

# Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Higher Education

The Local Authority has a responsibility to make young people aware through the Local Offer of support available to them in Higher Education and how to claim it. We hope that young people and their families find this factsheet useful. This factsheet, as well as the links to other organisations and sources of support, can also be downloaded so it can be easily printed. Although this contains general information about Higher Education, young people should continue to seek support from their current school/college around their individual needs as they go through the process of moving to Higher Education.

## What is Higher Education and how is support different?

Higher Education (HE) refers to all courses delivered at 'post-secondary or tertiary institutes of learning'- this can be degrees, diplomas, higher national diplomas and higher education certificates. They can be delivered at universities and some colleges as well as at specialist institutions (e.g. art colleges) as well as remotely (e.g. the Open University). They can be full time, or part time but all Higher Education courses are Level 4 and above. Support at HE level can be provided for young people who have a disability, ongoing health condition, mental health condition or learning difficulty. Young people do not have to have had an EHCP to apply for support with an HE course.

Moving to University/into HE is a big change and a huge transition for any young person. It is the opportunity for a new level of independence in all areas of life and for most young people it is the first time they live away from home if they choose to study away from their local area. Whilst this is really exciting, it can also be a worrying time for parents who are also adjusting to this change and it is important that both young people and their families are aware of the support that is available to them. For students with SEND, there are additional things to think about when planning a move to HE. There are some important differences between Higher Education and Further Education (e.g. courses studied at sixth forms, colleges and training providers)- one of the important differences is that EHCPs do not apply to HE study and the Local Authority ceases to become responsible for the young person (Section 9.201 of the SEND Code of Practice). A young person's EHCP will cease once they have started a programme of HE study. This does not mean that there is not support in place, but it does mean that it is arranged differently and comes from central funding sources in line with student loans and other finance rather than from Local Authorities. More information about this is included in this factsheet.

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Most HE courses involve greater academic independence (including managing deadlines, self-prompted research and even work placements) than in further education, the style of learning might well be different depending on the course type and there are new requirements to adjust to (e.g. research projects, dissertations and even new rules around referencing information sources). Higher Education also often involves an increase in non-academic independence skills; from budgeting, travelling to and navigating a new place to managing friendships and relationships and the skills involved with independent living (shopping, cooking, cleaning etc). Whether a young person applying to university is currently at a school sixth form, a college or a training provider there is work to be done prior to moving into HE that their current provider has a duty to provide. This includes career planning to support with course/provider choice, helping a young person to consider what kind of support they might want (and/or need), how they would want it delivered, and what information they want (and/or need) to share about their SEND/other needs.

## What happens to my EHCP?

The Local Authority who maintains the EHCP has some responsibilities in relation to a young person starting HE before ceasing the EHCP. These have been outlined below and the relevant reference to the Code of Practice has been given in brackets. It is important to note that a young person can of course share their EHCP or any of their other documents at any point themselves with anyone they choose to.

- An EHCP can be disclosed by a Local Authority to any person in connection with a young person's application for Disabled Students Allowance when requested to do so by the young person (9.211)
- An EHCP can be disclosed by a Local Authority to the Principal (or equivalent) of the HE institution when requested to do so by the young person (9.211)
- When a young person with an EHCP applies for DSA, the Local Authority must pass a copy of their plan to the DSA assessor to support and inform the application when asked to do so by the young person (8.45). The Local Authority is not notified of students applying for DSA, so we rely on young people and their families telling us that they have done so and asking us to share information. We would discuss with the young person what they would like us to share as we can share not only the Plan but the appendices and supporting information if the young person wishes us to
- The Local Authority should plan a smooth transition to higher education support before ceasing the EHCP by passing a copy of the EHCP to the institution at the earliest opportunity, if asked to do so by the young person (8.47)
- As a young person nears the end of their time in formal education and their EHCP is likely to be ceased within the next 12 months, their last Annual Review should consider good exit planning. A young person's placement should help them to consider at this last Annual Review any support they might need with the application process, when and with whom to share their EHCP and what other information they might wish to share. This review is also a chance to reflect on what support has gone well and what the young person considers as most helpful to them so that they can share this with their HE provider (9.185)

Information sharing is at the request of the young person and that permission is required to carry out several of the HE transition responsibilities outlined in the Code of Practice. Some young people do question whether they **have** to share their EHCP, and whilst there is no requirement to share it, we would strongly suggest that it is helpful for the young person to share information as it allows a university or provider to make sure that they are providing the right support to give the young person the best chance of success. It is reasonable for a young person to expect that the information is treated confidentially within the university or provider. We would encourage the young person and their family to discuss with the provider any concerns they might have in relation to information sharing and to consider carefully the benefits of sharing this information to ensure they have the best chance of success.

## What is Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and how do I apply?

Study related support at HE is funded through Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) which is considered part of the general Student Finance available to students through Student Finance England (SFE). Links to detailed sources of information and support have been provided in the resources section below. DSA can be provided on its own or in addition to student finance and it does not have to be repaid. Disabled Students Allowance funds support under the categories of specialist equipment, non-medical helper, general allowance and travel costs. As well as technology and aids (equipment) the support can therefore be used to fund study skills tuition, mentoring, notetaking and interpreting and additional disability related study costs are covered (e.g. having to print additional copies of documents). Students are expected to contribute to any laptop/computer provided by DSA. The type of support required will depend on each young person as well as the type of course that they are studying including the assessment methods and any practical component.

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Currently a young person planning on studying a full time course starts the process of applying for DSA by ticking a box on the Student Finance England (SFE) application, by declaring a disability on a UCAS application and providing supporting information at this stage when requested. This process is completed via a paper form if a young person is applying for a part time programme. An EHCP including appendices can be provided as supporting evidence to SFE for the initial application. Once initial eligibility has been confirmed, a young person may be asked to book and attend an independent study needs assessment carried out at a recognised assessment centre. There are centres around the country and young people can attend a centre wherever is most convenient for them There are assessment centres close to West Berkshire in Reading, Basingstoke, Oxford, Abingdon, Andover and Didcot as well as further afield. The application process for DSA takes around 14 weeks but most centres should provide an assessment date within a couple of weeks. Some more information about the application process is available here:

<https://www.ucas.com/student-finance-england/disabled-students-allowances#how-to-apply>

## How do I find out what support different Universities can offer?

Universities are required to have a designated person (like a SENCo in a school) who is a contact for students with additional needs. These are often called Disability Advisors but different universities can sometimes use different names. They can assist with DSA funding applications, provide information, advice and support about housing (including adapted accommodation and accommodation for personal assistants/carers), liaise with academic departments and are usually responsible for alternative exam arrangements. All universities are required to publish information about the support available to students with additional needs but the level of detail provided can vary- some universities have websites with lots of information and some prefer to provide it directly to young people and their families once they have made contact with them. We would strongly suggest that when young people and their families are researching HE courses, time is also spent finding out about what support the university or institution provides. Attending open days is also a good way to find out more information. Some of the support will be individualised and some may be grouped (e.g. study support sessions for students with specific learning disabilities) and the university may already provide some support that you do not need to be receiving DSA to access e.g. assistive technology on all computers on site/in teaching rooms, extended library loans. Young people may not need to be in receipt of DSA to access some of the support services.

All young people benefit from the support of those around them and providers recognise that this does not change once they become adults (i.e. when they turn 18). However, as young people moving into HE are all legally adults (i.e. over 18), it is important that young people discuss with their support networks the involvement that they would like parents, carers and family members etc to have. It is highly likely that universities will not want to discuss students with their parents unless the young person is also part of the conversation and they may require specific permission about sharing information, even with parents and carers.

## What about Care Support in Higher Education?

There are requirements for the Local Authority in terms of planning Social Care support including transferring support between areas if the young person is moving away for their studies however Social Care support/medical support is not provided via Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and is not arranged by the SEND Team. For information about arranging this support, we would advise contacting Adult Social Care (either the named social worker, or using the online Adult Social Care contact form [www.westberks.gov.uk/adultenquiry](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/adultenquiry) ). For those young people who already have a Care and Support Plan, it is important that this is updated to reflect the change in circumstances particularly if a young person is going to be studying at a university away from home and young people should consider starting these conversations as soon as they have a conditional offer of an HE course at their preferred provider.

The Care Act includes guidance in relation to Higher Education for students who are moving out of the area in which they received social care services previously- a link to find out more about Ordinary Residency is included in the resources section of this factsheet.

## What about Health Support in Higher Education?

Most students register for university health services (doctors, dentists etc) near their university location and some universities will have on site health services specifically for students although a young person can choose to register elsewhere. If a young person has specialist health input (e.g. specialist consultants or monitoring from specialist services/centres) these often remain the same, but this should be confirmed with the medical professionals involved. It is advisable for a young person to let their health services know as soon as possible if they are thinking of higher education, especially if they are considering moving away from home as they might require a reassessment of their needs. The NHS publish some information about universal health services at university here

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-medical-care-as-a-student/>



## Resources

Some resources have been listed below and we hope that these are useful as a starting point for young people and their families. If you are applying for university and you have an EHCP, please do remember to contact the SEND Team to let us know whether you would like us to share your information so that we can do our part to support your existing transition to the next stage of your education.

*Please note that West Berkshire Council does not take responsibility for any information provided on external websites and the below should not be viewed as an exhaustive list of information that may be useful to young people and their families but a starting point of sources of information, advice and guidance.*

The Government's own website with step by step information about student finance including DSA.  
<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

UCAS <https://www.ucas.com/>

National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Discover Uni (Government site which includes UNISTATS data) <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>

Student Minds- 'Know Before you Go' e-guide for Year 12/13/14 students

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/knowbeforeyogo.html> and 'Transition into university' guide

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/transitionintouniversity.html> as well as lots of other information and FAQ section for parents and supporters

Student Finance England <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance>

Whatuni? University comparison site also using UNISTATS data <https://www.whatuni.com/> and providers of a parent, guardian and carer guide <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents>



The National Network of Assessment Centres <http://www.nnac.org/>

Some additional financial support may be available through grants and scholarships and Disability Rights UK provides a factsheet about this <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/funding-charitable-trusts> For example, the Snowdon Trust provides grants for young people with physical or sensory disabilities to cover costs experienced as a result of their disability which are not covered by statutory services <https://www.snowdontrust.org/grants>

The Student Room, the UK's largest online student community. Information about applying to university, careers, student finance, health and fresher's information <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/>

Disability Rights UK has a Disabled Students Helpline (which can also provide support to parents and carers) <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/helplines/disabled-students-helpline>

Disability Rights UK also has a useful factsheet about financial support for students which covers universal student finance as well (e.g. tuition loans) <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/fundinghighereducation>

General information from the NHS about universal health services at university <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-medical-care-as-a-student/>

The Care Act includes guidance about Ordinary Residency which helps decide who provides Care Services if someone moves from their home LA. More information about the Care Act Guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>