

# Universities and Colleges Neighbourhood Helpline

## Annual Report 2012-13

This report provides an overview of all the student behaviour cases handled by the Leeds colleges and universities in 2012/13. This report is produced by the University of Leeds with support from our partners Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Trinity, Leeds College of Music and Leeds City College.

The purpose of this report is:

- (i) To provide information about the complaints made to through the Helpline service to the universities and colleges between August 2012 and July 2013 and the subsequent institutional responses.
- (ii) To provide information on the universities and colleges proactive work to reduce students negative impact and promote positive behaviour in local communities.
- (iii) To highlight any emerging trends and issues affecting local communities.
- (iv) To outline developments and priority areas for the coming 12 months.

### 1. Report highlights

- Helpline action days were undertaken in the Ash Road and Granby's areas of Headingley, Little Woodhouse and the Brudenells area of Hyde Park to educate our students on their responsibilities as Leeds residents. 44% of Helpline cases were identified through proactive work.
- The Helpline received complaints relating to 210 households between August 2012 and July 2013. A further 158 households were identified through an action day in the Ash Road area of Headingley in partnership with Leeds City Council as requiring advice on waste management.
- Noise nuisance was the dominant issue affecting Helpline users (60%), followed by waste management (28%).
- The Headingley ward is the area with the highest number of issues relating to student behaviour (57%), followed by Hyde Park and Woodhouse (37%), Kirkstall (4%) and Weetwood (2%).
- 75% of cases required the universities and colleges to communicate through a letter or email to our students regarding their behaviour and no further complaints were received.
- No student involvement was identified in 31.9% of complaints.

## 2. Introduction

This report highlights the total number student behaviour cases managed by the City's universities and colleges. These include the complaints made to the Neighbourhood Helpline service, complaints referred by other university/college departments (these include Security and Accommodation Services) and cases identified through proactive work by Helpline staff.

The Neighbourhood Helpline has been in operation since 2000 and continues to be recognised as a valuable service alongside those of statutory authorities such as Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police. The Helpline operates as a partnership between the University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds Trinity University, Leeds College of Music and Leeds City College. By involving the majority of the City's universities and colleges, the Helpline service is able to respond to as many issues involving students living in local communities as possible.

To ensure a consistent approach to complaint handling, each institution follows the procedures detailed in the Neighbourhood Helpline Code. The code has been developed and adapted since 2007 to ensure that our students have an opportunity to correct their behaviour before disciplinary action is taken. A copy of the Code is provided to Helpline users to make them aware of the action which will be taken in response to their complaint and detail the universities and colleges roles and responsibilities with student behaviour.

Key to the success of the Helpline service is our partnership approach to provide education and/or mediation to student households to reduce their impact on their neighbours. Data is provided to the Helpline service from our statutory partners, Leeds Antisocial Behaviour Team, Environmental Enforcement and Police on waste, noise and antisocial behaviour issues so that our students are also receive a communication from their university/college about appropriate behaviour.

The Helpline can be contacted on 0113 3431064 (voicemail service) or at [neighbourhood.helpline@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:neighbourhood.helpline@leeds.ac.uk).

For more information on the Neighbourhood Helpline service and procedure, visit the following link. <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ace/community/helpline.htm>

## 3. Update on activity

In the last 12 months the Helpline has continued to build on our partnership arrangements with the City's universities and colleges as well as building on our multiagency work in partnership with Leeds City Council and Police to tackle neighbourhood issues.

The University Police Officers have continued to provide their support to the Helpline service. Both Officers referred complaints made to the Police concerning noise and antisocial behaviour on to the Helpline to take action and supported home visits and enquiry meetings where two or more complaints have been made to the service involving a student property. The Officers involvement reinforces the Helpline process by providing our students with a Police perspective on the consequences of their negative behaviour and reiterates the seriousness of the Helpline complaints process. For more details on the Helpline procedure, see link above.

The universities and colleges have continued with our targeted work to proactively address noise, anti-social behaviour and waste issues in hotspot areas identified through the Helpline data. Last year, Helpline action days were undertaken at the start of the academic year in:

- Granbys area of Headingley,
- Little Woodhouse, and
- Brudenells area of Hyde Park.

A team of officers from the University of Leeds, Police and Leeds City Council went door to door speaking to households about the neighbourhood issues being reported to agencies, the responsibilities of residents and the multi-agency response. Non-student household were also

engaged as part of this activity to encourage reporting to the relevant agency. Positive feedback has been received from residents of these communities as a result of our targeted work.

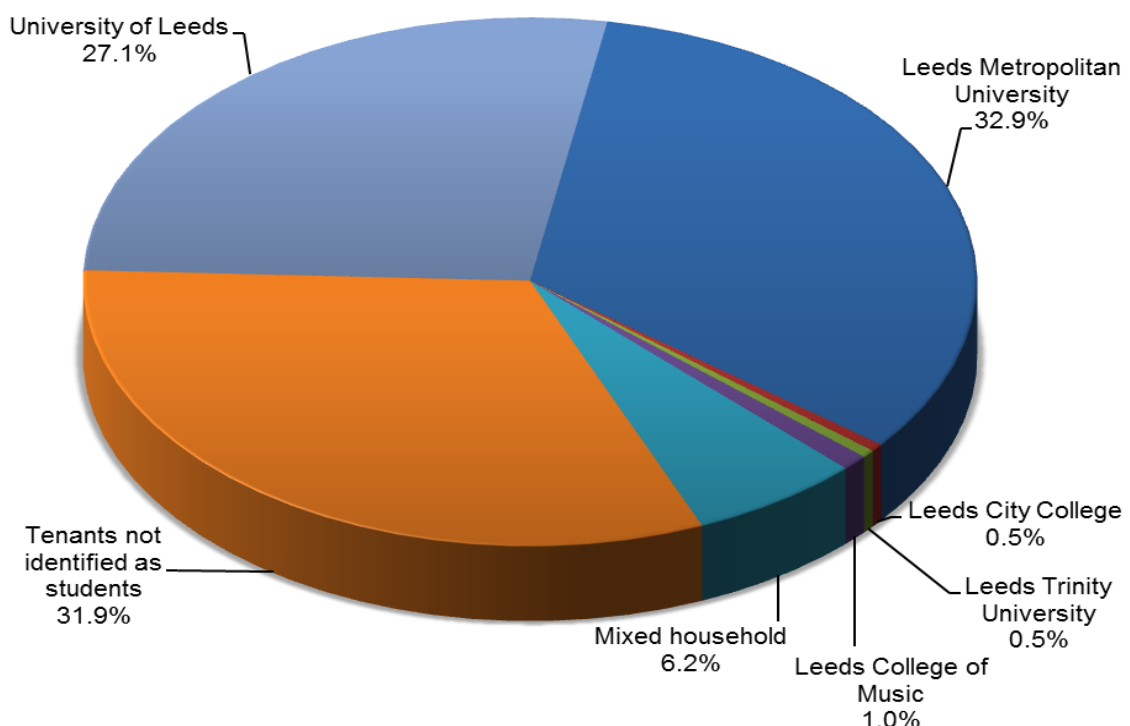
A day of action was also undertaken in the Ash Road area of Headingley in January 2013 to educate residents on waste management and cleanliness issues. A team of volunteers from the University of Leeds and the local community spoke to all households about correct waste management and wheeled all bins back on to properties. The Helpline followed up this activity by writing to 153 student households where waste management issues had not been resolved two weeks later.

The universities produce a range of communication throughout the year to raise student's awareness of their neighbourhood responsibilities. These include waste, recycling and noise reduction messages on student's portals, and a programme of communications leading up to student changeover at the end of June. Tailored messages are also sent to student living in purpose built accommodation, including the Burley Road student accommodation.

The Helpline service is publicised through circulating Helpline cards to community and residents groups as well as Police Officer's, GP surgeries, dentists and schools throughout inner North-West Leeds where the majority of our students live. The Helpline cards and the voicemail message also include the contact details for the Council's environmental call centre and out of hours noise service. The University of Leeds Community and Housing Policy Officer also promotes the service through attending local meetings and forums throughout the year.

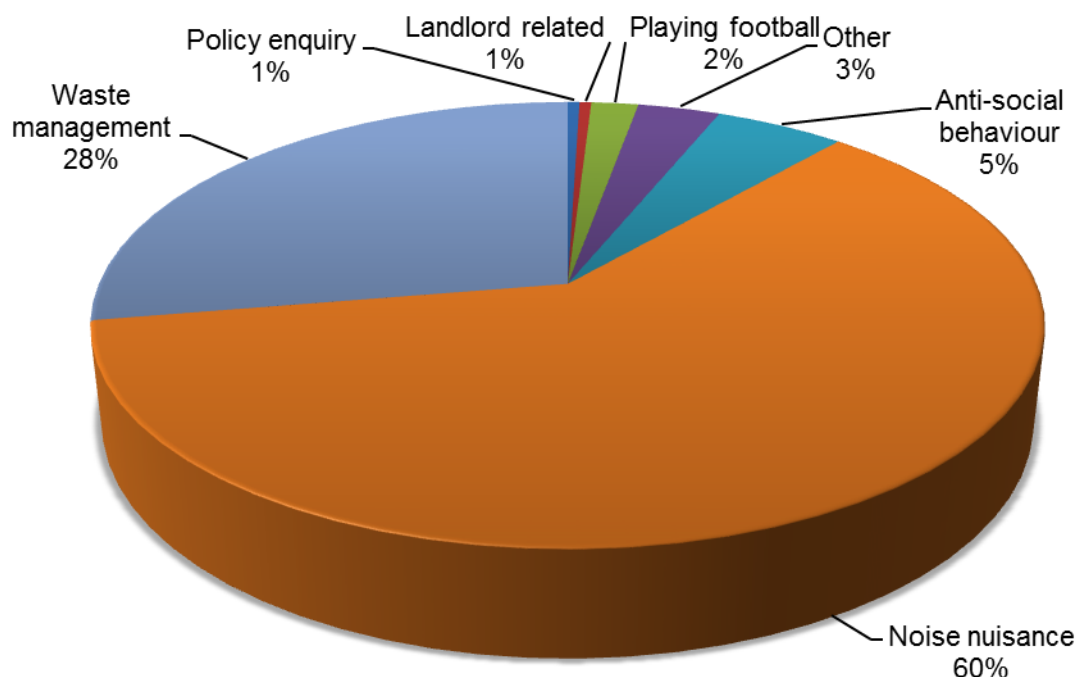
#### 4. Addressing queries

Between August 2012 and July 2013, the universities and colleges were able to deal directly with 68% of all complaints to the Helpline service. No student involvement was identified in 31.9% of complaints. A number of home visits are undertaken by the University Police Officers to confirm non-student involvement, particularly between changeover in July and registration in October. It is relevant to note that the number of cases involving students from the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University are proportionately higher due to the size of these institutions compared to the City's other institutions.



## 5. Issues affecting residents

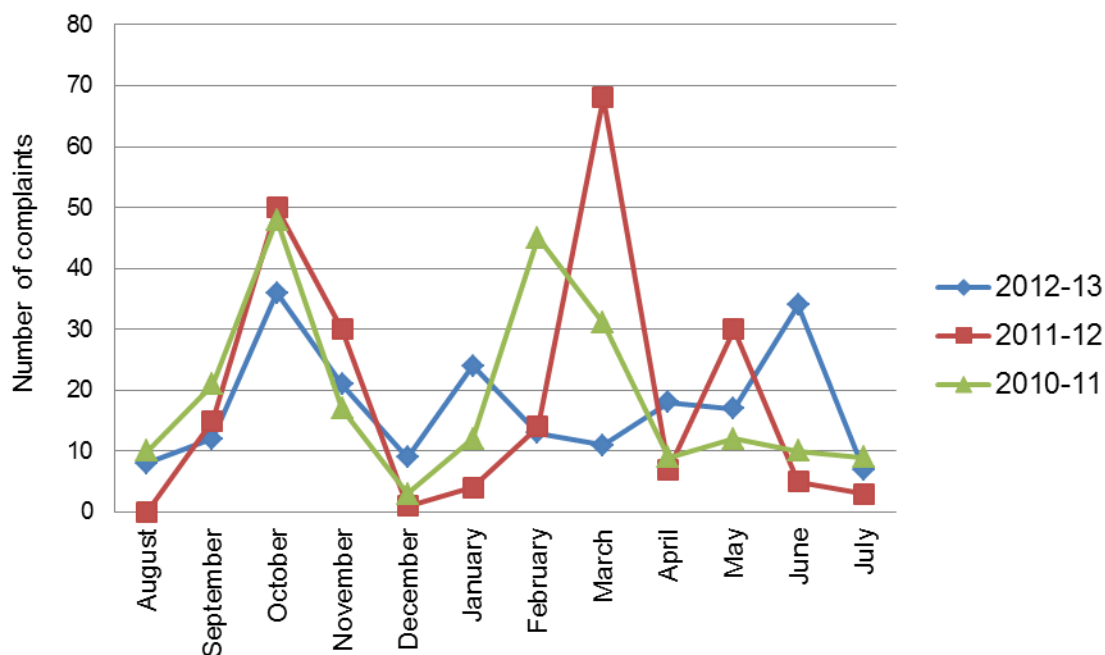
Last year, noise nuisance was the dominant issue affecting Helpline users (60%). In addition to this caseload, 158 households were identified and written to last year by the universities and colleges to address waste management issues.



## 6. Service demand

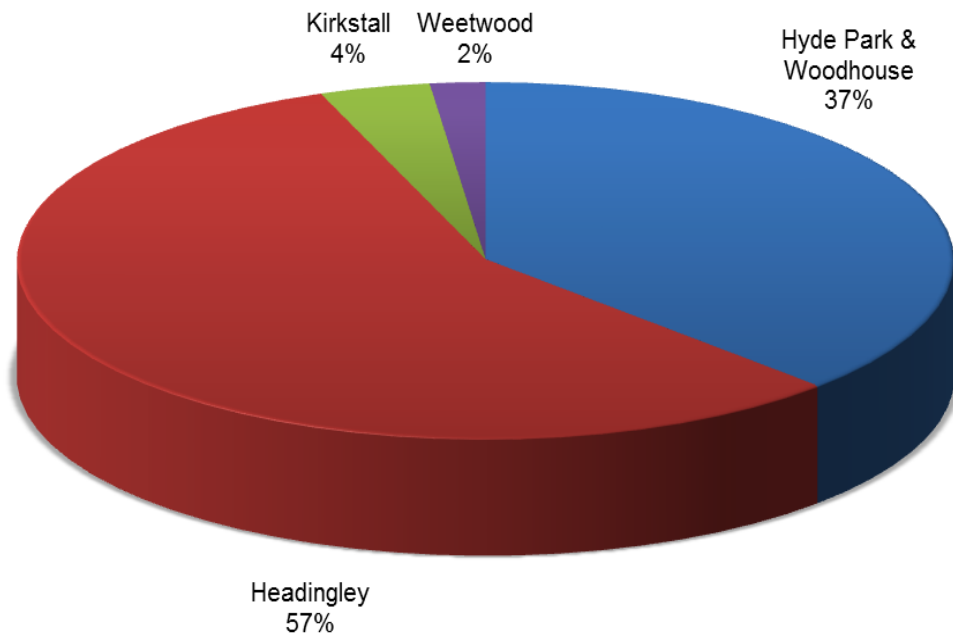
The chart below plots the number of complaints made to the Helpline service last year against those from the previous two years to highlight peak times and trends. The number of complaints made to the Helpline has remained at the same level for the past three years.

Complaints regarding student behaviour continue to peak at the beginning and end of each semester. The number of complaints referred to the Helpline in June in the lead up to changeover was slightly higher than average due to Leeds City Council's new inner North-West Leeds dedicated Noise Nuisance patrol sharing data with the Helpline on the households responsible for noise nuisance.



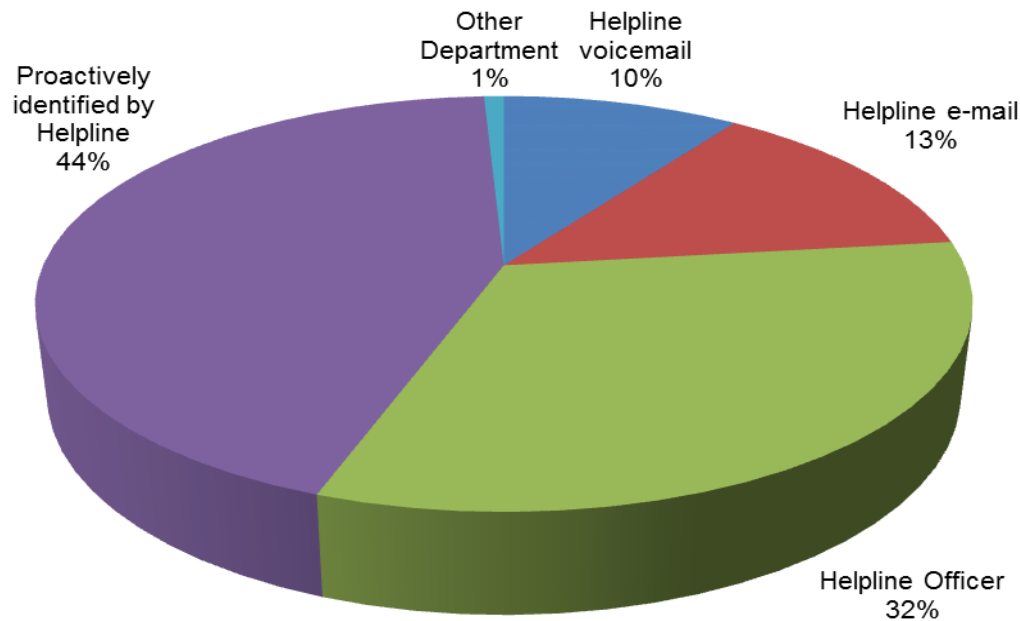
7. Areas covered

The majority of Helpline complaints relate to inner North-West Leeds where the majority of our students live. The Headingley ward continues to be the area with the highest number of issues relating to student behaviour. This is the ward which the Helpline has historically found to have the greatest number of complaints from residents and where waste management issues have been identified through our proactive work.



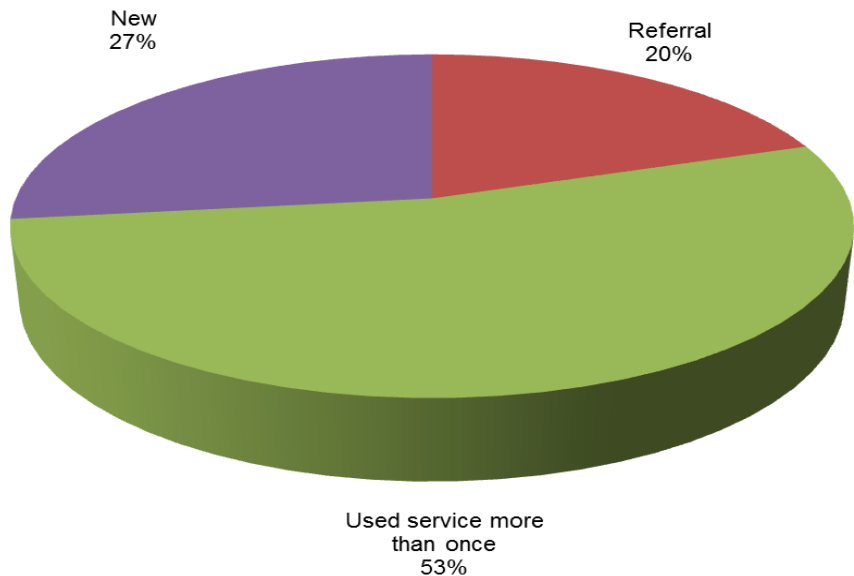
8. Means of identification

This section refers to the means in which issues concerning student behaviour are identified. A significant number of cases were identified by the Helpline through the Ash Road day of action last year, 44% compared to 16% the previous year. Many residents continue to contact Helpline staff directly as their preferred method of communication. This can be attributed to awareness within inner North-West Leeds of the officer’s involvement with the Helpline.



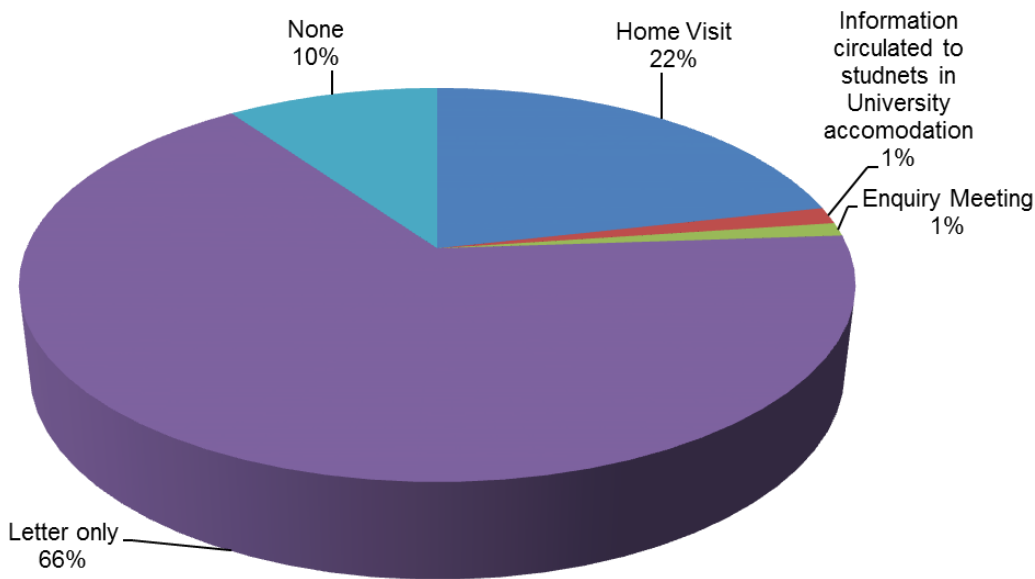
9. Neighbourhood Helpline Users

This section refers to the level of use per Helpline user. Residents who have previously used the service make up the bulk of Helpline users. This could be attributed Helpline users satisfaction with the universities and colleges response to their complaint and the resolution of issues involving our students. Increasingly the Helpline is working with other agencies to maximise our effectiveness in resolving neighbourhood issues involving students. There was an increase in the number of referrals from the Police and Leeds City Council increasing to 20% of complaints from 13% the previous year. In addition, the number of Helpline cases that were managed in partnership with Leeds City Council or Police has increased to 57% from 31% the previous year



10. Helpline Effectiveness

All cases handled by the Helpline service are dealt with in a professional manner, with the colleges and universities working closely to resolve any issues which have been raised. The Neighbourhood Helpline Code outlines the procedure that Helpline staff follows in the event of receiving a complaint. 75% of cases required the universities and colleges to communicate through a letter or email to our students regarding their behaviour and no further complaints were received. No action was required from the Helpline in 10% of cases due to non-student involvement. This is lower than the reported 31.9% of cases which do not involve students, as home visits were undertaken to confirm non-student involvement.



## **11. The Year Ahead**

This forthcoming year, particular attention will be paid to the following issues and priorities:

- (i) Investigate the potential for further data sharing with Leeds City Council to the Helpline partnership and develop a data sharing protocol to formalise this process.
- (ii) Investigate the potential to merge the Helpline action days with Leeds University Union Get to Know you Neighbour campaign.
- (iii) Monitor, review and report on multi-agency plans to tackle noise, antisocial behaviour and waste issues in hotspot areas.
- (iv) Work with Leeds City Council and Neighbourhood Policing Team to identify hotspot areas for antisocial behaviour, noise nuisance and waste issues and proactively develop campaigns to change behaviour.
- (v) Continue to work with other university/college departments and students unions to proactively work to reduce student's negative impact and promote positive behaviour in local communities.
- (vi) Work with the Leeds City Council and Neighbourhood Policing Team and resident groups to raise awareness of the Helpline service and publicise the action taken through the Helpline.
- (vii) Work with senior Council Officers and Leeds University Union to strategically address the environmental issues in inner North-West Leeds. We will work to ensure that waste services meet the needs of inner North-West Leeds residents and there is an effective education and communication campaign to advise students about how to efficiently use the Council services.
- (viii) Work to strengthen the relationship with landlords to resolve any issues as a result of their tenants or property.