



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

Consultation on targeting funding for
disabled students in Higher
Education from 2016/17 onwards

JULY 2015

Contents

Introduction.....	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. How to respond	7
3. Confidentiality & Data Protection	8
4. Help with queries	9
5. Background information on DSAs policy and rationale for the proposed changes.....	10
6. Options for changes to Non-Medical Help (NMH) support	14
7. Draft guidance for the provision of NMH	17
8. Accommodation, peripheral equipment and consumables.....	26
9. Summary and final questions	30
10. What happens next?	31
11. Summary list of all questions.....	32
Annex 1: Consultation principles.....	35
Annex 2: the Equality Act	36
Annex 3: Evidence and data for the Disabled Students’ Allowances consultation	37
Annex 4: Response form	41

Consultation on targeting funding for disabled students in Higher Education from 2016/17 onwards

Introduction

This consultation invites you to submit information that will help the Government to develop options to target Government funding for disabled students in higher education (HE) more effectively. It seeks views on the balance of the source of support between the help available for all disabled students via HE providers, and specific aspects of the personalised support available via Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs).

This consultation is relevant to HE providers, disabled students, prospective HE disabled students, stakeholders within the HE sector working with disabled students, groups working with disabled people wishing to enter HE, disability charities and wider advocacy organisations working with disabled people, DSAs assessment centres, and non-medical help suppliers. It forms part of our on-going engagement with many of these groups.

HE is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The questions in this document refer to HE students who are entitled to receive support for their courses from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills via Student Finance England (including English domiciled students studying in the Devolved Administrations).

Issued: 1 July 2015

Respond by: 24 September 2015

Enquiries to: Paul Higgs

Tel: 0207 215 1500

Email: DSAconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. Supporting students to access and succeed in HE is a priority for the Government. Disabled students may face particular barriers, and a range of support has been developed over time to provide extra financial support to help address some of the barriers these students may face.

2. Additional support is available for eligible disabled students studying on an HE course through DSAs.

3. This consultation seeks to gather specific information and evidence on a range of support available through DSAs including accommodation, peripheral computer equipment (such as printers and scanners), consumables (for example paper and ink), and Non-Medical Help (NMH) provision (the additional human support needed to enable an individual to access HE, for example library assistants or sign-language interpreters). It seeks views on how HE providers can best meet the legal duties placed upon them, particularly with regard to the areas outlined above, and how DSAs can complement such support.

4. The results of this consultation will help the Government to determine which types of support for disabled students should be supplied to students by DSAs and which should be provided in part or whole by HE providers in accordance with the duties placed upon them by the Equality Act 2010.

5. HE providers will be directly impacted by these proposed changes, and we particularly wish for them to contribute to this consultation.

6. Although the Government is exceptionally consulting upon these specific proposals, the Disabled Students' Allowances guidance remains a Student Loans Company operational document that is revised on a year to year basis and is not generally subject to consultation before it is amended.

Rationale for the consultation

7. It is important that the ways in which Government funding is provided to support disabled students is reviewed to ensure that support remains appropriate and effectively targeted.

8. There have been many changes in HE provision, technology, legislation, and society in general, since the first system of help for disabled students was introduced in 1990/91 but there has been no overall review of the support the Government provides for disabled students throughout that time. For example, changes such as the Equality Act 2010 place legal duties on organisations, including HE providers, to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students. This draws into question the types of support that should continue to be funded through DSAs.

9. Additionally, current DSAs funding arrangements do not recognise technological advances, increases in the use and ownership of technology, or the fact that HE providers are responding to new ways in which students are able to access information. Taken together these changes may mean the barriers facing disabled students have changed and the source and provision of available funding is being considered in light of this. To help determine where the balance of support should lie, the Government is consulting on certain elements of DSAs funding.

10. The Government remains committed to the principle of ensuring disabled students can access higher education. DSAs are provided to meet the additional costs a disabled student is obliged to incur in order to access their course. However, DSAs should not be provided as the default provision where a legal duty to provide support lies elsewhere. The DSAs system should be underpinned by HE providers striving for an inclusive environment and making individual reasonable adjustments for disabled students, as per their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

11. This consultation is expected to enable Government to determine where the balance for providing support should lie. If any changes result from this consultation, the Government expects to implement them from the academic year 2016/2017 – which should allow HE providers time to prepare for any changes.

The policy aim of the proposed changes

12. The policy aim of the proposed changes is to rebalance the source of support for disabled students provided by HE providers and DSAs to ensure that:

- Accessibility to HE is improved for all disabled students, through improved inclusivity in the learning environment,
- HE providers are fulfilling their Equality Act duties to make reasonable adjustments for their disabled students, and
- DSAs are targeted at those students that, due to their circumstances, require a higher level of support where it would not be reasonable for the institution to make an adjustment.

Scope of this consultation

13. This consultation is about helping BIS to decide what help a disabled student should expect to be supplied by their HE provider and what help should be supplied through DSAs. It sets out Government's preferred view on how support supplied by HE providers and DSAs should be rebalanced. Details on the Government's preferred option are set out in section 2 (NMH) and section 3 (accommodation, peripherals and consumables). We welcome comments on all aspects of the proposed changes and also invite alternative suggestions, some of which are set out at paragraph 58.

14. Existing DSAs recipients will remain on the current scheme of DSAs support. Any changes will impact new DSAs applicants only.

15. As HE is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the questions in this document are relevant only to students who are eligible to receive support from BIS via Student Finance England (SFE). This includes English domiciled students studying in HE providers in the Devolved Administrations.

Outside of scope

16. The following areas are outside of the scope of this consultation:

- The tuition fee and living cost support which is available to all eligible students,
- The current overall structure of Disabled Students' Allowances, including the four allowances for undergraduates and one for postgraduates,
- The maximum amounts available via Disabled Students' Allowances,
- The general eligibility criteria for student support including DSAs, and
- The help available to students with dependants.

17. The Department of Health (DH) provides allowances to students who are studying on healthcare related courses via the NHS bursary system and to social work students via the social work bursary. The support provided mirrors that provided by BIS. These allowances are also outside the scope of this document. Responses to this consultation will be shared with DH to consider whether any changes should be made to their schemes.

Structure of the document

18. This consultation is divided into 4 sections:

- Section 1 provides background information on DSAs policy, and the rationale for the proposed changes,
- Section 2 sets out the Government's preferred option on the provision of funding for non-medical help including the proposed changes to guidance for non-medical help for 2016/17 for assessment centres and HE providers, and some alternative options that have been considered,
- Section 3 sets out the Government's preferred option on the provision of funding for accommodation costs, peripherals and consumables including the proposed draft guidance for assessment centres,
- Section 4 gives a summary and asks some additional questions on some specific aspects of the proposed changes, and their implementation.

Annexes 1 to 3 give information about Government consultation principles, the Equality Act, and evidence and data for the consultation respectively.

2. How to respond

19. You can reply to this consultation online at <https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/student-finance/consultation-on-he-dsa-2016-17> . Alternatively, the consultation response form is available electronically on the following page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disabled-students-in-higher-education-funding-proposals> until the consultation closes on 24th September 2015.
20. The form can be submitted
- online
 - by email to DSAconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk
 - by hard copy to Paul Higgs,
Higher Education Student Funding Policy,
5th Floor Abbey 1,
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,
1 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0ET
 - by fax to 0207 215 6910 marked for the attention of Paul Higgs, Higher Education Student Funding Policy.
21. If you would like to provide evidence, further information, or a paper in support of your views you can do so by forwarding this to the email address given above.
22. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents by selecting the appropriate type of interest group on the response form and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled. If you are submitting the form via email please make it clear which organisation you represent by clearly marking this on the email.
23. Respondents may wish to answer some or all of the questions posed. There are opportunities throughout to make other points about DSAs. Respondents are invited to provide as much information and evidence as possible in support of their views and to enable new ideas to be explored.
24. When making suggestions for alternative approaches, respondents should indicate whether their suggestions apply to new and/or existing students, and undergraduate and/or postgraduate level of study.
25. Other versions of the document in Braille, audio or other formats are available on request. You may make printed copies of this document without seeking permission. This consultation will close on 24th September 2015.

3. Confidentiality & Data Protection

26. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want information, including personal data that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

27. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

4. Help with queries

28. Questions about the policy issues raised in the document can be addressed to:

Elaine Underwood
Higher Education Student Funding Policy
Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
2 St Paul's Place
125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield
S1 2FJ

Email: DSAconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk

5. Background information on DSAs policy and rationale for the proposed changes.

DSAs policy

29. The Government believes all students should be able to access appropriate support to reach their academic potential in higher education. This applies equally to disabled and non-disabled students. DSAs provide non means-tested, non-repayable grants to enable disabled students to access their chosen higher education course.

30. DSAs are available to full-time and part-time undergraduates and distance learning students who are eligible for student support. They are additionally available to full-time and part-time postgraduates. There are four allowances for undergraduates which cover specialist equipment, non-medical help, travel costs, and general costs. The postgraduate DSA is paid as a single annual grant.

31. For 2015/16 the maximum amounts for each of those four elements are:

Type of student	Specialist equipment allowance	Non-medical help ¹	Travel costs	General Allowance
Full-time	Up to £5,212 for the whole course	Up to £20,725 a year	Uncapped	Up to £1,741 a year
Part-time	Up to £5,212 for the whole course	Up to £15,543 a year	Uncapped	Up to £1,305 a year

Postgraduate students receive a single allowance of up to £10,362 a year

32. DSAs are awarded in addition to the existing standard package of student support.

33. DSAs will continue to contribute to the additional costs a student is obliged to incur whilst studying on an HE course by reason of their disability.

34. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is used to determine eligibility for DSAs. Students falling within the Equality Act 2010 definition are eligible to apply for DSAs support. Sometimes a student's disability does not substantially affect their normal day to day activities but does have a substantial effect on their ability to study. Therefore study is deemed to be a 'day to day' activity for the purposes of DSAs.

¹ Non-medical help is the human support provided to students to enable them to access their studies.

Rationale for the proposed changes

35. The Equality Act 2010 placed duties on HE providers to make reasonable adjustments to support their disabled students and many have responded positively. However, we believe that there is scope for HE providers to go further to anticipate and meet the needs of their disabled students. It is appropriate, therefore, that we should consider what support should be provided by HE providers in the future, and what should be funded through DSAs.

36. Additionally, technological advances have resulted in a huge shift in the way that people live, work and study. There has been a rapid expansion in the type and capabilities of technologies that individuals own and use on a day-to-day basis - from PCs and laptops, to tablets and smartphones - alongside a vastly different learning environment in HE which embraces technology in the provision of information.

37. The overarching aim of the proposed changes to policy is to rebalance provision of support between HE providers and DSAs. This consultation does not set out what a reasonable adjustment should look like, but seeks to gather information and evidence concerning the provision of support which will inform policy as to where provision of support should lay, and about the respective roles that HE providers and DSAs might play in supporting disabled students from 2016/17.

38. The consultation seeks an improved understanding of what constitutes a reasonable adjustment for an HE provider to supply, and what might continue to be supplied under DSAs, based on an expectation that HE providers will be actively considering their duty to provide reasonable adjustments.

39. Any changes to the current system of DSA support should deliver 3 key improvements:

- a. Improved accessibility of the learning environment for all disabled students through HE providers actively striving for wider inclusivity,
- b. Re-balancing the provision of support between HE providers and DSAs, and
- c. Improving value for money by ensuring DSAs provide only the support which would not be available to disabled students from other sources e.g. reasonable adjustments.

Below we set out how the changes we are proposing provide those improvements.

a) Creating an accessible learning environment for disabled students

40. In recent years the number of UK full-time undergraduate students who have made applications who are known to have a disability, and have had applications accepted, have both grown from around 7 per cent in 2010 to around 9.5 per cent in 2014 (Source: UCAS, Annual reference tables: Disability (UK)). However, the percentage of students currently in receipt of DSAs is smaller than the percentage of HE students declaring a disability, and the

percentage of students in HE who declare a disability is lower than the general prevalence of disability in the UK as a whole.

41. Disabled students in HE may choose not to claim DSAs, or may choose not to declare to their condition or impairment. While we encourage all eligible students to claim DSAs if they want to, it is Government's intention that the learning environment should be accessible to all disabled students, not just those in receipt of DSAs. HE providers should actively be anticipating the needs of their entire disabled student cohort, and seeking to create a more inclusive learning environment to encourage greater independence and less reliance on individual interventions.

42. Government's view is that integrating help for disabled students via reasonable adjustments throughout higher education (referred to as 'mainstreaming' support) will enable disabled students to choose their university based on their preferred course, and not on the support available at a particular university. HE providers may not be able to anticipate the needs of all disabled students: some students will continue to have needs that are not easily anticipated or addressed, and so DSAs will continue to have a role to play.

b) Re-balancing support for disabled students in higher education between HE providers and DSAs

43. As well as providing direct funding to students through DSAs, Government also supplies significant funding to publicly funded HE providers to support disadvantaged students (including disabled students) through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

44. For 2014/15 HEFCE allocated a total of £366 million through its Student Opportunity fund for widening access, student retention and success and to support disabled students. The disability element of the Student Opportunity Funding allocation of the HEFCE grant, supplied to HE providers to help them recruit and support disabled students, rose to £20 million for 2015/16, an increase of £5 million on the previous year.

45. HE providers are required to fulfil their specific responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and this is not dependent on Government providing additional funding for them to do so. Therefore there are no plans to supply additional funding for HE providers to support disabled students.

46. Although alternative providers of higher education courses do not directly receive public funding, under Part 3 of the Equality Act 2010 they are a service provider and therefore have a similar duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of disabled persons.

47. We believe that DSAs funding should complement the reasonable adjustments made by an HE provider, not replace them. The Government's view is that these proposed changes will ensure a proper balance is struck between the support provided by HE

providers as part of their legal duty to support all disabled students, and the funding supplied directly to specific disabled students through DSAs to enable them to study.

c) Delivering better value for money

48. A key responsibility of any Government is to maintain control of the public finances and ensure that public funds are spent in a way that demonstrates value for money.

49. The changes proposed will ensure that funding available via DSAs is focussed on help that would not otherwise be supplied (i.e. help that it would be unreasonable for a higher education provider to provide), and to supply support where it is most needed to achieve the Government's goal of making HE as accessible as possible to all those who have the ability, including disabled students.

Note: The numbered questions appearing in the text throughout this document are placed in the section of the consultation that they refer to. So the questions here relate to the rationale for the proposed changes, those in part 6 relate to the proposed changes to non-medical help, and so on. A summary list of all questions is also shown at section 11.

Q1: Do you think a minimum level of reasonable adjustments for all HE providers could help ensure a consistent approach to making reasonable adjustments? If yes, what areas do you think should be covered? Please state what you think the minimum level for each area should be.

Q2: Do you think there are other mechanisms that could be introduced to achieve a consistency of reasonable adjustments for disabled students across all HE providers? If yes, please describe them.

Q3: Do you have any examples of how it might prove difficult for an HE provider to make reasonable adjustments because of the nature of their student population (e.g. if the HE provider has a very large or small student cohort)? If you have, please explain why this could be difficult.

6. Options for changes to Non-Medical Help (NMH) support

50. This section sets out the Government's preferred option for change and also outlines some of the alternative proposals suggested.

Government's Preferred Option: HE Providers have primary responsibility for providing certain NMH support with DSAs used for specialist support or by exception.

51. As set out in the draft guidance for non-medical help provision in part 7 below, it is proposed that HE providers will take the primary responsibility for providing support to the majority of students in need of certain forms of NMH support in the future as part of their duties to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. The relevant section of the draft guidance for 2016/17 is set out within this document to illustrate the Government's preferred option for changes to funding NMH support.

52. DSAs would continue to supply additional support where it is unreasonable for the HE provider to supply the support, or the support is of a more specialist² nature. Under the Government's preferred option many of the roles outlined in the SLC NMH manual as being in band one or two would fall primarily to the HE provider to deliver (see below for detail). In the event of an HE provider failing to supply an adjustment, or where the HE provider feels the adjustment is not reasonable, an Exceptional Case Process would be established to ensure students are supported whilst any dispute with the institution is resolved (see paragraph 61 below).

53. We also believe that changes to the way lectures and tutorials are delivered, coupled with improvements in assistive technology, may reduce the need for separate and dedicated non-medical help in some cases. For example, good practice emerging in HE providers delivers lecture notes in an electronic format meaning they can be easily accessed; similarly, complete lectures are being made available as downloads to view. This means that students can access the text electronically and manipulate it – via text to speech software for example – to present the text in a way that is most suitable for them.

54. HE providers already have a duty to support students under the Equality Act, but DSAs would still be available where it would not be reasonable for an HE provider to put the support in place, or where support is required in addition to support that it is reasonable for HE providers to supply.

55. Under the current preferred option, no type of support in the areas outlined will be completely excluded in principle from DSAs funding.

² Specialist support is support provided by someone with a qualification, appropriate training, or a higher level of knowledge of experience - please refer to the SFE NMH guidance for examples.

56. The proposed draft guidance for non-medical help in Part 7 below indicates broad areas where we expect the primary responsibility to transfer to HE Providers, and where we believe provision should continue through DSAs.

Q4: Do you think the Government's preferred option for non-medical help changes fulfils the policy rationale of making HE as accessible as possible, re-balancing support between HEIs and DSAs, and improving value for money? If no, please give details of your reasons.

Alternative options

57. Other ideas have emerged through the stakeholder engagement conducted in the run up to the consultation. There may be additional alternative ways of delivering support which are different to the Government's preferred approach set out above but which may still meet the policy rationale set out at paragraph 39 above.

58. Alternative options considered include:

- a) No Change to the Current Arrangements.
- b) Transfer Responsibility for all NMH Provision to HE Providers
 - Transferring all responsibility for NMH to HE providers, with some or all of the costs being met by HE providers as part of their legal responsibilities
- c) HE Providers fund limited NMH with DSAs top up
 - HE providers funding support for each student up to a pre-determined monetary level for NMH, with DSAs being provided once that level is reached (i.e. mirroring the system by which schools can apply for additional funding for supporting some disabled pupils), and
- d) Disability Officers at HE Providers determine if support should come from the HE provider or through DSAs.
 - An enhanced role for HE providers at the initial stages of the process, with DSAs being drawn down only in exceptional circumstances.
 - This would involve Disability Officers at HE providers interviewing all disabled students and would advise them of the help that was available through the HE provider. They would decide whether the support needed would be supplied by the HE provider, or via DSAs, or by a mixture of both.
 - There would be an expectation that the majority of non-specialist non-medical help would be provided by the HE provider.
 - If support via DSAs was required over and above that locally available, the system would work broadly as at present with students

referred to a needs assessment interview as now, but with reduced numbers of students being advised to apply for DSAs.

Q5: Do you think any of the alternative options in paragraph 58 for non-medical help provision could deliver the support required and meet the need to make HE as accessible as possible, re-balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money? If yes which one(s)? Please give details, explaining how the proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers.

Q6: Do you have an alternative proposal for non-medical help provision? If yes please give details, explaining how your proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers, and meets the policy rationale (i.e. the need to make HE as accessible as possible, balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money)

7. Draft guidance for the provision of NMH

Note: For clarity of reading and ease of understanding only this section uses the words ‘will’ or ‘will not’, ‘is’ or ‘is not’, and so on. This reflects the format of how any guidance would look and should not be taken as an indication that policy has been settled.

Purpose

59. This guidance forms part of the suite of guidance that is produced by the Student Loans Company (SLC) for Student Support administrators. It is intended for DSAs practitioners inside SLC, for those working in assessment centres, HE providers and elsewhere, and for those advising students. It will be available via Student Finance England’s (SFE) practitioners’ site, where it will also be available to the general public.

60. The NMH section seeks to set out in broad terms the areas of support that should be provided by HE providers, and where exceptions might occur. It does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list.

61. For situations where a student is in dispute with their HE provider about the provision of an adjustment, an Exceptional Case Process will be established to safeguard the interests of students. The Exceptional Case process will consider circumstances where a reasonable adjustment might be expected but the institution fails to provide it, in which case interim DSAs support would be considered whilst a dispute with the institution is resolved. The Exceptional Case Process will also consider the provision of DSAs in cases where it would not be reasonable for the HE provider to provide an individual adjustment because of the specific needs of the particular student, even though the general rule is that DSAs are not ordinarily available. For example, it might be ordinarily expected that a higher education provider would meet the needs for note-taking support. However, due to the very individual needs of the student they require the provision of notes in an unusual format that the institution would find difficult to supply. Such cases would be considered for DSAs funding.

62. This draft guidance should be read in conjunction with the SLC’s NMH reference manual. The reference manual has been a helpful starting point in considering what role DSAs funding should play in funding non-medical helper support, in light of the expectation on HE providers to provide reasonable adjustments.

63. The manual was created by the Student Loans Company after they commissioned research into the range of NMH provision funded by DSAs. The research informed the NMH services reference manual which grouped activities within bands based on the type of support provided (e.g. practical, enabling etc.), the qualifications the support worker might be expected to have and the hourly cost of the support. The manual can be found at the following address:

http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/705785/non_medical_help_manual_v16.pdf

64. The reference manual is a useful reference point but it does not set out what DSAs will or will not fund.

65. Each activity is noted below and indicates where DSAs may have a primary role, and where HE providers may be expected to primarily provide the support. It also indicates some initial exceptions.

66. The draft guidance below shows the 4 main bands of NMH support, and gives examples of the sort of support provided within those bands. As a general rule, it is proposed that NMH support in bands one and two relate to the areas of support that should be primarily provided by HE providers.

BAND ONE – Support Assistants

The role of a support assistant is generally to provide support in the following areas: practical support around the campus; practical support in the library, laboratory or workshop/studio, reading aloud, scribing, proof reading/text checking (pointing out errors but not providing corrections).

a. Practical Support Assistant

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	DSAs funding <u>is not</u> available for any aspects that are covered by a local authority care plan. Such support will continue to be provided under the duties placed upon the local authority. While some tasks, such as carrying equipment for a student with mobility difficulties, will need to continue throughout a student's course, others, such as general orientation, should decrease as the student becomes more able to manage independently.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

b. Library Support Assistant

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	Access to libraries and information available through libraries to support students in their study is expected to be the primary responsibility of the HE provider.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

c. Reader

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	There are now many forms of assistive software that can help in this area.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

d. Scribe

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	There are now many forms of assistive software that can help in this area.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

e. Workshop/Laboratory Assistant

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	Supporting a student in gaining access to the practical aspects of their course is expected to be the primary responsibility of the HE providers.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

f. Sighted Guide

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 this support is proposed to remain under DSAs funding.
Other information	This role is about the physical attendance at lectures, tutorials, workshops etc. and not about accessing the information that is delivered.
Exceptions	N/A

g. Proof Reader/text checker

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	This type of support is valuable for the general student body and all students should be able to access such support. For disabled students there are also many forms of assistive software that can provide some support in this area.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

Q7: In NMH Band One categories a - e and g on pages 18-20 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q8: In NMH Band One category f on page 19 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to** the HE provider? If yes, please give full details, and explain your reasoning.

BAND TWO – Enhanced Support Assistants

Functions undertaken by Enhanced Support Assistants include: supporting students to develop their independence and autonomy in HE, for example by providing support with issues such as time keeping; organisational skills etc. and can be supplemented by practical support e.g. library support, workshop support etc. and supporting a disabled student during examinations

a. Study Assistant

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	This role does not refer to the specialist one-to-one study skills support which is provided under band 3 support. HE providers have a responsibility to all its students to develop their independence and autonomy in HE. This may require additional intervention in the case of some disabled students, but nevertheless is a primary responsibility of the HE provider.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

b. Examination Support Workers

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	Supporting students to undertake their exams is considered to be a HE provider matter.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional case process.

c. Manual Note takers

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	<p>Manual note-taking, even where it is accompanied by the subsequent typing up of notes should not be confused with electronic note taking.</p> <p>Electronic note-taking is based on the RND Speed Text service and is ordinarily provided to deaf/hearing impaired students – see below.</p> <p>For disabled students there are now many forms of assistive software that can provide some support in this area.</p>
Exceptions	An exception might be where the notes are required in a foreign language, or the notes require specialist knowledge of the subject in order to capture formulae etc.

Q9: In NMH Band Two categories a – c on pages 20-21 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

BAND THREE - Specialist Enabling Support

This support demands specific expertise and specialist training in a particular access area. This support includes: making use of specialist expertise and training in a particular access area in order to facilitate a student’s access to learning using specialist skills and/or equipment to represent the language of delivery into another more accessible format, and using specialist skills to enable students to navigate themselves independently around the educational environment.

a. Communication Support Workers

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	Workers providing this support will require specialist knowledge and qualifications to provide this role.
Exceptions	Not applicable

b. Electronic Note takers

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	<p>Electronic note-taking is based on the RND Speed Text service and is ordinarily provided to deaf/hearing impaired students.</p> <p>Although DSAs remain available, there are now many forms of assistive software that can provide some support in this area. Assistive software responses should be considered as an alternative to such support where appropriate.</p> <p>DSAs funding is available for this support for hearing and visually impaired students where assistive software alternatives cannot remove the specific barrier.</p> <p>Electronic note-taking will not be considered where it is being recommended as an alternative to manual note taking, as a means to draw down DSAs funding.</p>
Exceptions	Not applicable.

c. Specialist Transcription Service

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to be the primary provider of this support.
Other information	Not applicable.
Exceptions	No specific exceptions have been identified for this support at the time of publication. Possible exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis through the exceptional cases process.

d. Mobility Trainer

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support.
Other information	For on-going support a sighted guide may be the most appropriate support and will be funded through DSAs (see Band One).
Exceptions	Not applicable.

Q10: In NMH Band Three category c on page 22 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q11: In NMH Band Three categories a, b, and d on pages 22-23 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to** the responsibility of the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

BAND FOUR - Specialist Access and Learning Facilitators

This support requires advanced specialist skills, training and/or qualifications concerning how particular conditions or impairments affect a student’s access to learning and how to address these access issues. These support workers will make use of specialist skills and training in order to:

- understand the particular barriers to learning experienced by individual disabled students,
- work with the student in order to identify strategies to help address these barriers, monitor the effectiveness of these strategies,
- work to enhance student’s autonomy within their learning context and interpret the language of delivery,
- giving real time access into another language accessible to the student.

a. Specialist Mentors

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	<p>DSAs study needs assessors should carefully evaluate the stages of the course where the student will require this support and agree a reducing level of support to enable independence where appropriate.</p> <p>Where HE providers request that additional support is required and that request is not supported by the needs assessor, the responsibility to provide and fund that support will rest with the HE provider.</p> <p>Mentors should not be recommended where the student requires counselling support. Counselling falls outside the scope of DSAs.</p>
Exceptions	Not applicable.

b. Specialist One to One Study Skills Support

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support.
Other information	<p>DSAs study needs assessors should carefully evaluate the stages of the course where the student will require this support and agree a reducing level of support to enable independence where appropriate.</p> <p>The continued provision of support at the same level may indicate that the support is not effective and should be reviewed.</p> <p>Where HE providers determine that additional support is required, and that request is not supported by the needs assessor the responsibility to provide and fund that support will rest with the HE provider.</p> <p>Specialist one-to-one study skills support should not be recommended where a study assistant will meet the needs of the student.</p>
Exceptions	Not applicable.

c. British Sign Language Interpreters

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	Workers providing this support will require specialist knowledge and qualifications to provide this role.
Exceptions	Not applicable.

d. Language Support Tutor for deaf students

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	Workers providing this support will require specialist knowledge and qualifications to provide this role. This role does not include the provision of academic support.
Exceptions	Not applicable

e. Assistive Technology Trainers

Is DSAs Funding available?	From 2016/17 DSAs will remain available for this support
Other information	HE providers should consider how students can access on-going assistive technology training support once initial training has been undertaken and completed.
Exceptions	Not applicable.

Q12: In NMH Band Four categories a - e on pages 24-25 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to** the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q13: Do you have detailed edits or comments on the draft NMH guidance? These can be provided online on the Citizenspace form, by email to DSAconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk , or by hard copy to the address given in paragraph 20.

8. Accommodation, peripheral equipment and consumables

Accommodation

67. Government recognises that when disabled students are studying away from home their disabilities may require them to occupy specially built or adapted accommodation.

68. We have identified three types of accommodation that a student could occupy whilst studying: accommodation wholly owned and managed by the HE provider, accommodation provided for an HE provider via an agency agreement, and wholly private accommodation (i.e. with no link to the HE provider).

69. HE providers regularly build new student accommodation, and refurbish or upgrade their existing stock. HE providers also outsource provision of accommodation to private large providers of student accommodation. HE providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the provision of accommodation to disabled students, and under legislation are already obliged to provide accommodation suitable for disabled students in new and newly refurbished accommodation.

70. Government considers that once a reasonable adjustment has been made to provide specialist accommodation because of a disability, any additional cost should not be passed onto the student, even where a student has access to DSAs.

71. It is proposed therefore that DSAs are no longer available for the additional costs of specialist accommodation where that accommodation is owned and managed by the HE provider or its agent.

72. DSAs would continue to be available towards the additional costs of accommodation where the additional costs are incurred solely because of the student's disability, and where it would not be reasonable for the HE provider to meet the costs of such an adjustment.

73. Exceptions to the general policy would be considered on a case by case basis through the Exceptional Case Process, detailed at paragraph 61 above.

74. DSAs funding would also remain available to students living in other types of accommodation where additional costs are incurred because of their disability, for example students renting accommodation in the private sector.

Q14: Where accommodation is owned and managed by the institution or its agent, do you agree that the additional costs of providing specialist accommodation for disabled students should not be passed on to the student? If not, please explain your reasons?

Q15: What other approach would you favour for funding specialist accommodation? Please explain why.

Peripheral equipment and consumables

75. Funding for general participation costs, including equipment and consumables, is already provided through the Maintenance Grant for full-time undergraduate students. Part-time and Postgraduate students do not receive a maintenance grant, as they are expected to self-fund their participation costs.

76. HE providers should be ensuring that their courses and facilities are available and accessible to all students as part of their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Printers and scanners

77. In order to remove the need, wherever possible, for individual items of printing and scanning equipment and hard copy materials, it is the Government's preferred approach for HE providers' library services to:

- Provide materials in alternative formats wherever possible.
- Where materials are not available in an alternative format, provide long library loans or fully accessible scanned versions (where copyright regulations allow).
- Where students need printed materials, consider how that need might be met at no additional cost to the student, through the use of the HE provider's printing facilities.
- When producing reading lists, consider if the textbooks on those lists are fully accessible to disabled students.

78. Exceptions would be considered under the Exceptional Case Process and may include students whose combination of needs mean that they are unable to access a HE provider's printing facilities, or alternative format materials are not available or appropriate.

79. All recommendations for DSAs-funded items would require full justification and evidence, to ensure that funding is targeted appropriately. DSAs funding would remain available for peripheral equipment where the provision of the individual item is required for the student to undertake their course solely due to their disability.

80. Where individual printers or scanners are provided, ink and paper consumables would continue to be funded through DSAs.

Q16: Do you agree that the primary source of hard copy materials should be through an institution's library services to remove the need for individual printers, scanners and hard

copy materials? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Standard computer peripherals

81. The Government’s preferred approach is that DSAs funding will no longer be available for the purchase of standard keyboards, standard size monitors and standard mice as a matter of course, unless they form part of a recommendation for a desktop computer. This is because, in most cases, the need for these items is not solely due to the student’s disability.

82. DSAs funding is not available for the purchase of standard speakers, headphones, USB drives or USB cables as a matter of course. DSAs funding would remain available for headsets or other items where they are essential for the effective use of specific assistive software that has been recommended.

83. Exceptions would be considered under the Exceptional Case Process where provision of equipment is required solely due to the student’s impairment.

Q17: Do you agree with this approach to the funding of standard computer peripherals? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

USB hubs / laptop carry cases / extension leads / surge protectors / computer stand/risers – known as ‘the bundle’

84. The Government’s preferred option is that from 2016/17 DSAs funding is not available for USB hubs, laptop carry cases, extension leads, surge protectors or computer stands/risers, unless they are required solely to meet a specific disability-related need. This is because, in most cases, the need for these items is not solely due to the student’s disability.

Q18: Do you agree with this approach to funding items referred to as ‘the bundle’? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Audio capture equipment (e.g. Digital Voice Recorders (DVRs), microphones, recording pens)

85. From 2016/17 HE providers are expected to consider how they can meet the needs of their students through improved lecture capture facilities. If improved lecture capture facilities do not meet the needs of the student, assessors should consider whether adequate personal recording of lectures and seminars could be achieved via a laptop or a smart phone, before recommending DVRs etc. DSAs funding is available for smart phone

apps if they are essential for audio capture, where the student will be using their existing smart phone instead of a DVR for this purpose. It is not expected that assessors will recommend DVRs and note-taking for the same purpose.

86. Where DVRs are provided, battery consumables will continue to be funded through DSAs.

Q19: Do you agree with this approach to funding audio capture equipment? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Q20: Are there circumstances where the primary responsibility for providing an individual item of IT related equipment, for example a printer, scanner, DVR etc. should fall to a student's HE provider? If yes, which items of equipment would fall into this category? If yes or no, please give reasons for your answer.

9. Summary and final questions

87. This consultation explains the rationale for change, and the Government's preferred option on NMH, accommodation costs, peripherals and consumables. We welcome comments on the preferred options and on alternative options.

88. Finally, there are some further questions on the whole of the proposed changes on which we would welcome your views.

Q21: We have described how we think HE providers can best fulfil their obligation to supply reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Are there other ways in which they could do so? If yes, please describe them.

Q22: How should any changes introduced be monitored and evaluated to ensure students are receiving a consistent service and are not being disadvantaged?

Q23: Are there any additional safeguards for students that should be considered to ensure that they receive the support necessary? If yes, please state what you think they should be.

Q24: Some students may not be able to identify their final choice of HE provider until the clearing process. Do you think that any specific arrangements need to be put in place as part of clearing? If yes, what are they and why do you think they should be put in place?

Q25: Do you have any relevant additional information that you would like to be considered as part of the ongoing Equality Analysis? If yes, please provide this.

10. What happens next?

89. Responses made to this consultation will inform decisions regarding DSAs funding. They will also be taken into account in the ongoing Equality Analysis being carried out as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty. If changes result from this consultation, the Government expects to implement them from the Academic Year 2016/17, which would affect students from August 2016.

90. We understand the need to give clarity to stakeholders. We will issue information concerning any decisions made as a result of the consultation as soon as possible and within 3 months of the consultation closing. Any decisions made will publicised and posted to the BIS website.

11. Summary list of all questions

Q1: Do you think a minimum level of reasonable adjustments for all HE providers could help ensure a consistent approach to making reasonable adjustments? If yes, what areas do you think should be covered? Please state what you think the minimum level for each area should be.

Q2: Do you think there are other mechanisms that could be introduced to achieve a consistency of reasonable adjustments for disabled students across all HE providers? If yes, please describe them.

Q3: Do you have any examples of how it might prove difficult for an HE provider to make reasonable adjustments because of the nature of their student population (e.g. if the HE provider has a very large or small student cohort)? If you have, please explain why this could be difficult.

Q4: Do you think the Government's preferred option for non-medical help changes fulfils the policy rationale of making HE as accessible as possible, re-balancing support between HEIs and DSAs, and improving value for money? If no, please give details of your reasons.

Q5: Do you think any of the alternative options in paragraph 58 for non-medical help provision could deliver the support required and meet the need to make HE as accessible as possible, re-balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money? If yes which one(s)? Please give details, explaining how the proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers.

Q6: Do you have an alternative proposal for non-medical help provision? If yes please give details, explaining how your proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers, and meets the policy rationale (i.e. the need to make HE as accessible as possible, balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money)

Q7: In NMH Band One categories a - e and g on pages18-20 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q8: In NMH Band One category f on page 19 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to** the HE provider? If yes, please give full details, and explain your reasoning.

Q9: In NMH Band Two categories a – c on pages20-21 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q10: In NMH Band Three category c on page 22 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should not** sit with the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q11: In NMH Band Three categories a, b, and d on pages 22-23 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to the** responsibility of the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q12: In NMH Band Four categories a - e on pages 24-25 are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision **should move to** the HE provider? If yes, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Q13: Do you have detailed edits or comments on the draft NMH guidance? These can be provided online on the Citizenspace form, by email to DSAconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk , or by hard copy to the address given in paragraph 20.

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Q15: What other approach would you favour for funding specialist accommodation? Please explain why.

Q16: Do you agree that the primary source of hard copy materials should be through an institution's library services to remove the need for individual printers, scanners and hard copy materials? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Q17: Do you agree with this approach to the funding of standard computer peripherals? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Q18: Do you agree with this approach to funding items referred to as 'the bundle'? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Q19: Do you agree with this approach to funding audio capture equipment? If not, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Q20: Are there circumstances where the primary responsibility for providing an individual item of IT related equipment, for example a printer, scanner, DVR etc. should fall to a student's HE provider? If yes, which items of equipment would fall into this category? If yes or no, please give reasons for your answer.

Q21: We have described how we think HE providers can best fulfil their obligation to supply reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Are there other ways in which they could do so? If yes, please describe them.

Q22: How should any changes introduced be monitored and evaluated to ensure students are receiving a consistent service and are not being disadvantaged?

Q23: Are there any additional safeguards for students that should be considered to ensure that they receive the support necessary? If yes, please state what you think they should be.

Q24: Some students may not be able to identify their final choice of HE provider until the clearing process. Do you think that any specific arrangements need to be put in place as part of clearing? If yes, what are they and why do you think they should be put in place?

Q25: Do you have any relevant additional information that you would like to be considered as part of the ongoing Equality Analysis? If yes, please provide this.

Annex 1: Consultation principles

The principles that Government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Consultation-Principles.pdf>

Comments or complaints on the conduct of this consultation

If you wish to comment on the conduct of this consultation or make a complaint about the way this consultation has been conducted, please write to:

Angela Rabess
BIS Consultation Co-ordinator,
1 Victoria Street,
London
SW1H 0ET

Telephone Angela on 020 7215 1661
or e-mail to: angela.rabess@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Annex 2: the Equality Act

As independent and autonomous bodies HE universities and colleges are responsible for addressing any issues of discrimination that might come to their attention. The Government provides a legal framework for individuals which protect their right not to be discriminated against – primarily through the Equality Act 2010. HE Institutions are prohibited by law, through the Equality Act 2010, from discriminating against students with protected characteristics which includes disability.

Under the Equality Act 2010 HE institutions have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments comprises three requirements:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with those who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.
- Where a physical feature puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function.
- Where not providing an auxiliary aid or service puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with students who are not disabled, to take reasonable steps to provide that auxiliary aid/service.

The duty to make adjustments arises where a provision, criterion or practice, a physical feature or the absence of an auxiliary aid or service puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared with students who are not disabled. The content of the duty may vary depending on the particular circumstances.

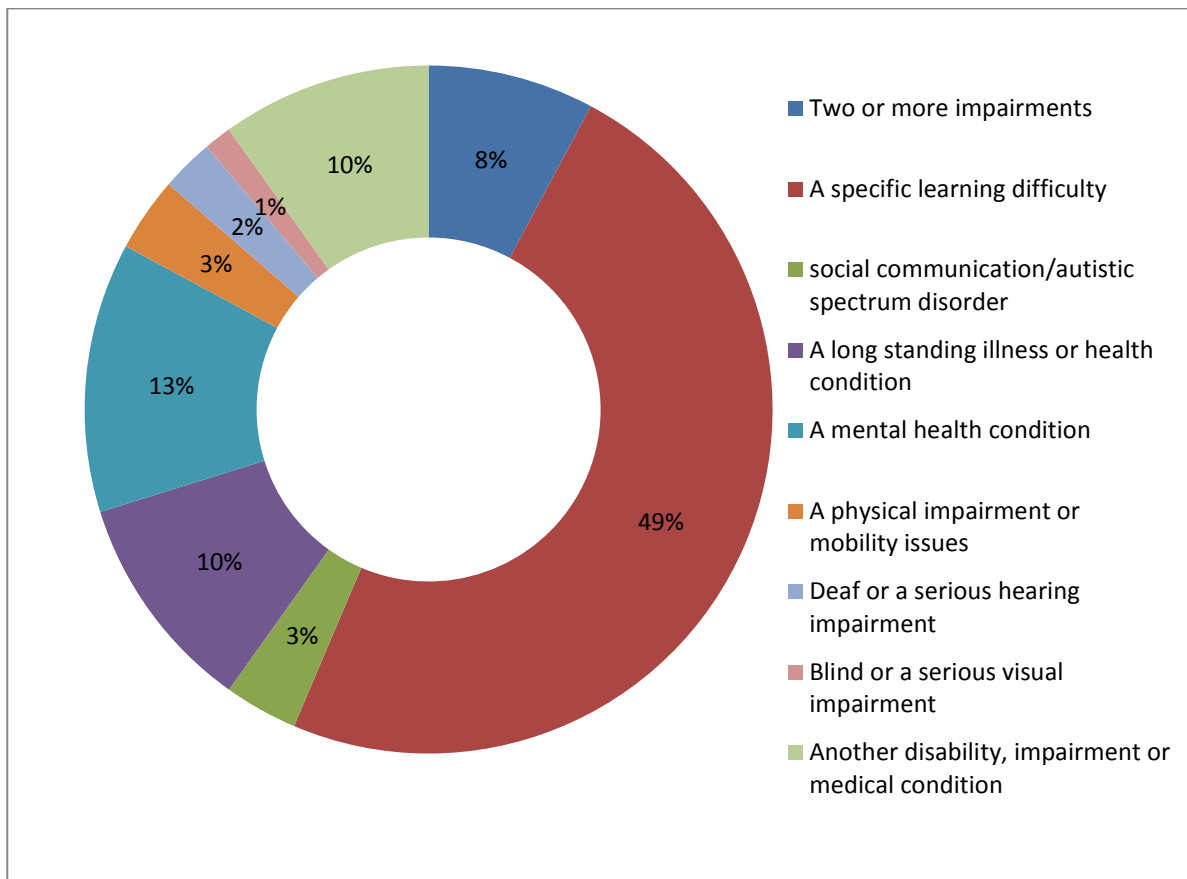
Failure to comply with the three requirements is a failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments. An institution will be considered to discriminate against a disabled person if they fail to comply with that duty in relation to that person.

Annex 3: Evidence and data for the Disabled Students' Allowances consultation

Profile of the DSAs recipient population

Data from the HESA student record is examined to ascertain whether groups with protected characteristics other than disability are over, under or proportionately represented in the subgroup of English domiciled student at UK institutions that are in receipt of DSAs.

Chart 1 - UK-domiciled undergraduate disabled entrants to UK higher education by type of disability



Source: HESA Table 14 - First year UK domiciled higher education students by level of study, gender, mode of study and disability 2013/14

Table 1 below shows that the gender profile of English domiciled entrants to UK institutions that declare a disability and the subgroup of these that receive DSAs is the same as entrants without a known disability: the majority (59%) are female.

The age profile of entrants that declare a disability is similar to that for entrants without a known disability. However the subgroup of entrants that receive DSAs is younger: most of them (53%) are under 21 compared to 45% of entrants with no known disability.

The ethnic profile of disabled entrants is different to that of those with no known disability: only 17% of disabled entrants are from a minority ethnic background compared to 24% of non-disabled entrants. This is due to lower representation of Asian and African-background entrants amongst disabled students. The profile of the DSAs recipient group does not differ significantly from that of the wider group of entrants declaring a disability.

In terms of measures of disadvantage based on socio-economic class and on neighbourhood participation rates the profile of the three groups is similar: around two thirds of entrants are from the top three socio-economic groups (managerial, professional and associate technical groups) and only around one in eight students (12-13%) are from low participation neighbourhoods.

A slightly higher proportion of DSAs recipients are awarded the full maintenance grant. An analysis of SLC data on undergraduate student finance applicants finds that at the end of Academic Year 2012/13, 47% of eligible DSAs recipients applicants were awarded a full maintenance grant compared to 43% of the wider population of all eligible student finance applicants³.

Table 1: Profile of university entrants by disability status, Academic Year 2013/14

Disability status	Gender Male (%)	Gender Female (%)	Age Under 21 (%)	Age 21 to 24 (%)	Age 25+ (%)	Disadvantage NS-SEC classes 4-7 (%)	Disadvantage Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3 Q1) (%)
No known disability	41	59	45	17	38	35	12
Declared disability	41	59	46	19	36	34	13
DSA recipient	41	59	53	19	28	34	13

³ These are prospective students who had been approved for Maintenance Grant and would be paid the grant if they became attending students. Eligible student finance applicant population includes students on postgraduate Initial Teacher Training courses, who are eligible for maintenance funding.

Table 2 below sets out data provided by the SLC on the characteristics of DSAs applicants by type of DSA support. The only robust data available is on the protected characteristics of age and gender⁴. Despite this limitation the data is useful in potentially identifying whether a group with a shared protected characteristic would be particularly affected by a policy change aimed at a specific type of DSAs support.

The proportion in receipt of a full maintenance grant is also provided as a measure of disadvantage. Note that this data covers full-time and part-time undergraduate students only, i.e. excludes postgraduate students.

The analysis shows that the gender, age band and disadvantage profile of students applying for Non-medical Helper support is broadly equal to the overall DSAs population⁵.

Table 2: Profile of DSAs undergraduate applicants by type of DSAs support 2012/13

Type of DSA	Gender Male (%)	Gender Female (%)	Age Under 21 (%)	Age 21 to 24 (%)	Age 25+ (%)	Disadvantage Full Maintenance Grant / Student Support Grant (%) [Note 1]
Non-medical Helper	42	58	58	20	22	44
Total DSAs undergraduate recipients	42	58	57	20	23	44

Source: SLC data for elements of DSAs Expenditure and HESA data for the base group of all undergraduate DSA recipients (English-domiciled enrolments at UK institutions, at all modes of study)

Note: [1] Percentage of full-time undergraduate applicants (part-time are not eligible for maintenance grant)

⁴ Data on ethnicity collected by the SLC is self-reported and only a small proportion of students provide this data to the SLC

⁵ This is unsurprising, given that the majority of DSAs applicants apply for Non-medical helpers and equipment support

Table 3: Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) - Full time students domiciled in England, Academic Year 2012/13

	Description	Amount awarded (£m)	Number of applicants awarded (000s) (Note 2)
Under graduate	Full-time DSA – General	4.9	24.3
Under graduate	Full-time DSA – Travel	3.8	2.0
Under graduate	Full-time DSA – Equipment	36.9	27.8
Under graduate	Full-time DSA – NMH	81.9	48.8
	Full-time total	127.6	56.6

Source: SLC national statistics Supplementary Tables – Payments of DSA by DSA Type published on 21 January 2015

Note 2: Students will draw down from a number of allowances and therefore these figures do not equate to the sum total of students in receipt of DSAs.

Annex 4: Response form



Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

Consultation on targeting funding for disabled students in Higher Education from 2016/17 onwards

RESPONSE FORM

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is 24 September 2015.

Your details

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Address:

Please return completed forms to:

Paul Higgs,
Higher Education Student Funding Policy,
5th Floor Abbey 1,
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,
1 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0ET

Please tick the box below that best describes you as a respondent to this consultation:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business representative organisation/trade body
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity or social enterprise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Large business (over 250 staff)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium business (50 to 250 staff)

	Micro business (up to 9 staff)
	Small business (10 to 49 staff)
	Trade union or staff association
	Other (please describe)

Question 1

Do you think a minimum level of reasonable adjustments for all HE providers could help ensure a consistent approach to making reasonable adjustments?

Yes No

If yes to question 1, what areas do you think should be covered? Please state what you think the minimum level for each area should be.

Question 2

Do you think there are other mechanisms that could be introduced to achieve a consistency of reasonable adjustments for disabled students across all HE providers?

Yes No

If yes to question 2, please describe them.

Question 3

Do you have any examples of how it might prove difficult for an HE provider to make reasonable adjustments because of the nature of their student population (e.g. if the HE provider has a very large or small student cohort)?

Yes No

If you have answered yes to question 3, please explain why this could be difficult.

Question 4 Do you think the Government’s preferred option for non-medical help (NMH) changes fulfils the policy rationale of making HE as accessible as possible, re-balancing support between HEIs and DSAs, and improving value for money?

Yes No

If no to question 4, please give details of your reasons.

Question 5 Do you think any of the alternative options b) to e) for NMH provision in paragraph 58 of the consultation document could deliver the support required and meet the need to make HE as accessible as possible, re-balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money?

Yes No

If yes to question 5, which one(s)? Please give details, explaining how the proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers

Question 6 Do you have an alternative proposal for NMH provision?

Yes No

If yes to question 6, please give details, explaining how your proposal takes account of the legal duty imposed on HE providers, and meets the policy rationale (i.e. the need to make HE as accessible as possible, balance support between HEIs and DSAs, and improve value for money)

Question 7

In NMH Band One categories a - e and g are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should not sit with the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 7, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Question 8

In NMH Band One category f (see More Information) are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should move to the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 8, please give full details, and explain your reasoning.

Question 9

In NMH Band Two categories a – c are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should not sit with the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 9, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Question 10

In NMH Band Three category c (see More Information) are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should not sit with the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 10, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Question 11 In NMH Band Three categories a, b, and d are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should move to the responsibility of the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 11, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Question 12 In NMH Band Four categories a - e are there any circumstances where the primary responsibility for provision should move to the HE provider?

Yes No

If yes to question 12, please give full details and explain your reasoning.

Question 13 Do you have detailed edits or comments on the draft NMH guidance? These can be provided below.

Question 14 Where accommodation is owned and managed by the institution or its agent, do you agree that the additional costs of providing specialist accommodation for disabled students should not be passed on to the student?

Yes No

If your answer to question 14 is no, please explain your reasons.

Question 15 What other approach would you favour for funding specialist accommodation? Please explain why.

Question 16 Do you agree that the primary source of hard copy materials should be through an institution's library services to remove the need for individual printers, scanners and hard copy materials?

Yes No

If your answer to question 16 is no, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Question 17 Do you agree with the approach to the funding of standard computer peripherals?

Yes No

If your answer to question 17 is no, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Question 18 Do you agree with the approach to funding items referred to as 'the bundle'?

Yes No

If your answer to question 18 is no, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Question 19 Do you agree with the approach to funding audio capture equipment?

Yes **No**

If your answer to question 19 is no, why? What alternatives do you suggest?

Question 20 Are there circumstances where the primary responsibility for providing an individual item of IT related equipment, for example a printer, scanner, DVR etc. should fall to a student's HE provider?

Yes **No**

If your answer to question 20 is yes, which items of equipment would fall into this category? If yes or no, please give reasons for your answer.

Question 21 We have described how we think HE providers can best fulfil their obligation to supply reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Are there other ways in which they could do so?

Yes **No**

If your answer to question 21 is yes, are there other ways in which they could do so? Please describe them.

Question 22 How should any changes introduced be monitored and evaluated to ensure students are receiving a consistent service and are not being disadvantaged?

Question 23

Are there any additional safeguards for students that should be considered to ensure that they receive the support necessary?

Yes No

If your answer to question 23 is yes, please state what you think they should be.

Question 24

Some students may not be able to identify their final choice of HE provider until the clearing process. Do you think that any specific arrangements need to be put in place as part of clearing?

Yes No

If your answer to question 24 is yes, what are they and why do you think they should be put in place?

Question 25

Do you have any relevant additional information that you would like to be considered as part of the ongoing Equality Analysis?

Yes No

If your answer to question 25 is yes, you can provide evidence, further information, or a paper in support of your views by forwarding this to dsaconsultation@bis.gsi.gov.uk or by forwarding a hard copy by post to

Paul Higgs,
Higher Education Student Funding Policy,
5th Floor Abbey 1,
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills,
1 Victoria Street,
London,
SW1H 0ET

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply



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BIS/15/81