

Disabled Student Service Bulletin

October 2011



This bulletin gives you an update on the Student Finance England service for disabled students for academic year 2011/2012 – how we are doing and what's new.

AY 2011 / 2012 APPLICATIONS

We're letting students who are starting uni this autumn know that there is still time to apply for student finance, online now, at: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

DSA APPLICATIONS

Please access our [Practitioners' website](#) for information about how to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances.

DSA APPLICATION PROCESSING

As of 25 September, we have received over 21,000 DSA applications which is 49% of what we expect to receive for AY 2011/2012.

The number of DSA applications received for academic year 2011/2012 is about 30% higher compared to the same time last year. Around 40% more students will have their DSA support in place for the start of term this year compared to last year.

A huge thank you to everyone who has helped us promote the 'apply early' message to students.

The key message we want to communicate to disabled student customers now is that we accept **photocopies of disability evidence**, and this is preferable to sending in originals.

Please help us to promote this message to any students you are in contact with.

DSA STUDENT LETTER BY EMAIL

We now send a copy of the student's DSA1 letter (eligibility confirmation and prompt to proceed to a Needs Assessment Centre) by email to them, as well as sending a hard copy through the post.

Please help us by **asking students to check their email inbox if you need to obtain a copy of this letter** to confirm eligibility, rather than calling our Response team.

CHANGES IN NMH REQUIREMENTS

We'd like to request that Needs Assessors always specify the number of hours of non-medical help support being recommended - including exam support - even if it is an estimate, as opposed to the open-ended recommendation: 'as required'.

If an estimate is being provided 'to be confirmed' or 'to be reviewed' should be added to the report.

If the NMH hours required are going to exceed the initial estimate, a '[Request for Additional Support Hours](#)' form should be submitted by the Disability Adviser.

NON-MEDICAL HELP RESEARCH

The research work to aid development of the non-medical help procurement guidance is well underway.

Phase one of the project involved research to bring together the range of information which already exists on the work of non-medical helpers, the nature of the roles, role descriptions (where they exist), training, qualifications and pay scales.

The next phase of the project is a series of five regional discussion groups to consult on the procurement guidance proposal. The focus groups have representatives from university and college disability teams, assessment centres and non-medical help providers and are taking place throughout October. There are still a few places at the London group on 14 October, please email Sally Faraday at sallyfaraday@hotmail.com if you're interested in attending. We are particularly keen for participants from further education colleges.

FEEDBACK

If you have any comments or feedback on this bulletin, please email: stakeholder_enquiries@slc.co.uk

More information for practitioners is on our Student Finance England practitioners' website: www.practitioners.studentfinanceengland.co.uk

DISABLED STUDENT STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Disabled Student Stakeholder Group met on 8 September. They discussed:

- The interim high level findings of the 'aged' DSA application exercise, where 2010/11 applicants who have not proceeded to the assessment stage, are being contacted to understand their reasons for non-progression and to help move their application through.
- Findings of phase one of the non medical help research project, including the initial draft of the banding of different non medical help roles, which the group felt was an excellent start to structuring and bringing clarity to the different roles.
- The 2012/13 Student Finance England IAG campaign theme, rationale, approach and design concepts, the group stressed the importance of ensuring DSAs featured in the pre-launch activity with schools and practitioners so potential students were aware extra help was available.

NEED TO CONTACT OUR DISABLED STUDENT TEAM?

- For Practitioners with DSA enquiries:
Tel - 01325 215194 (this number is not for students)
- For practitioners with queries relating to policy and regulations email – ssin_Queries@slc.co.uk
Tel - 0845 602 0583 (this number is not for students)
- For disability practitioners at HEIs email – disability_adviser@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessment Centres email – access_centre@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessors or Disability Advisors submitting information on late, final year applicants email - dsa_late_apps@slc.co.uk
- Submission of Needs Assessment Reports via encrypted PGP – needs_assessment_reports@slc.co.uk
- For suppliers submitting invoices, invoice queries or specific student queries email – invoice_team@slc.co.uk
- For Needs Assessment Centres referring Educational Psychologist's reports email – Matthew_hall@slc.co.uk
- For enquiries regarding the Disabled Student Service Stakeholder Group email – stakeholder_enquiries@slc.co.uk