

**COMMITTEE:** Union Council

**SUBJECT: Support for Disabled Students**

**APPROVAL DATE:** 03/12/2019

**RENEWAL DATE:** 03/12/2022

**PROPOSER:** Abdi Hassan

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**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION NOTES:***(These are FACTS and should be referenced)*

1. Course providers in Further and Higher Education welcome almost 30,000 disabled students every academic year.[[1]](#footnote-1)
2. In 2018/19, 16% of students at Sheffield Hallam University identified themselves as having a disability - over 4500 students. This is higher than the national average, and has been for several years.
3. Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010[[2]](#footnote-2), and this explicitly includes application to student admission and treatment.[[3]](#footnote-3)
4. Significant research has been carried out that evidences the additional barriers disabled students still face in terms of entering, and succeeding in, Higher Education.[[4]](#footnote-4)
5. Disabled students are able to apply for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) with Student Finance to help cover study-related costs incurred because of their disability.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, government cuts to DSA funding in 2015 reduced the type and amount of support available which not only jeopardises disabled students' access to Higher Education but also their chance of success if they do access it.[[6]](#footnote-6)
6. NUS runs Disabled Students campaign, a student-led movement with specific campaign focus on Disabled Student Allowance, mental health, and opposing funding cuts.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION BELIEVES:**

1. The government cuts to Disabled Student Allowance have negatively impacted disabled students and reduced the equality of their learning experience at Sheffield Hallam, increasing the barriers to their success.
2. The process of applying for Disabled Student Allowance can be both complicated and confusing, and not all disabled students are aware it is even available.
3. The growing number of disabled students/students identified with a disability means more resources are needed to meet their needs.
4. As an organisation we should be doing more to raise awareness of issues faced by disabled students, lobby the university to make positive changes on these issues, and work to implement such changes ourselves.
5. There are still many ways Sheffield Hallam University facilities and processes can be improved to increase access and support for disabled students to ensure their studies are not disadvantaged.

**SHEFFIELD HALLAM STUDENTS UNION RESOLVES:**

1. To lobby the university to better promote Disabled Student Services and its services, including DSA application support, to students.
2. To lobby the university to improve their resources and facilities for disabled students, including, but not limited to, better promotion of available assistive technology and software in libraries.
3. To work with Disabled Student Support to improve university staff awareness of disabled students' needs and the importance of staff abiding by the learning contracts of their students, through training sessions or other identified means.
4. To create better awareness of Disability History Month and ensure it has the opportunity of equal institutional support, finance and focus as the other liberation months (Women's, LGBT+ and BME), subject to project leadership by the Disabled Students' Rep.
5. To support any local or national efforts to oppose further cuts to government disability support initiatives.

References:

NUS DSA Cuts Briefing,

<https://studentsunionucl.org/sites/uclu.org/files/u84290/documents/dsa_cuts_briefing1.pdf>

NUS Equality and Diversity Resource Hub, <https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/learning-academy/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-resources-hub/equality-and-diversity-resources/disability>

[Disabled Learners and Higher Education - barriers and enablers to success](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ahcov-disabled_learners.pdf), Coventry and Warwickshire Aimhigher, 2011, https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ahcov-disabled\_learners.pdf

Sheffield Hallam's Disabled Student Allowance advice page , <https://www.shu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/disability-support/sheffield-regional-assessment-centre/what-is-disabled-students-allowances-dsa>

UCAS Disabled Student Guidance, <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/disabled-students>

UK Government Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1>

UK Government Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 2, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/6/chapter/2>

1. [UCAS Disabled Student Guidance](https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/disabled-students) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [UK Government Equality Act 2010, Part 2, Chapter 1](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1)  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [UK Government Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 2](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/6/chapter/2) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Disabled Learners and Higher Education - barriers and enablers to success](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ahcov-disabled_learners.pdf), Coventry and Warwickshire Aimhigher, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Sheffield Hallam's Disabled Student Allowance advice page](https://www.shu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/disability-support/sheffield-regional-assessment-centre/what-is-disabled-students-allowances-dsa) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [NUS DSA Cuts Briefing](https://studentsunionucl.org/sites/uclu.org/files/u84290/documents/dsa_cuts_briefing1.pdf)  [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [NUS Equality and Diversity Resource Hub](https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/learning-academy/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-resources-hub/equality-and-diversity-resources/disability) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)