

Disabled Students Stakeholders Group (DSSG)

04 December 2018

Key outputs from the meeting

DSA

DSA applications had risen significantly, largely due to the introduction of DSA online. Applications received without supporting medical evidence had fallen, but many students were still taking considerable time to submit the necessary evidence. Work to understand the reasons behind this was underway. The launch of DSA online was considered a success.

SFE continued to monitor application profiles, and rates of students claiming DSA with mental health conditions and autism had risen.

The DSA contact team had exceeded their target for response rate, and was handling calls previously managed by the contact centre. Call reasons were in line with the previous month's data.

Several updates were planned for 2019, including a project that would allow students to upload their medical evidence. Undergraduate funding (both full- and part-time) for 2019/20 was increasing in line with inflation, and the post-graduate allowance would increase to £20,000.

Workshops to examine the internal process to deal with missed and cancelled NMH sessions were scheduled for early 2019.

DfE

Evaluation research was complete, with the report due to be published in January 2019. This would cover student feedback on DSA awareness and assessment, support available through DSA and HEPs and the impact of DSA on their university successes.

The Mandatory Criteria Review was almost complete, and an SSIN on this would follow shortly.

The Fee Cap Review was felt by some to unfairly penalise assessment centres which had historically honoured requests not to increase their fees, and these centres could not now raise fees in line with the maximum chargeable by newly-established centres. The discussion continued offline between NNAC and DfE.

There had been new guidance on suitable venues for NMH support. The group emphasised the need for the choice of such venues to be student-led in order to meet the student's needs. Students were not always aware that they could request an alternative venue or submit feedback.

WG

Allowances for 2019/20 were being looked at in line with inflation and would need ministerial approval.