



# Policies & Procedures

Support for HE Students

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) is committed to making its learning environments accessible and inclusive to all students. Additional Learning Support is available for HE students who declare a disability or a specific learning difficulty and who have applied for, and been awarded, a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).

DSAs are available to full-time or part-time HE students and provide funding for goods and services that may be needed to enable you to access your programme of study; for example learning support and a computer with specialist software if you are dyslexic or a communication support worker if you are deaf or hearing impaired. For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/what-youll-get>

You may be eligible for DSA if you have any of the following:

Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia

Developmental conditions such as Autism, ADHD

Mental health difficulties

Mobility difficulties

Hearing impairments

Visual impairments

Other disabilities and long-term medical conditions

Other medical and psychological conditions not mentioned on this list may be covered by DSA.

There is no age limit on getting a DSA.

It is the responsibility of the student to make an application to the DSA, although students can seek assistance from college staff. Students should apply for the DSA as soon as they can as the process can take up to 3 months.

- You will need to complete and return the DSA1 application form (available from the Student Finance England website) together with evidence of your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.
- For physical disabilities and long-term health conditions you will need to provide a report or letter from the GP or consultant.
- For specific learning difficulties a report from a chartered or practitioner psychologist or a specialist teacher holding a current Assessment Practising Certificate will be required.
- For other conditions, including mental health conditions, a letter from a GP or other qualified specialist will be required
- Students will receive confirmation directly from Student Finance England regarding their application.

Once the application and medical evidence has been received, an assessment needs meeting will need to be booked with a regional ACCESS Centre. The needs assessment helps to assess how best to support you during your time at college. The DSA may pay for the first needs assessment but this does depend on a range of factors. For further guidance contact Staffordshire Access Centre on 01782 295716

Once your DSA has been approved, you will receive a confirmation letter from Student Finance England (known as a DSA2). The DSA2 will explain what support has been agreed for you and who has been named as your support provider. NSCG can only provide your support if the college has been named as the support provider on your DSA2 letter. Before support can be arranged, you will need to bring in a copy of your DSA2 letter to Student Services as evidence.

A copy of needs assessment will be shared with the ALS Coordinator

Students are not required to pay back help received from the DSA even if they leave the course early.

What is available to Students?

- Items of specialist equipment – students will be helped by DSA to buy any major items of specialist equipment needed because of disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficult. Repairs, technical support, insurance or extended warranty costs can also be included.
- Non-medical helper allowance – this is to pay for support workers such as readers, sign-language interpreters, note-takers, specialist 1-1 support and other non-medical assistants.
- Travel allowance – this helps with extra travel costs the learner may have to pay to attend the College because of the disability (for example, taking a taxi because the disability prevents a student from taking public transport).
- General allowance – to help pay other disabilities and course-related costs. Items such as print cartridges and Braille paper or to top up the specialist equipment and non-medical helper allowance if necessary.

NSCG Responsibility

On receipt of the DSA report the ALS coordinator will action any outcomes as per the recommendations.

Where additional support has been granted by the DSA the funding will be credited directly to the supplier, for example, for equipment this will be purchased directly from the course, for 1:1 support provided by a third party or for travel, such as taxis, this will be paid directly to the taxi company.

**If you are unsure if you are eligible to apply for a DSA, or have any queries about the application process, speak to a member of the Additional Learning Support team or e mail [help.newcastle@nscg.ac.uk](mailto:help.newcastle@nscg.ac.uk) [help.stafford@nscg.ac.uk](mailto:help.stafford@nscg.ac.uk).**