

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>Disabled Student Experience of HE – Supporting Disabled Students</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<b>Bella – University of Hertfordshire</b>
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## **Disabled Student Experience of HE – Supporting Disabled Students – Uni of Hertfordshire Bella**

- Disabled students allowance and supporting students with a disability

Question – Have you heard of DSA?

- 26 yes, 2 no

Discussion – What does “disability” mean to you

- Physical vs mental vs visible
- Society isn't built for people who aren't able bodied/minded
- Don't like the word – its negative and a blanket term
- Broad term but should be more to the individual
- Often details more than the challenges faces
- Students are adaptable
- Neurodiversity
- Cause an impact on somebody's experience of the word
- E.g. dyslexia, chron's – you may need support to be 'included'
- Everyone is a unique individual
- Types of disabilities

What type of disabilities do you think are covered by DSA?

- Word cloud – Physical, mental health, neurodiverse, chronic illness, mental, deaf, dyslexia, ADHD, anxiety

UCAS disability codes

- See slides, A-J

Bella's personal experience

- Diagnosed with General Anxiety & Depression
- Had no idea how to manage it, studied 17 hours a day
- Saw a cardiologist – heart palpitations
- Through DSA excelled in studies
- Currently undergoing diagnosis for ADHD

Who is DSA the company?

- Separate to SF and Universities

- Monitor and collaborate with universities
- Provide a form of non-repayable support

## DSA

- Physical, long standing medical condition/illness, sensory impairment that can't be corrected by glasses, ASD, mental health conditions, specific learning difficulty that affects their ability to study
- 60% of eligible students missing out on financial support

## Quiz

- BBC – how much % of eligible students miss out on support = 60%
- How much financial support goes unclaimed in the UK each year = £150million e.g. scholarships
- Do students need to meet SLC eligibility criteria to get DSA = No

## Application for DSA

- Same time as SF – tick a box
- .gov website – if not going through SF
- Contact your wellbeing team at university (if you have a confirmed places)

## What will they need?

- Passport, NI number, bank details
- Letter/diagnosis/assessment from medical specialist (School/college 8 form not accepted)

## After they've applied

- They'll get emailed by SF
- They can book/will be booked in for a DSA study needs assessment

## Assessment

- A chat with an assessor – how their needs affect them, what support their uni can offer, can recommend what support they think will help
- Based on their condition
- Study needs agreement is a binding contract between DSA, Uni and Student – what the needs are/how it affects them/support
- Equipment – laptop/computer – usually requires a small payment from student
- A mentor
- Non-medical helpers i.e. note takers/reader
- Extra travel support e.g. free parking

## What if they think they aren't eligible?

- Can still access student support/wellbeing services – don't need a diagnosis for this
- If they are unsure on a diagnosis and whether they'll be eligible they can speak to their university support teams to ring DSA for them

## Good to know info (Hertfordshire University Specific)

- Refer for services
- Arrange diagnostic assessors e.g. dyslexia
- GP on site

## Discussion – what do your team/institution provide in terms of support

- Give a list of services but leave it open for students to research themselves
- Smaller institutions can build a better relationship and offer more support

- We need to be able to speak more confidently about what we have on offer
- Mental health first aid training – one institution has 80% of staff trained
- SU guide dogs – current student matter too
- It's a whole university responsibility – not just 1 team
- Student success team (at one university) every student in the scheme got a laptop for lockdown
- Dedicated teams e.g. MH Support, chaplaincy ect
- Outreach team responsibility is signposting to the right places
- Falmouth – 40% of students have an additional need – offer sensory, meat/alcohol free rooms, its ok not to be ok campaign. Department level – paired with a local MH charity to support students at tier 1 (prevention rather than cure), safeguarding, looking for students if they don't turn up/use the library, invite them for a wellbeing check
- Nottingham Trent – call out program, people across the uni volunteered, preventative measure, spoke to teachers to see how they were getting on, have employed a team to call students – student retention has improved, decided who to call from looking at dashboard log ins

## Prospective students with disabilities

- Scared/anxious
- Unlikely to know about support
- Unaware they need to instigate the process
- Likely to have parents/teachers act as their mentor / handle everything for their disability

## Myth Busting

- Disclosing a disability will affect my application
- It will stop me getting a job
- I can't get any other financial support if I have DSA
- Students will bully me – it's very different to school and college
- Teachers won't take me seriously – students are more like colleagues at university

## How can I help?

- Research and advertise
- Contact wellbeing team and collaborate
- Be a friendly face
- Show empathy NOT sympathy
- If you don't know the answer be honest
- Keep up to date

## Extra bits

- Look at the scholarship hub
- Menti.com used for PowerPoint – interactive