



STUDENTS' UNIONS' ADVICE SERVICE

Annual Report

JUNE 2016 - JUNE 2017

Students'
Unions'
Advice
Service

We'll help you **explore** your options.



FOREWORD

SOPHIE BUCK, CUSU-GU WELFARE AND RIGHTS OFFICER 2016-17

I've been proud to be the lead elected sabbatical officer of such an important independent support service for students this past year. It is incredibly valuable the breadth of knowledge and range of connections the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) has built up, and the thoroughness with which it supports its service users. It is no surprise that the number of students accessing the Service has increased on last year and that service users' satisfaction remains high.

We've continued to improve the prominence of the SUAS this year. This has included adding mentions of the SUAS into relevant guidance documents, e.g. the revised intermission guidance for tutors and students and the 'When to Refer' document for departments and faculties, and obtaining Lisa, the Advice Service Manager, a place on the Health and Wellbeing Committee, on which a number of other prominent service providers sit. Moreover, we produced contact cards with the details of the SUAS and Nightline for new students, and raised particular awareness of the Service to College Welfare and Liberation Officers so that they are able to further promote it within their respective colleges. The next SUAS team will be able to further build on this increased awareness.

This year a key within-service development was also made: that sabbatical officers remain closely involved in the SUAS but no longer do advice casework. As a service, we believe that only having professional staff with a background in advice work and no conflicting commitments providing advice has multiple benefits to the Service. These benefits are direct, in terms of ensuring greater consistency in the advice provided and reducing risk involved, and indirect, by allowing sabbatical officers to better carry out their representational duties and thus be able to address systemic problems students come to the SUAS with via their campaigning and committee work. Unlike Nightline, the SUAS is not intended to be a peer-support service, and given the greater training and support sabbatical officers require compared to professional advisors, their involvement does not significantly assist with the Service's caseload. To better utilise sabbatical officers' time, experiences and representational influence, and ensure the Service remains led by the Students' Unions, regular and structured 'information sharing' and 'support and development' meetings between the SUAS advisors and sabbatical officers ensure the student-led nature of the Service. Overall, I see this change as necessary, widely beneficial and forward-thinking, one that will provide a base for further developments.

LISA DÉRY, ADVICE SERVICE MANAGER

This year, we have continued to experience an increase in the number of service-users accessing the Students' Unions' Advice Service, which is no doubt in part due to the dedication of the members of this year's team who have gone to great lengths to promote the Service.

With a team of elected sabbatical officers keen to focus on committee and campaign work, and larger demands being placed on the Service due to the increase in the number of service-users, we further analysed the allocation of our resources. This exercise highlighted that the in depth training and supervision required to support elected sabbatical officers to do advice casework, coupled with the decrease in their caseloads over the last few years due to their focus on committee and campaign work, actually reduced the capacity of the SUAS, as opposed to increasing it. This is because elected sabbatical officers were unable to

provide in advice casework the equivalent of the investment of time provided for their training and supervision.

In addition, both the CUSU and the GU Trustee boards had the desire to reduce the risk involved in having non-professionals providing casework. As such, the Advice Service is now staffed purely by professional advisors. It was a high priority however for both Unions to retain the student-led nature of the Advice Service. We have accomplished this by having regular structured meetings with the elected sabbatical officers where they can hear about the types of issues students are bringing to the Advice Service as well as continuing to contribute towards the development and promotion of the Service. It really does feel as though we have retained all of the positive aspects of having sabbatical officers involved in the Advice Service whilst eliminating any of the challenges and risks involved.

In particular this year, I have enjoyed building a strong relationship with the new Office of Student, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA). Our engagement was met with much enthusiasm and opportunities for discussion and feedback regarding the review of procedures were plentiful.

The feedback we received from students continues to be positive and demonstrates our determination to give every service user a positive experience of the Service.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now in its seventh year, the Students' Unions' Advice Service is a well-established component of the support network in place for students at the Collegiate University. The Service fulfils a vital function within this network - the provision of independent, confidential and professional advice to students. Whilst maintaining its clear independence, the Service has also developed strong links with a range of other service providers, and as such is able to make a strong contribution to student support at Cambridge.

In 2016-17, the Service operated with two full-time advisors, underpinning the professional aspect of the advice and support we were able to offer. The Service was accessed by 321 service users of which 273 were students. Students from 30 Colleges and a range of departments and institutions have come to us for advice. This represents a 65% growth in the number of students we worked with (and a 49% increase in service users) when compared to 2014-15. Our figures this past year are also greater than they were last year with 11% more student having accessed the Service (8% increase in service-users). For the first year since its inception, the Advice Service provided support to more postgraduates (52%) than undergraduate (41%).

Students approach the Service for help with a variety of issues. For example, students might come to us for help in understanding academic-related procedures such as examination reviews or allowances, with concerns over working relationships or their health and wellbeing, and a variety of other issues related to student life such as finance or intermission. The knowledge and experience of the Service has therefore continued to grow, and this is supplemented by professional training and development undertaken by the full-time advisors.

In October 2016, the sabbatical officers involved in the Service made the decision to cease doing casework with the intention of focusing on their campaign and committee work which they felt would have a positive impact on more students. In addition, they wanted to further professionalise the Service and reduce the possible risks related to providing casework by having a staff-only team of advisors. This change has worked well and the sabbatical officers continue to be heavily involved in the development and promotion of the Advice Service.

Through our membership of the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA), we have continued to expand our ability to provide advice on student finance matters, and 11% of our service-users sought advice in this area.

In 2016-17, strong links were created with the new Office of Student, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) and through the year there were many opportunities to meet with these colleagues to exchange information, ideas and feedback. Furthermore, information regarding the Students' Unions' Advice Service was included in much of the OSCCA's guidance and procedures thus alerting students at a crucial point that they can access free, independent and impartial information and advice on these matters.

The Service is pleased with the various ways in which it has developed over the past year. Its inclusion in various procedures appear to have proven to be effective, its co-location within the Offices of CUSU and the Graduate Union has continued to enhance the effectiveness of the team, and it has undertaken more awareness-raising activities than ever before. This work has also brought about a significant growth in the number of students we have supported. In summary, 2016-17 has been a successful year for the Advice Service, and we look forward to seeing this work continue to enhance student support at Cambridge.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE STUDENTS' UNIONS' ADVICE SERVICE

In 2016-17, the Students' Unions' Advice Service was composed of two professional advisors who provided individual support to students, and four elected sabbatical officers who assisted the team of staff with the leadership and development of the Service. To the Service, the sabbatical officers bring their experience as students of the Collegiate University, while staff members bring professional experience, knowledge and institutional memory. These different backgrounds contribute to the overall success and professionalism of the Students' Unions' Advice Service.

SUAS Teams 2016-17

Team of Advisors

- Lisa Déry (Advice Service Manager)
- Gemma Douglas (Advisor and maternity cover for Rachel Wilson)
- Rachel Wilson (July 2016)

Support and Development Team

- Lisa Déry (Advice Service Manager)
- Gemma Douglas (Advisor and maternity cover for Rachel Wilson)
- Sophie Buck (CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer and lead officer for the Advice Service)
- Roberta Huldish (CUSU Education Officer)
- Audrey Sebatindira (CUSU Women's Officer)
- Jessica Wing (CUSU Disabled Students' Officer)
- Ellie Chan (GU Vice-President)

SUAS Teams 2017-18

Team of Advisors

- Lisa Déry (Advice Service Manager)
- Rachel Wilson (Advisor)
- Gemma Douglas (Advisor, funding until February 2018)

Support and Development Team

- Lisa Déry (Advice Service Manager)
- Rachel Wilson (Advisor)
- Gemma Douglas (Advisor, funding until February 2018)
- Micha Carroll-Frazer (CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer and lead officer of the SUAS)
- Martha Krish (CUSU Education Officer)
- Lola Olufemi (CUSU Women's Officer)
- Florence Ould (CUSU Disabled Students' Officer)
- Ellie Chan (GU Vice-President)

3. STUDENTS' UNIONS' ADVICE SERVICE DEFINED

The Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) provides free, confidential, and independent advice, information and representation to all Cambridge University Students, undergraduate and graduate, from all 31 Colleges. Students can come to the Service with any issues they might experience during their time at Cambridge University. As an impartial service, Advisors don't take sides or make value judgments.

The Advice Service is provided by Cambridge University Students' Union and the Graduate Union and is open Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, all year round. Students can expect to be warmly welcomed by all members of the Advice Service team.

The goal of Advisors is to make every person's experience of the Advice Service positive regardless of the complexity or sensitivity of the matter. As such, Advisors work by a Code of Practice which assures students that they will receive free, confidential, impartial, non-directive and non-judgmental advice as well as a prompt response (one-two working days from initial contact).

As generalist advisers, the Students' Unions' Advice Service complements other more specialised University service providers such as the Counselling Service and the Disability Resource Centre which deal with more specific issues such as mental health and disabilities. Advisors can also work closely with tutors, other University or College service providers and departmental staff members if the student feels that this would be useful.

4. ACTIVITIES

A. CASEWORK ACTIVITIES

CASEWORK DEFINED

The Students' Unions' Advice Service is open to all students at the University of Cambridge. Individuals can come to the Service with any issues or problems that they might experience as a student - from making friends to working relationships, from exams to intermission, and from welfare concerns to finance. The issues experienced by students using the Service are often complex and regularly involve many inter-related concerns (for example a health issue and exam allowances, or intermission and finances). A student might approach the Service with one particular issue in mind, but others may emerge during the course of subsequent communications.

This means that the Service helps students with a broad range of issues, with a varying degree of involvement in each case. For example, an Advisor may help a student explore their options and navigate University or College procedures over several appointments, and may also attend meetings with a student in their College or the University. Other cases, however, may require less intensive work - for example, talking through a straightforward application to the Applications Committee or simply providing a listening ear and referring a student to another service when appropriate. Some case studies are included as an appendix to this report to provide some examples of the role of the Service in different scenarios.

Following the advice sector’s framework for defining the types of advice provided, the Service splits cases into three categories - Information, Advice, and Advice with Casework – which are defined as follows:

Information

- Providing general information that is readily available to students (e.g. student clubs and societies etc.)
- Signposting/referring a student to another service/person/agency
- Assisting students to find the information that relates to their enquiry i.e. website addresses, links to relevant guidance and/or regulations etc.

Advice

- All that is included in “Information”
- Conducting our own research to find information that would not be readily available to students (includes contacting third parties anonymously or with consent)
- Exploring options with a student (e.g. discussing in person, by phone, by email or by Skype the possible options with a student and discussing the pros and cons of each)

Advice with Casework

- All that is included in “Information” and “Advice”
- Discussing options over several meetings/phone calls/email exchanges
- Practical help on submissions (proofreading, drafting etc.)
- With their consent, discussing a student’s case with a third party (e.g. Tutor, DRC, DoS etc.)
- Attending a meeting with a student
- Representing a student at College or University level

OTHER TYPES OF CASEWORK

While the Students’ Unions’ Advice Service is geared towards directly supporting students, we are often approached by users who are not current Cambridge students. For example, non-standard users might include past and prospective students, students on intermission, students who are off the register, and visiting students. The Service continues to consistently record information regarding the status of all service-users.

Furthermore, the Service continues to record information regarding non-student users - for example, a number of parents, relatives or friends of students ask for advice. Though non-student users approach the Service on a regular basis, the aim is always to work with the student directly. Therefore, the advice we provide to non-student users is often limited and is usually focused on helping the non-student user encourage the student to access the Service themselves.

A service is also provided for JCR/MCR and Peer2Peer volunteers who specifically want advice that relates to their role or to discuss any concerns they may have about a student they are supporting. More detail is provided later in this report (see Links with other Organisations).

More informally, the Service continues to welcome contact from tutors, other service-providers and staff across the Collegiate University who feel that it would be useful to explore with us options that may be available to a student they are supporting.

MAINTAINING QUALITY STANDARDS

Maintaining a consistently high quality of service is vital to the continued success of the Students' Unions' Advice Service. The effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms is important in ensuring that every member of the team can provide students with an excellent standard of support. Advisors undergo training throughout the year in order to increase their knowledge in relevant areas. The Service also utilises a peer observation scheme throughout the year, where all Advisors are observed by another team member and offered constructive feedback on how they might improve their skills.

In addition, each week, all Advisors meet for reflective practice – this provides an opportunity to share best practice, discuss challenging cases and explore options together, and reflect on how Advisors might improve the level of support they offer to individual students. This is coupled with a session for “business-related” items which can contain anything from relevant committee updates to planning the activities of the Advice Service for the coming weeks, or identification and discussion of upcoming issues students might bring to the Service e.g. exam warnings and allowances, or first year reports. The Advice Service Manager leads the team in maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of training and professional standards and may therefore use this time to discuss possible changes to current practice in line with this understanding.

The professional development of permanent staff is also central to the Service's quality enhancement. To this end, the Advice Service Manager receives supervision sessions at the Counselling Service, where she has the opportunity to confidentially reflect on her work. Advisors also receive supervision from the Advice Service Manager weekly during the course of the year.

INTERNAL PROCEDURES

The Advice Service's internal policies include the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Practice
- Peer Observation
- Independent File Review
- Complaints Procedure
- CUSU Internal Policy (e.g. Safeguarding Policy)

All of the Advice Service policies and procedures were updated to reflect the new make-up of the team of advisors as well as to reflect how we work.

B. TRAINING

ADVISORS

Though the elected sabbatical officers ceased to undertake advice casework in October 2016, the full Advice Service training programme had been delivered to them during the summer to ensure that they were able to offer the highest level of support. Every sabbatical officer involved in providing support to students underwent an extensive 50 hour programme. Sessions included:

- Introduction to the Students' Unions' Advice Service
- Students' Unions' Advice Service – how it works and why
- Essential Skills for Supporting Students Parts I and II (active listening, confidentiality, boundaries, non-directive advice, referrals)
- Introduction to Casework Parts I and II
- Outside of the Advice Service Room (representing students, representing the Advice Service)
- Introduction to Student Mental Health and the Student Community
- Bullying, Harassment and Student Complaints
- Reducing the Risk of Student Suicide
- Equality and Diversity (provided by E&D)
- Working with Disabled Students (provided by DRC)
- Observing casework
- Meeting and visiting University and College Service Providers

These training sessions were mainly offered by the Advice Service Manager and an Advisor with some sessions being offered by external and internal providers. Sabbatical Officers have reported to have found the training useful, and though they eventually ceased to provide advice casework, they found the training also helped them in their roles as student representatives. The Advice Service Manager and Advisor have also received training in the following areas:

- Introduction to Student Finance (NASMA)
- Strategic Planning
- Working with students with Asperger Syndrome

TUTORS

For the third year running, the Students' Unions' Advice Service participated in the tutor training programme by delivering a session on the Students' Unions' Advice Service. We look forward to continuing to be involved in this programme, as it not only informs tutors about the existence of the Students' Unions' Advice Service and the important role we have to play, but it also helps to build relationships with colleagues with whom we are likely to have contact in the future.

UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTAL STAFF MEMBERS

The Students' Unions' Advice Service accepted several invitations to deliver training to University administrators and other staff members who work with students. In a session entitled "Essential Skills for Supporting Students", participants have the opportunity to think about confidentiality and boundaries and how these apply to their role. Participants also learn to provide active listening, recognise the difference between active listening and advice giving, and to refer students to the appropriate service within the College, the University and the city of Cambridge.

Since its launch in April 2016, there has been a high demand for the session which was delivered on seven occasions to about 100 staff members in Engineering, Physics, Mathematics, Politics and International Studies, and the Judge Business School. In the months to come we hope to be able to make this training available more widely. Feedback received from the sessions has been very positive, and participants seemed to have particularly enjoyed sharing their experiences of working with students with colleagues in similar roles in a setting that was informative and supportive.

C. PUBLICITY AND EVENTS

It is crucial that students are aware that they can access a professional, independent, and impartial service. It is of course a student's decision whether they choose to use the Service, but it is vital that they are at least aware of its existence. This is something that we aim to do in partnership with the Collegiate University, and we are grateful to all College and University staff members who have signposted students to the Service, attended our presentations and integrated information about the Service into their handbooks, websites etc.

The increase of 65% in the number of students accessing the Service over the last couple of years is an indication that more students know about the Service. This will no doubt be in large part due to the promotional work we have undertaken. In particular, we are pleased that information about the Advice Service features prominently in many University guidance documents (e.g. Student Complaints Procedure).

The Students' Unions' Advice Service's generic name has sometimes meant that students at the University of Cambridge have not always recognised that the Service exists exclusively for them. This year, the design of the promotional materials was enhanced to make this link more obvious. Along with prominent logos and text about CUSU and the Graduate Union, the speech bubble (a key feature of the design) now includes a Cambridge skyline.



The training we have provided to departmental staff has been instrumental in raising awareness of the Advice Service, thus allowing those who have contact with students to make quality referrals to the Advice Service.

21% of students have been referred to the Service by a University or College service-provider, such as the Counselling Service, Disability Resource Centre, Tutor, or Senior Tutor. We continue our formal visits to service providers every year, and this year we attended several tutorial lunches where we had the opportunity to speak to Senior Tutors and their teams about the work we do and how we complement the tutorial system.

Though students' awareness of the existence of the Service seems to have improved, we continue to receive feedback from students, our service-users, and colleagues within the Colleges and the University, that there is still only a small percentage of the student population that knows that the Students' Unions' Advice Service exists. This is something we ourselves need to continue to work on improving, and we recognise the importance of doing so in partnership with the Collegiate University.

The Service continues to utilise a wide range of publicity routes, from posters and leaflets in Colleges and departments, to the Students' Unions' annual and weekly publications and the student press. The Service also has a visible presence at many events throughout the year – such as the CUSU Freshers' Fair, the Disability Resource Centre "Transitional Events", the "Feeling at Home in Cambridge" sessions for international students, and the Graduate Union Welcome Events for students who begin their studies in the Lent and Easter terms.

We continue our publicity through social media, advertising the Service by linking in with national awareness events such as Mental Health Week and Dyslexia Awareness Week, as well as with more local themes such as preparing for exams. This also provides an opportunity to distribute self-help resources and raise awareness of other relevant support services throughout the year. Our Facebook post on the Winter Holiday Activity Guide that was created in partnership with the Graduate Union for students remaining in Cambridge over the holidays proved to be one of the most popular reaching over 5000 students.

This year we increased the number of Students' Unions' Advice Service roadshows we were able to offer re-branding them as Pop-Up Advice to further increase awareness that students can simply pop by and get advice on the spot. This is where we set up a stall at an academic site (e.g. Downing, Sidgwick and West Cambridge) and where possible offer hot drinks and biscuits to students on their way into or out of lectures, in exchange for an opportunity to briefly chat to them about the sorts of things the Service can offer.



With the support of the Welfare and Finance committee, a new initiative was launched whereby cards which contain information about the Students' Unions' Advice Service and Nightline were distributed to colleges to be posted on the notice boards of freshers' bedrooms. Between the Students' Unions' Advice Service and Nightline, independent and impartial student-led support can be provided nearly 24 hours/day during term –time with SUAS running from 9am-5pm, and Nightline from 7pm-7am.

	
<p>The Students' Unions' Advice Service offers confidential, impartial and independent advice and representation for Cambridge students. 9am-5pm weekdays all year round</p> <p> studentadvice.cam.ac.uk</p> <p> 01223 746999</p> <p> advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk</p> <p> Upper Ground Floor, 17 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX</p>	<p>Whatever's on your mind, Nightline* is always here to talk things through. <small>* formerly known as Linkline</small></p> <p>7pm-7am every night during term time</p> <p> cambridge.nightline.ac.uk</p> <p> 01223 744444</p> <p> email@cambridge.nightline.ac.uk</p> <p> instant messenger via website</p>

A major contribution to students' increased awareness of the existence of Students' Unions' Advice Service was the inclusion of information about the Service in University guidance and procedures such as student complaints, examination reviews, fitness to study etc. The creation of the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals and its efforts to provide clear information to students was mainly responsible for information about the Students' Unions' Advice Service being made more readily available.

D. WINTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND GUIDE

In order to reduce isolation and loneliness for students who remained in Cambridge over the winter holiday period, the Students' Unions Advice Service supported the Graduate Union in creating a Winter Holiday Activity Guide which included a list of activities open to everyone in Cambridge throughout the holiday period. St-Edmund's was nominated as the "Christmas College" and for a second year running they hosted a potluck Christmas day meal in the College which was open to all Cambridge University students. Of all of the Students' Unions' Advice Service's Facebook posts, it was the Winter Holiday Activity guide post that reached the highest number of students (5147 students in total); this could perhaps be an indication that those students who remained in Cambridge actively sought out ways of meeting others and taking part in non-academic-related activities.

E. COLLECTING FEEDBACK

All students who access the Students' Unions' Advice Service are invited to provide feedback on their experience of the Service. This is done through a confidential and anonymous on-line survey. 7% of our student service-users have responded to the questionnaire in 2016-17. Of those who responded:

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that their concerns were listened to and taken seriously by the Advisor.
- 95% strongly agreed or agreed that the advice they received was relevant, appropriate and clear.
- 95% strongly agreed or agreed that overall they were satisfied with the support they received.
- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that the Service was professional.
- 90% said they were very likely or likely to recommend the Students' Unions' Advice Service to friends.

To the question "What I like about the Service is...", the following comments are amongst the responses received during the year:

- *"The commitment to fully understanding a student's concerns in order to explore as many options as possible. I feel the student advice service was an incredibly welcoming environment and an indispensable resource at a very important stage in my academic life."*
- *"The staff is very kind, patient, and very cautious on giving opinions. The advisor was keen to help solve my problem, and provided feedback with thoughtful suggestions."*
- *"How accessible it is and how quick advisors are to help and respond"*
- *"They listened to all my points and issues and provided me relevant information, resources and possibilities to solve it."*
- *"How approachable and caring the advisor was. Being able to access an impartial/neutral service."*
- *"It is non-judgemental and feels like a safe place to discuss problems"*

To the question "What I feel you could do to improve the service for students is...", similarly to previous year, the majority of responses related to the promotion of the Service. Below are some of the comments:

- *"Might get more students to know about the service."*
- *"Perhaps make it more visible, including the actual location of the service."*
- *"Possibly increase awareness of the service and what it has to offer as I feel I would have benefited from knowing of it earlier and being encouraged to make contact."*

The Service is in its fourth year of receiving feedback, and with the responses we have received so far, it seems clear that students appreciate the welcoming approach and knowledge of the advisors, the quality of the listening, and the promptness of the service provided. Our service-users feel that we are taking their concerns seriously and the majority feel that we are providing them with clear and relevant advice.

We have, however, noted for the third year that many of our service-users feel that we need to publicise our services more widely. Our efforts to raise awareness about the Service continue and publicity remains a priority as can be seen in the Publicity section of this report. The 65% increase in the number of students who have accessed the Service in the last two years must no doubt be an indication that our publicity has improved but we recognize that this is an area which will continue to require our attention and creativity. Publicity will continue to be an area on which we focus in 2017-18.

In addition to the feedback we already receive from students; from October 2017, we will begin the process of measuring the impact our work has had on students by aiming to measure the ways in which we have made a difference to their lives and experience at the University.

5. STATISTICS AND TRENDS

The Students' Unions' Advice Service records information about each service-user and case by asking students to complete a casework record form when they access the Service – either via email, phone or in person. Data, such as the number of students, user demographics and issue areas act as indicators which form the Service's development in terms of the quality and comprehensiveness of the advice it can provide. This information also helps the Service to identify trends in student welfare needs, respond efficiently to enquiries and direct students to relevant resources. Through its monthly SUAS Information and Sharing meetings with all CUSU-GU elected sabbatical officers, along with its monthly SUAS Support and Development meetings for elected sabbatical officers for whom welfare is part of their role, the Service regularly updates the Cambridge University Students' Union and Graduate Union as to its activities and trends in student welfare issues, which, in turn, facilitates their wider political work in supporting students.

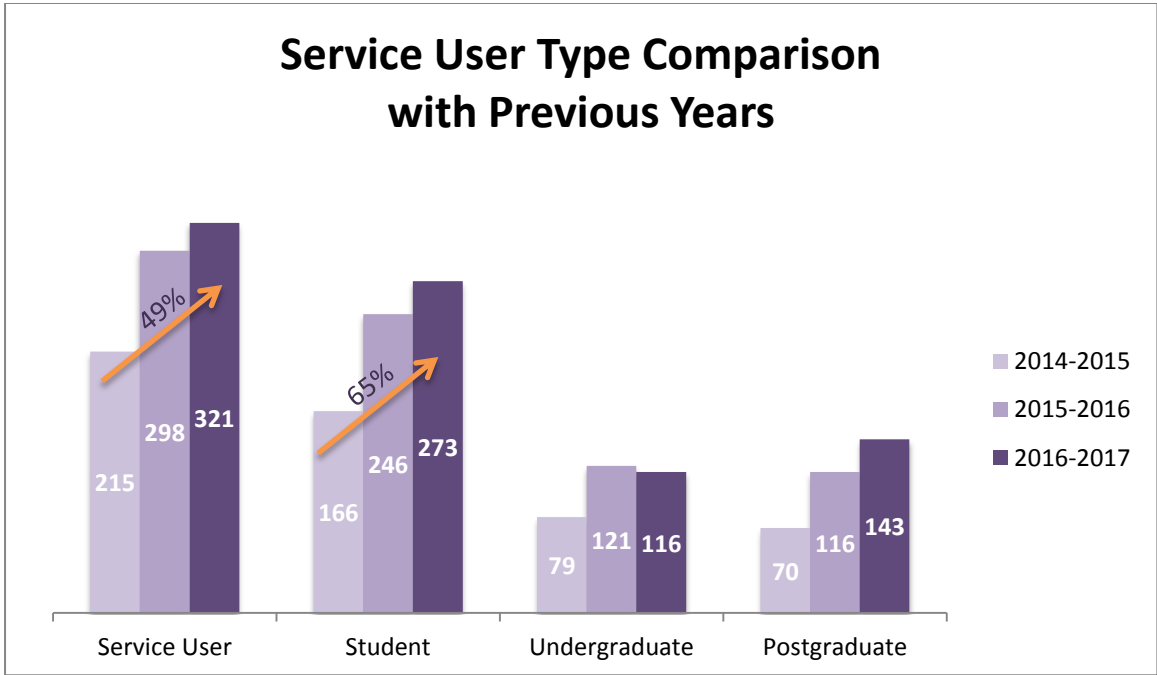
Since the Service is non-judgmental and is committed to providing support to all students, regardless of identity, College or issue, it does not measure success by the number of appeals or complaints that our users have had upheld. The Service's approach to assisting students is to ensure individuals feel able to make their own decisions given the resources and options available to them. The Service's knowledge and experience with the processes, rules and regulations of the Collegiate University also means the Advisors are well-placed to manage expectations as to the possible outcomes of a complaint or review procedure.

The following measures of data were taken from the time period 11th June 2016 to 30th June 2017, which is a slightly longer recording period than in previous years (19 additional days). The number of service-users who accessed the Service between 11th-30th June 2017 accounts for about 5% of the total number of service-users. Noting trends in the types of issues or students ensures the Service is well-equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to help the students who approach us. It allows the Service to adapt and evolve, and to develop its sources of support in line with student demand and need.

A. SERVICE-USERS

Throughout 2016-17, the Service worked with a total of 321 service-users of which 273 were students (students = current, intermitting, off the register, past, visiting, exchange, JBS and ICE). We had 16 students who came to us twice for different issues, 4 students who came to us three times for different issues, and 1 student who came to us four times for different issues. This highlights that in some cases, students may experience a range of different issues during their time at Cambridge. It also demonstrates that some of the work we do with certain students can be intensive and over a long period. It also highlights that some students who have accessed the Service have been willing to return for additional support.

Though the reporting period for 2016-17 (11th June 2016 -30th June 2017) is 19 days longer than in previous years (thus allowing us to report from the 1st July-30th June in the future), there is a marked increase from last year's cycle where the Service worked with 298 service-users (8% increase) of which 246 were students (11% increase). Since 2014-15, this represents a growth of 49% in the number of service-users, and a staggering 65% in the number of students.



Graph 1 – Comparison of Service User Type from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017

Various factors may be responsible for the growth in the number of students accessing the Service. This year, we have continued our efforts to increase the publicity and promotion of the Advice Service throughout the student body; alongside improvements to the design of our promotional materials, there has been a further increase in leaflets and posters strategically distributed around the University and Colleges and in student welfare packs, as well as several welfare-related events and faculty visits. The SUAS-Nightline cards were launched and distributed to Colleges in September 2016.

In particular, the inclusion over the year of information about the Advice Service featuring prominently in a high proportion of University guidance and procedures is likely to be responsible for at least part of the increase in student numbers. This combined with strong engagement with college and departmental staff, information about the Students’ Unions’ Advice Service appearing in more student handbooks and departmental websites and the continuing benefits of CUSU’s move to 17 Mill Lane into shared premises with the Graduate Union may account for the increased number of students accessing the Service. The number of student cases that emerged via physical drop-in remained stable (47 in 2016-17 as compared to 49 in 2015-16) and an increase in email (172 in 2016-17 compared to 136 in the previous cycle).

For the first year since its inception, the Advice Service will have provided support to more postgraduate students than undergraduate students. The percentage split is usually about 50/50, with, if anything, slightly more undergraduate students. By contrast, in 2016-17, the split was 41/52 in favour of postgraduate students.

SERVICE USER STATUS

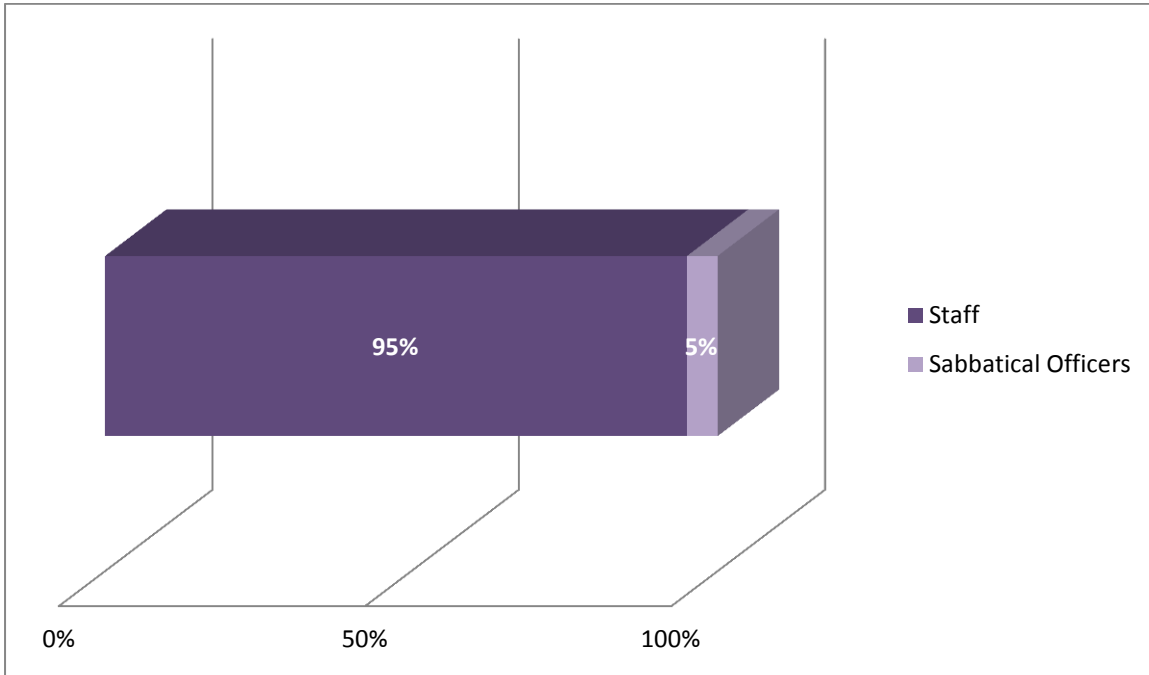
The Service works with users across a range of profiles (*Table 1*). Current students, non-standard student users (including past and prospective students, or intermitted students), and non-students (such as relatives or friends of students) may all access the Service. The Service also provides advice to JCR/MCR Officers and Peer2Peer Supporters who may use the Service to discuss their specific role or any concerns they may have about a student in their community, or the welfare and academic provision in their College.

73% of the Service-users for this year were current students, with the next biggest group being past students, followed by offer holders, intermitting students and College or University staff who made up 9% of the client users. It is also interesting to note that we provided support to 6 visiting students, most of whom were not eligible to access any of the other University service-providers. Though we were glad to be able to support these students, this has highlighted a gap in the support these students can receive and that the Advice Service may not always have the capacity to fill, thus potentially leaving these students isolated.

Client Status	Number	Percentage
Current student	235	73%
Past Student	20	6%
Intermitted student	11	3%
Off the register	1	1%
Visiting student	6	2%
Post Doc	2	1%
Offer holder	11	3%
Prospective Student	4	1%
Relative of a student	6	2%
JCR/MCR Officer	3	1%
College or university staff	9	3%
Unknown	2	1%
Other	11	3%
Total	321	100%

Table 1 – Status of Service User

With two full-time Advisors facilitating the work of the Advice Service, and the decision of the elected sabbatical officers to cease doing casework as part of their roles in October 2016, the vast majority of service user cases have been handled by the full-time Advisor and the Advice Service Manager (*Graph 2*). The Advice Service Advisors meet regularly, on a weekly basis, to discuss their casework and offer advice at Reflective Practice; this allows all members of the team to have an overview of the types of cases coming to the Service and to help in the advice work.



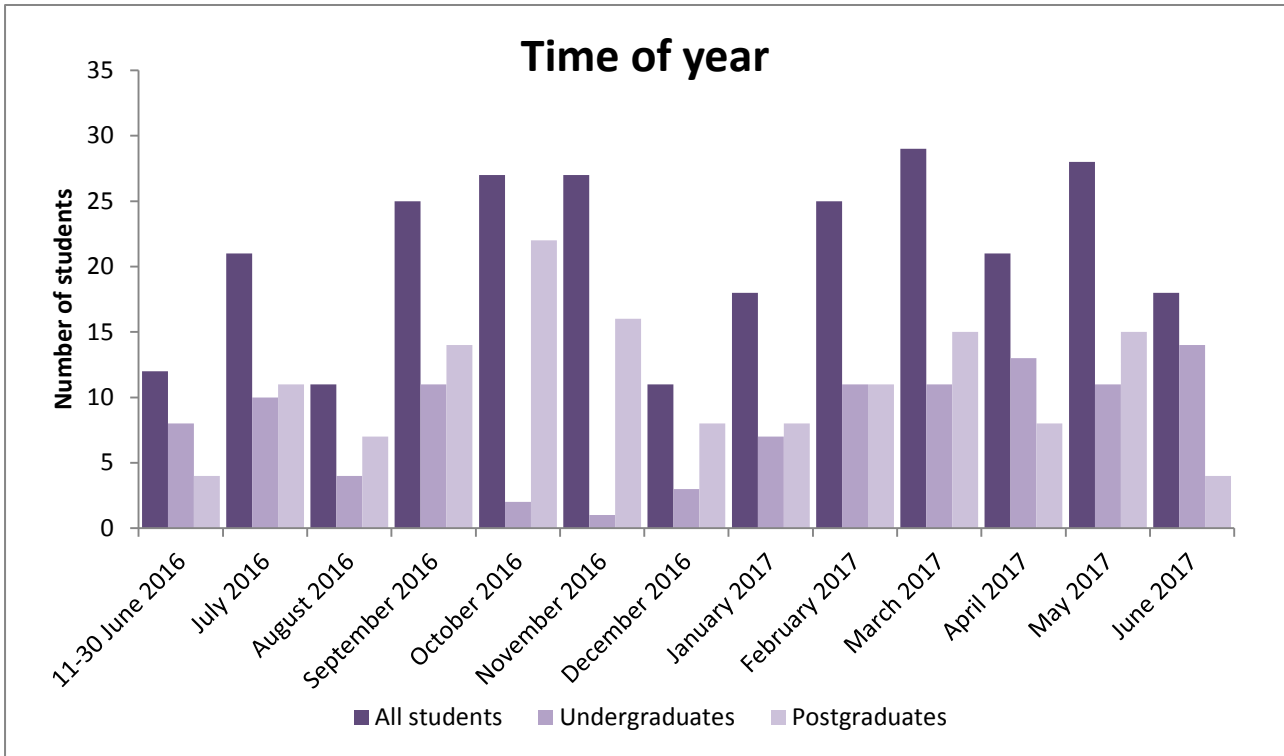
Graph 2 - Service user cases handled by full-time staff and sabbatical officers

B. CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

TIMES OF YEAR

The Students' Unions' Advice Service is open throughout the year, and can be accessed by students at any time – including outside of academic term time. There are, however, certain trends that can be identified by analysing at what point in the year students access the Service.

Graph 3 demonstrates what may be described as peaks and troughs throughout the year. As in previous years, the Advice Service continues to be busy during the academic term-times but we have seen an increase in the number of students accessing the Service outside of term-time, in particular the months of July 2016, March, April and June 2017 were very busy. We supported an almost equal number of postgraduate and undergraduate students during the month of July, whereas October, March and May were busier with postgraduate students, and April and June were busier with undergraduate students. Exam results account for the high number of undergraduate students accessing the Service during the month of June to enquire about examination allowances, examination reviews, or advice on what options are available in light of their results.



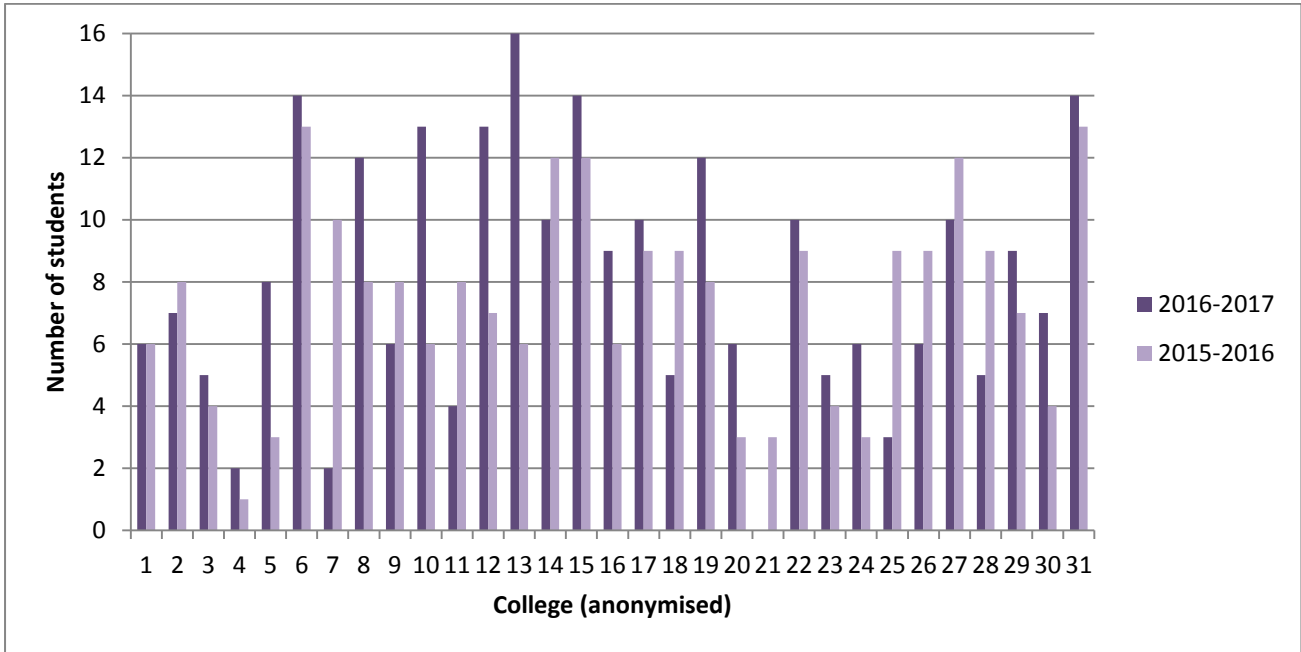
Graph 3 – Number of students by month of reporting year

We also noted that the biggest gap between undergraduate and postgraduate students accessing the Service was in October 2017 where a far greater number of postgraduate students accessed the Service. Half of the postgraduates students who accessed the Service in October were 1st year students and the issues they raised were varied.

COLLEGE

In the 2016-17 cycle, the Advice Service supported students from 30 Colleges, with an additional 16 students whose College was undeclared and 8 where College information was not applicable (*Graph 4*). As expected, the number of students accessing the Service from each College varies. This may be because of a variety of causes, but may include the relative size of the College population, the prominence and accessibility of the Advice Service publicity around the College and accommodation, and the strength of referral links the Service has with the pastoral and tutorial systems at the College.

We have noticed that these factors change on a yearly basis. As in 2014-15 and some years prior to that, this year’s report notes that there has been a well-evidenced trend for the Colleges of sabbatical officers to be well represented due to the relationships maintained between officers and their student body. This year we have also seen increases in student access to the Service from Colleges which are not the *alma mater* of current sabbatical officers.



Graph 4 –Number of students accessing SUAS by College

The variability of students approaching the Service within a given year, as well as over several years, should not be taken as an indication of effectiveness or quality of support offered within different Colleges. It is important to note, however, that the number of students accessing the Service has increased for most Colleges since last year. This may be due to increased publicity material and referrals within the College, or the wider efforts of promotion the Service has been engaging with this year – including visits to lecture sites and tutorial lunches.

GENDER

Similar to previous years, more disclosed female students accessed the Advice Service compared to disclosed male students (Table 2). However, this year the percentage of male students having sought support from the Service has increased as compared to previous years thus reducing the difference between the number of female and male service-users to only 5%. This is a significant change as compared to 2015-16 when the gap between female and male service-users was 14%, and 2014-15 when the gap was 12%.

Having fewer male service-users corresponds to wider sector trends which signal lower engagement in pastoral and academic support services by male students, which in turn reflect social norms and expectations. However the figures for this year are encouraging and we hope this will be the beginning of a trend where more male students feel able to access support from the Advice Service. 1% of our service-users identified their gender as “other” but these figures were too low to be able to draw any conclusions.

The large number of students whose gender is undisclosed (76 for the 2016-17cycle) arises from the fact that data is recorded based on how students declare their gender. If a casework form is not received, for example, or if the case is short-lived (such as some of those under the ‘Information’ category), or if users communicate entirely by e-mail, then a gender may not be registered. The Service does not assume a user’s gender if it has not been explicitly declared.

All students	Number	Percentage
Female	105	38%
Male	90	33%
Other	2	1%
Undisclosed	76	28%
Total	273	100%

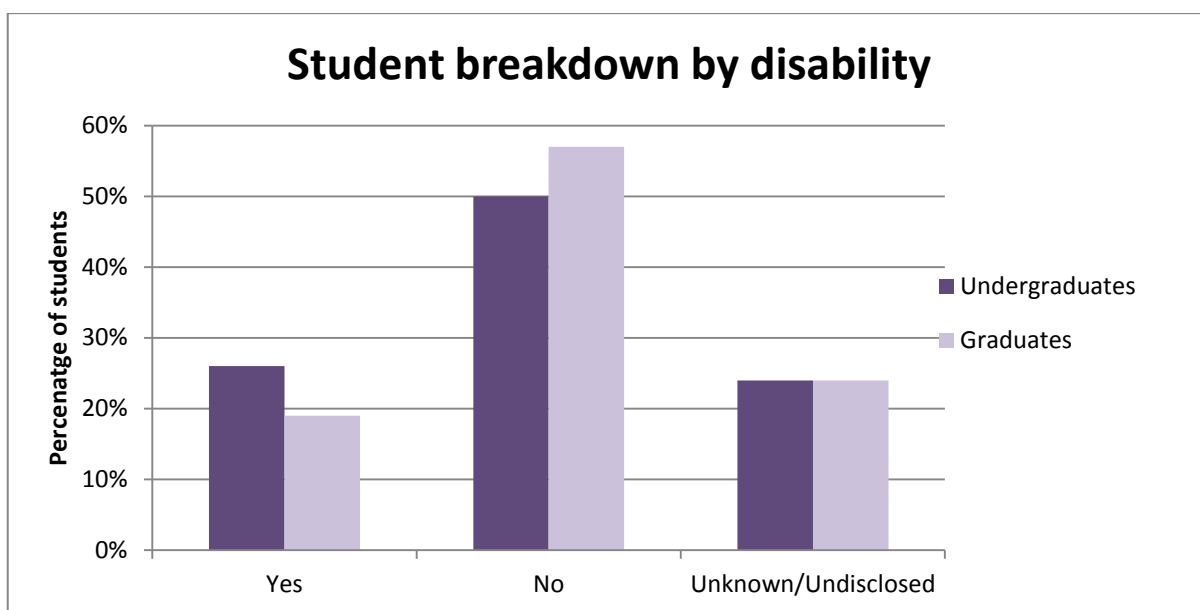
Table 2 – Students accessing the Service by gender

DISABILITY

Of the 273 students accessing the Service this year, 59 disclosed a disability via the casework form, 140 declared that they did not have a disability and 76 did not disclose either yes or no (*Graph 5*). Despite there being a larger number of postgraduates using the Service, more undergraduates declared having a disability (of the 21% of students having disclosed a disability, 26% were undergraduates and 19% were graduates). The percentage of students disclosing a disability to the Advice Service increased slightly as compared to 2015-16 when 19% of students disclosed a disability.

It is interesting to note that unlike last year when our figures for students whose concerns were about mental health were greater than our figures for students who disclosed a disability; this year there are more students who disclosed a disability than there are students whose concerns were about mental health. This could imply that this year, students with mental health conditions were more likely to identify themselves as disabled and/or more students with mental health concerns may have official diagnoses as compared to last year.

The Students’ Unions’ Advice Service has close links with the Disability Resource Centre, and has taken part in several transitional events for students as well as induction events for staff this year. The Disability Resource Centre and the University Counselling Service are responsible for the largest number of referrals to the Students’ Unions’ Advice Service.

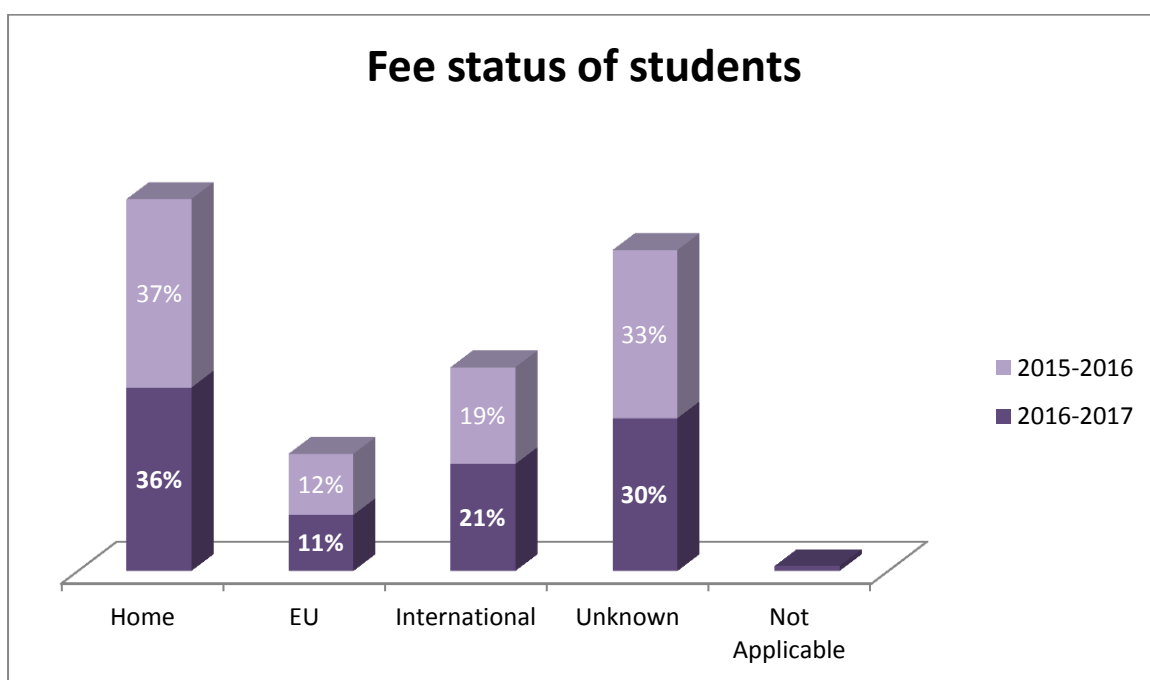


Graph 5 –Percentage of students accessing the Service by disclosed disability

FEE STATUS

In line with the increased number of students in the 2016-17 cycle, there was a corresponding increase in the number of Home, EU and International students (*Graph 6*). Unlike last year, we did not see a further increase in the percentage of EU and International students accessing the Advice Service. We continue to see a larger number of service-users who are home students, and since last year, the number of EU and International students we have seen has neither increased nor decreased.

There are however encouraging signs as the majority of EU and International Students at the University are postgraduates, and 50% of Advice Service postgraduate service-users were EU or International students. This highlights that we are reaching these demographics in the postgraduate student population but that more work needs to be done in order for our numbers to be in proportion with the number of EU and International students actually studying at the University.



Graph 6 – Fee status of students

STUDENT STATUS

The Service continues to support students across a wide range of subjects and degrees (*Table 3*). Unlike previous years when there was an almost equal number of undergraduate and postgraduate users accessing the Service, this year for the first time since the launch of the Advice Service, we saw a greater number of postgraduate students with 143 postgraduates and 116 undergraduates accessing the Service. Of course, the category of ‘postgraduate’ is not homogenous, and within it, encapsulates PhD students, MPhil, MLitt, MBA, MSt, MEd, LLM and Graduate Medicine students. Within these sub-categories, usage of the Service varies dramatically. 42% of our student users this year were undergraduates (compared to 49% last year), while 13% were studying for a Masters, and 33% were studying for a PhD (same as last year).

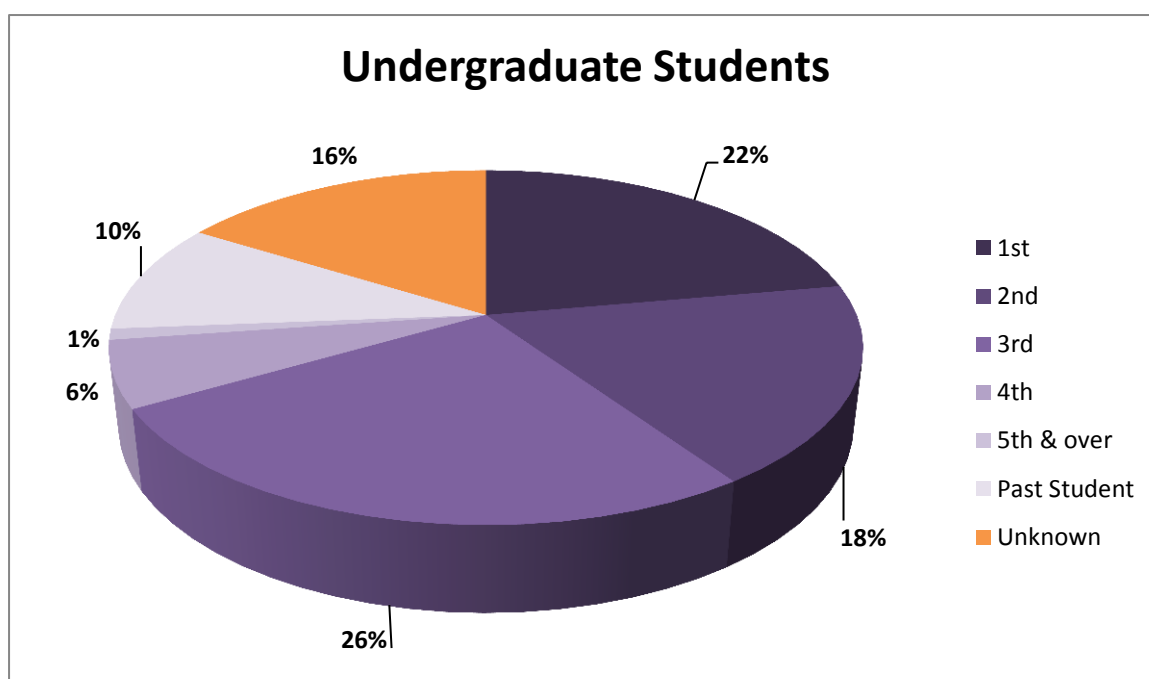
We also note that this year we reached three PGCE students which may have been helped by our efforts to promote the Service at the Faculty of Education as well as strong links with some of the Colleges of which these students are members.

Student Status	Number	Percentage
Undergraduate	116	42%
PhD	91	33%
Masters	36	13%
Postgraduate	9	3%
PGCE	3	1%
Other	4	1%
Unknown	14	5%
Total	273	100%

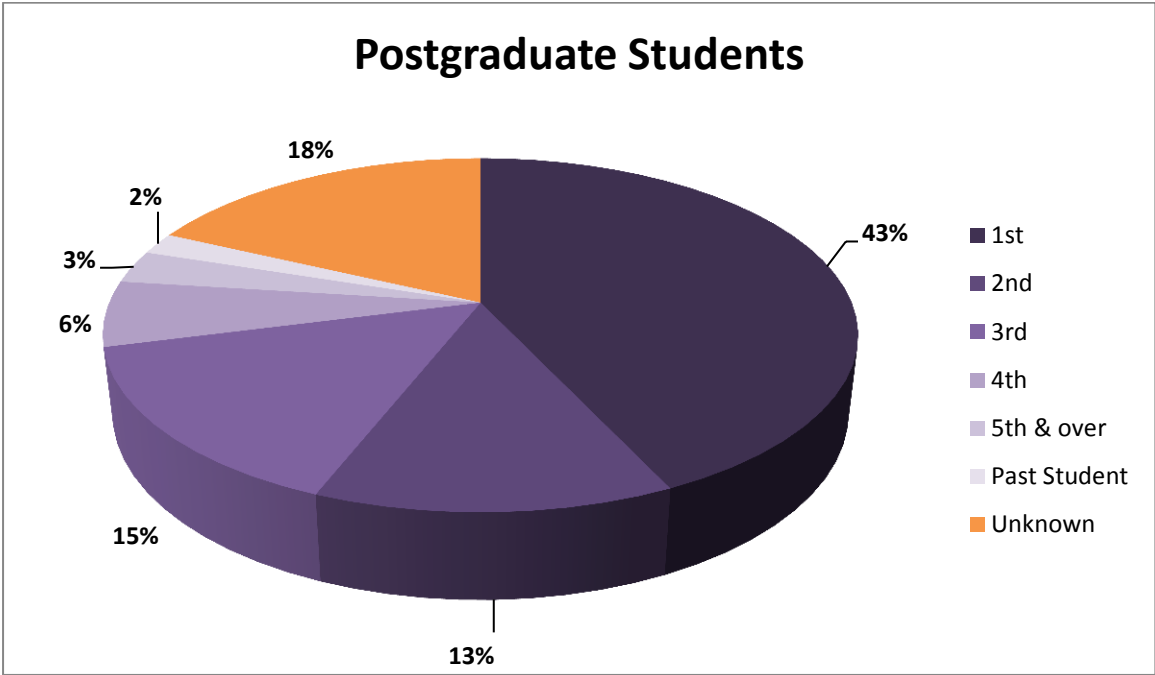
Table 3 – Student users by their student status

YEAR OF STUDY

In a similar trend to the last two years, students in their undergraduate third year were the most likely to access the Service (26% of undergraduate users), while 22% of undergraduate users were in their 1st year, and 18% in their second year. This may be because of specific issues that arise in final year, such as exam and dissertation concerns or career queries. Among postgraduates, those in their first year of study were once again the most likely to approach the Service (43% of postgraduate users, which is similar to last year where first year postgraduates made up 48% of students). The main issues of concern for Postgraduates are from PhD students having difficulties with their relationship with their supervisor and passing their PhD registration.



Graph 7 – Undergraduate student users by year of study



Graph 8 – Postgraduate student users by year of study

C. TYPES OF ISSUES

The Service has assisted students on a number of issues this year, ranging from exam concerns to financial difficulties to issues regarding student-supervisor relations. The most common issues recorded during this period (measured as the percentage of students approaching the Service who experienced that particular issue) were:

1. Exam related: 20% (down from 37%)
2. Finance-related issues: 11% (down from 14%)
3. DoS/Supervisor Relationships: 8% (down from 13%)
4. Intermission/Intermission returning: 8% (down from 14%)
5. Health and Wellbeing: 7% (down from 12%)
6. Mental Health: 5% (down from 26%)

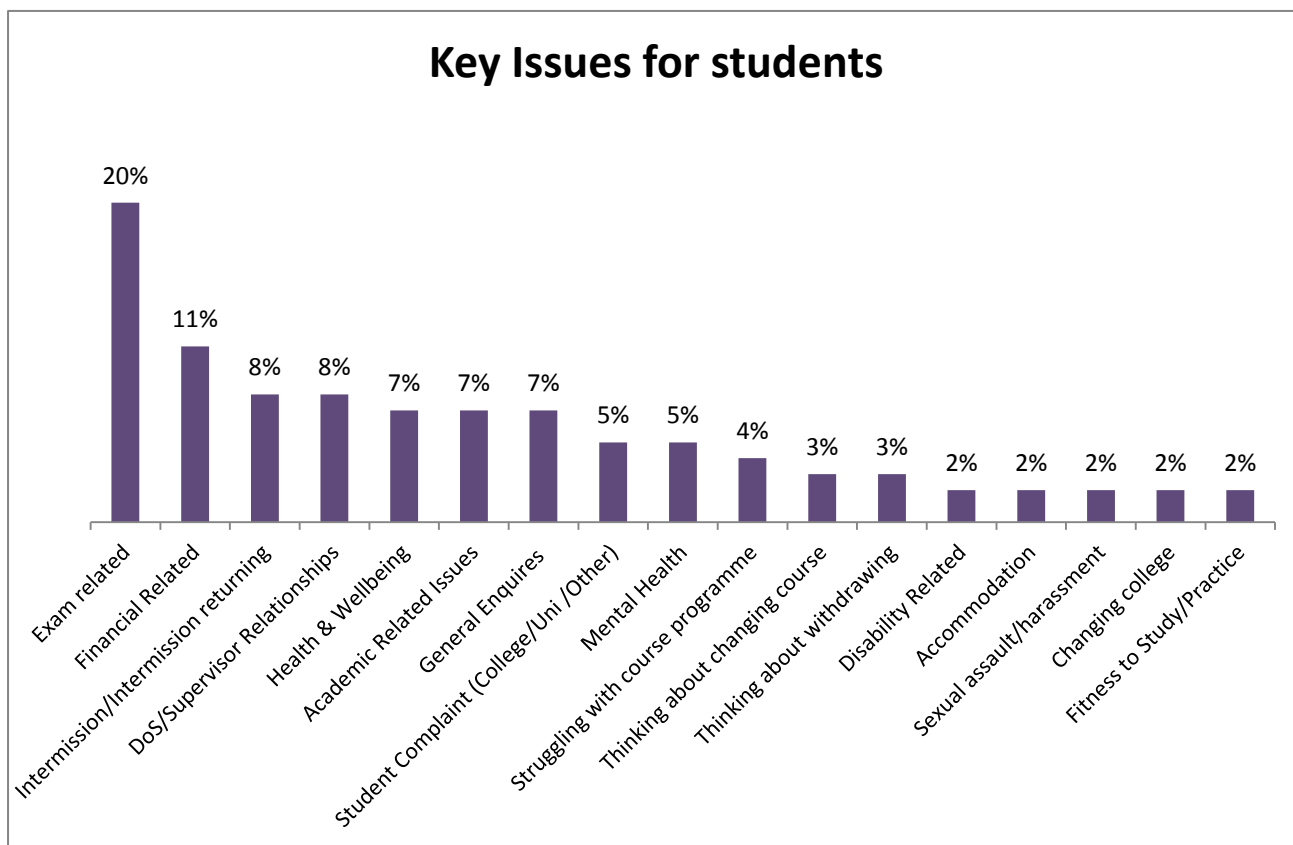
Although student cases may fall into a distinct category, it should also be noted that a single case may include multiple issues. For example, a student approaching the Service to discuss exam concerns may also seek support on an issue such as intermission or a disability or academic support.

As Graph 9 demonstrates the most frequently occurring issues this year are broadly similar to those encountered during the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 academic years however, these issues are more broadly spread out with the percentage of students approaching the Service with these issues lower in each

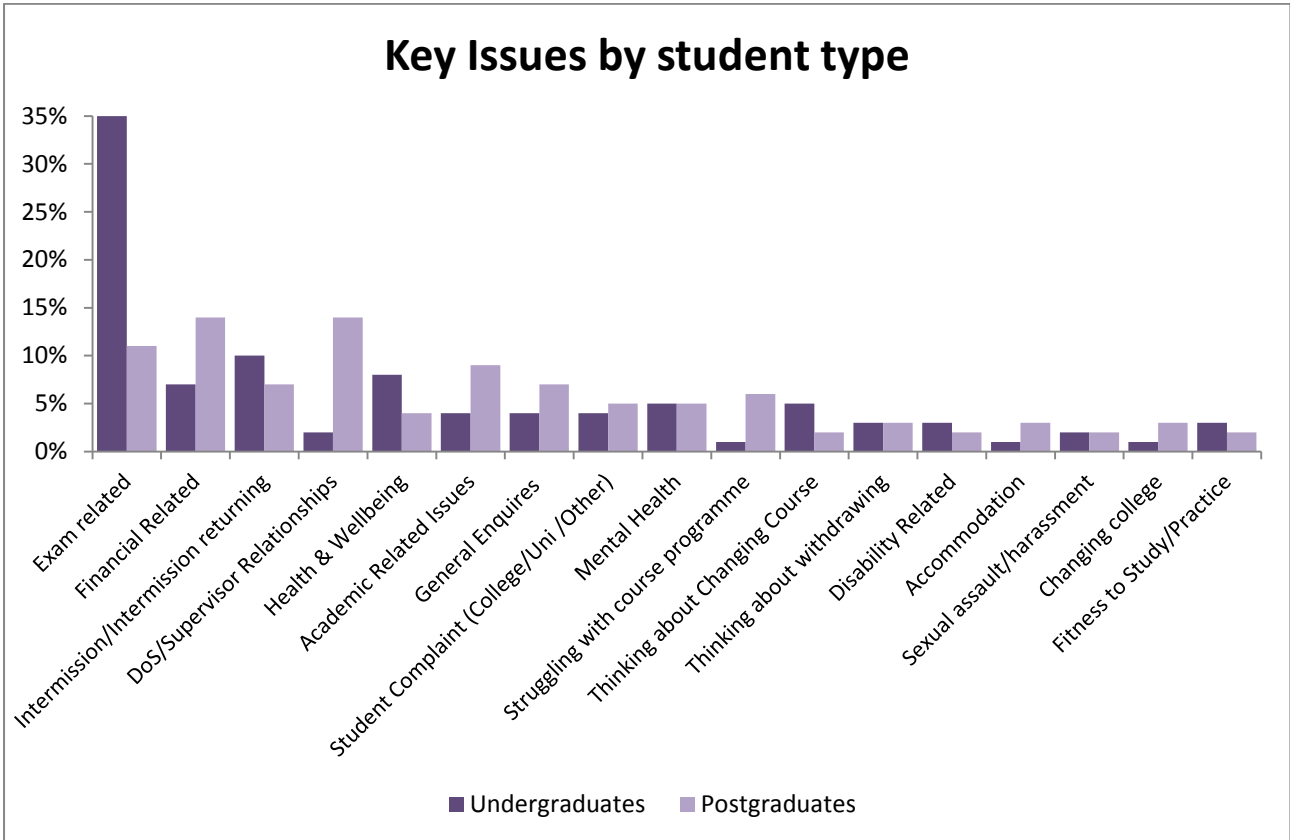
of the top six categories: Exam-related (20% of cases – 17% decrease from last year), Finance-related (11% of cases – 3% decrease from last year), DoS/Supervisor relations (8% of cases - 5% decrease from last year), Intermission/Intermission Returning (8% of cases – 5% decrease from last year), Health and Wellbeing (7% of cases – 5% decrease from last year), and mental health issues (5% of cases - 21% decrease from last year). This could be an indication that students are becoming more aware of the broad range of advice on offer at the Advice Service. General enquiries and other academic issues accounted for 14% of issues service-users brought to the Advice Service.

Exam-related concerns has remained the top area of advice but the order of the following five issues has changed from 2) Mental Health to Financial-related, 3) Intermission/Intermission returning to DoS/Supervisor relations, 4) Financial-related to Intermission/Intermission Returning, 5) DoS/Supervisor relations to Health and Wellbeing, and 6) Health and Wellbeing to Mental Health.

It should be noted that Health and Wellbeing can include mental health and that though some students may be experiencing stress and anxiety, they may not consider these to be mental health issues. For many students, resolving the matter they are experiencing such as difficult supervisor relations or financial issues can sometimes immediately result in a reduction in their stress and anxiety levels.



Graph 9 - Key issues for students

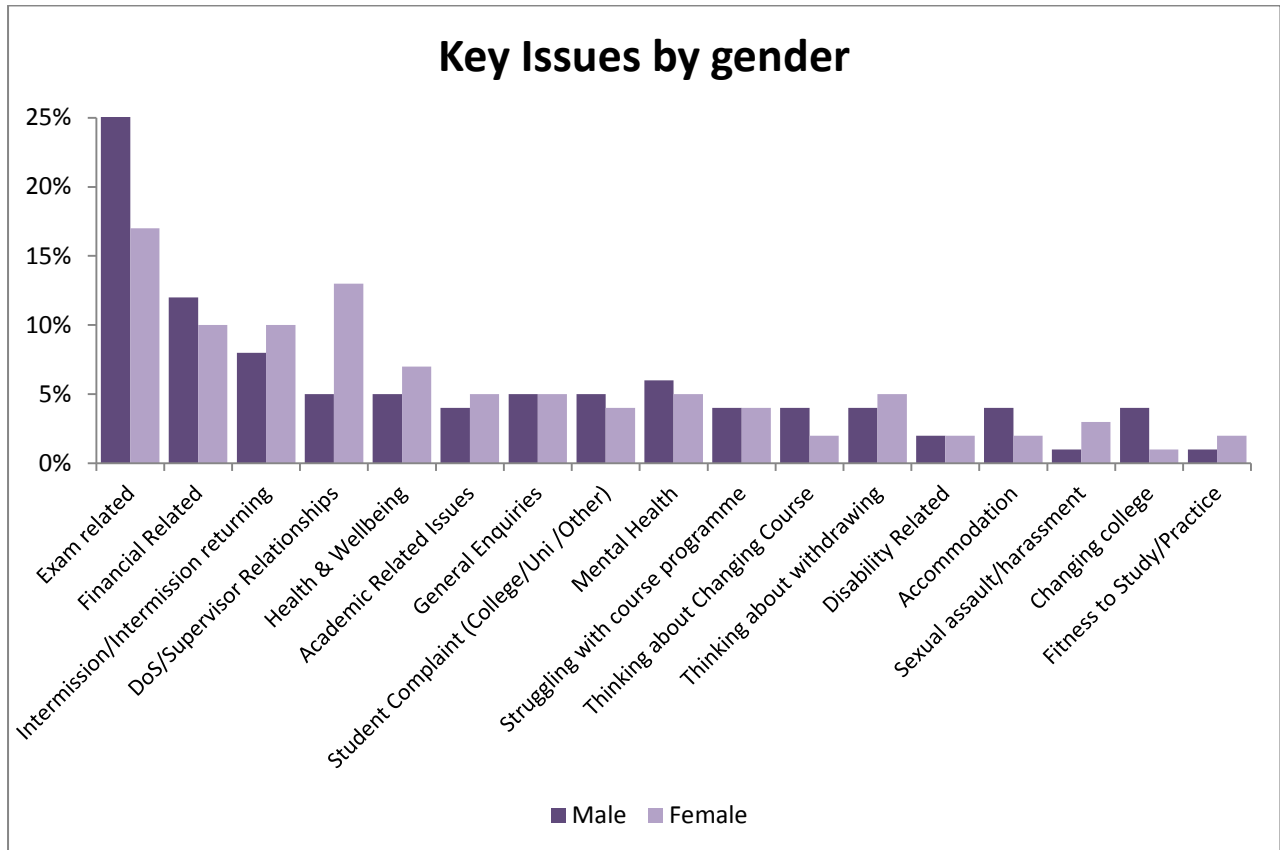


Graph 10 - Key issues by student type

Graduate and undergraduate students using the Service tend to access the Service for different reasons and concerns (*Graph 10*). In a continuing trend from last year, the most common issues brought by undergraduates were exam-related issues (such as exam allowances). This was followed by intermission/intermission returning issues, and health and wellbeing; though a high number of postgraduate students also sought support on exam-related issues (such as first year PhD registration), they were more likely to come to the Service with financial-related concerns, student-supervisor relationship issues, and academic-related matters (such as course concerns). It is important to note that though 35% of undergraduate cases this year were regarding exam-related issues, there was a decrease of 15% as compared to last year where half of undergraduate cases related to exams. As with the last two years, postgraduate students were more likely than undergraduates to approach the Service with difficulties with a supervisor or their department, and student complaints, while undergraduates were more likely to raise intermission and issues with their health and wellbeing.

Different issue profiles were also exhibited by those who disclosed themselves as male or female (*Graph 11*). Though we did support some students who identified their gender as “other”, there were too few of them to draw any conclusions. In contrast to last year, when female students were much more likely to raise exam-related concerns than males, this year (as in 2014-15) male students were 9% more likely to bring exam-related issues to the Service. Women were, however, 8% more likely to bring issues about student-supervisor relations to the Service; proportionally, exam-related issues are the most common issues for men and women to bring to the Service. After this, men are more likely to raise concerns about intermission/intermission returning, and women are equally likely to raise financial or supervisor-relations concerns.

The greater number of females using the service may account for this disparity, but it may also suggest some gender-specific issues. This year, there were seven issues which men brought to the Service more than women: exam-related, financial-related, student complaint, mental health, thinking about changing course, accommodation, and changing college.



Graph 11 - Key issues for students by gender

D. ISSUE SPOTLIGHTS

One of the advantages of having sabbatical officers strongly engaged with the Advice Service is that, by meeting regularly with Advisors, the officers gain knowledge of the issues that affect students who seek support from the Advice Service.

Though the Advice Service is an impartial service that does not make value judgements, CUSU and the Graduate Union Officers can use the knowledge they've gained working with the Advice Service to inform their campaigns, activities and committee work.

The following spotlights represent some of the issues where officers have been able to use the knowledge they've gained working with the Advice Service to inform the work they have undertaken in their capacity as elected student representatives.

SPOTLIGHT ON...INTERMISSION – BY JESSICA WING (CUSU DISABLED STUDENTS OFFICER 2016-17)

SUAS is regularly able to support students on intermission with a variety of issues, and this focus is reflected in CUSU's work. This year, the Disabled Students' Officer has made intermission a focus for campaigning, and we've seen some really positive developments come from this.

After collecting data from intermitting students, CUSU were able to write a paper focusing on the issue of the sometimes varying pastoral support over the course of the intermission process. This paper was presented to the Welfare and Finance Committee, and the development of new guidance for tutors via a working group took place. This guidance furthers understanding of some of the rules surrounding intermission, such as further comments on setting exams as a condition to return from intermission, and visiting or residing in Cambridge during a period of intermission. The guidance also provides further information on signposting intermitting students for further support.

A further success is that the Disabled Students' Campaign's Guide to Undergraduate Intermission was finished and published in April 2017. This comprehensive document has been made available both online and in print to students, and signposted to JCR and MCR officers, as well as being signposted to in the new guidance produced by the University in collaboration with CUSU. The Guide is a student-facing resource which supports students across each stage of the intermission process. It aims to interpret University policy and guidance in a way that is helpful for students, but also encourages students to refer to this policy as the superior source, and to seek guidance from their tutor and the SUAS if they are unsure.

SPOTLIGHT ON...MENTAL HEALTH – BY SOPHIE BUCK (CUSU-GU WELFARE AND RIGHTS OFFICER 2016-17)

In 2015-16, 26% of students accessing the Students' Unions' Advice Service did so for reasons of mental health. In 2016-17, this dropped to 5%, though it should be noted that an additional 7% of students approached the Service for health and wellbeing issues bringing the combined total of these two areas to 12%.

The Students' Unions recognise that mental health is a key issue at Cambridge. According to CUSU's Big Cambridge Survey 2016, 52% of undergraduate respondents, 47% of research-student respondents, and

43% of taught-postgraduate respondents reported that they found dealing with stress and anxiety a problem, suggesting that they would benefit from support. This figure rose for those in liberation groups, e.g. disabled students (83%) and LGBT+ students (62%). Mental health has therefore been a key focus of the work done by the CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer and CUSU Disabled Students' Officer this year.

To combat isolation, weekly Parent and Toddler Coffee Mornings and Saturday (Children's Film) Screenings were organised. Moreover, the Winter Holiday Activity Guide, which contained information about upcoming local events, was produced again; with thanks to St Edmunds College, a film screening, Christmas potluck and New-Year's-Eve bar-night event were organised.

As well as the regular yoga, Art for Mental Health events were run every term to provide outlets for stress. At these events, a wide range of high-quality art supplies were provided alongside fruit and vegetables that acted as everyday artistic inspiration. Contrasting with Cambridge culture, the focus of the events was on the process of artistic creation - particularly the sensory and emotional aspects – rather than the quality of the product created.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, the Students' Unions' wrote and shared a number of resources, including on self-care, the fact mental health problems can be classed as disabilities, and the range of support services available.

To help students best support those around them while managing their own mental health, the Handbook for College Welfare and Liberation Officers was fleshed out, to include links to where to refer students for further support among other things, and a guide was written and workshop held on 'How to Support Friends'.

Finally, to reduce some of the barriers to accessing support, the Students' Unions made contributions, via a working group, toward the creation of guidelines for college confidentiality policies, worked to improve the questions asked in the University Counselling Service pre-counselling form, based on recommendations by students, organised a safe-space workshop on 'Mental health and Masculinity' with Chama Kay for male and non-binary students, and created a 'Guide to Support Services'.

These resources and events have and will be useful for the Advice Service in supporting students on issues relating to mental health, raising awareness of the Advice Service, particularly in addressing the broader issues relating to mental health, e.g. relationship issues, as well as preventing some students from even needing support.

SPOTLIGHT ON...GRADUATE-SPECIFIC ISSUES BY ELLIE CHAN (GU VICE-PRESIDENT 2016-17)

The single, most prevalent issue to come through the Advice Service is one which concerns graduate students alone.

Consistent with last year's numbers, many students access the SUAS to discuss difficult student-supervisor relations (8% in 2016-17), and the vast majority are PhD students. Deteriorating, problematic, or non-functioning supervisor relations is the most obvious problem connected to this, but there are a number of attendant issues covered by the broader aegis of supervisor relations. For example there is a clear lack of coherent, consistent understanding of what constitutes a PhD. Headway is being made as part of the CamSIS improvement programme into defining the qualification itself, but more work needs to be done to ensure that this information is disseminated, and constantly so.

Information that appears to be most crucially lacking from common knowledge includes understanding of the appropriate level of skill for a student beginning a PhD, and what being a supervisor of a PhD student actually entails (for example, the widespread belief that a supervisor's role is akin to that of a 'line manager' or 'boss'). This knowledge is equally lacking in PhD students, and in their supervisors. In an academic climate in which the academic job market is becoming increasingly more competitive, it is in turn becoming ever more vital that a successful PhD student is equipped with the proper range of critical skills appropriate to a researcher, and that the PhD is considered a professional development program to some extent (both for the student, and for the supervisor).

These issues are testified to by the cases which come through the Advice Service. Students coming to SUAS are concerned about how to fund the 4th year of doctoral research; about their current supervisor blocking a change to an alternative (more appropriate) supervisor; about being pressurised to submit early (either before the end of funding, or before their ninth term); about the influence of their supervisor over their examiners. Such cases are focused on microcosmic areas surrounding the central and unifying issue of supervisor relations: it is evident from the most cursory consideration that all of these issues would be solved by a greater degree of either trust or understanding between a student and supervisor, and a greater appreciation of the kind of questions both should be asking throughout a student's doctoral research.

For the remainder of her term of office, the work of the GU Vice-President will be focused on improving channels of communication and understanding between PhD students and their supervisors. The Graduate Union will continually advertise the Code of Practice for Research Students and the Cambridge Researcher Development Framework throughout the coming academic year, both through social media and on their own website. The Vice-President is collaborating with the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning to produce a Chartership training course for supervisors of graduate students; this Chartership, progressing through bronze, silver and gold levels, will equip supervisors with a greater range of tools for training research students. It aims to provide awareness of, amongst other things, the typically steep and by no means smooth learning curve of doctoral research, and the fact that a doctoral student will not embark on their research project as a fully-formed academic peer, but should become one through good supervision. Following the recommendations of the Review of Postgraduate Feedback and the Student Registry's official definition of a PhD, the Graduate Union seeks to act as an ambassador for these changes, and to ensure that it is widely recognized across the University that a PhD should first and foremost be producing a well-trained researcher, rather than a thesis.

SPOTLIGHT ON...DISABLED STUDENTS BY JESSICAL WING (DISABLED STUDENTS' OFFICER 2016-17)

This year has been an exciting one for disability at CUSU, with the addition of a new full-time disabled students' officer to the sabbatical team. This has meant the opportunity to encourage a stronger focus on issues that often affect disabled students. This year's Disabled Students' Officer has been able to work on several issues that are reflected in the cases that the Advice Service sees:

- Physical access to academic and social commitments, as well as accommodation
- The implementation of reasonable adjustments
- Awareness of academic support for students with mental health issues

On the issue of physical access, the Disabled Students' Officer has begun the development of a guide that compares the physical access of communal areas across all the colleges. Its intention is to provide an at-a-

glance understanding of whether or not certain facilities are accessible, by using a traffic light system: 'green' indicates a facility is accessible, 'red' inaccessible, and 'amber' indicates that a facility is accessible only under certain conditions.

The issue of effective and timely implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled students has continued to appear in cases that SUAS has supported. This year, the Disabled Students' Officer has been able to produce and publicise a resource on reasonable adjustments and student support documents (SSDs), with the aim of empowering students through knowledge of the systems in place and the support that is available to them.

SPOTLIGHT ON...HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE BY AUDREY SEBATINDIRA (CUSU WOMEN'S OFFICER 2016-17)

In 2016-17, 2% of students supported by the Students' Unions' Advice Service (SUAS) approached the Service to discuss sexual assault and/or harassment. An equal number of postgraduates and undergraduates reported these issues (6 students in total), and all who did identified as female.

This year, CUSU consulted with the University as it launched a new Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Procedure. This Procedure makes explicit the choice that students have between using their college harassment policies or the University Procedure. It has also allowed for the creation of a Sexual Assault Advisor role as part of the University Counselling Service, and an anonymous reporting service through which students can record instances of sexual misconduct without having to go through the full reporting process. The procedure is comprehensive, and template versions will hopefully be adopted by the Colleges. CUSU has striven this year to widely publicise the procedure and build up student faith in it. It will continue to do so throughout the next academic year.

A gap remains concerning staff-student instances of sexual misconduct, however, as the Procedure only governs instances of misconduct between students. This could pose a particular problem for postgraduate students, although undergraduate students are, of course, also affected. Currently, such cases are governed by the University's Dignity@Work procedure (which is currently being reviewed). A policy on personal relationships between staff and student members of the University should also provide much-needed clarity on this issue once it is approved by University committees and publicised.

6. LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

A. WORDS FROM OUR PARTNERS

CUSU - PARENT ORGANISATION

The support and guidance offered to students by the Students' Unions' Advice Service is one of the most valuable contributions CUSU makes to the University of Cambridge. The SUAS offers a level of personalised and professional advice that has benefitted hundreds of students over this year. From the Advice Service, students can expect to be supported through difficult procedures and fully informed about their options. We at CUSU are so proud of the service and commend the work of Lisa, Rachel and Gemma.

This year, there has been some change in the operation of the Advice Service; change that we believe is fully mutually beneficial. With officers no longer involved in advice casework, students are provided with a fully professional service, and CUSU sabbs can concentrate on pursuing the longer-term and structural welfare issues in the University. Central to the success of this model is the level of discussion and interaction between the Unions and the Advice Service. Officers have monthly discussions about the kinds of cases SUAS is dealing with, which not only allows us to help find answers to certain questions, but can identify gaps in welfare provision, or patterns in the kinds of cases SUAS is dealing with. This information can thus guide our representational work in CUSU.

We look forward to another year of working with the Students' Unions' Advice Service and are grateful for all they do for students.

Daisy Eyre (CUSU President 2017-18)

GRADUATE UNION - PARENT ORGANISATION

The work of the Students' Unions' Advice Service is core to the mission of the Graduate Union, and therefore supporting the development of the Service is a fundamental component of the Union's strategy. We at the Graduate Union are very proud of the Service's achievements, and it's with great pleasure that we are able to look back on another successful year of supporting our membership.

This year has, again, seen an increase in the total number of student accessing the Service. This is a testament to the success we have had integrating the Advice Service as an integral part of the Collegiate University's student support network, as a complement to the services provided by the University and Colleges. We look forward to continuing to facilitate this growth in the future, working with our partners CUSU to meet the increasing demand on our advisors' time through further development of the Service's capacity. The success of the Advice Service, which since its establishment has been provided jointly by both unions, provides a model for how collaboration between the two unions can produce fantastic results for our two memberships.

For the first year ever, in 2016-17 more postgraduates (56%) than undergraduates (44%) accessed the Advice Service; despite undergraduates currently outnumbering postgraduates among the student body. This is a trend we would anticipate continuing in future years, as postgraduate student numbers begin to increase in line with the University's targets. It is therefore particularly timely that the Graduate Union's first

sabbatical Vice-President took office at the start of 2017; one of the fundamental purposes of this role is to provide a robust Graduate Union contribution to the running and development of the Advice Service. Active student leadership is particularly important to the Service, now that the two unions have decided to cease providing casework through their sabbatical officers, and transfer towards a fully-professional team of advisors. Finally, I'd like to express my gratitude to Lisa, Rachel and Gemma for all the fantastic work they do supporting postgraduate students at Cambridge. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to work with them during my two terms of office, and I look forward to seeing the Service continue to grow and improve.

Chad Allen (Graduate Union President 2015-17)

HEAD OF STUDENT CONDUCT, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS, OSCCA

The Students' Unions' Advice Service has a critical role within the collegiate University; ensuring that students have access to an independent, confidential team of professional advisors with whom they can seek help on any University or College matter. Whilst the increase in the numbers of students accessing the Service provides evidence of both its reputation and its effectiveness, these figures only tell half the story. As with all student-facing services, the needs of each client vary dramatically and it is in its individual approach to each student's needs that the Service comes into its own.

The Students' Unions' Advice Service considers both the student's immediate needs and their long-term goals; they act a facilitator between College and student, as an advisor in University processes. Their role is so valuable because although their support for the student is unwavering, their pragmatism and understanding of the parameters of what is possible, enables them to provide realistic and helpful advice to students. It is their knowledge and experience of the collegiate University system that allows them to provide such a good service to students, which in turn advantages the University and Colleges.

That is not to say that the Students' Unions' Advice Service does not also play the role of a 'critical friend'; this year has seen a number of changes to procedures and student-facing guidance regarding University student procedures and the Advice Service have provided thoughtful and helpful feedback during this time. We are grateful to be able to work closely with the Students' Unions' Advice Service and for the service it provides to students.

Sarah d'Ambrumenil (Head of the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, OSCCA)

B. CUSU AND THE GRADUATE UNION

The Students' Unions' Advice Service is provided by CUSU and the Graduate Union. Both organisations provide financial and staff resources that allow for the Service's continued operation. The Students' Unions' Advice Service remains one of the key services provided to members by either Union and as such is central to their strategic development.

C. OTHER STUDENT SERVICES

Working effectively with other University services is key to the way the Students' Unions' Advice Service operates, and the team works closely with other services throughout the year, whether in making or receiving referrals, seeking advice and information, or working alongside various support services when supporting a student through a difficulty.

The Service prides itself on its expertise in what services are available to Cambridge students. The team's knowledge of the services on offer to students in the Collegiate University, locally and nationally, allows us to see students with any issue. Advisors recognise the limits of what they are able to offer a student, and as such we are experts at signposting and referrals. Cases often involve discussing multiple referral options with the student to help them identify what might be most appropriate for them. To support this aspect of the Service, every year, the Advice Service team meets other key service-providers in the Collegiate University such as the Counselling Service, Mental Health Advisors, Disability Resource Centre, College Nurses, Careers Service, Childcare Office, International Students Team, Accommodation Service, Language Centre, and Student Registry.

D. APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Students' Unions' Advice Service usually attends Applications Committee meetings ones or twice a year, and we look forward to resuming this aspect of our work once the new Secretary of the Applications Committee is in post. These meetings allow Advisors to discuss with the committee members some of the challenges that students face when navigating the University procedures as well as some of the challenges that the Service faces in advising students.

Members of the Advice Service team were in regular contact with the acting Secretary of the Applications Committee to ensure that we had a clear understanding of the procedures and regulations that were relevant to our service-users, and that we were up to date with any changes that might affect students.

This year, the Advice Service was given many opportunities to provide feedback regarding the review of the Applications Committee guidance notes and forms. We appreciate having been given this opportunity and look forward to working with these new documents.

E. OSCCA

This year, the Advice Service built a strong working relationship with the team of the Student, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA). Termly meetings were organized between our teams to ensure that we were sharing information. OSCCA also sought feedback from the Advice Service team on various procedures they had been reviewing or developing, and we were very grateful to be able to use our first-hand experience of working with students to provide feedback and ideas.

In addition, Advisors were in regular contact with OSCCA staff to discuss complex cases (with students' permission) and what options and processes would be most suitable for those students, therefore always ensuring any information we provided to students was correct and up to date.

F. COLLEGES

The Students' Unions' Advice Service is always keen to further develop and cement its relationship with the Colleges. In September 2016, the Service contributed for a third time to the Tutor training programme. This was a great opportunity to build relationships with College tutorial teams, and to raise awareness of the Service amongst tutors. We look forward to our continued involvement in tutor training.

Furthermore, the Advice Service Manager has continued visiting Colleges to meet Senior Tutors and their Tutorial teams though the number of Colleges visited this year was lower than in previous years due to the increase in the number of students accessing the Service and the effect this has had on the Advice Service team's capacity. It is felt that these visits are successful both in building relationships and finding out more about specific support systems and services available in each College. This allows Advisors to more effectively support students, especially in terms of helping them access the support that is available to them in their College. The Service is also keen to maintain links with other College services, e.g. attending meetings of the College Nurses Association during the year.

G. SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

This year, the Advice Service continued to build relationships with University staff who work with students, mainly through our "Essential Skills for Supporting Students" training sessions which were requested by some of the Schools. The training was provided on seven occasions to about 100 staff members from Engineering, Physics, Maths, POLIS and the Judge Business School. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive and staff who attend the session seem to enjoy having the opportunity to think about boundaries and confidentiality and how these apply to their roles as well as learning about active listening and making quality referrals. Furthermore, they seem to value the opportunity to discuss their experiences with students in a supportive atmosphere with other colleagues in similar roles.

The "Essential Skills for Supporting Students" session lasts three hours and provides University staff (such as administrators and anyone else who works directly with students) with the skills they need to listen to students, manage boundaries, signpost students and manage their expectations. The session is interactive and includes activities such as practicing listening skills and discussing familiar scenarios.

H. NATIONAL ADVICE COMMUNITY

The Students' Unions' Advice Service remains a member of Advice UK (the UK's largest support network for free, independent advice centres), which allows the Service access to their training and resources, as well as their professional liability insurance. The Service is also a member of AMOSSHE (the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education), RAWs (Research and Welfare Staff in Student Unions), and more recently NASMA (National Association of Student Money Advisers) and has benefitted from the access to training, resources and advice that membership of these organisations afford.

The Service continues to foster strong relationships with other Advice Services locally and nationally, including Anglia Ruskin University, the University of East Anglia, and Oxford University.

I. STUDENT-LED WELFARE INITIATIVES

Strong peer support networks are a feature of the Collegiate University and something which the Students' Unions' Advice Service plays a vital role in supporting. In turn, volunteers in these networks are a vital source of referrals and awareness-raising for the Service.

This year, the CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer focused on developing quality resources for JCR and MCR committee members with support-related roles, Autonomous Campaigns, and other welfare-related initiatives as well as for students in general. The Advice Service took a lead role in providing material, resources, and feedback for the Welfare Officers' handbook, the Support Services Guide, and the Mental Health Support Options guide.

We have also continued to work closely with Nightline this year, collaborating on projects such as, the Students' Unions' Advice Service and Nightline card project which was supported by the Welfare and Finance committee and involved creating a card containing information about SUAS and Nightline (highlighting that between the two services, almost 24 hour student-led support is available to students). The cards were distributed to colleges with the goal of them being posted on the bedroom notice boards of every fresher.

	
<p>The Students' Unions' Advice Service offers confidential, impartial and independent advice and representation for Cambridge students. 9am-5pm weekdays all year round</p>	<p>Whatever's on your mind, Nightline* is always here to talk things through. <small>* formerly known as Linkline</small> 7pm-7am every night during term time</p>
 studentadvice.cam.ac.uk	 cambridge.nightline.ac.uk
 01223 746999	 01223 744444
 advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk	 email@cambridge.nightline.ac.uk
 Upper Ground Floor, 17 Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RX	 instant messenger via website

The Service further supports these student networks by providing a confidential source of advice and support for volunteers who are worried about a particular student or situation. Issues such as students experiencing suicidal thoughts, eating disorders or self-harm are common; in these instances, the Service can support officers in providing information about what support is available, how to manage the situation, and help them think about when it may or may not be appropriate to breach confidentiality. This support offering is a separate but parallel service to that offered to the general student population. The separate service allows the Advice Service team to be slightly more directive, for example in setting clear boundaries about the volunteer's role and advising when situations are inappropriate for them to be dealing with.

7. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

A. CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2016, the company that provides our case management system (Izuka) partnered up with Membership Solutions to deliver a new case management system more tailored to student casework, entitled “Student Case Manager”, to which the Advice Service upgraded in July 2016.

Since then, a great deal of the Advice Service Manager’s time has been dedicated to customising “Student Case Manager” to the needs of the Advice Service and to allow us to record the different and sometimes unique issues experienced by students at the University of Cambridge.

This effort will pay dividends from the academic year 2017-18 where from the 1st day of the Advice Service year (1st July), we will be recording information in a more comprehensive and consistent way in a system completely adapted to our needs.

As we went through the process of customization, entering cases in a precise and consistent manner proved to be challenging which made extracting meaningful data very time-consuming. Now that the system is fully customized, we are able to produce meaningful data and tailored reports on the areas we have identified as relevant in an easy, quick and comprehensive manner - far better than anything we have been able to do before. This allows us to provide data and information to sabbatical officers and staff on the areas we capture within minutes. These areas include the following:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Student ID | 14. Case Type | 27. Method of Contact |
| 2. Case Ref | 15. Enquiry Type | 28. Course |
| 3. Case Owner | 16. Secondary Case Type 1 | 29. Department |
| 4. Open Date | 17. Secondary Case Type 2 | 30. School of Study |
| 5. Date of birth | 18. Secondary Case Type 3 | 31. College |
| 6. Age | 19. Secondary Case Type 4 | 32. Year of Study |
| 7. Gender | 20. Secondary Case Type 5 | 33. Enrolled |
| 8. Language | 21. Secondary Case Type 6 | 34. Student Status |
| 9. Ethnicity | 22. Secondary Case Type 7 | 35. Tuition fee |
| 10. Do you consider yourself to be disabled | 23. Type of advice required | 36. Age on entry |
| 11. Health Issues or Impairments | 24. Student found out about the service via | 37. Record Time Spent Type |
| 12. Service-User Type | 25. Referred on to 1 | 38. Time Spent |
| 13. Channel/Method of Contact | 26. Referred on to 2 | 39. Case Status |

B. STAFF TRAINING

This year, the Advice Service continued to provide training to University staff who work with students, mainly through our “Essential Skills for Supporting Students” training sessions which were requested by some of the Schools.

So far, we have provided this training on seven occasions to about 100 staff members from Engineering, Physics, Maths, POLIS and the Judge Business School. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive and staff who attend the sessions seem to enjoy having the opportunity to think about boundaries and confidentiality and how these apply to their role as well as learning about active listening and making quality referrals. Furthermore, they seem to value the opportunity to discuss their experiences with students in a supportive atmosphere with other colleagues in similar roles.

The "Essential Skills for Supporting Students" session lasts three hours and provides University staff (such as administrators and anyone else who works directly with students) with the skills they need to listen to students, manage boundaries, signpost students and manage their expectations. The session is interactive and includes activities such as practicing listening skills and discussing familiar scenarios.

C. CONTRIBUTION TO UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This year the Advice Service Manager was invited to be a member of the University's Health and Wellbeing committee. This was alongside separate CUSU-GU representation on the committee. Membership of this committee has provided the Advice Service with crucial information that currently or eventually will impact directly on the work we do with students (e.g. standard provision guidance for exam access arrangements). Furthermore, it has allowed us to use our experience to provide input and feedback on projects and initiatives (e.g. When to Refer document).

In 2015-16, the Advice Service was asked to be part of a working group to develop a new inter-Collegiate process and policy for changing college, and we were pleased with the clearer and more transparent process that came out of this. Having now supported several students with the new process, we have experienced the strengths and weaknesses of the new procedure and hope to be able to provide feedback to help to further improve the process.

This year, our strong link with the Applications Committee continued, and through informal discussions with the acting secretary of the Applications Committee, we were able to provide feedback on the Applications Committee's guidance, discussing some of the areas of the guidance that were challenging to our service-users with the purpose of this feeding in to the development of the new guidance.

We also created strong links with the Office of Student, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, who approached us regularly for feedback on the procedures they had been reviewing such as the Student Complaints Procedure, the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Procedure, and the Examination Reviews.

D. NEW AREAS OF ADVICE

Through the various issues students have brought to the Advice Service over the years, as well as in discussions with other service-providers within the Collegiate University, we had become aware that certain gaps existed in the range of advice that is available to students at Cambridge. As such, we had started to record areas where students were struggling to get consistent and quality advice. By asking other service-providers to refer students to the Service regardless of whether we covered that area of advice, we were able to provide quality referrals to the appropriate advisory networks, and keep a record of these enquiries.

Over time, this allowed us to explore whether we should be broadening the areas for which we provide advice, and we determined that it would be beneficial to students if the Advice Service more formally offered financial advice to students (including financial advice during intermission and student money advice), and we have been offering this type of advice since Lent 2016.

Since then, finance-related issues has become one of the Advice Service's main areas of advice with 11% of our service-users having approached us for support on these matters.

As this is a new area of advice for us, these types of cases tend to be more time consuming and will probably remain so for another year or so while we continue to develop our knowledge "on the job" and with training, but we think this investment in time will be worthwhile in the long term.

In order to offer the same quality of advice on financial matters as we do in all of the Service's other areas of advice, we have increased our knowledge of financial advice through our membership of NASMA (National Union of Student Money Advisers) where we have access to multiple resources, regional meetings, training opportunities, as well as a community of advisers where we can share information and ask questions.

The Advisors attended a one day course entitled "Introduction to Student Finance", where the knowledge that we gained was almost immediately put to good use. The Advice Service staff members will continue to increase their knowledge as suitable training opportunities become available.

E. STAFFING STRUCTURE

In 2016-17, the staffing level of the Service was 2 FTE. The staff members consist of the Advice Service Manager and the Advisor. The Advisor sees the majority of the students who come to the Service and also assists the Advice Service Manager in the day-to-day management of the Advice Service, thus allowing the Advice Service Manager to focus on the development of the Service, as well as on some of the more complex cases. However, with the increase in the number of students accessing the Service this year, and providing support to students being the Service's number one priority, the Advice Service Manager had to take on many more cases since the original increase in staffing from 1 FTE to 2FTE in 2013, which then impacted on some of the other aspects of her work.

F. ROLE OF SABBATICAL OFFICERS

Since its inception, there had been a view that sabbatical officers should be part of the Advice Service team and undertake casework. However, sabbatical officers were also keen to reduce the amount of casework they were handling in order to dedicate more time to their committee and campaign work. Over the years, the increase in staff resources has allowed for a reduction in the proportion of cases being undertaken by sabbatical officers from 50% of cases in 2012-13, 37% in 2013-14, 16% in 2014-15, 13% in 2015-16 and finally 5% in 2016-17.

The especially low percentage of 5% in 2016-17 was due to the sabbatical officers' decision in October 2016 to permanently cease to undertake casework. This decision was made with the view of reducing risk, further professionalizing the Service, and allowing officers to dedicate more time to aspects of their roles that were

likely to benefit a larger number of students as opposed to individual casework which usually only benefits the individual involved. Staff in the Advice Service welcomed this decision recognizing that if planned carefully, it would be possible to retain all the positive aspects of the involvement of elected sabbatical officers in the Advice Service (e.g. development and promotion of the Service) while abandoning the more challenging areas such as casework which have an element of risk to them.

A considerable amount of time had already been spent training the new team of elected sabbatical advisors; and therefore the combination of an ever increasing number of students accessing the Service with fewer advisors providing support impacted on the capacity of the staff team, and though the two advisors managed to maintain the quality of the support provided, we were at times stretched and at risk of not meeting our response times.

It was agreed that in future years, the Advice Service team would no longer be required to deliver the in-depth training programme essential for anyone providing individual support and casework, and that we would contribute to the wider CUSU training programme, thus reducing how much training we deliver whilst at the same time making our training available to all elected sabbatical officers.

There are real benefits to having sabbatical officers involved in the Advice Service, and we are pleased that whilst the sabbatical officers will no longer be undertaking casework, we will retain the more positive aspects of their involvement such as their in-depth understanding and experience of student life, knowledge of the informal processes at work within the institution, and also their knowledge of the background to any changes that are made to relevant procedures and processes relevant to student cases. In order to maintain these positive aspects and with the goal of retaining the student-led nature of the Advice Service, two sets of meetings were established between Advisors and sabbatical officers which created opportunities to discuss with officers Advice Service related matters every two weeks. The first of the meetings is the SUAS Support and Development meeting which is for elected sabbatical officers whose roles used to undertake casework where the focus of the meeting is the development and promotion of the Service. The second of the meetings is the SUAS Information and Sharing Meeting which is for all elected officers and offers a space where officers can hear about the issues students bring to the Advice Service which in turn may inform their campaign and/or committee work.

Sabbatical officers also play an important role in advertising and promoting the Service. This includes ensuring information about the Advice Service is presented at any induction and training events they host as well as including information about SUAS in any resources they develop (e.g. intermission guide) and social media groups and forums in which they participate. Sabbatical officers also play an important role in making their friends and those they work with aware of the Service. This year the sabbatical officer team as a whole has worked to develop the publicity and awareness of the Service, particularly by attending and emphasising the existence and utility of the Service in their interactions with other students. This has the benefits of making sure students are aware that the Advice Service is provided to them by CUSU and the Graduate Union, and provides further opportunity for sabbatical officers to interact with students on an informal basis.

8. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

A. STUDENT AWARENESS

The Annual Reports in the two previous years cited student awareness of the Service as one of our main challenges. Though we have made good progress in this area as has been demonstrated in the increase in the number of students accessing the Service over the last couple of years, we still receive feedback from students who indicate that more needs to be done to raise awareness about the Advice Service.

We are hopeful that the recent inclusion of Advice Service information in a high proportion of University guidance and procedures will continue to reach students who are actively looking for this type of information.

We plan to continue with our established promotional activities but new initiatives may be put on hold until we have a better idea of what staff capacity within the Service will look like in the future, bearing in mind that our third advisor role is currently only funded until February 2018.

B. ADDITIONAL ADVISORS

In July 2017, the main advisor of the Advice Service returned from maternity leave. With the generosity of the Graduate Union, we have been able to retain her maternity cover which has allowed us to increase the staff team to 2.6 FTE. This increase in staff capacity has been crucial in allowing us to continue to provide quality support to students despite the increase in demand on the Service. This arrangement however is temporary (currently until February 2018). As such, the future of the Advice Service beyond this point is uncertain, and though the Unions will be supporting us in raising these matters with the Collegiate University through the appropriate channels, it is with some concern that we enter into our seventh year of service. Quality of support has always been our number one priority, and we are keen to maintain the level of service we have been able to provide so far.

C. MEASURING IMPACT

Though we invite student service-users to provide feedback regarding their experience of the Advice Service twice monthly; we have yet to start the process of measuring the impact the support we have provided has had on students. We will begin the process of measuring the impact of our work from October 2017.

D. WORKSHOPS

One of the areas we are hoping to develop is the design and delivery of workshops for students in the areas of money management, and managing working relationships. Whether we will be able to develop these areas will depend on the staff capacity we have within the Advice Service.

E. NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The majority of the objectives in the Advice Service strategic plan from 2014 related to the quality and promotion of the Service. Most of these objectives have now been achieved, while others are no longer relevant. As such, we would like to start the process of creating a new strategic plan that will allow us to reflect on where we are now, and where we would like to be in the future.

9. CONCLUSION

The Students' Unions' Advice Service has seen real benefits from having moved to a staff-only team of advisors whilst continuing to work closely with elected sabbatical officers to ensure the Service remains student-led. We have retained all the benefits of working with elected sabbatical officers whilst having eliminated the risks involved in having them undertake casework. This has allowed the sabbatical officers to focus on their committee and campaign work which in turn will potentially not only benefit our service-users but also hopefully the general student population.

The strong links we have created with OSCCA have allowed us to share information, have input into new procedures and ensure we continue to give clear information to students. Furthermore, the inclusion of Advice Service information in University guidance and procedures is alerting students of the existence of the Advice Service at a time when they are actively seeking out information.

Wider-reaching training within the Service has helped broaden our expertise thus allowing us to extend our advice work to student finance, which has further enhanced the Service's ability to provide a quality source of support to students.

The past year has been our busiest so far, in part as a result of the inclusion of Advice Service information in University guidance and procedures, but also due to the diligent work of the team in raising the profile of the Service. We look forward to seeing whether the growth in the number of students accessing the Service will continue in 2017-18, and initial signs seem to be indicating that this is likely to be the case. Here's to another busy year!

Sophie Buck

CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer (2016-17)

Lisa Déry

Advice Service Manager

Rachel Wilson

Advisor

Gemma Douglas

Advisor

10. APPENDIX – CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

A PhD student has an appointment with the Students' Unions' Advice Service to talk about funding issues. The student has applied for an extension to their submission deadline and is enquiring about any financial support they may be able to access to help them cover the living costs if the extension is granted.

Role of the Advisor:

- Listen
- Identify the reason for requesting an extension e.g. medical, disability, other mitigating circumstance
- Suggest the student speaks to their Supervisor to inform them of the situation, get advice and explore whether the Department can provide any financial support
- Suggest the student speaks to their Graduate Tutor to inform them of the situation, get advice and explore whether the College can provide any financial support
- Explore with the student whether they would be eligible for any hardship funding for Graduate students
- If options for the student seem limited, contact the Fees and Funding office to discuss whether any other options may be available
- Provide information about internal resources (e.g. Cambridge Funding Search, Funds for Individuals and Projects, Careers Service etc)
- Provide information about external resources (e.g. charitable funds and searches)
- Explore with student whether other options may be possible (e.g. family)
- Help student think about their finances and offer support in considering how best to manage the funds they currently do have.

CASE STUDY 2

A second year undergraduate student has an appointment with the Students' Unions' Advice Service. The Senior Tutor has requested the student attend a meeting at the College as there are concerns about the student's academic progress and there is mention of the Fitness to Study procedure. The student is worried about what's going to happen to them and is looking for guidance and support. The student states that they have been feeling very depressed over the last few months and they have been struggling to attend lectures and do their work. They haven't yet told their tutor about the situation.

Role of the Advisor:

- Listen
- Explore with the student why they haven't discussed the matter with their tutor, and support the student in engaging with their Tutor or other College support
- Is student receiving support for depression (GP, Counselling Service, College Counsellor, College Nurse, external counsellor, psychologist)?
- Has student been officially diagnosed (may be eligible for support from DRC)?

- Is student struggling due to depression or something else (e.g. SpLD)?
- Inform student about the support available to them in their College
- Inform student about the Counselling Service
- Inform student about the Disability Resource Centre
- Suggest student books an appointment with their GP
- Explain the Fitness to Study Procedure and its possible outcomes
- Explore with student what might be help them with their studies
- Help student prepare for the meeting
- If student has concerns about the meeting, offer to attend the meeting with them if they feel that would be helpful.