Accessibility & Disability Resource Centre (ADRC): Annual Report 2023-2024

Data and key performance and quality assurance measures

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January 2025

1. Executive summary
Headline data:

1. Total disabled student numbers increased by 14% (5576 to 6356).
2. Satisfaction ratings for the overall ADRC service (88%) and advisory support (90%) remained high.
3. 22,277.5 hours of individual non-medical help were delivered (a 13% increase from 2022-23).
4. The ADRC ran 13 training courses with 275 participants, with 471 participants having completed the ADRC's Moodle course on inclusive teaching and learning to date.
5. The ADRC's Assistive Technology service provided individual support to 33 students, with 36 delegates (staff and students) attending its accessible materials on-line course.
6. Student feedback identified lack of recording of lectures, lack of understanding of disability in academic staff and communication difficulties as major barriers to access to learning.
7. The ratio (caseload) of disabled students to ADRC adviser stood at 877:1, a 14% increase in caseload per adviser from 2022-23.
8. The ADRC received funding from the University to establish a service to support disabled non-matriculated students and this came into operation in January 2024.
9. The Neurodiversity Screening Service completed its first full year of operation. Between 1 October 2023 and the end of May 2024, the screening service screened 622 students.

2. Current students who have disclosed a disability
July 2023 (5576) to July 2024 (6356) = **13.98% Annual Increase**

2.1 Totals

Total Disabled Students as of 1st July 2024

Total No. of Disabled Students	6356	% of Total
Undergraduate	3844	60.5%
Post-Graduate	2512	39.5%

Table 2.1

Post-Graduate Disabled Student Data

Total Post-Graduate	2512	% of Total
Post-Graduate Taught (PGT)	1112	44.3%
Post-Graduate Research (PGR)	1400	55.7%

Table 2.2

2.2 Breakdown by disability category (total disclosures)
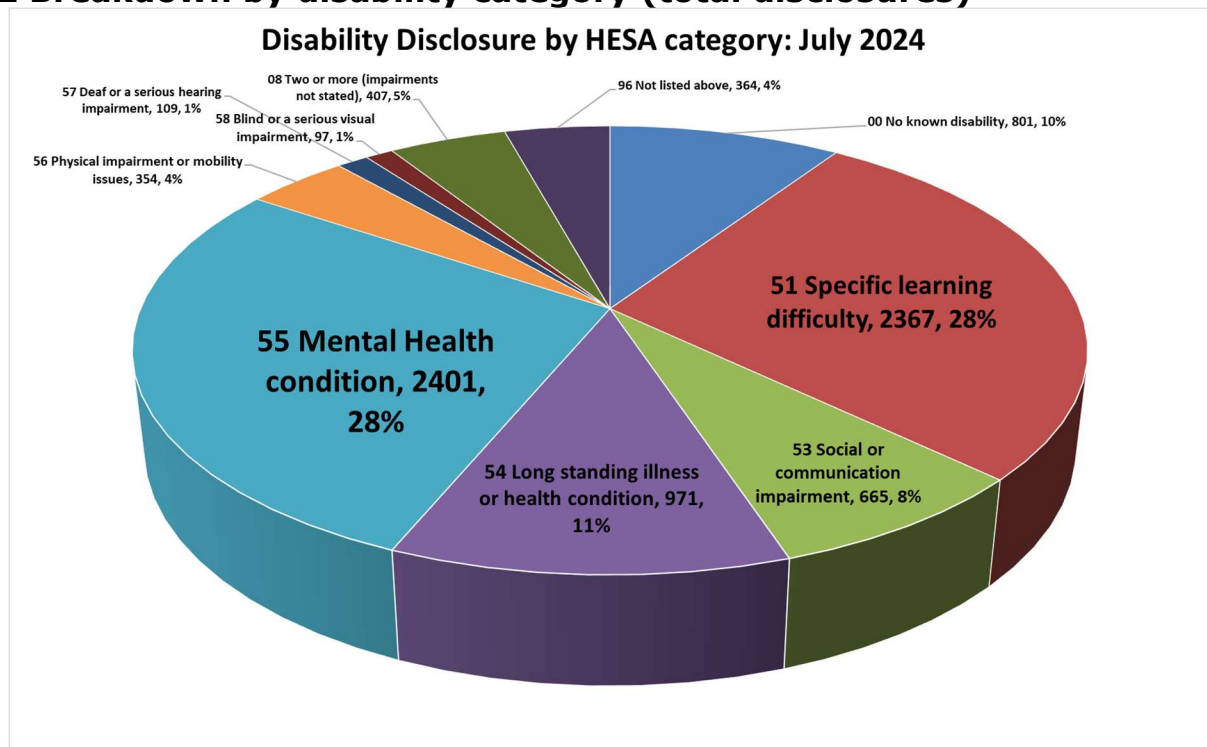
Figure 2.1

2.3 Gender & Disability

	Male	Female	Other	Unknown
Gender all levels of study	**2409**	**3739**	**208**	**1**
	37.9%	58.8%	3.3%	0.1%
Gender UG	**1452**	**2250**	**142**	**0**
	37.8%	58.8%	3.7%	0%
Gender PG	**957**	**1489**	**66**	**0**
	38.1%	59.3%	2.6%	0%

Table 2.3

2.4 Ethnicity & Disability

	White	Asian	Black	Arab	Other	Unknown
Ethnicity	**4073**	**1088**	**245**	**53**	**625**	**272**
	64.1%	17.1%	3.9%	0.8%	9.8%	4.3%
Ethnicity UG	**2483**	**666**	**150**	**26**	**379**	**140**
	64.6%	17.3%	3.9%	0.7%	9.9%	3.6%
Ethnicity PG	**1590**	**422**	**95**	**27**	**246**	**132**
	63.2%	16.8%	3.8%	1.1%	9.8%	5.2%

Table 2.4

2.5 Trends by disability category

Increase in disabled students by HESA disability category 2009 - 2024

Y-axis: No. of disabled students; X-axis: End of academic year

Data points and labels:
- 55 Mental health condition, 2401
- 51 Specific learning difficulty, 2367
- 54 Long standing health condition, 971
- 53 Social or communication impairment, 665
- 514
- 59
- 34

Legend:
- 51 Specific learning difficulty
- 53 Social or communication impairment
- 54 Long standing health condition
- 55 Mental health condition
- 56 Physical impairment or mobility issue
- 57 Deaf or serious hearing impairment
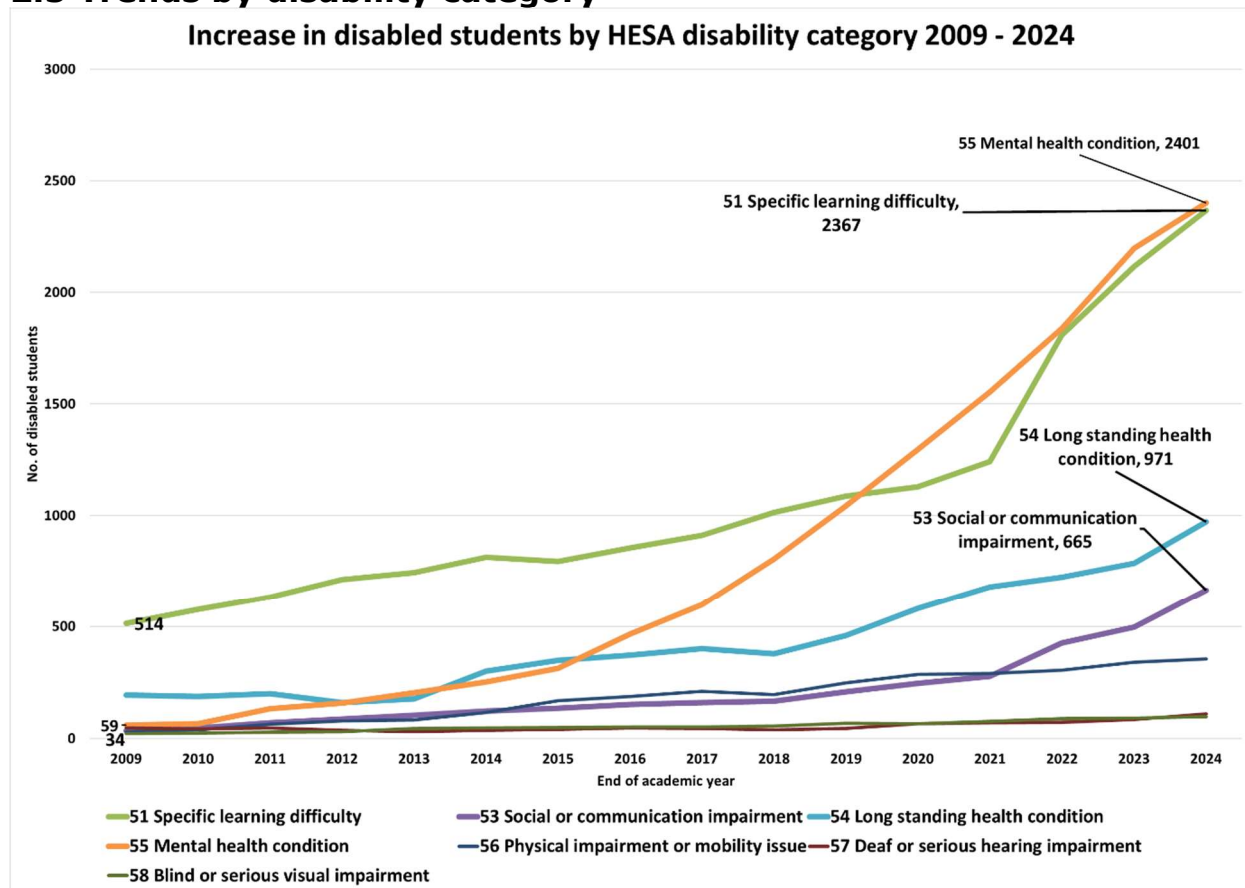- 58 Blind or serious visual impairment

Figure 2.2

3. ADRC Service Rating
3.1 Overall service rating

In the 2023-24 ADRC student survey, respondents (n= 346) gave an overall satisfaction rating (satisfactory, good or very good) of 88% (n= 305), a 1% decrease on 22/23, with 76%, (n= 263), a 5% increase on 22/23, rating the service as good or very good.

The process of obtaining my Student Support Document was quick and easy.

The ADRC has been incredibly understanding, efficient, and helpful in communicating with myself/my tutor about disability adjustments.

3.2 ADRC Adviser rating

Respondents (n= 344) who rated the support provided by ADRC Advisers gave a 90% overall satisfaction (satisfactory, good or very good) rating (n= 309), a 1% decrease on 22/23, with 72% (n= 247), a 2% increase on 22/23, of students rating the service good or very good.

I was very well supported by my Disability Advisor; she is extremely knowledgeable and understanding and supportive and I feel that most of

my PhD time at Cambridge was made possible because of her advice and support.

My ADRC adviser has been a great source of support over the last 3 years. I was supported through my DSA application when I wasn't able to complete it by myself. I also felt understood and respected as a disabled person, especially in regard to chronic conditions that had been overlooked by my department.

My advisor was very supportive and made a huge difference to my university experience. After the help received from the ADRC I am doing much better at university and life in general.

In both measures, students who rated the ADRC service or support from Advisers poor or very poor cited delays in communications and email responses, and provision and implementation of support.

While there are some things my adviser did to support me, there are others where I did not receive response or follow up, and sometimes responses took quite a while to receive.

SSD not in place until near end Michaelmas term. I had completed online form in August.

Other key themes identified within the qualitative data were:

- Delays in production of support documents
- Recommended adjustments in support documents not being implemented
- Difficulty accessing support due to the oversubscription of support services
- Insufficient in-person appointments available

4. Non-Medical Help (NMH)

4.1 NMH hours delivered: 2022-23 & 2023-24 compared

NMH Task	22/23		23/24	
	Total Hrs	% of total	Total Hrs	% of total
Mentoring	10559.5	55%	12372	56%
Study skills	4622.25	24%	5343.75	24%
Notetaking	1520.5	8%	1838.25	8%
Study Assistance	2412	12%	2501.5	11%
Scribe/Reader	532	3%	210	1%
Practical Assistance	25	0%	12	0%
Total Hours	**19671.75**	100%	**22277.5**	100%

4.2 Number of students in receipt of main NMH tasks

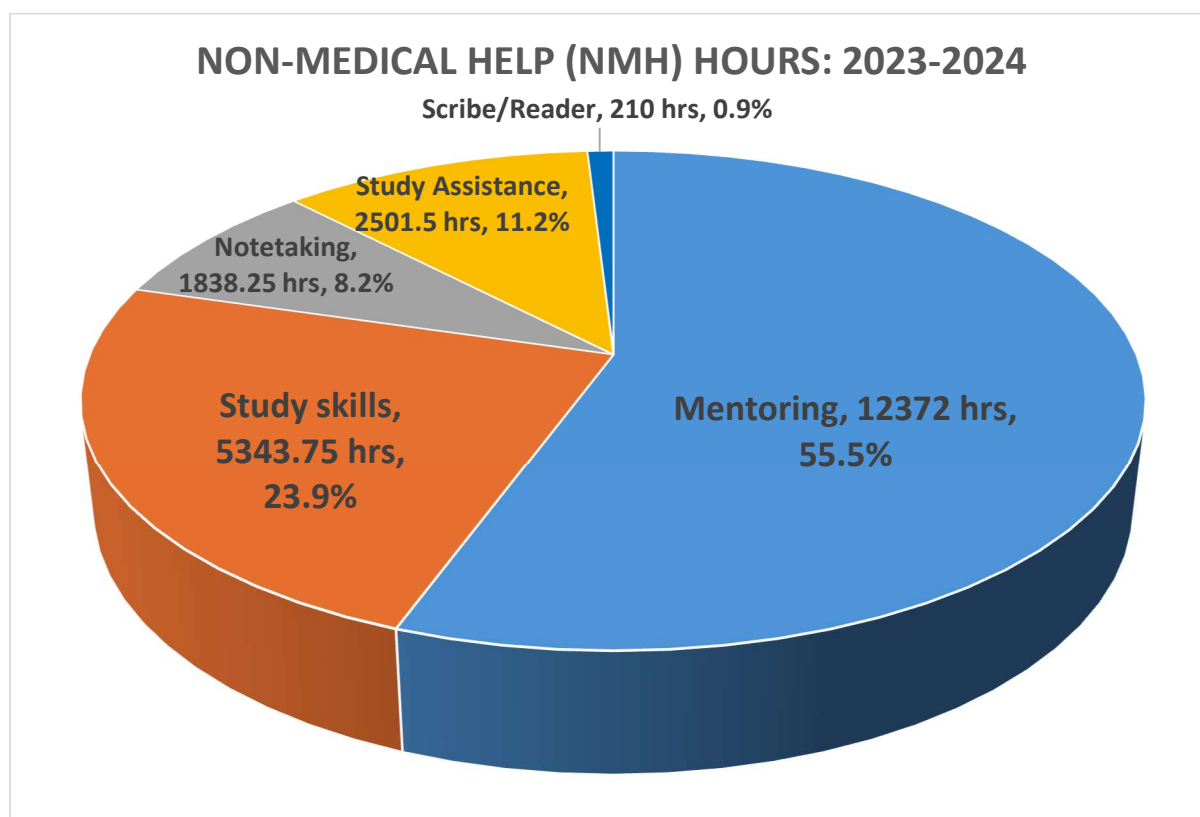|	Total Students	UG	PG	Foundation Year
Mentoring	1632	1051	553	28
Study Skills	1331	861	442	28

Figure 4.1

4.3 ADRC Annual Student Survey Data: NMH

Quantitative data: In the 2023-24 ADRC student survey, respondents (n= 200), gave an overall satisfaction rating (satisfactory, good or very good) for NMH support of 93% (n= 186), a 1% increase on 22/23, with 78% (n= 156), a 1% decrease on 22/23, rating the service as good or very good.

Qualitative Data:

My study skills tutor is absolutely amazing, I am so grateful to them. All the work I was able to turn in was thanks to them. They have always been kind, supportive and flexible about our meetings, which is really useful for energy-limiting conditions to not feel pressured into keeping a meeting that will make me feel more ill.

I had such a great experience with a very compassionate and kind mentor who guided me through the last stages of the PhD.

January 2025

My mentor is amazing. I always feel heard and she helps me clear up my mind and organise my time.

5. ADRC Training Provision
5.1 Training via CCTL booking system
In 2023-24 the ADRC ran three training courses open to all University and College staff with 78 participants. Courses delivered included:

- Inclusive teaching: Arts and Humanities Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (Briefing) (Online)
- Inclusive teaching: STEMM Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (Briefing) (Online)
- Teaching Students with ADHD (Briefing) (Online)

In the 2023-24 academic year, the ADRC ran 10 trainings for Specialist Mentors. The number of individual sessions (including repeat sessions) totalled 15, and the participants across all sessions totalled 197.

5.2 Assistive Technology Training
During 2023-24, 33 one-to-one Assistive Technology sessions were carried out for students.

Student Feedback:

The session I had with Darran was extremely valuable. He took time to understand my specific challenges and recommended several free and accessible tools that will help with my academic work. Thanks to his guidance, I now feel much more confident in accessing lecture content and completing my readings in a way that works for me. The tools suggested were practical and user-friendly, making them easy to incorporate into my study routine.

During the same period 3 "How to Produce Accessible Documents - An Introduction" courses were delivered online to both staff and students, training a total of 36 delegates.

Delegate Feedback:

I came to the course with my diversity and HR hat on. I really wasn't sure what to expect from the course, and I was slightly sceptical If I'm honest. However, I was absolutely blown away by the course content and how much I learned. I was amazed to learn how many things can be put into place to support people with disabilities. If I'm honest, I would go as far to say that this course should be made mandatory, so everyone across the University is armed with knowledge and information this course provides.

I can honestly say, this is the one of the most engaging and interesting courses I have attended for a very long time.

I found the session to be incredibly useful. I felt that there was an appropriate amount of context provided at the start of the session to outline why attending to accessible documents is important - both morally and legally! Having done so, I felt the session moved carefully through articulating the needs of students and how these needs can be effectively met through a combination of time-saving in-built mechanisms alongside judicious individual choices and oversight. It was a principled and practical session. I learnt so much in the session and genuinely feel like a lot of ground was covered in a warm and insightful way. So, thank you.

5.3 Moodle Training Courses
The ADRC also provides Moodle courses on the following subjects:

- Inclusive Teaching and Learning: Disabled Students (471 participants to date)

The ADRC is working with the new Education Services Blended Learning Service to consolidate two courses into one and to update the existing materials. The work on the consolidated module is due for completion and relaunch in Lent Term 2025.

6. Student feedback on teaching learning and assessment
From a thematic analysis of the qualitative data in the free text responses to the on-line questionnaire in the annual student survey the three themes with the highest number of individual comments in the following areas were:

Barriers to learning (122 responses)

1. Dissatisfaction with lack of recording of lectures or significant time and bureaucracy required to access recordings (24 responses)
2. Physical accessibility and issues with transport or travel (13 responses)
3. Failure for academic and support staff in being aware of SSDs/putting SSD recommendations in place/questioning SSD recommendations (15 responses)

Suggestions to improve learning experiences (132 responses)

1. Academic staff disability awareness, training and understanding and implementation of SSD recommendations (34 responses)
2. Better communication across the collegiate University related to accessing support/reducing complexity and promoting the support options available to students (16 responses)
3. Provide consistent and universal recording of lectures (8 responses)

7. Staff Feedback on working with the ADRC

"Working closely with ADRC has been vital to providing appropriate support for students on the Cambridge Foundation Year. Our embedded Advisor is very much one of our team which means we have confidence when we refer students that they will receive the best advice and guidance for their needs. Staff members also benefit from ADRC's support. It helps us in practical ways to create inclusive teaching and assessment environments in response to the latest examples of best practice in the sector."

Dr Alex Pryce, Foundation Year Course Director, University of Cambridge

8. University of Cambridge – Review of Approach to Provision for Disabled Students

A strategic review was conducted of the approach to provision for disabled students across the collegiate University in the calendar year 2024. The review's outcomes were endorsed by Senior Tutors' Committee, the General Board's Education Committee and the Joint Wellbeing Committee. Recommendations from the review will inform development of the future approach, as part of continuous improvement.

9. Resourcing
9.1 ADRC Adviser to Disabled Student Ratios (caseload)
Figure 9.1 shows the ADRC adviser to disabled student ratios (caseload)
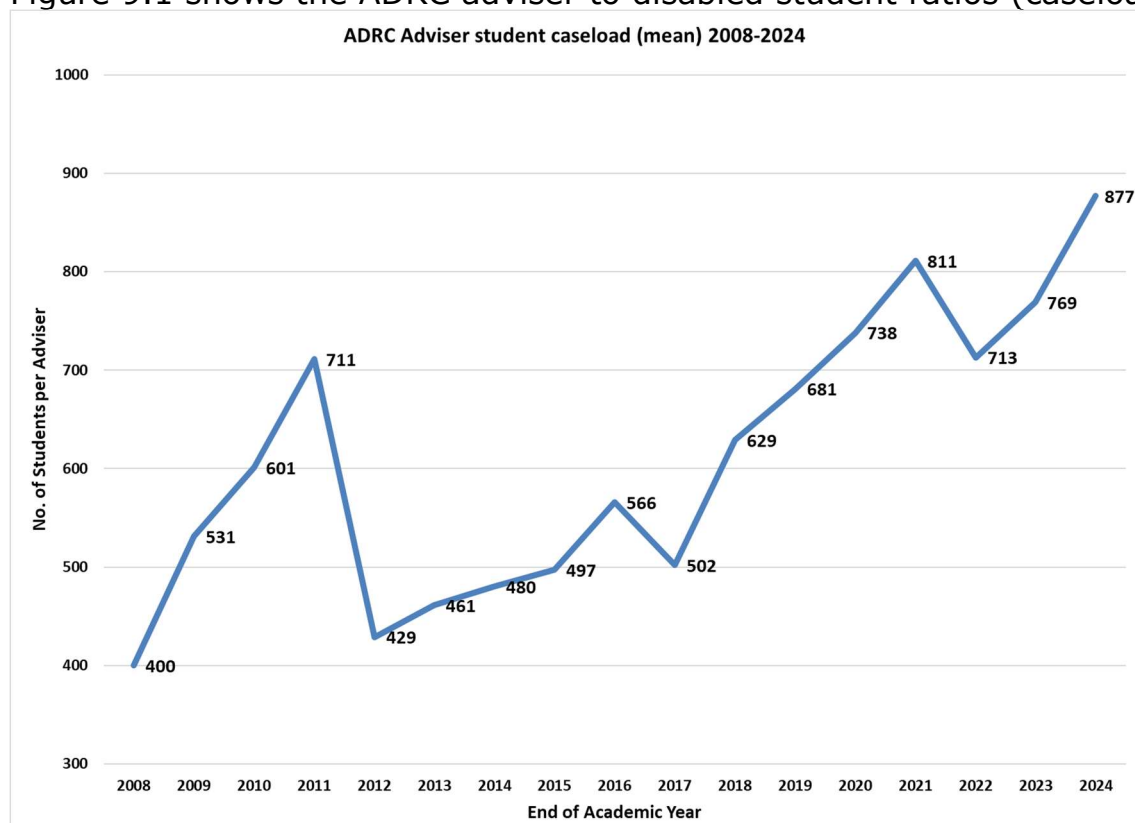

Figure 9.1

9.2 Disability Adviser Ratios: Sector Comparison

The Russell Group Disability Heads Forum completes a survey of disability adviser to disabled student ratios once every two years. The next survey is planned for the 2024/25 academic year. From August 2023 to August 2024 the mean caseload for an ADRC adviser rose from 769 students per adviser to 877, an annual increase of 14%.

9.3 Disability Adviser updates

9.3.1 Changes to how Student Finance England (SFE) administers Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

The DSA model was changed in February 2023 down to two suppliers, Capita and Study Tech, now responsible for the provision of needs assessments, assistive technology equipment, and assistive technology training and aftercare for students in receipt of DSA. This change has caused some delays in agreement for funding as many Needs Assessment Centres closed and students are all now directed to the two providers. The ADRC has been working with the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) to help identify and support an improvement in the experienced of disabled students accessing DSA.

9.3.2 Mental Health Change Programme – training for ADHD and Autism

Following on from the Training Task and Finish Group from the Mental Health Student Change programme, the ADRC has now created a working party to help identify and create a bespoke training program for academic staff. Work will continue through to the next academic year with an aim to roll out in 2025/26 and beyond.

9.4 Non-Matriculated Student Service

The ADRC Non-Matriculated Student (NMS) Service was established in January 2024 after funding for the service was approved by the Resource Management Committee. The NMS service supports any disabled student classed as a non-matriculated student. This indicates that the student does not have college affiliation and does not pay composition fees.

There are three posts within the service - Senior Adviser, Adviser and Operations Assistant. The first six months were used to plan, develop and implement the processes and procedures for the service. From Michaelmas 2024 onwards the service supported all disabled students on award bearing courses at the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The service has also worked with Practitioner Professional Development in the Faculty of Education, and the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL).

9.5 Neurodiversity Screening Service

9.5.1 Number of students screened
Between its inception on 1 October 2023 and the end of May 2024, the screening service has screened 622 students. Feedback from students receiving a screening shows high satisfaction rates, with students particularly appreciating the professionalism and sensitivity of the screening advisers. Examples of the positive feedback include:

I had my appointment with X and I was nervous at first but X put me at ease straight away with her positive and kind demeanour. I felt listened to and understood.

I am very impressed at the quality of the service, the kindness of the team dealing with my case, and I am very grateful for the support. I was especially impressed by the fact that the results were available in the very next day after the screening, and the follow up instructions were very timely and helpful

Negative feedback from students primarily related to the length of the waiting times for a screening, albeit the service was valued once students were able to access it. Examples of the negative feedback include:

The waiting time for getting the screening appointment was a bit long, but the screening itself was very clear and accessible.

The screening service was slow. The quality and efficiency of support I got was very high once I had access to it.

9.5.2 Service Challenges

a. Waiting times
The target for the Screening Service is a maximum of an 8-week waiting time. Given that the surge in demand for the screening service during Michaelmas term 2023 resulted in a potential waiting time of 24 weeks for the SpLD/ADHD screening service, additional external screening capacity was purchased from January 2024 to reduce the waiting list. With these additional resources, by the end of April 2024, the waiting times for SpLD/ADHD screenings were reduced to 4 to 6 weeks and have been no longer than 6 weeks at any point throughout the year. The waiting times for an autism screening has remained constant at 8 weeks throughout the year.

b. Smoothing the peaks and troughs of the workload
The weekly capacity of staff providing screenings remains static across the year, but the demand for the service is characterised by 'peaks' (Jan to March) and 'troughs' (May to Sept). The screening service purchases additional help with in-person screening during peak times to increase capacity at times of high demand and provides screenings over the summer to offer-holders registered with the ADRC who have received

exam access arrangements at school, but who do not have a formal diagnosis of SpLD/ADHD. This aims to reduce the number of incoming students requesting a screening once they start in Michaelmas Term. These screenings for offer-holders are managed within the existing resources of the screening service.

9.5.3 Service Development

To assist with ongoing service development and improvement, a student advisory group has been established to help steer the service. The group meets 3 times a year, and its members are representative of the service users. In the academic year 2024/5 the student advisory group will be focusing on improvements with the screening service's communications.

10. Staffing
10.1 Organogram of the ADRC Team
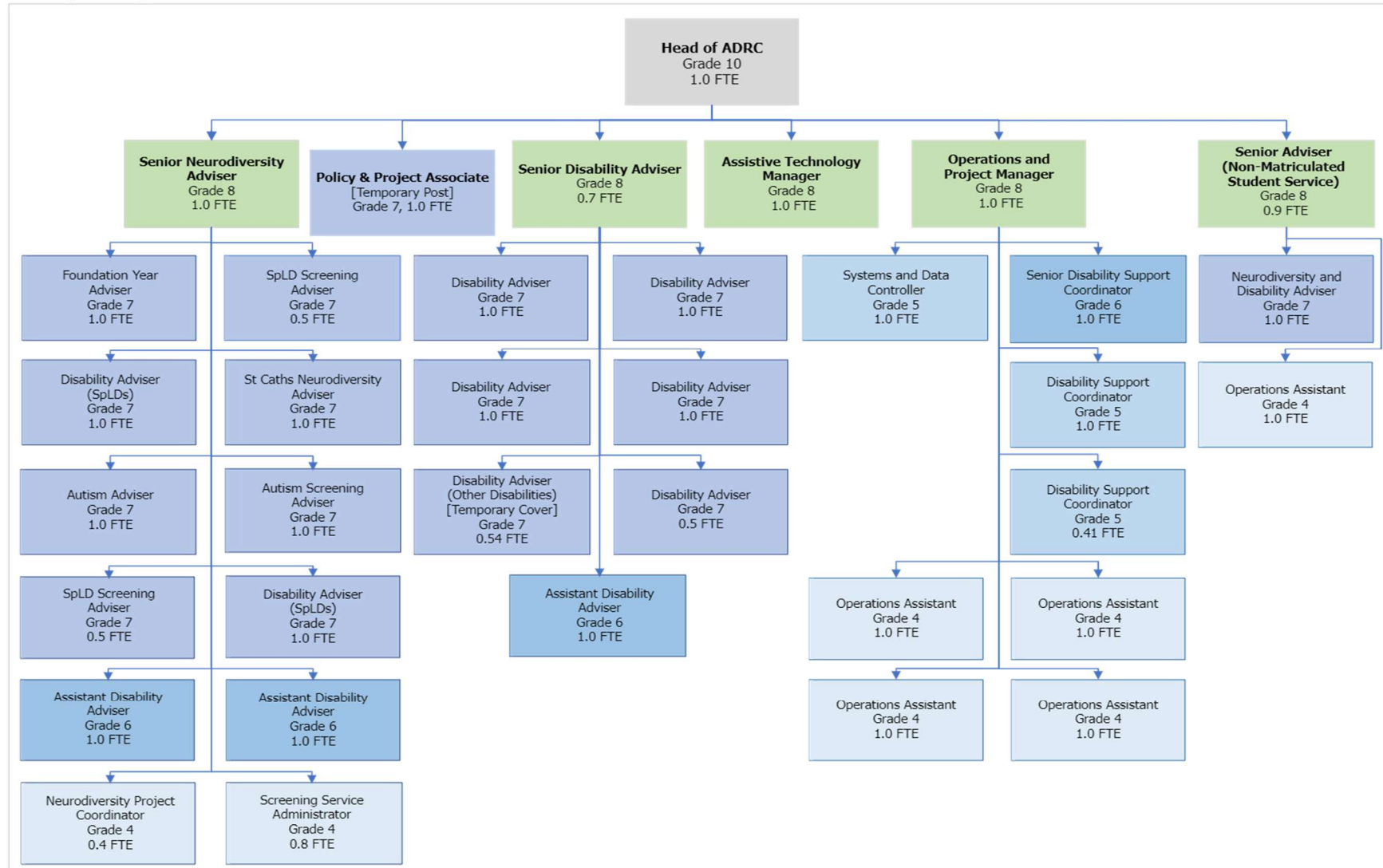
January 2025

If you have any questions regarding this report please email disability@admin.cam.ac.uk .

ADRC, January 2025.