

Peer Support Programme Annual Report 23-24

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Introduction

The Peer Support Programme was developed in 1991, in recognition of the essential role students play in supporting and encouraging one another on a day-to-day basis throughout their time at university. The Programme seeks to better equip students for this role, enabling them to feel more confident in supporting their peers, work closely with college, departmental and divisional welfare and become more aware of other professional support networks and services available to them. Evidence shows the vital role of peer support networks as well as the increased engagement with those networks in the first instance, in addition to more formal sources of support¹.

Welfare support at Oxford comprises of many interconnected services including the Peer Support Programme. As students pick routes for support, from the very informal (friends) to the more formal, Peer Support falls somewhere in between and is an important addition to college/ departmental/ Divisional welfare structures. Since its launch, the Programme has been embraced by University of Oxford reviews as an integral part of its welfare provision and provides a complimentary level of support to holistic welfare support at Oxford. The Peer Support Programme fits in with the Universities United Kingdom (UUK) and Student Minds 'whole institution approach to mental health'.

Executive summary

The report covers the period of 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024, with the exception of current active Peer Supporters and current active Junior Deans whose data is taken from the date of this report (8 of January 2025).

123 students completed the peer support training, with 312 hours of training delivered by 13 training rounds. 354 students are recorded as currently active and actively working as Peer Supporters across the collegiate University during this academic year as of 8 of January 2025. Active Peer Supporters were offered 47 hours of supervision last academic year.

32 new Junior Deans accessed our specialist welfare training and 36 hours of supervision were offered to them. According to our records, 137 Junior Deans actively engaged with the junior dean programme (as of 8 of January 2025).

Key deliverables

The Programme delivers the following services:

- Peer Support Training and Supervision Groups, including one to ones.
- Junior Dean Training and Supervision Groups, including one to ones.
- Welfare Rep Training to common room reps/ officers.

¹ Please refer to our Literature Review on PGR students and mental health as published in association with OfS, Research England and Vitae [LiteratureReviewLink](#)

- Supplying volunteers to the Coffee Ambassadors initiative.
- Bespoke clinical supervision and consultancy to senior welfare members.
- Research engagement that promotes peer to peer welfare initiatives.
- Attendance and consultancy to Welfare Forum.
- Bespoke welfare training for summer programmes, student union initiatives and student societies.

All training and supervision groups returned to full in-person provision, except for one Junior Dean and Peer Support supervision group per term, which was kept virtual to increase accessibility and choice for attendees.

Supervision is seen as a vital provision, enhancing the psychological safety and running of the scheme for Peer Supporters, Junior Deans, the student community they are helping and the institutional member communities in which they work. Supervisions are co-created spaces which increase accountability, share good practice, increase learning and emphasize joined up thinking and working.

Core service delivery headlines

Peer Support

Institutional members of the Peer Support Programme

| <i>Colleges and PPHs</i> | <i>Departments</i> | <i>Division</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 37 | 6 | 1 |

Peer Supporters referring to the Counselling Service

| 23-24 | 22-23 | 21-22 | 20-21 | 19-20 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| 5.8% | 5.3% | 6.3% | 5.1% | 4.3% |
| 158 forms out of 2718 | 165 forms out of 3108 | 193 forms out of 3067 | | |

Of pre-intake forms received, students indicated a Peer Supporter as a referrer.

Total active Peer Supporters (as of 8th January 2025)

| |
|-----|
| 354 |
|-----|

Total hours of supervision delivered for the academic year

| |
|----|
| 47 |
|----|

This number excludes cancelled sessions due to low registration numbers and staff illness. The overall number of supervision sessions were reduced to increase institutional member engagement in addition to engagement with the Peer Support Programme.

Topics included:

- Freshers and transitions.
- Exam anxiety.
- Grief and bereavement.
- Reviewing peer support processes in college.
- Referring onwards and upwards using assertiveness when there is risk, threat or danger.
- Different university services and college provision in a student welfare journey.

Total students successfully trained for the academic year

| <i>Terms</i> | <i>23-24</i> | <i>22-23</i> |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| September + MT | 49 96.08% completion rate. (2 did not complete training). | 60 |
| HT | 48 100% completion rate. | 46 |
| TT | 26 100% completion rate. | 36 |
| Totals | 123 | 142 |

Students can cancel or drop out at the last minute or not complete the training by missing the first or eighth session or miss more than one session overall. When a student completes the course, it is assumed that they meet the training requirements of attendance and do not give rise for concern during the training.

Total hours of training delivered for the academic year

| <i>Terms</i> | <i>Rounds</i> | <i>Hours</i> |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| September + MT | 5 | 120 |
| HT | 4 | 96 |
| TT | 4 | 96 |
| Totals | 14 | 312 |

Gender distribution of the training cohorts for the academic year

| <i>Female</i> | <i>Genderfluid</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Non-Binary</i> | <i>Prefer not to say</i> |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 68 | 1 | 51 | 2 | 1 |

Total number of nationalities reported in the training cohorts for the academic year

| |
|-----------|
| 25 |
|-----------|

The 7 highest number of nationalities represented in the training cohorts for the academic year

| <i>British</i> | <i>English</i> | <i>Chinese</i> | <i>Indian</i> | <i>American</i> | <i>Australian</i> | <i>Irish</i> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 47 | 22 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 3 |

Total number training cohort by division for the academic year

| <i>Humanities</i> | <i>Medical Science</i> | <i>MPLS</i> | <i>Social Sciences</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| 46 | 31 | 28 | 18 |

Total number training cohort by level of study for the academic year

| <i>Undergraduate</i> | <i>Masters</i> | <i>DPhil</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 79 | 5 | 39 |

The top 6 highest number of ages represented in the training cohorts for the academic year

| <i>19</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>23</i> |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 40 | 17 | 17 | 8 | 6 | 5 |

Junior Deans

Total active Junior Deans (as of 8 January 2025)

| |
|------------|
| 137 |
|------------|

Total Junior Deans trained

| <i>Terms</i> | <i>23-24</i> | <i>22-23</i> | <i>21-22</i> | <i>20-21</i> |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Summer | 24 | 21 | 35 | 24 |
| Christmas and New Year | 8 | 19 | 12 | 21 |
| Totals | 32 | 40 | 47 | 45 |

Total hours of Junior Dean supervision delivered

| <i>Terms</i> | <i>Hours</i> |
|---------------|--------------|
| MT | 12 |
| HT | 12 |
| TT | 12 |
| Totals | 36 |

Other areas of service delivery

- Participated in a research study with UCL about developing good practice, guidelines and fidelity measures around training Peer Supporters in HE.
- Policy writing with the Student Union for SU Campaign Chair guidelines in supporting students.
- A Junior Dean shadowed and co-facilitated a Peer Support training so that they could improve their own group training experience to assist with their clinical psychology application.
- Presentation given to Counselling Service Team about Peer Support and working with colleges.
- Celebrated a Peer Supporter's 7 years of Peer Support achievement with a bespoke certificate and recognition within the college.
- Provided various drop-ins and community spaces to help communities process student tragedies.

