



Aston Webb student hub

Mental Health & Wellbeing Service

Welcome to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Service – Counselling service

This leaflet answers some of the questions that people often ask when they have been referred to the **Counselling service** strand of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Service after registering.

Q How soon will I get my appointment after I have received notification that I have been referred to counselling?

A Our appointments are in high demand. This means that at busy times of the year, you may wait several weeks for your initial assessment appointment. We will always try to send you an appointment as quickly as possible. While you are waiting for your appointment, you can make use of the Self-Help guides <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/taking-care-of-yourself/self-help-guides.aspx> which cover a wide range of issues and Check-ins. This will help you to prepare for individual or group sessions and think about the kind of changes you wish to make.

Q How many sessions of support can I have?

A After your initial assessment appointment, we usually offer up to six further appointments. These can either be on a weekly basis or spread over a longer period. We will agree with you about the frequency of sessions at the initial assessment or during your ongoing sessions.

Q If I arrive late, will you still see me?

A We understand that sometimes transport problems can delay you in arriving on time for your appointment. Please call us on 0121 414 5130 if you are going to be late. If you arrive after the start time of your appointment, we will not be able to extend the session, which lasts for 50 minutes. This session may still count towards the total available for you.

Q I can't make my next appointment. What should I do?

A It's important that you let us know as soon as possible. To avoid wasting counselling appointments and unnecessary delays we have a Missed Appointments Policy in order to keep things fair for all students who are on our waiting lists and to offer appointments as soon as we can. If you know that you will not be able to attend a planned session, please call 0121 414 5130 or email studenthelp@contacts.bham.ac.uk to leave a message for your counsellor as soon as possible so we can still use the appointment time.

Our Policy:

- If you miss an appointment without letting us know and do not contact us within 48 hours after the appointment, we may close your case. We will tell you if we do this. If you then tell us you wish to continue, we will review your case and may put you back onto our waiting list.
- If you cancel two appointments without giving us 24 hours' notice, we may close your case. We may put you back onto our waiting list if you contact us again.
- If you cancel or miss an appointment, it will usually count towards the total number of sessions we can offer you.

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/welfare/mental-health/index.aspx>

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions>

Q

I don't think I need any further support now.

A

If you feel that you no longer need our services please let us know. This means that we can use that time to offer support to another student who may have been waiting some time for an appointment.

Q

Why do I have to fill in a questionnaire before every session?

A

We send you a questionnaire before each session to help talk with you about how you are, how you are progressing in your sessions and also as a way of monitoring the overall effectiveness in our work with students. We appreciate you taking the time to fill in these questionnaires: they give us – and you – valuable feed-back about your overall levels of wellbeing that inform our work with you.

Q

My department wants a letter saying that I've been to see you. Can you do that for me?

A

Once we have had a chance to work with you for a few sessions we can, where we judge it to be appropriate, write letters/provide support for extenuating circumstances. However, our main purpose is to work with you and support you in exploring and understanding issues which are affecting you so that you can bring about changes.

Q

I don't feel very comfortable with my counsellor's approach. Can I see someone else?

A

First and foremost, if you don't feel that your counsellor is working with you in a way that is helpful to you, tell them! Don't worry about offending them – they will be more than willing to think about what might need to change to make your sessions more productive for you. Very often, issues which seem to make working with a particular counsellor difficult are worth exploring as they may be part of the problem which has brought you to us in the first place.
If you feel that you cannot work with your counsellor, you may request one change of counsellor by contacting 0121 414 5130 or emailing studenthelp@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Further changes are not usually possible.

Q

I have a concern about an aspect of the service you provide. How will you handle this concern?

A

The first step in raising a concern is to try to talk to your counsellor. They will always be willing to look at why you feel unhappy about anything that has happened in your contact with us, and will try to explore ways in which matters can be resolved.

If they cannot resolve matters for you, you can write to the head of service with your concern: Joanne Adams, Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Aston Webb Student Hub, University of Birmingham, BIRMINGHAM B15 2TT. (If you have been seeing Joanne, you may write to the Assistant Director of Student Services (Student Support) at the address below).

Your concern will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You will receive a full response within 2 weeks of receipt of your concern.

If you then feel that your concern has not been resolved, you can contact Nahid Saiyed, who will investigate further, at Assistant Director of Student Services (Student Support), Aston Webb Student Hub, University of Birmingham, BIRMINGHAM B15 2TT.

Beyond that, you can raise your concern with the professional association which accredits the counselling strand of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Service: The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 15 St John's Business Park, LUTTERWORTH, LE17 4HB.