



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

**STUDENT  
WELLBEING**

# **STUDENT WELLBEING SERVICE OUR IMPACT 22/23**



**FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SEPTEMBER 2023**



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## Introduction

Mental health and wellbeing support is integral to ensuring Queen's students are supported and empowered to be healthy learners who can grow and develop throughout their academic journey.

The Education and Skills strand of [Strategy 2030](#) sets out the University's aspiration to provide a transformative student experience, with a full range of mental health and wellbeing support available and utilized by the student population, supported by a strong policy framework<sup>1</sup>.

The [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy \(2022-23\)](#) recognises that all members of Queen's, staff and students, play an important role in the success of our community. A whole University approach on health and wellbeing is fundamental to ensuring a culture exists where all members can flourish regardless of their role at the University.

Student Wellbeing Services lead on the delivery of support for students, and staff supporting students, with services delivered around a Stepped Match Care model, ensuring students have access to the most appropriate level of intervention at the right time, to address their presenting issue. This may include referral to statutory services where the need is either critical and / or clinical and therefore outside of the scope of the University to appropriately support. The Wellbeing team also provides advice and guidance to staff as they support students as part of their role – whether this is in a School or on a professional support Directorate.

This report gives:

- an overview of Student Wellbeing Service activity in relation to students registered on programmes in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences during the academic year 2022-23.
- a breakdown of the profile of Faculty students accessing the services and their presenting issues has also been included for analysis of data.
- a high level overview of students presenting to other support services including Disability Services, the Counselling Service, the Belfast Trust Student Mental Health Project and the Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner service.
- a summary of themes relevant to the Faculty
- an update on University-wide wellbeing initiatives undertaken in the last year to help support students, and the staff supporting students.

The Student Wellbeing Team would like to thank colleagues in Schools, Professional Support Directorates and the Students' Union for their continued partnership as we work together to support our students.

## Faculty Support

Student Wellbeing Services are delivered on a Faculty-facing model, with a dedicated Student Wellbeing Adviser working closely with colleagues in Schools, to help deliver support and interventions to students. In addition, a Faculty Assistant Disability and Wellbeing Adviser leads on supporting students at Tier 1 of the 'Stepped Care Model of Support', offering support and guidance through a triage service. Students presenting at Drop-In or through online staff or student referrals are contacted the same day and are given supportive guidance and signposted to relevant supports. Although both staff members have wider service duties, working with a dedicated group of Schools in one Faculty has helped build positive relationships with staff and allows for a better understand of the nature and demands of the programmes across AHSS Schools.

The team works closely with their colleagues in Disability Services who also deliver support for students with disabilities and long-term conditions on a School-facing model offering a holistic and joined up approach.

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<sup>1</sup>Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUBeWell/about/policy/>

## Summary of Overall Findings for the Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences

- Right across all levels of study there continues to be high levels of students presenting with mental health needs as a primary concern. Given the continued pressures on students such as the cost of living crisis it is expected this trend will continue.
- The Student Wellbeing ‘Stepped Matched Care’ model of support ensures that students are matched with the most effective form of support to address individual presenting issues. Where appropriate this may include self-directed support to promote independence and resilience.
- The Student Wellbeing Service had 2368 referrals in the 2022-23 academic year (August 2022-June 2023). Of that, 1089 (45.9%) were from the Faculty of Arts Humanities & Social Sciences.
- Of the 1089 student referrals from AHSS, 349 of these were from staff referrals (32%). The rise in staff referrals from the academic previous year (2021-22 staff referrals, 22%) suggests that the connection between Student Wellbeing (especially the UG Faculty Wellbeing Adviser) and School staff continues to strengthen and staff have a greater understanding of how they can work in partnership with Wellbeing to improve their students’ wellbeing and experience.
- The introduction of Student Support Officers in Schools has also been a welcome development in many of the Schools in AHSS and has strengthened the ability to manage lower level issues at School level while at the same time further improving communication and pathways into Student Wellbeing for more specialist support.
- A total of 67 students (0.7% of the total Faculty Student population, 6% of the AHSS student cohort) presented at risk during the period September 2022 to June 2023 to the Student Wellbeing service.
- Students continue to present with academic stress. In particular, the Level 1 cohort are finding the transition to third level education difficult and appear to struggle to manage expectations, implement time management skills and build resilience around exam season.
- An increased number of AHSS students are requesting and needing further 1:1 consultations with their Faculty Wellbeing Adviser following on from their initial triage. This is due to the complex nature of their presenting issues which can lead to a multi-disciplinary approach involving other support providers including Disability Services, Schools, GP, Inspire and external stakeholders. This indicates that initiatives that encourage students to seek support and early intervention around wellbeing concerns should be an area of moving forward for Schools and Student Wellbeing
- Although the data in this report only covers September 2022 – June 2023, there have been a high number of risk incidents over the summer 2023. This data will be detailed in next year’s report. Risks involving international students who are not progressing or who are exiting with a lower qualification than anticipated is a significant concern and will be discussed with the relevant Schools.
- This year’s data interpretation would suggest that wellbeing initiatives that target GB and international students and particularly, but not solely at PGR level, should be an area of focus for the Service and Faculty moving forward.

# Student Wellbeing Service: Stepped Care Model

Tier 0	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>Preventative and Protective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellbeing on Weekdays activities based on the Take 5 Approach</li> <li>QUBeWell - Healthy Campus Campaign and Flag Days (e.g. University Mental Health Week, World Suicide Prevention Day)</li> <li>Transitions support</li> <li><a href="#">Cost of Living</a></li> <li>Self-Help Hub and Resources (including <a href="#">Inspire Hub</a> and <a href="#">website resources</a>)</li> <li>Peer Support Groups (e.g. ASD, Epilepsy and Mature Students)</li> <li>Student-led Wellbeing Events (e.g. <a href="#">Mind Your Mood</a> and <a href="#">International Student Guides</a>, Consent Ambassadors)</li> </ul>	<p>Supportive Guidance and Signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drop-in Clinic</li> <li>Walk and Talk sessions</li> <li>Talking Table events</li> <li>Active Campus Referrals</li> <li>Target Group Initiatives (e.g. grief peer support)</li> <li>Psychoeducation Initiatives (e.g. <a href="#">Belfast Recovery College</a>)</li> </ul>	<p>Assessment, Consultation and Therapeutic Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-1 Wellbeing consultations</li> <li>Low-level CBT</li> <li>Counselling via Inspire</li> </ul>	<p>Risk Management, De-escalation and Crisis Support</p> <p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional wellbeing support</li> <li>Risk management</li> <li>De-escalation/ Safety planning</li> <li>Links with trusted contacts</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Mental Health Service - BHSCT, Inspire Crisis Helpline</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Mental Health Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GPs</li> <li>Mental Health Liason Team</li> <li>Community Mental Health Team, CAMHS etc</li> </ul>

## Referral Methods

There are various access points to the service. Students normally self-refer to the service through:

Daily Drop-in (in person in One Elmwood or telephone)

Via the [online Formmail](#).

Staff can also refer students directly to the service via an [online staff form](#).

The team offer a “same day” (or next working day if a referral is received outside of working hours) triage process for students, to ensure a thorough initial assessment with a student to talk through their concerns and identify appropriate supports and recommendations to take forward.

Students requiring secondary interventions at Tier 2 can continue to access 1-1 (50 minute) Faculty Wellbeing Adviser appointments or a disability assessment, normally within a 2-week wait time. Where a student raises study related concerns, the team work closely with staff in Faculties and Schools to try to redress these concerns, encouraging early intervention where possible and liaising closely with School Student Support Officers, Advisers of Studies and Personal Tutors, amongst others, where appropriate.

As the Faculty facing wellbeing model has grown, both students and staff have become more familiar with the various referral methods with a noted increase in students and staff contacting the Faculty Wellbeing Advisers directly, recognizing them as their key point of contact.

## Faculty Student Data 2022-23<sup>1</sup>

Across the Faculty, females make up 60% of the student population, males 39.5% and only a very small percentage of students ( $\leq 1\%$ ) who identify as non-binary which were recorded in 3 Schools (AEL, HAPP and SSESW).

Queen’s Business School has the largest student population within the Faculty (34% of the entire Faculty population) and with 45% female, 55% male and no students who identify as non-binary. QMS and the Leadership Institute (100% male student population) are the only Schools within the Faculty in which there are larger numbers of male than female students.

SSESW has the highest proportion of females (78%) to male students, followed by similar percentages in Law where females make up 68%, IPLS where females make up 66%, AEL where females make up 66% of their respective School populations. The gender split is more even in HAPP who have a 55% female and 44% male student population.

Faculty/School	Female	Male	Non-binary	Grand Total
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	5,429	3,661	8	9,098
Arts, English and Languages	1,099	568	5	1,672
History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics	697	571	2	1,270
Institute of Professional Legal Studies	202	100		302
Institute of Theology	1	1		2
Law	863	402		1,265
Queen's Business School	1,386	1,691		3,077
Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	1,181	321	1	1,503
The Leadership Institute		7		7

<sup>1</sup>Data supplied by Planning Office for Academic year 2022-23

## Student population by school and residency 2022-23 (As of July 23)

63% of AHSS students are local NI students and make up the largest proportion of the total School population in every School within the Faculty.

ROI students make up 2% of the total AHSS student population.

8% of AHSS students have GB as their residency status.

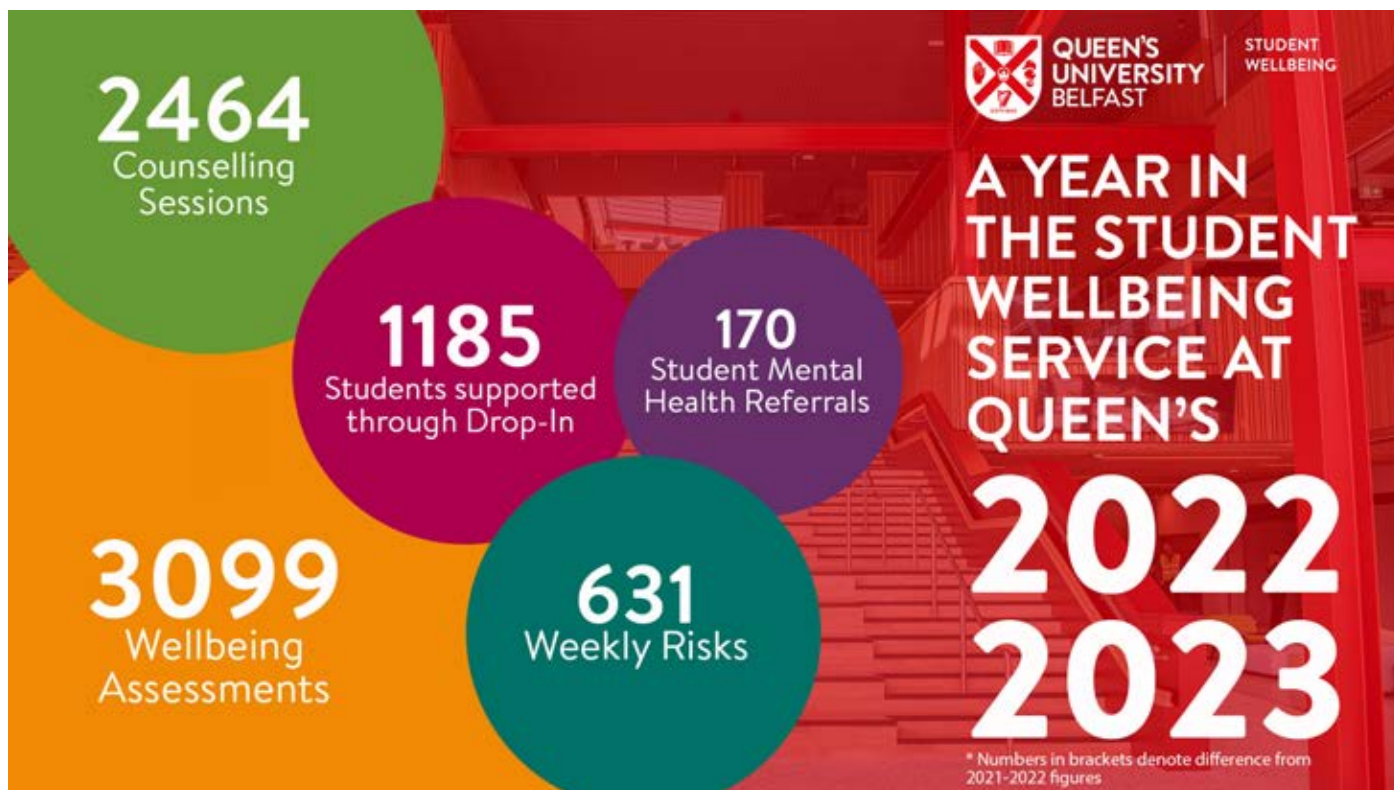
International students make up 24% of the total AHSS student population.

In QBS, the Faculty's largest School, International students account for 40% of the total School population.

Faculty/School	GB	International	NI	Other EU	ROI	Grand Total
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	772	2,017	5,744	269	296	9,098
Arts, English and Languages	170	185	1,188	59	70	1,672
History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics	256	184	715	71	44	1,270
Institute of Professional Legal Studies			298		4	302
Institute of Theology			2			2
Law	98	264	809	41	53	1,265
Queen's Management School	133	1,214	1,599	46	85	3,077
Social Sciences, Education and Social Work	115	170	1,132	47	39	1,503
The Leadership Institute			1	5	1	7

## Student Data and Reporting Trends

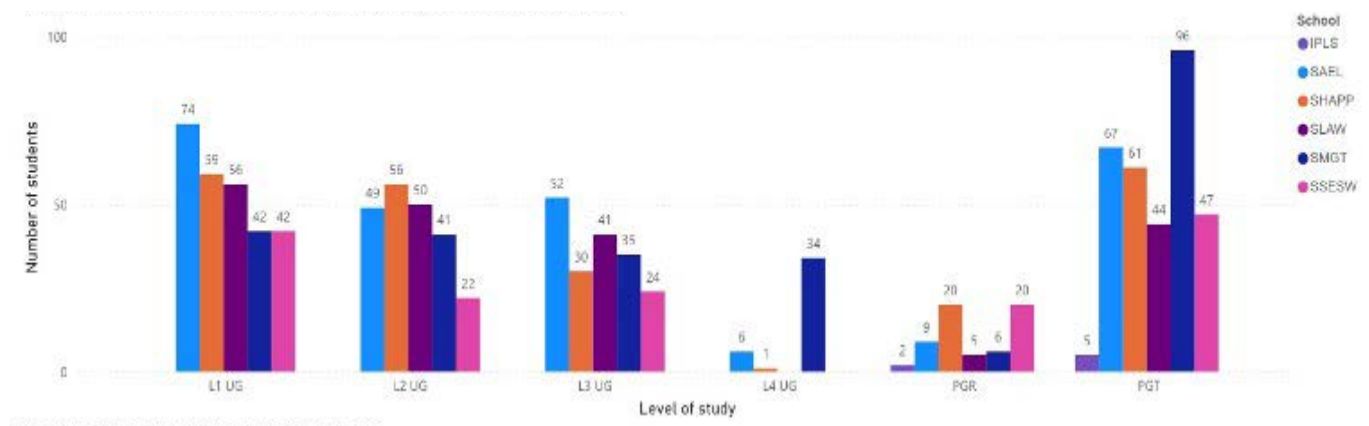
This year the Student Wellbeing Service has created and implemented a new CRM platform for the recording and management of student referrals and interactions. The new CRM system has allowed for deeper data recording by centralising student wellbeing information, tracking interactions and assessments and providing analytics. It has also enabled us to provide a richer level of data to Faculties and Schools when monitoring trends in student support needs across campus. The table below indicates the numbers of students seen by Wellbeing across all Faculties in 2022-23.



However, this new monitoring mechanism has presented challenges in comparing data with previous years as the datasets have been recorded differently this year. Therefore, data in this report is based on Service activity between August 2022 and June 2023. Numbers for July and August 2023 will be reported next year and will report on the high numbers of students presenting over the summer 2023.



## 1. Students Presenting to the Wellbeing Service by School and Level of Study



The total number of student referrals to Student Wellbeing from AHSS across the academic year of 2022-23 was 1089 which is 12% percent of the AHSS student body.

The highest number of referrals came from the PGT cohort in Queens Business School, however, this is reflective of the fact that QBS has a higher number of PGT students.

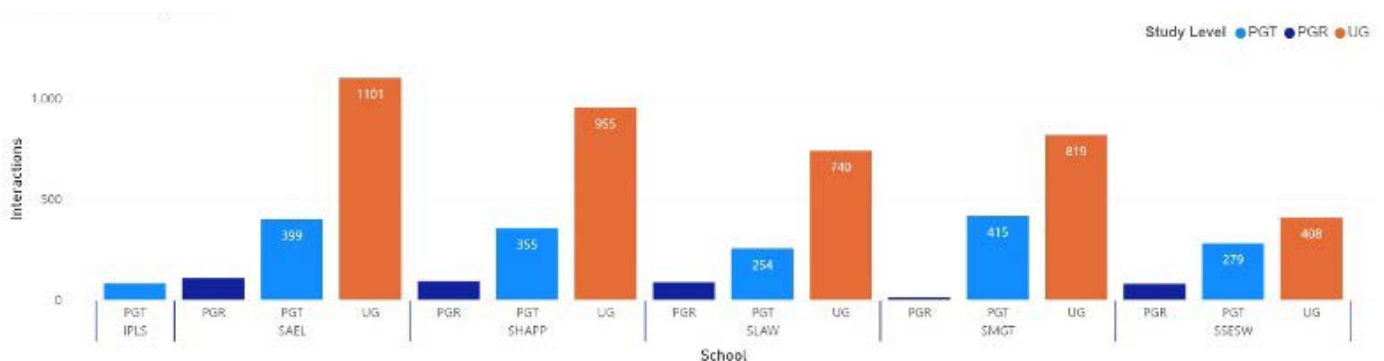
School referral figures are shown below:

- School of Arts, English & Languages – 257 (15% of students in School)
- School of History, Anthropology, Politics & Philosophy – 227 (18% of students in School)
- School of Law – 196 (14% of students in School)
- Business School – 254 (8% of students in School)
- School of Social Sciences, Education & Social Work – 155 (10% of students in School)

This indicates that HAPP has marginally the highest number of students presenting to the service as a percentage of the overall student body in that School.

The highest single cohort of students presenting to the Service are PGT students from QBS. However, as a percentage of their overall student body, the number of referrals were the lowest by percentage for the overall Faculty. Please note however that the figures are for September 2022 – June 2023 and will change next year. There have been a number of international students presenting to Wellbeing over the summer 2023 following the return of results – with a small number of these being hospitalised (due to their mental health) or referred to NHS specialist mental health services.

## 2. Total interactions by School



A SBAR triage is completed with all students accessing the Wellbeing service to identify their main Situation, Background (length of time the situation has been going on for), this information informs an Assessment of risk with appropriate Recommendations of support. Following this initial meeting a series of interactions take place with the student and other stakeholders involved in their support if required. These interactions will continue until such time as the student no longer requires support and that will vary for each student based on the nature, complexity and level of risk associated with their individual circumstances.

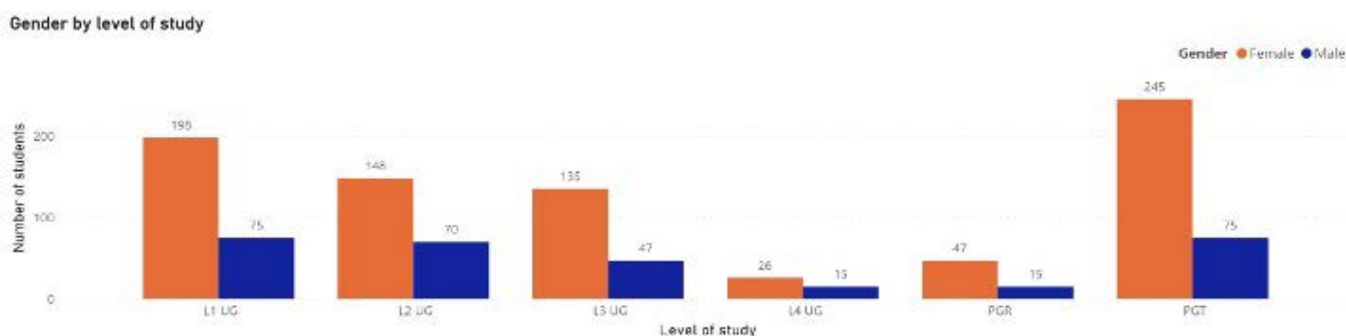
Students may be seen just once or they may be seen on multiple occasions depending on the level of their need.

For the 1089 AHSS referrals to the service in academic year 2022 - 2023, a total of 6328 interactions took place. While this appears to be a marked increase on 2021-2022 interactions (1788), it should be noted that the

new CRM system in use has given us increased capacity to more accurately capture all instances of interaction with students and on their behalf for example, wellbeing presence and support at Student Support Meetings, individual case review meetings with external support providers such as Student Mental Health Service and is a more realistic reflection of the support provided by the Service for our students.

The total number of interactions with the students from AHSS was 6328. The highest percentages of interactions were with UG students (63%) across the entire Faculty. Of that 63%, the largest number of interactions took place with students from the School of Arts, English & Languages (1101), followed by HAPP, QBS (819), Law (740) and SSESW (408). Considering their lower referral numbers, the number of interactions with UG QBS students is higher than expected and the same is true for the interaction numbers with their PGT cohort which are the highest, at 415, of all Schools within the Faculty. This would suggest that the wellbeing support required by the QBS UG & PGT cohorts is more extensive and that their concerns may be more complex and resolved less quickly.

### 3. Engagement with Student Wellbeing: Gender By Level of Study



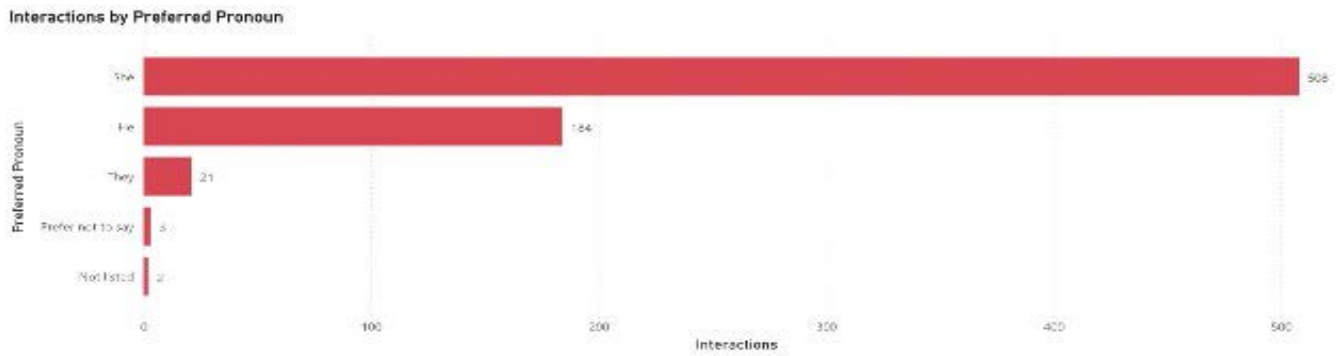
Research has consistently reported that males seek support for wellbeing and mental health concerns in lower numbers than their female peers. From the above graph we can see that those students who identify as female engaged with Student Wellbeing more than those who identify as male across every level of study, which is consistent with last year's figures. Across the Faculty, females make up 60% of the student population, males 39.5% and only a very small percentage of students ( $\leq 1\%$ ) who identify as non-binary which were recorded in 3 Schools (AEL, HAPP and SSESW).

The overall breakdown of engagement by gender with the service is as follows:

Female – 799 (73%)  
 Male – 297 (27%)

The data would suggest that males are not accessing the service to the same levels as females and in lower numbers than would be expected given the Faculty population gender data. This would appear to be especially evident at PGT level where females are 3 times more likely than their male counterparts to engage with Student Wellbeing.

## 4. Interactions by Preferred Pronoun

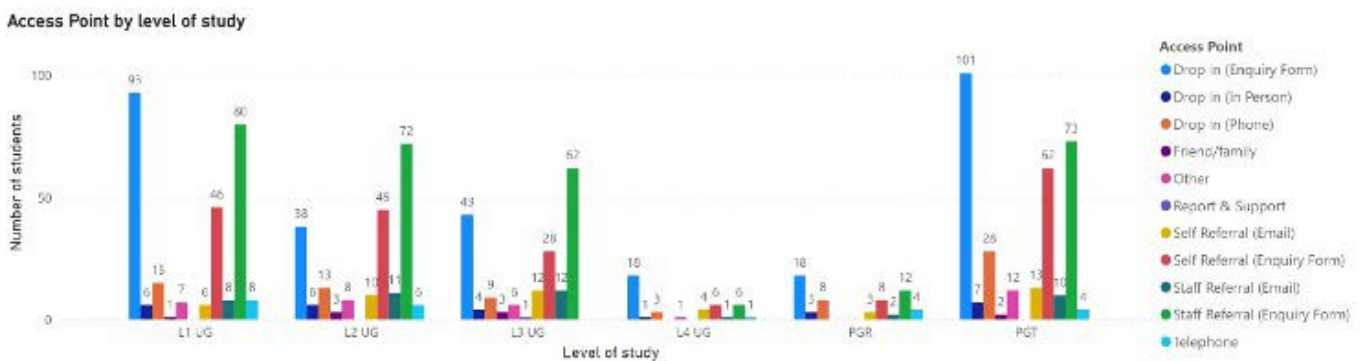


Of the 1089 referrals made from AHSS, 718 of these students opted to select their preferred pronoun to Student Wellbeing, with the breakdown below:

She – 46.3%  
 He – 16.8%  
 They – 1.9%  
 Prefer not to say – 0.27%  
 Not Listed – 0.18%

Reporting on the pronoun breakdown of referrals is an important step in creating an inclusive and respectful environment that recognises and values the diversity of gender identities among service users. It promotes a culture of sensitivity and understanding, which is crucial for the well-being and satisfaction of all individuals engaging with the service.

## 5. Access Point by Level of Study



Common trends on how AHSS students are initially accessing the service:

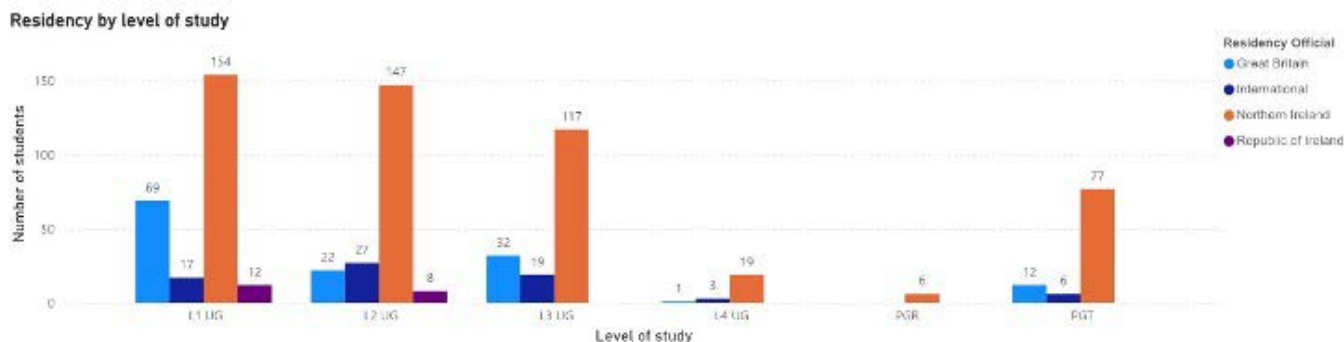
Self-referral via Drop-in, whether in person, by phone or enquiry form, is the most frequently used entry mechanism into the WellBeing Service for most UG and Postgraduate students,

There has been a marked increase in staff referring students into the service across the Faculty in 22/23. In academic year 21/22, staff referrals accounted for around 22% of total referrals into the service and this has increased to 32% this year across the whole Faculty. This is an encouraging development which indicates that Schools have become more familiar with the referral process and are engaging more with it to seek appropriate support for students.

UG students tend to access the service most at Level 1, with a slight decrease at Levels 2 and 3.

Interestingly, more PGT students access the service than those in UG Level 1 courses while PGR students are least likely to self-refer to the service or to be referred by staff.

## 6. Residency by Level of Study



Local NI students (who make up 63% of the AHSS student population) access student wellbeing in greater numbers (520) than any other cohort at all levels of study, followed by 136 GB students (who make up just 8% of AHSS student population and who did not access the service at PGR level).

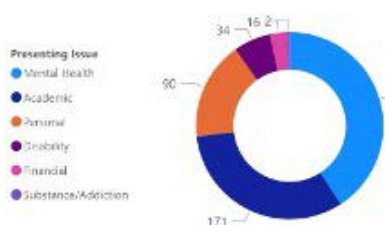
Despite making up 24% of the AHSS student population, International Students access the Student Wellbeing Service in relatively small numbers (72), particularly in comparison to GB students (136) who have a much smaller cohort. None accessed the service at PGR level and only 6 accessed the service at PGT level.

ROI students (2% of AHSS student population) make up the smallest proportion of the overall Faculty population and present to Wellbeing in the smallest numbers (20).

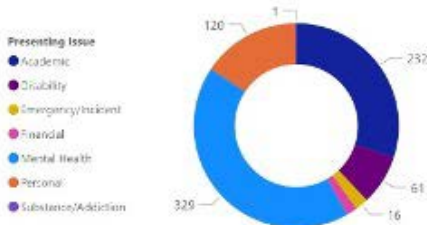
This would suggest that wellbeing initiatives that target GB and international students, and particularly but not solely at PGR level, should be an area of focus for the service and Faculty moving forward.

## 7. Presenting Issue by School

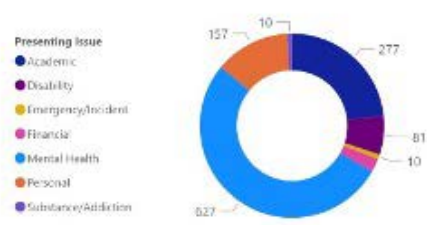
Presenting Issue for SSESW



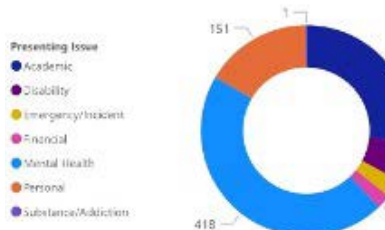
Presenting Issue for SLAW



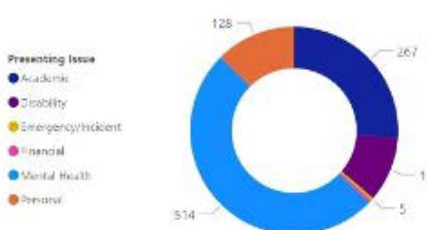
Presenting Issue for SAEL



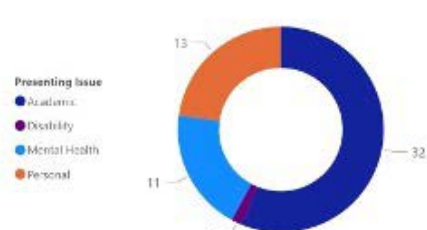
Presenting Issue for SSGT



Presenting Issue for SHAPP



Presenting Issue for IPLS



Presenting issues and triggers are often incredibly varied and widespread with a significant overlap between academic and non-academic issues. This reinforces that students' personal and academic lives are deeply intertwined, inter-connected and often unrelated to issues on the students' programme. In recent years the most common presenting issues have remained the same - Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Academic pressures. This correlates with the recent Students' Union OMNI survey. It is anticipated that data in this report will offer a helpful understanding of the issues being experienced by students and within the Faculty grouping. This in turn will enable Faculty Wellbeing Advisers to work alongside

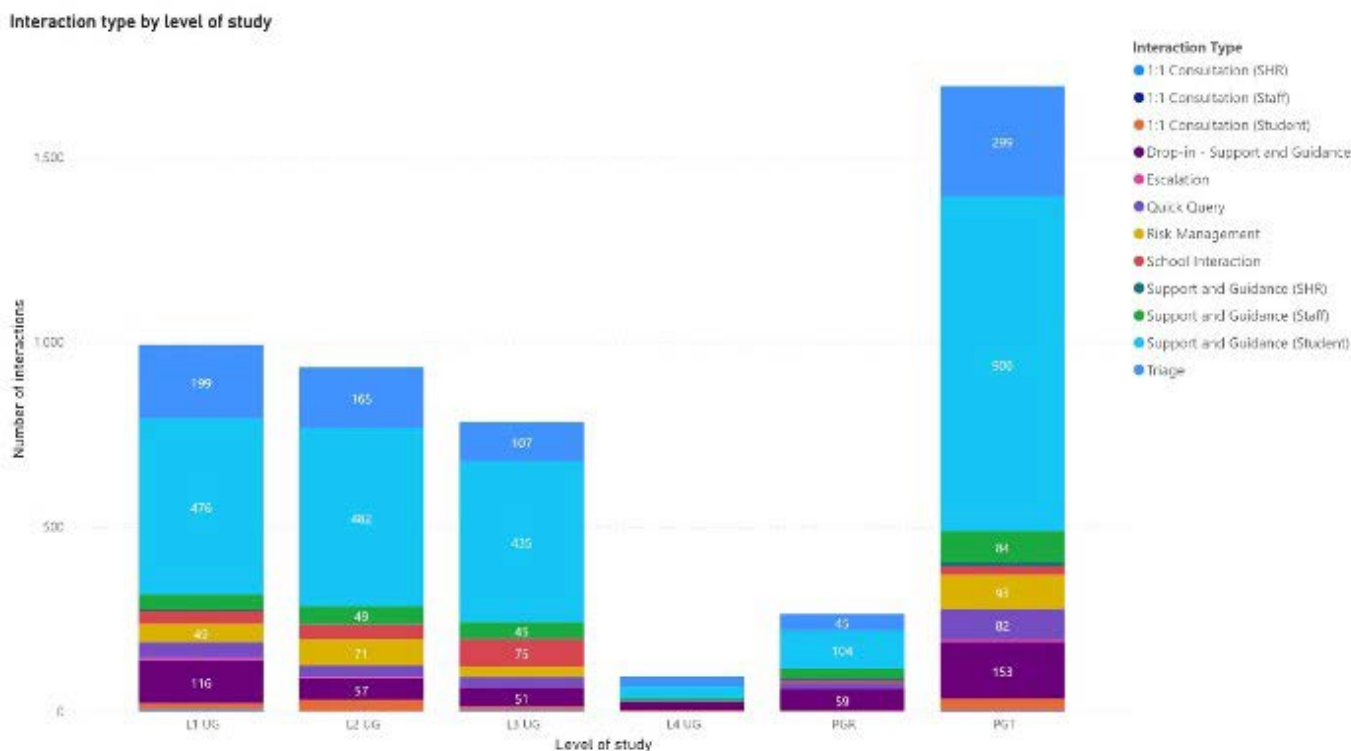
Schools to develop and deliver preventive wellbeing initiatives that respond to student needs and support staff supporting students in the academic environment.

Across the Faculty, mental health concerns continue to be the issues most commonly cited by students accessing Student Wellbeing support closely followed in the majority of schools by academic concerns with the exception of IPLS where more students cited academic rather than mental health concerns.

Interestingly, Queens Business School had the largest numbers of students across the Faculty who presented with concerns about incidents or emergencies. This may be linked to the high proportion of international students in their population as we know that increasing numbers of international students are accessing Report + Support.

In academic year 2021-2022, personal issues were the third most commonly cited reason for presenting at Student Wellbeing by AHSS students. That trend continues this academic year and includes bereavements, family and relationship breakdowns and difficulties, caring responsibilities and terminal diagnosis of a close family member. It is encouraging that students presenting have recognised that wider stressors can impact their engagement in their studies and their university experience and that they have felt comfortable to come to seek support and advice about them at university.

### 8. Interaction Type by Level of Study



For this academic year, we have recorded interactions across a number of main categories and plan to refine this further as we further develop our CRM system in the new academic year.

Students continue to engage with the range of Intervention and support options available through the Wellbeing Service with 1 to 1 consultations and support and guidance being the mostly frequently accessed across the Faculty at all levels of study.

The graph above demonstrates that the vast majority of interactions consist of direct student facing support provision by Student Wellbeing Staff during triage, through offering support and guidance and 1 to 1 Faculty and Safe and Healthy Relationships Wellbeing Adviser consultations.

Increasingly we have engaged with other staff across the University including staff within Schools to either provide support and guidance for staff supporting students or to offer wellbeing support during School interactions such as joint case review work with Student Support Officers, presence at Student Support meetings or during the Support to Continue Study process. Through the CRM we have for the first time been able to track where we have given support to staff who are supporting students. While we believe that there is some under recording as much of this work can be informal – it is worth noting. Often this involves reassuring staff on actions they have taken in support of a student, or undertaking confidential conversations about a

student to advise staff on the best course of action, how to approach a difficult conversation with a student, or how to encourage the student to engage with support services.

Interestingly, PGT student interactions make up almost a quarter (23%) of all AHSS student interactions compared to 63% for all UG levels combined and 13% of our interactions relate to PGR students. This would suggest that the wellbeing support required by the AHSS PGT & PGR cohorts require more contact with the Wellbeing Adviser and/or Assistant than with the UG cohort and that their concerns may be more complex and less quickly resolved.

## **Students at Risk**

Schools, and therefore the Wellbeing Service, have reported an increase in the numbers of students who are presenting at risk. Students at risk are defined as students who are reporting they are at risk of suicide and/or serious self-harm. Some students are also categorised as “at risk” if they are likely to be a risk to others. However, as they are referred into the service, they are assessed by a Wellbeing Assessment Manager and support is agreed. In 2022-23, we created a second full-time Grade 7 Wellbeing Assessment Manager post within the service to support with risk management.

All students presenting in distress to the service are taken seriously, with each case triaged to assess the level of risk. Options are to either de-escalate the student using internal team members or, where the risk is too high, support the student to access statutory services. It is the position of the University that statutory services have primary responsibility, skills and clinical expertise to respond to individuals in mental health crisis. External referral options include GP, a direct referral to the Belfast Trust Student Mental Health Service and Inspire Psychological Therapies. On occasion where a student is thought to be experiencing an acute mental health concern, they would be supported to access emergency medical support through A&E.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues across the University, for example, in Security, the Library, Estates and Accommodation to manage high risk incidents and to co-ordinate risk management support for students in crisis situations.

## **Links with Emergency Contacts**

The University collects emergency contact details from all students at registration. This is used in emergency situations, normally defined as when there is a threat to life, or threat of harm to others. Additionally, the Disability and Wellbeing Service ask students for a ‘Trusted Contact’ when the student engages with services. As part of a managed and supportive conversation it is explained to students that we believe that a ‘Trusted Contact’ can be a useful additional source of support at the appropriate time. In that context it is rare that a student refuses to give details for a close friend or family member. Trusted contacts are then normally only contacted with the students’ knowledge and consent.

It is our experience that students are normally content for the University to contact their nominated contact. There are rare occasions where consent is withdrawn, or students threaten to harm themselves if contact is made. These are extremely difficult judgements for colleagues, who are not working in a clinical framework, to make and advice is sought on a case-by-case basis from medical professionals. However, the latter are bound by stricter professional boundaries in relation to patient confidentiality meaning that the University can feel vulnerable in making such judgements in what can be very challenging circumstances.

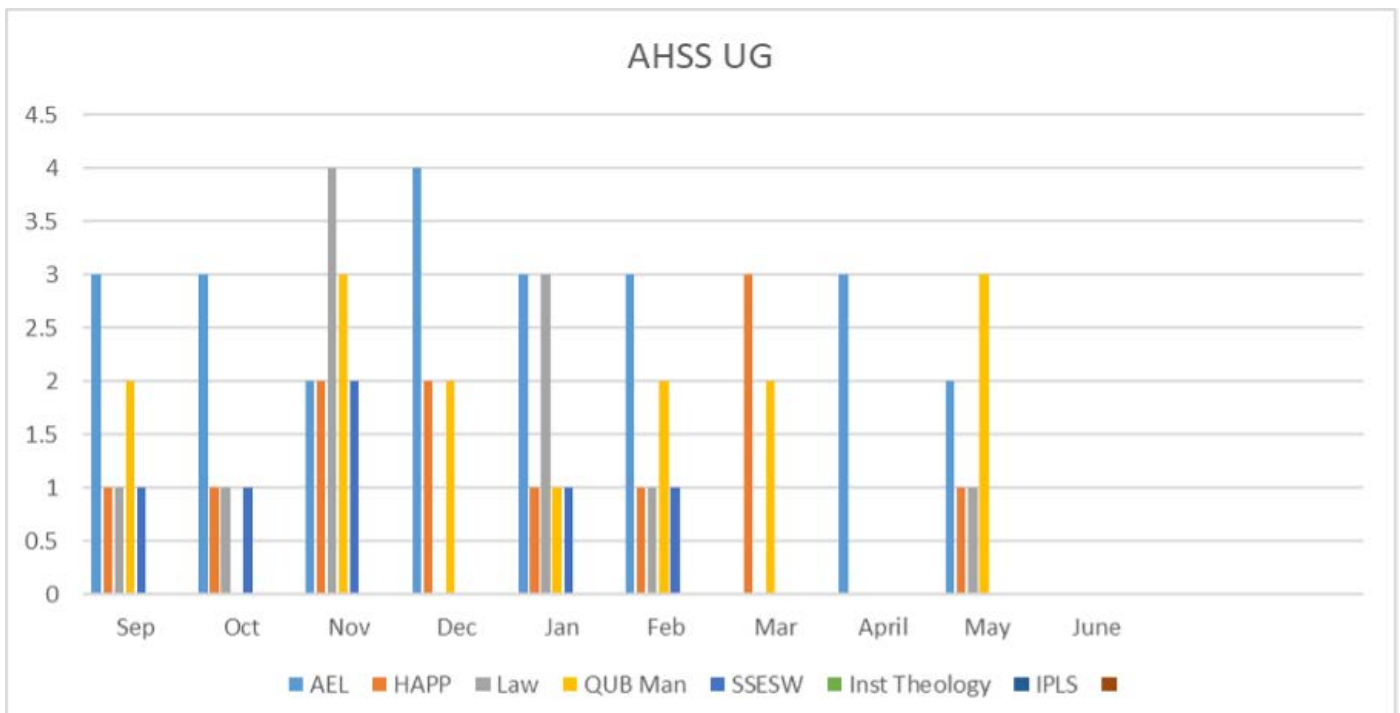
Where a student presents to a service in crisis and a Trusted Contact has not been given, the University would revert to the Emergency Contact procedure. Where there is refusal to use a Trusted Contact or there is need for an Emergency Contact to be contacted without student consent, this decision is escalated to senior management.

## **AHSS Risk Report September 2022 to June 2023 - Undergraduates.**

Wellbeing Services Risk Management protocol requires staff to risk assess students at each intervention. When a student presents with medium to high or high risk, staff should consult with a Wellbeing Assessment Manager who will consider and agree the most appropriate course of action. Students deemed at risk will be added to the Students at Risk List which is reviewed by management and staff on a weekly basis. Wellbeing Services work closely with internal and external services until risk has been managed, at which point the student will be removed from the risk list.

For the purpose of this report, students will only be counted once, on the month they are added to the risk list, although they may remain on the risk list for several weeks or months. They may also require multiple interventions during this period.

The graph below displays the students added to the Students at Risk list who are Undergraduate Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The key provided at the bottom of the graph shows the breakdown by School per month (Sep to June 22/23).



A total of 67 students from AHSS presented at risk during the period September 2022 to June 2023.

The graph above shows students from the School of Arts, English and Languages presented at risk for 8 out of 10 months with the highest number of students at risk in December (4 students) across all AHSS.

The School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics also recorded students at risk for 8 of the 10 months.

The School of Law and Management School both recorded students at risk for 7 out of the 10 months, with Law showing the highest presentation of risk in November (4).

Students from Social Sciences, Education and Social Work presented at risk during 5 of the 10 months.

It is anticipated that this information will assist Schools to identify the key periods when students appear to be struggling and are most likely to require additional support during the year. More granular information can be made available to Schools about the reason for risk and level of study of the students in each month to help better interpret what mitigations, if any, can be implemented by the School.

## Referral to External Support

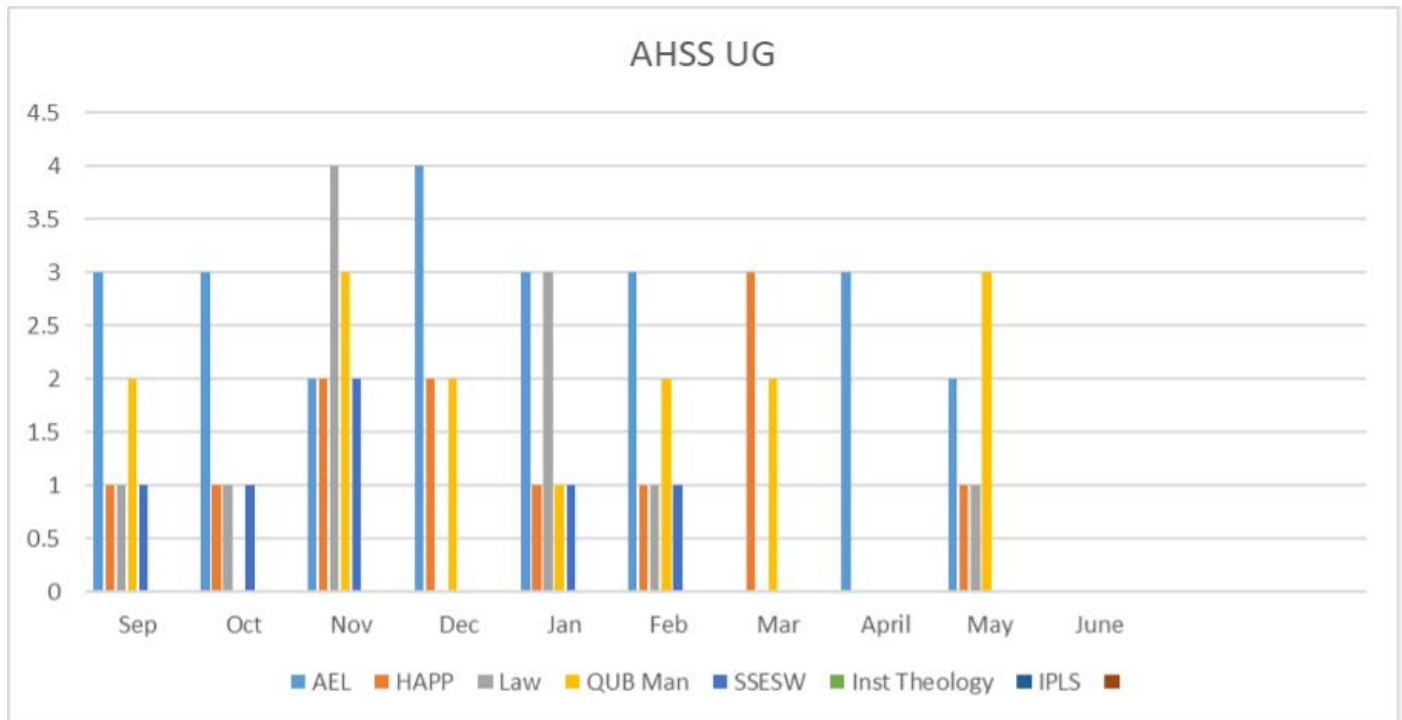
Student Wellbeing work closely with a range of external agencies, for specialized and tailored support to students. This includes the following organisations with which the University has a formal Service Level Agreement to provide services for our students:

- o Student Psychological Therapies (Counselling) through Inspire Wellbeing
- o Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners
- o Belfast Trust Student Mental Health Project

While there is no formal agreement in place, the Wellbeing Service does routinely refer students to the following for very specialist support:

- o DAISY - Drug and Alcohol Intervention Service
- o CEDAR transition support
- o NEXUS - supporting individuals impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

**Number of Undergraduate AHSS Students accessing Counselling through Inspire Wellbeing September 2022 to June 2023.**



The graph above shows the number of students accessing support for counselling through Inspire for AHSS broken down by School per month. A total of 238 referrals were recorded for the Faculty of AHSS for the period September 2022 to June 2023.

The highest number of referrals were recorded in November (38) followed by February (36) then March (33) and October (32).

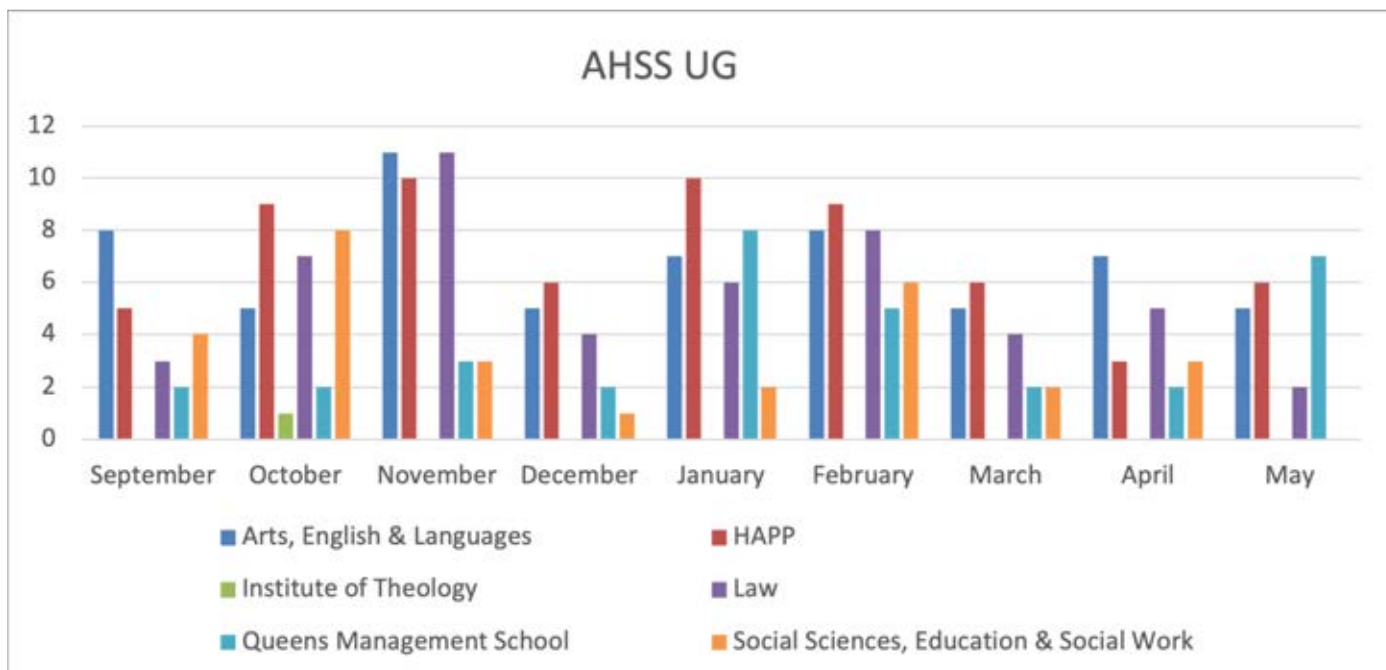
School of HAPP recorded the highest number of referrals for the year (64) followed by AEL (61) then Law (50), School of Management (33) and SSESW (29).

**BHSCT Student Mental Health Referrals - AHSS UG and PG students 2022-23**

In addition, we are a trusted referrer to the Student Mental Health Project through Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. This service provides a direct referral pathway for students with new and emergent mental health issues and this year has been supported by a Band 7 Community Practice Nurse (CPN), Band 6 Mental Health Practitioner and a 0.5fte Psychiatrist. Typically, students who have emergent, undiagnosed mental health conditions are referred to the service via their GP or via a “trusted referral route” through Student Wellbeing. Students must have an address in the Belfast Trust to access the service.

BHSCT Student Mental Health is a Tier 3 service funded by Belfast Trust, Queens University and Ulster University. Students with significant new and emerging mental health issues can be referred to the service by their GP or a Trusted Referrer within Wellbeing Services, they must have a Belfast address. Students are triaged into the service and may be seen by a psychiatrist and can be seen by SMH MH specialists, prescribed medication or referred to appropriate services. Students benefit from being seen a lot faster than they would if referred to the Community Mental Health Hub. Student Mental Health can also link in with Wellbeing Services who can support students with School meetings or registering with Disability Services if necessary.





Student Mental Health (SMH) data set captures undergraduate and postgraduate so unfortunately, therefore this data cannot be shown by level of study.

The chart above shows a total of 79 referrals recorded as AHSS students were received by SMH. The highest number of referrals were for AEL students (21) followed by Queens Management School (16), then HAPP (15), Law (14) and SSESW (6). The last bar represents 7 students from AHSS for whom the individual School was not collect.

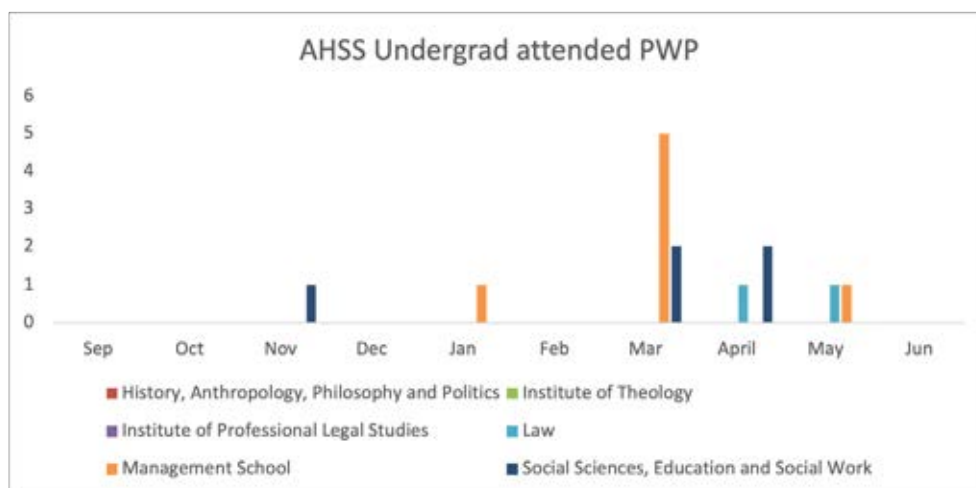
Although this service is in part funded by the University, it is governed by the NHS data protection protocols and, therefore, we have limited access to data about the use of the service beyond referrals. For example, we do not have access to the numbers of interventions each student receives beyond the initial assessment. The University does, however, see this as an invaluable service for supporting students who are often in considerable crisis. The most common issues reported by the service are depression and anxiety, with students not from Northern Ireland forming half of the ongoing case load.

### Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners Service Referrals

The Wellbeing Service has been involved in a project for the past two years, providing placements for Ulster University Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP) Masters students, who provide low level cognitive behavioral therapy for referred students. They carry out an initial assessment followed by up to 6 sessions of therapy, where appropriate. Both Disability and Wellbeing Service can refer directly into this service where mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression has been disclosed by the student.

This year we were allocated two students who commenced therapeutic interventions in November 2022 ending in June 2023.

The table shows the monthly number of Undergraduate students from the Faculty of AHSS referred to the PWP Service during the year 2022-23, divided by School.



The table above shows that a total of 21 referrals were made by Wellbeing Services to the PWP Service during November 2022 to June 2023. A total of 7 students from QMS engaged in CBT with 5 receiving therapy in March.

SSESW recorded a total of 5 students engaging in CBT, 1 in November and in the later months March and April.

School of Law recorded 1 student accessing service in April and 1 in May.

Overall, the highest level of referral to CBT was from students from Faculty of AHSS.

### Students Registered with Disability Services

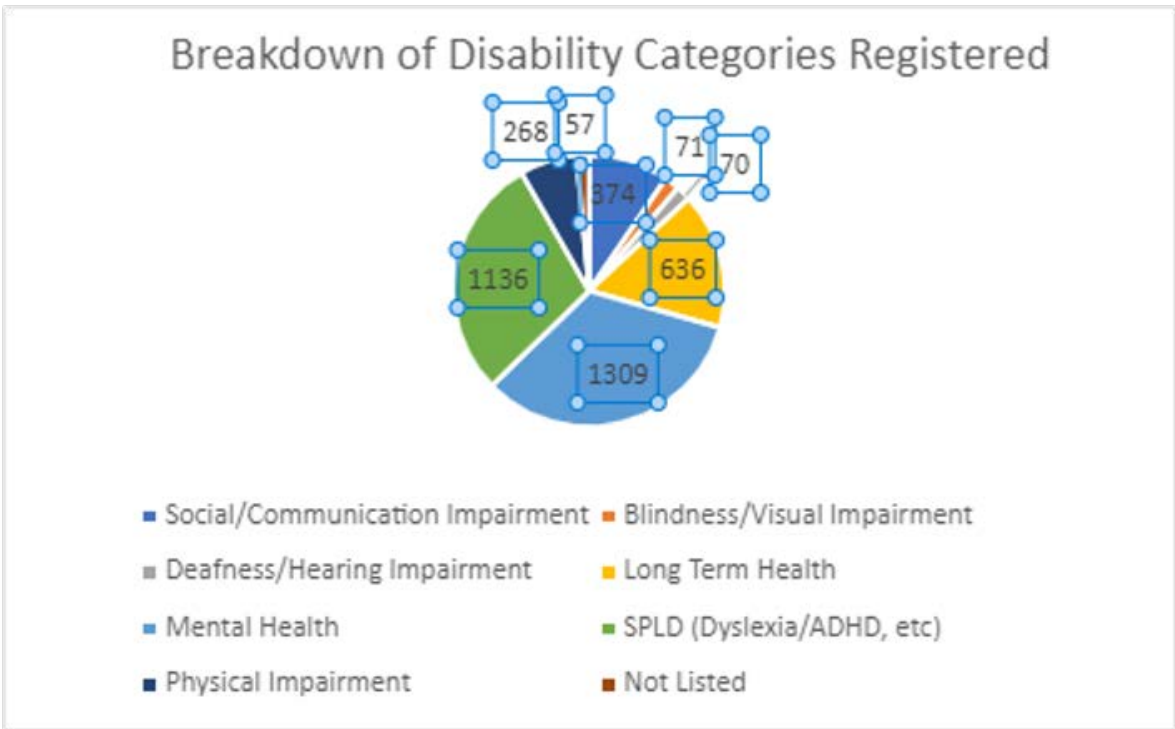
Students with a disability or long-term condition including those with a mental health condition are encouraged to link with the University’s Disability Service to consider their individual needs and identify relevant support recommendations for their chosen course of study and wider participation in University life.

Disability Services continue to see growing numbers of students registering with the service with a number of students declaring more than one condition. In recent years, the highest category of students registering with the service has been mental health.

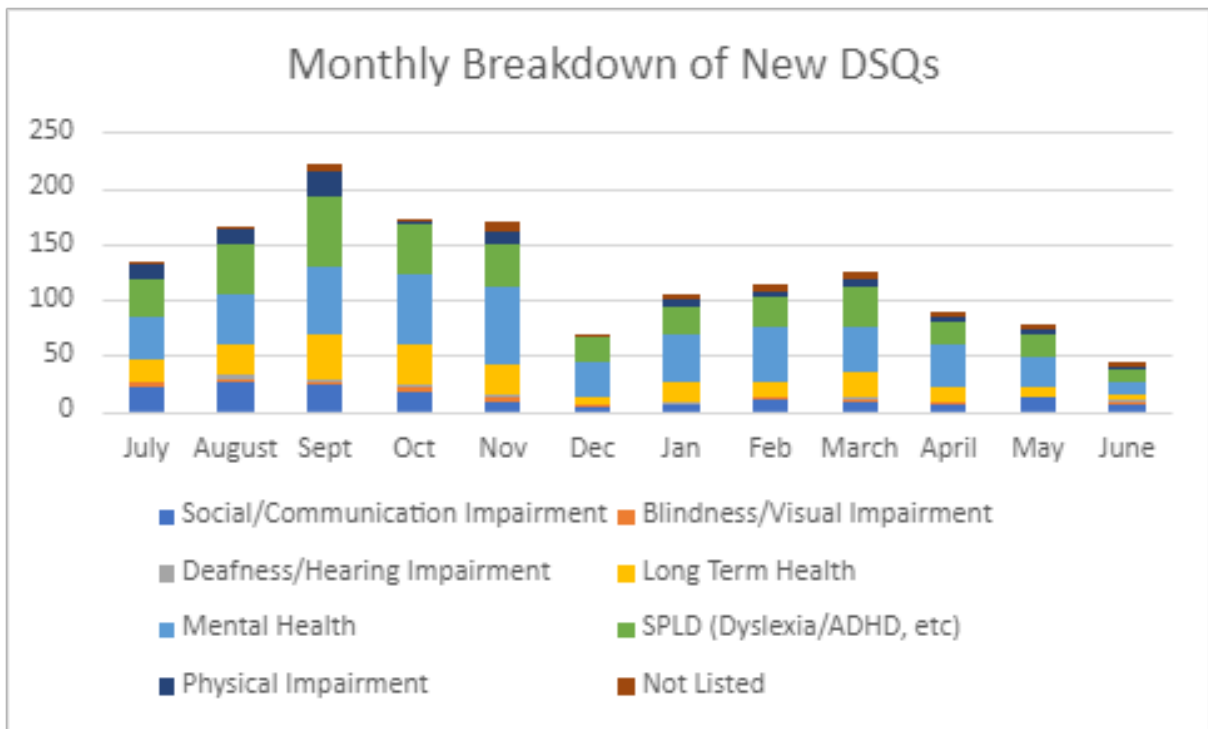
**3,161 registered students**

**1,134 DSQs received since July '22**

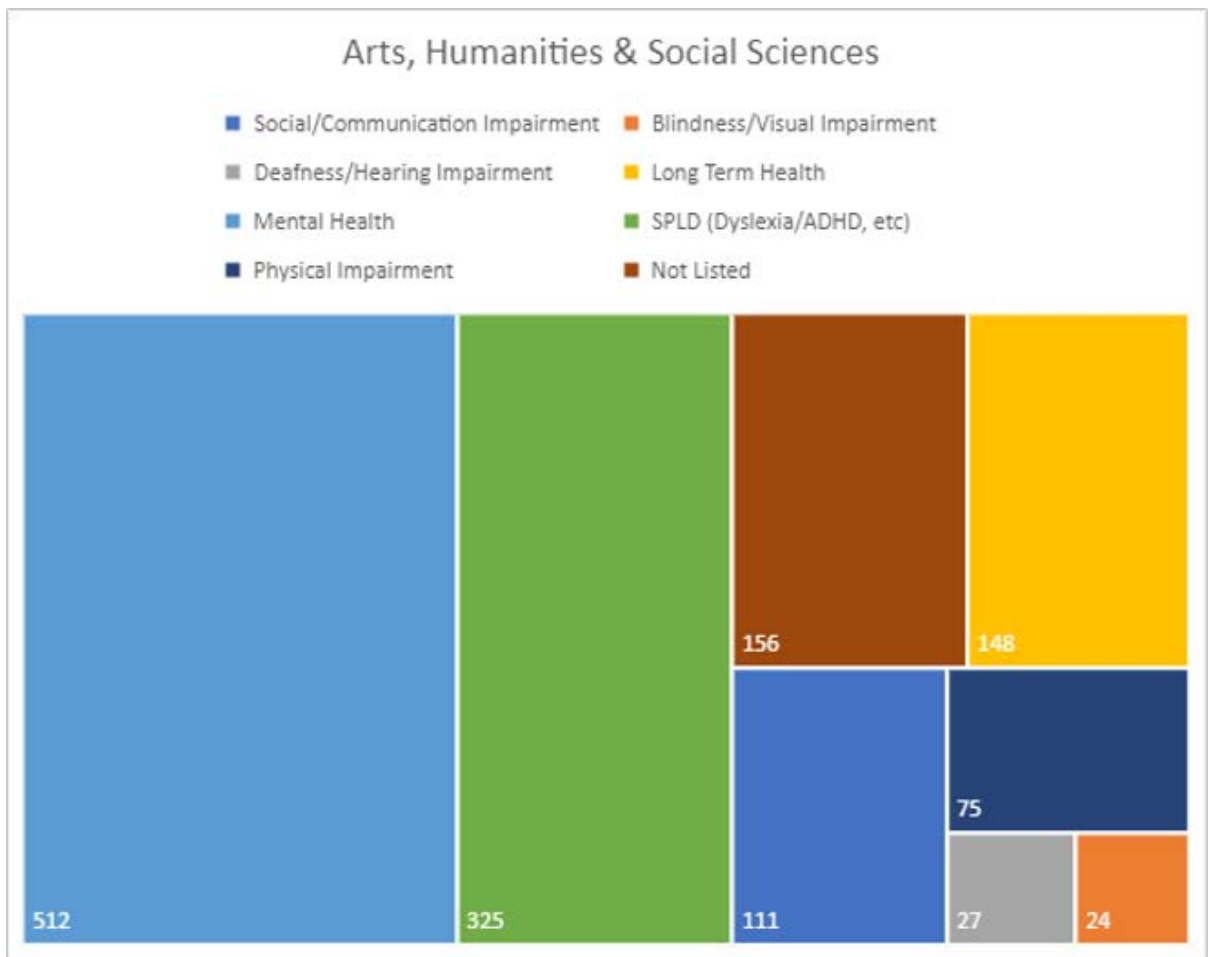
**1,064 new ISSAs completed since July '22**



Breakdown of conditions supported by Disability Services



*Disability Service Questionnaires (DSQ) received by month*



*Faculty Breakdown by condition*

Disability Services offer support to students throughout their academic studies from transition to the University on to graduation. The team promote the support available to prospective and current students through representation at open days and offer holder events.

In April of this year the Disability Offer Holder event took place on campus, with the team welcoming over 130 attendees to Mandela Hall. Prospective students were provided with essential information on disability support and the process of registering with Disability Services.

The event included information sessions, engaging discussions and motivating stories from current students who have thrived with the assistance of disability support services. They shared their personal experiences, highlighting the positive impact these resources can have on one's academic journey.

The team continue to encourage students to engage with the Service with plans to launch a new service video in the new academic year with the hope of encouraging eligible students to contact the Service and avail of the support. Students can contact the Service to review their support at any point during their academic journey.

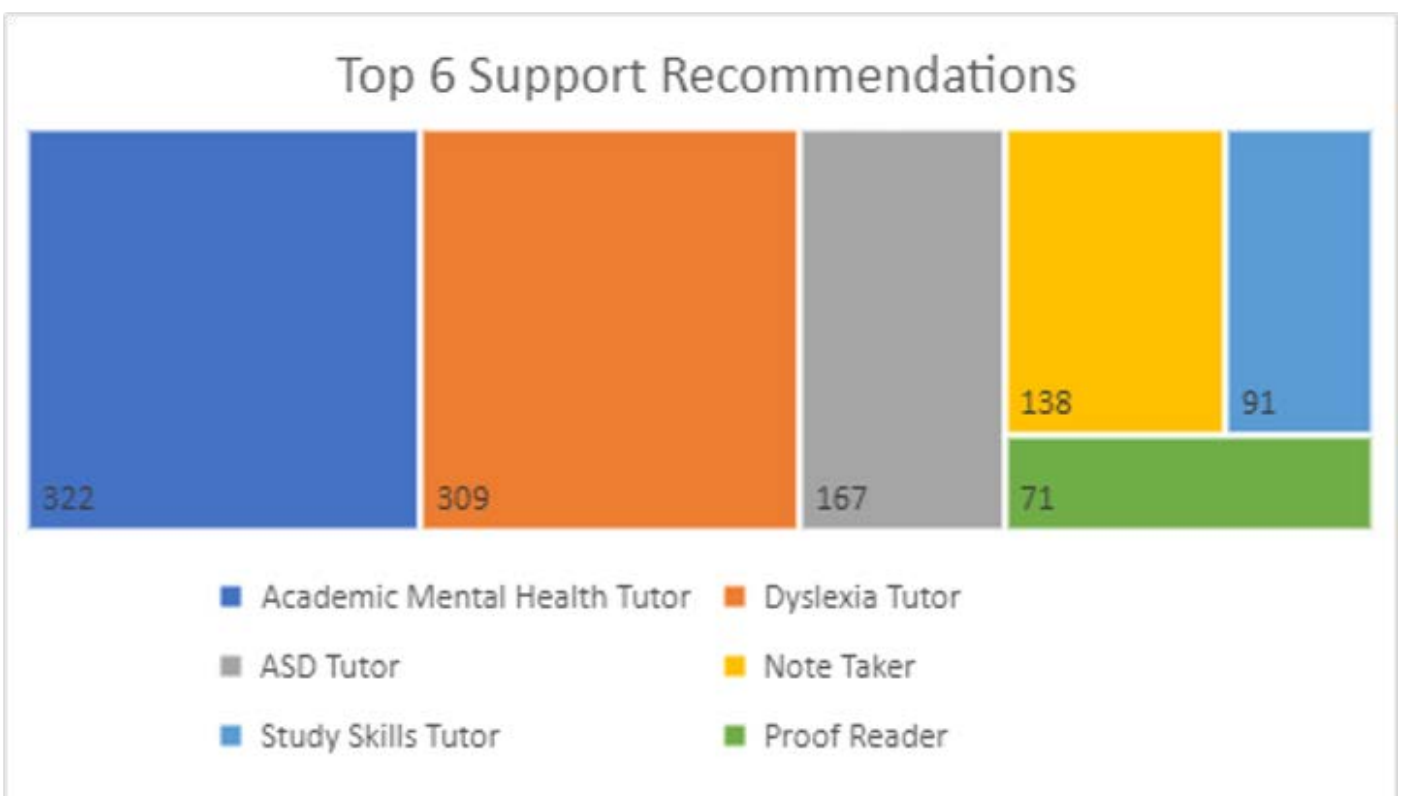
Disability Services work collaboratively with a range of internal and external agencies to support students through their studies and beyond to prepare for graduation and future employment. This includes linking with colleagues in the Careers service and specialist employment services.

A new resource has been developed with the Learning Development Service (LDS) to encourage students to take responsibility for managing deadlines offering help and guidance to make the right decision for their studies whilst managing their condition.

Disability Services aim to empower students to become independent learners by increasing awareness and student engagement outside of HEI reasonable adjustments including use of funded one-to-one support and assistive technology. The Needs Assessment Centre has assessed 313 students this year for funded support and the Register of Support Providers have matched 939 students with one to one support.

### Top 6 Support Recommendations

- Academic Mental Health Tutor (322)
- Dyslexia Tutor (309)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder Tutor (167)
- Note Taker (138)
- Study Skills Tutor (91)
- Proof Reader (71)



Assistive Technology (AT) offers a great support, with many students recommended specialist software through DSA funding and assistive software available to all students in the campus libraries and student computing centres. The Service has committed to working with external AT providers to deliver at least two AT demonstrations per year, encouraging students to engage with and effectively use the assistive technology provided via the University.

The Service also continues to support staff supporting students by providing specialist advice and guidance including identifying appropriate support mechanisms. Disability Officers continue to link with staff across the University and deliver bespoke training, which this year has included Disability Awareness, Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SEND O) and condition focused training such as supporting neurodiverse students.

The team welcome queries from staff supporting students and remain committed to supporting staff and students to identify the relevant support path for students, including those experiencing difficulty gaining a diagnosis and associated supporting documents. Staff and students are encouraged to contact the team at any point during the academic year for ongoing advice and support.

### **Service Wide Developments in 2022-23**

- Student Wellbeing carried out 3099 Wellbeing Assessments (triage) during this academic year, with the access point for 1178 of those being self-referrals through drop in, 813 self-referrals through the online student contact us form and 885 staff referrals in addition to family/friend and report and support referrals.
- This constitutes a significant increase in access to support compared to the same period in 2021-2022.
- Reasons for increased access include a full return to campus and the opening of One Elmwood Student Services, better visibility in One Elmwood and better data recording following the combination of the Wellbeing and the Disability CRMs.
- The high staff referral rates in 2022-2023 would also suggest that increased collaboration and partnership working between Student Wellbeing and staff in Schools is having a positive impact. Given high profile cases in the sector which implied a failure in appropriate referrals to support services, the Disability and Wellbeing Team undertook a round of meetings with School Boards to ensure that staff were confident in referring students and/or knew where to access support for students. All or X Schools in AHSS invited the team to attend a School Board meeting.
- Most common reasons given for accessing the Service include mental health, academic, and personal issues. This is no change from previous years.
- There has been an increase in students using the Report and Support reporting tool to report incidents of bullying, harassment, hate crime and sexual misconduct. We have seen greater numbers of international students, particularly Chinese students, reporting that they have fallen victim to sophisticated online scamming schemes over the last academic year. (see separate report for Report and Support data 2022-23)
- While total risk numbers are similar to the previous academic year, the complexity of risk cases has increased and management of those is labour intensive for the Service.

There is an increase in students with disabilities registering with Disability Services. The total is now 3161 with mental health being the highest category (1309) followed by Specific learning difficulty (1136) and long term medical condition (636).

- The team was involved in reviewing a number of policies this year: A Suicide Safe Policy, Trusted Contacts, Out of Hours Support, Fitness to Continue in Study, Short Term Impairments, Supporting Students Under the Age of 18, Policy on Alcohol and Drugs, Student Disability Policy, Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Service also been working on the Disability and Wellbeing Section of the Assessment Framework Hub in preparation for its launch ahead of the new academic year and have worked in partnership with the Learning Development Service to develop the Healthy Learners Canvas module.
- The Service has recently introduced a new CRM, integrated with the existing Disability Services system. This has allowed for more accurate record keeping within the Service, tracking all touch points and contact with students, ultimately offering a holistic picture of the student journey across the two teams. Anecdotally the team have reported an increase in students accessing the service since moving to One Elmwood. This twinned with more accurate recording of interactions and a return to face-to-face teaching, has resulted in a significant increase in data.
- A dedicated School Student Support Liaison Officer post was established to work with staff in Schools as they support students. The Officer has also established a Community of Practice which will meet six times per year.

- The Service is currently implementing the use of Faculty-facing micro-teams made up of a Disability Officer, Faculty UG Wellbeing Adviser, PG Wellbeing Adviser, Assistant Disability and Wellbeing Adviser and Mind Your Mood Ambassador across all 3 Faculties and for the PG cohort. These micro-teams will work closely with Student Support Officers and other key staff within Schools to ensure that there is a holistic and joined up approach to Wellbeing support provision for students.
- The Service rolled out an E-Learning Module for staff to do individually or as part of team training to give staff confidence in managing a range of common scenarios involving student mental health / ill health.
- Wellbeing Team members were deployed to help Schools as part of the response to the MAB. Staff attended School meetings, ran dedicated drop in clinics and provided specific social media content to support students
- The Mind You Mood (MYM) student led initiative celebrated its 10th year as a programme and continued to provide weekly wellbeing events

## **Recommendations for 2023-24**

- The Disability and Wellbeing Senior Management Team, along with the Faculty Wellbeing Adviser, Assistant Wellbeing Adviser and Disability Officer continue the practice of meeting annually with School Management Boards – to help embed the partnership approach to supporting students.
- The Faculty Wellbeing Adviser and Assistant Wellbeing Adviser continue to work closely with and build strong relationships with the AHSS Schools – in particular the Student Support leads in Schools.
- Further develop the AHSS Wellbeing Drop-in clinics. In 2023-24 the plan is to move these to a full Faculty undergraduate drop-in. These will take place every Thursday morning in the AHSS Social Space, 50 University Road from 10am-11.30am. The Faculty Wellbeing Adviser will lead on this with an aim to create connections within the student cohort, signpost to further wellbeing services and provide events at specific times of the year e.g World Mental Health Day.
- Schools engage with the School Student Support Liaison Officer to identify support needs for staff as they support students – including the roll out of the E-Learning Module and specific training on how to implement the revised Support to Study Procedure.
- Schools work with the Student Support Liaison Officer to identify if there are particular cohorts of staff requiring training in student support – such as Technicians.
- Schools continue to utilize the Transition Support modules on canvas as well as embed other skills modules developed by the Learning Development Service – all of which are designed to help students be healthy learners.
- Schools use the newly launched Assessment Support Hub as a tool to help students engage early with assessment support to help mitigate against mental health crisis at the time of assessment.
- The Faculty UG Wellbeing Adviser, in partnership with the PG Wellbeing Adviser, Disability Officer and Student Support Officer (or other key School contact in Schools without an SSO role) will set up monthly/ bi-monthly 'student of concern' joint case review meetings, commencing in two Schools (AEL and QBS) to facilitate prompt identification of students who may require additional academic and/or disability-related and/or wellbeing support and implementation of the appropriate supports.
- This years data would suggest that wellbeing initiatives that target GB and international students, and particularly but not solely at PGR level, should be an area of focus for the Service and Faculty moving forward.

# Student Feedback

“I wanted to thank you for taking me on and providing a space for me to talk, process, and get support! Having a space and a trusted adult take time to listen to me is much appreciated! Thank you for listening, hearing me, and being open to me!”

**HAP Student**

“Thank you so much for the food voucher – you’re such a legend. I contacted my Academic Mental Health Tutor and we are back on for our sessions starting next week. Thanks for all your help and support Tara – not sure what I’d do without you”.

**2nd year SSESW Student.**

“Just letting you know I had my first Inspire counselling session today. It went well and the counsellor is very nice and I have my next appointment in 2 weeks. Thank you so much for helping me phone them, I wouldn’t have been able to do it myself”.

**1st year Criminology student.**

“Thank you so much for taking the time with me, I really appreciate it. My Advisor of Studies has got back to me and we are meeting next week. Again, I want to say thank you again for everything, I really appreciate it”.

**2nd year HAP Student.**

“Thanks for checking in, both Inspire and the Needs Assessment Centre have got in contact with me since we spoke Thank you so much for all your help, its meant that I’ve been able to secure some support starting next week which should hopefully help considerably. Thank you!”

**1st Yr HAP Student**

“As a Student Support Administrator, in a brand-new post, having such great connections with Student Wellbeing has been like a lifeline for me. Knowing that I can get advice before meeting with a student as well as follow up advice has really been instrumental in helping me help the students. Also, having the single point of contact with the AHSS faculty wellbeing officer, Tara McCready, has allowed me to build a strong trusting relationship which continues to be of a huge support to me.”

**AHSS**

“Thank you for e-mailing me and again for meeting with me. I had my phonecall with the Community Mental Health Team and I also contacted my GP and I can collect the letter this week and get registered with Disability Services. Thank you again for reaching out and making me aware of the supports available!!”

**2nd year Law student.**

“Thank you for speaking with me today, I feel a lot better now! I will definitely think about CBT over the weekend, I really appreciate all your help and support!”

**3rd year Sociology student.**