counselling is situated in a building that is accessible and suitable for all its purposes, or that they are able to access suitable rooms easily.

To lobby the university to also provide extra funding and attention to the recruitment of foreign speaking counsellors, particularly for the major language groups on campus. Where this is not possible, to look in to a system of confidential translators, that can give international students the opportunity to speak in their own language during counselling sessions.