

**The ICU Welfare Survey:  
Analysing welfare provision in the context of IC students**

**A report by the Deputy President (Welfare)**

**Why a Welfare Survey?**

Nic Massie and Jenny Wilson originally came up with the idea and John Sandall and I joined to create the welfare survey team. We wanted to make a welfare survey because there was no data on our welfare services beyond rating them, which is what the Student Barometer does. For us, this kind of survey was necessary to give a deeper analysis of the performance of our welfare services. Some services, i.e. Counselling and the Student Hub had only been analysed based on the views of those who had used them and others i.e. the Chaplaincy had never been analysed at all. It also gave us an opportunity to ask about non-service based issues, such as depression

The survey aimed to cover all the welfare services we offer as well as the most current non-service based issues – depression and personal safety:

- The Health Centre
- Depression
- The Counselling Service
- Disability Support
- Phone Lines
- The Student Hub
- Union Welfare Support
- The Tutorial System
- International Student Support
- The Chaplaincy
- Personal safety

**Who took the survey?**

- The survey ran from the 14th March – 1st April this year
- It was created with survey monkey and incentivised with prizes
- 320 students responded, mostly between 18 and 25 but some older
- Most respondents were undergraduate, Natural Sciences and based on the South Kensington campus but we had good representation from other groups with just under 20% postgraduate respondents

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- Most lived in rented accommodation with 25% in Halls
- 72% were UK students with 14% EU and International respectively and most were Christian, Atheist, of no religion or Agnostic
- In the first instance of a problem, most would consult their friends, with half consulting a family member.
- More UK students would consult a friend in the event of a problem, whereas EU and International students would be more likely to consult a family member.
- Interestingly, unlike UK and EU students, no International respondents would tell no-one, but similarly, they wouldn't talk to a trained professional like a staff member. They're also more likely than UK/EU students to use the Internet or tell a warden.
- All students engage most with Felix, The Union and College websites and posters on campus for information

### **Medical Services**

- There is good awareness of the core services offered by the Health Centre, less so of complementary therapies and other services. So, an action from this is the Health Centre to aim to publicise individual services further
- The main comments given were:
- The time between booking and attending an appointment is too long. Here we would encourage the Health Centre to continue to look into NAs and ways of reminding students about their appointments to reduce waiting times
- Good service with good doctors but the reception staff are unfriendly and impatient. Here we would suggest the Health Centre to look into further customer service training for reception staff
- The queues are long and they'd like information on the Health Centre to be more accessible
- At Silwood 75% seem to not know the hours/ location of the surgery there – there clearly needs to be more work done to publicise Silwood's welfare services to it's students

### **Depression**

- We had no record of the incidence of depression in our student population other than Counselling and Health Centre attendance – we had no idea of how many of our students have depressive symptoms but do not seek help
- So we used the Patient Health Questionnaire, a standard pre-diagnosis survey used by the NHS to establish the likelihood of a depressive condition, incorporating it verbatim into the

survey. It asks students how frequently they have experienced the symptoms of depression over the last fortnight

- From our results, 8% of our population are likely to suffer from a depressive disorder, and 11% to suffer from a major depressive disorder – 19% of our population in total. We wanted to compare this to the incidence for the background population in the same age group, but so far I've been unable to establish an accurate enough number to make any conclusions. However, I think we'd all agree that 19% is a worryingly high figure
- I would suggest that subject to an accurate comparison we review mental health staffing provision with a view to long term increases, especially given our already sub par staffing level in this area

### **The Counselling Service**

- Feedback was that the service is not good at signposting to other services and helping students access those services, so we'd encourage a greater liaison between Counselling and other services to cross promote what is available
- More than 50% were able to get an initial appointment made for within 7 days, so it doesn't seem to be the case that there is insufficient access to support which is good
- However, 44% saying that they got less counselling than they wanted, so we'd suggest that there's a need a greater number of counselling sessions per student. 42% of users of the Counselling service rated it the quality as 'fair' though roughly 24% and 20% rated it as good or very good respectively, showing moderate satisfaction with the service provided.
- There is still a stigma surrounding Counselling among our students. People seemed hesitant to go as they didn't know what level of problem is appropriate, and they didn't know what services were on offer. 41% of UGs said outright that they would not use the Counselling service (90 people). The issue is tricky but needs to be tackled in future

### **Disabilities**

- Disabilities formed a major part of the survey as this is such a key area for improvement
- Both UK and International students were similarly aware of the DAS, but International students were a lot less aware of the specific services offered. So, going forward we want to make International students more aware of exactly what the DAS can offer them
- 88% were aware of the DAS existing, with a 1.5% improvement on last year.
- 84% UK students have contacted the DAS, which is similar for EU students but quite a bit lower for International students.
- Greatest awareness was of exam arrangements, diagnosis and DSA, less so of pre screening, lecture arrangement and library guidance
- 80% have declared, with the declaration rate decreasing for EU and International students. However, there didn't seem to be a reason for this in the comments. From this we'd suggest that the DAS work with the International Office and Registry to highlight the benefits of declaring to International students.

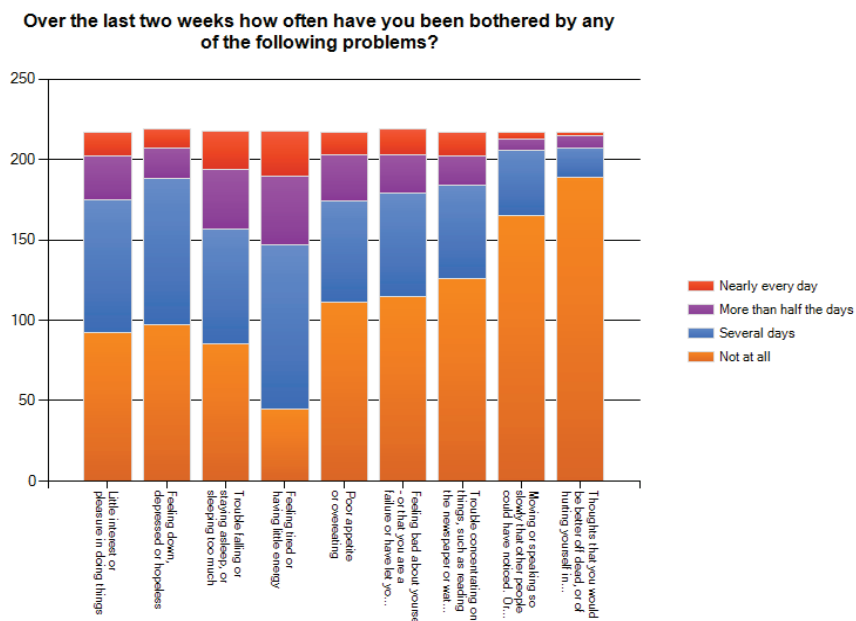
- A lot more declared to Imperial than to UCAS– they either weren't aware of importance of declaring or were waiting to be diagnosed, so we'd suggest including disability information more prominently in prospectus.
- Common reasons for why they didn't declare – I was not sure it was necessary or that they could help or I'm waiting for an official diagnosis.
- This year 57% know who their DDLO (Departmental Disability Liaison Officer) is compared to 45% last year so this is an improvement. However, this is lower for EU and International students. 16% of those who contacted their DDLOs didn't find their advice useful (no data for last year), so we'd suggest reviewing training for DDLOs
- 67.3% had had exam arrangements made, with fewer EU and International students (33.3%) However, 27.8% felt that this did not enable them to fully demonstrate their learning. We therefore support College's continued efforts to review these arrangements.
- There has been sporadic usage of the services in the library and the Assistive tech room – the text comments suggest a lack of awareness and problems with things working – we suggest a review of the Assistive Technology provision to improve access and availability
- DAS Comment themes
- More publicity needed, but a very helpful and efficient service with friendly and sensitive advisers.
- Feedback on the DAS also suggests that students would like a tutoring service– staffing provision which has already happened but needs time/publicity to realise its potential
- Looking at results by faculty, GSLSM and Eng are most aware of DDLOs and Med are least aware (30%). Med also find their DDLO's advice least useful. We'd suggest that Medicine in particular review the work of their DDLOs

### **Disabilities and the Tutorial System**

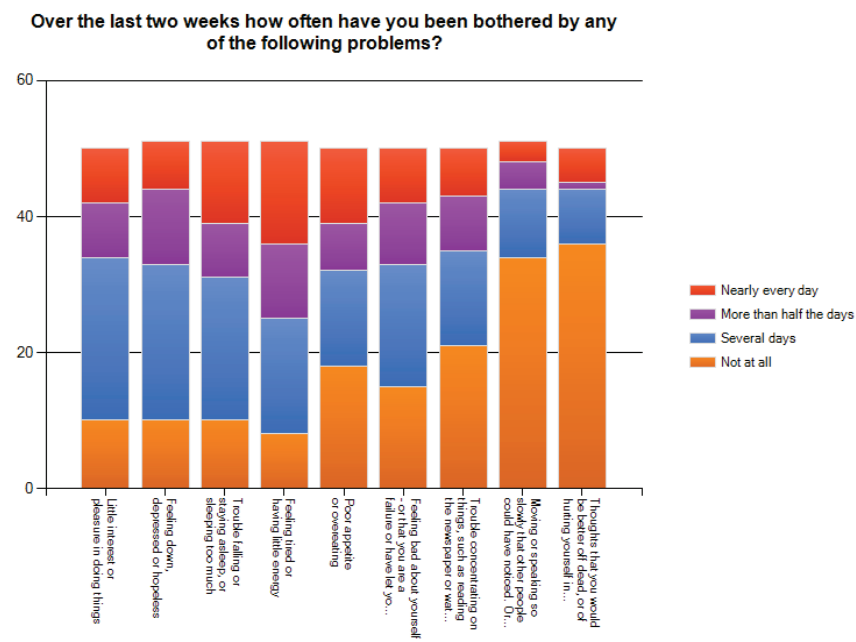
- The most common frequency of tutorial meetings in both groups is once a term, with a shift towards more frequently for those with a disability and less for those without a disability. This is supported by 10% more disabled respondents being content with the frequency of their meetings. However, 36% want an increase in frequency. We'd suggest looking into increasing the frequency of tutorial meetings for students with disabilities in particular, as well as for all students as you'll see later
- Disabled students are also more satisfied with the level of support provided – 64% rate their tutor's support as 'Good' or 'Very Good', versus 44% for their non-disabled peers.
- However, 10% fewer disabled students know who their Senior or Postgraduate Tutor is and 8% fewer disabled students know that they can contact their Senior Tutor if their personal tutor isn't responsive. So we'd suggesting targeted publicity of Senior and Postgraduate Tutors to disabled students

Disabilities and Depression

Students with no disability



Students with a disability



We compared the earlier depression scores for students with and without a disability. On first look at the graphs, a higher proportion of disabled students experience more severe symptoms associated with depression.

However, this could have been caused by all students with disabilities experiencing more severe symptoms or a greater incidence of individuals with very severe symptoms. So I scored each individual respondent's answers and categorised them as likely suffering from a depressive or major depressive disorder in line with the assessment criteria for the questionnaire. The results are below.

	Percentage of respondents likely to have a depressive disorder	Percentage of respondents likely to have a major depressive disorder
Students with no disability	8.181818	11.36364
Students with a disability	7.843137	29.41176
Difference	-0.338681	18.04812

So, as you can see, whilst the likelihood of suffering from a depressive disorder is similar for the two groups, students with disabilities are 18% more likely to suffer a major depressive disorder than their non-disabled peers.

However, it should be noted that 16 students with disabilities have used the Counselling service. Of these, 75% said that the time they were given was about right. The main comments were that the service should be better advertised. We'd suggest the DAS and Counselling liaise more closely and refer students to one another's services as appropriate.

#### **Phone Lines and the Student Hub**

- Only 4 students said that they would use a phone line. We should try and deduce why students wouldn't use phone lines. If they just don't want to, we shouldn't be relying on them so much as a way of supporting our students.
- Awareness of the student hub is good, with 89% aware of its location, 50% of its opening hours, and 68% how to contact.
- 59% of students were aware of at least one service the Hub offered. Highest awareness was of Council tax exemption letters and a list of recommended landlords, and lowest awareness of reading through tenancy agreements at 39.5%
- 82% have used the Hub. With 87% rating it as either 'good' or 'very good'.
- Comment themes were that it is a very helpful service, could do with advertising specific services more extensively, that it takes a long time to get served at peak times, and that staff could be friendlier and process paperwork faster. We'd suggest that Hub continues its already substantial efforts in these areas.

### Union Welfare Support

- Awareness for the Advice Centre is not good, with 17% aware of the location and 18% aware of how to contact the service.
- However, awareness of the services that the Advice Centre offers is good, the highest awareness being of help with financial issues and academic appeals and the lowest being help with substance misuse.
- Only 5% have used the Advice Centre – this may be due to the specialist and troubleshooting nature of the service, i.e. it's there to help when things go wrong, but is also probably due to the lack of awareness in the student population.
- Most users of the service rated it as 'Fair' or 'Very Good'.
- Comment themes were I don't know what this service is or what it does, Isn't it in the Student Hub? and It's a friendly service
- The overwhelming impression from these results is that very few students are aware of the service. A review of the publicity of the service needs to take place as soon as possible.
  
- Awareness of the Deputy President (Welfare) is moderate, with 30% aware of where her office is and 35% aware of how to contact.
- Awareness of specific services offered is good, with 66% are aware of at least one service.
- 8% have contacted the Deputy President (Welfare) – again, this is expected to be due to the troubleshooting nature of the job and the less than optimal awareness in the student body.
- 75% rated the service as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
- Comment themes were What is this service?, I didn't realise I could approach her with personal problems, I wouldn't approach a student with my problems, She seems/is friendly enough/I think she's doing a good job
- So we need to look into increasing public awareness of the Deputy President (Welfare) through an increased presence on central campus, as well as highlighting that the DPW can deal with personal problems.

### The Tutorial System

- Most people meet with their Personal Tutor/Supervisor once a term. 38% don't know whether this is in line with the official guidelines of their department – i.e. they don't know what is normal and what to expect. 17% say that the frequency of meetings is not in line with their department's guidelines. We'd suggest departments focus on raising awareness of what their guidelines are on the frequency of personal tutor/supervisor meetings, and enforcing those guidelines more rigorously.
- 44% would like meetings to be more frequent. This consists of 47% of undergraduates and 29% of Masters and PhDs.
- PhDs mostly frequently rate their tutorial support as 'Very Good' , with Masters 'Good'/'Fair' and undergraduates 'Fair'.
  
- Comment themes – UG - Personal tutors should be more actively involved and proactive in their role, especially when it comes to contact and organising meetings, I would like to be contacted initially by my tutor, I would like my tutorial meetings to be more frequent, Personal tutors should have more structured guidelines on how to do the job,
  
- Comment themes (Masters) (3 responses) I don't know who my PT is, More formal meeting scheduling would be good, I feel like my PT is too busy to see me

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- Comment themes (PG) My supervisor is helpful and supportive, My tutor has little time for me and doesn't prioritise my needs
- 76% of undergrads are aware of their Senior Tutor, with 54% of Masters students and 62% of PGs aware of their Postgraduate Tutor.
- Awareness of the Senior Tutor/Postgraduate Tutor's role is at 50% across the student body. Interestingly, 24% of undergrads know that they can contact their Senior Tutor but wouldn't.
- Around half of all respondents know what the College Tutors do.

### **International Student Support**

- 41% of UK students were aware of at least one specific service, with this being higher for EU students and for International students. Generally awareness of the International Office is lower among than Masters/PhD students than undergraduates.
- 16% of EU students and 36% International students have used the International Office, which I find surprisingly low. Perhaps the respondents thought of this as interactions after they arrived at College.
- 26% rate the International Office as very good, with 44% rating it as good
- 65% of International students and 44% of EU students are aware of what the ELSP (English Language Support Programme) offers. We'd suggest reviewing publicity for ELSP including the possibility of increased support from other departments
- 18.9% of International students and 5% of EU students have used the ELSP
- 55% rate the ELSP as Good, with 27% rating it as Fair

### **The Chaplaincy**

- Students are by far most aware of being able to talk to the Chaplain, and this awareness is high across our students (86%).
- Over 50% of students are aware of the various faith advisors and of the multifaith prayer room, less so of the more ancillary services such as links to student societies and the library, so we'd suggest focusing on the publicity of supplementary services
- 8% of students have used the Chaplaincy
- Comment themes:
  - I didn't know it existed – more publicity would be good
  - Whilst I don't use it, I believe it's a very good service to have
  - Good service with a student friendly approach
  - Is there provision for Atheists/Humanists in this service?

### **Personal Safety**

- Approx 70% said that they 'strongly agreed' that they feel very safe on campus, with 29% saying they agreed
- This drops to about 60% only 'agreeing' that they feel safe in their local area ie. Where they live.



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- We'd suggest more actively publishing crimes that take place on and around campus to prevent complacency and personal safety information to be made more widely available throughout the year.
- Many people suggested feeling unsafe in certain areas such as around the area of the bike cage. We'd suggest Security to look into making 'unsafe' areas more visible
- 50% leave their possessions unattended on purpose on campus, i.e. To save a seat at the library and 96% are aware that these could be stolen and not recovered.
- This again is a sign of complacency within our students. We suggest working with the police and staff in key areas such as the library to raise awareness of the issue of theft. This in the past has included the police 'stealing' laptops.

### **Improvements**

So how can we improve for next year?

- The survey was quite long this year as it asked so much, discouraging people from completing it. We need to use software that streamlines questions to make the survey shorter for individuals
- Ask about other important areas not covered including discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment
- Make the survey more centrally created and implemented to increase uptake and produce more valuable data, as well as implementing the survey at a more optimal time, say, November.

### **Dissemination**

I've already presented this to the College Welfare Seminar. I'm going to be presenting this report to the Student Welfare Committee and giving departments individual reports including all of their data and recommendations. If you'd like any more information, feel free to email me.