



Disabled Students' Allowances

Please tell us what you think about the changes we want to make



This is an easy read version of the Welsh Government Consultation 'Disabled Students' Allowances'.

How to use this document



This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.

You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.

Some words may be hard to understand. These are in **bold blue writing** and have been explained in a box beneath the word.

If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what it means on page 20.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**.

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Introduction



We want everyone to have the chance to get **higher education**.

Higher education takes place at universities and Further Education colleges. It includes things like:



- Bachelor's degrees and Foundation degrees
- Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND)



This document is about **Disabled Students' Allowances**. We will call it **DSAs** for short.



DSAs support disabled people to get higher education. They are **grants**.



A **grant** is an amount of money you can get that you do not have to pay back.



These **grants** help disabled students with any extra costs they face because they are disabled.

For example the **grant** can be used to pay for:



- A helper.



- Computers.



- Travel costs.



- Special equipment like screen reader software.



We want to make changes to the **DSAs** to:

- make sure the best support is being given to disabled students



- get disabled students support quicker



- make best use of the money.

To help with this we have:



- worked with partners to look into what changes we should make.



- asked an organisation called **York Consultation** to check how well **DSAs** work. They wrote a report on this. We will call it the **York report**.



This document is about the changes we want to make and why. We want to know what you think about these changes.



Please read this document. And then fill in the response form to tell us what you think.

The 4 changes we want to make

1. Having 1 grant

At the moment there are 4 different **grants**. They are:



- 1. Non-medical helper grant.** This is to pay for helpers like study skills tutors, special mentors and British Sign Language interpreters. You can get up to £22,472 **a year** under this **grant**.



- 2. Specialist equipment grant.** This is to pay for things like computers, screen readers and voice recorders. You can get up to £5,657 for the **course** under this **grant**.



- 3. General grant.** This is for any other extra costs you face because of your disability. This includes money to pay for your **study needs assessment**. You can get up to £1,894 **a year** under this **grant**.



A **study needs assessment** is when a specialist advisor talks to you about your disability. And how this might affect your studies. They will say what extra support you need.



4. A **grant** to help with the extra cost you face going to a university or college. For example travel costs.



There is also a separate **grant** for student's studying a **postgraduate** course.



Postgraduate means a course you do after your degree.

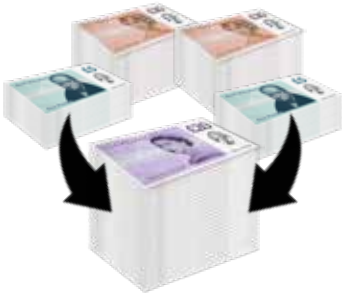


You can get up to £20,000 for **each year** of your **postgraduate** course under this **grant**.

Changing this



We are not sure we need to have 4 different **grants**. We would like to know what you think about having 1 overall **grant** instead.



We would add up the amount of money you can get under each **grant**. And use this as the new maximum amount of money students could get.

We think this would:



- make it easier for students when they are applying for a **grant**



- make it easier for **Student Finance Wales** to give out the **grant**



- help students get the support they need. Because they will not be limited by the amount of money they can get under just 1 **grant**.



Postgraduate students would be able to get this new grant too. Because we know student's needs do not change between courses.



The **York report** said we should **not** have a limit to the amount you can get under the Non-medical helper grant.



Most students do not need the full amount. But a small number of students need more than the full amount.



When this happens colleges and universities have to cover the extra costs.



If we had 1 overall grant you could use the whole amount for non-medical help.



If more money was still needed the student and college or university would need to find money from somewhere else.

2. Study needs assessments



Now, every student that applies for **DSAs** **must** have a **study needs assessment**.



A **study needs assessment** costs up to £660. And it takes around 7 weeks to do. But it can take up to a year.

We are not sure every student needs a **study needs assessment** because:



- Students with similar disabilities often have similar needs. And end up with the same support. So it is easy to tell what support they will need before a **study needs assessment**.



- Some students do not need support. They just need a special piece of equipment. For example a diabetic student may only need a fridge.

Changing this



We think having ready made packages of support could work.



These packages of support would be based on what most students with certain disabilities need.



Students will have the right to say no to a package of support. And they can have a full [study needs assessment](#) at any time if they want.



Universities and colleges have **Disability Advisors**. We think they could check to see if a student needs a [study needs assessment](#). Or if a package of support would work.



When needed **Student Finance Wales** will check to make sure students are happy with their package of support.



We think this change would help students get the support they need quicker. And we would not waste money on [study needs assessments](#) that are not needed.

3. Who should organise DSAs

We think universities and colleges could be responsible for:



- Study needs assessments



- Non-medical help

Study needs assessments



At the moment students go to outside centres to have [study needs assessments](#).



The **York report** said this sometimes does not work well for students. Because special advisors from outside centres do not always understand what is expected of students on their course.



The **York report** said that centres should be linked to universities and colleges instead.

Universities and colleges would then be responsible for:



- doing **study needs assessments**



- the support their student gets from **DSAs**



- checking the service for giving **study needs assessments** works well.



Students' would go to their university or college to have the **study needs assessments**.



Or they could agree to do it without meeting the specialist advisor face-to-face. For example over Skype. Or at a place linked with their college or university that is closer to their home.



We think this would be better for students. Because they would get their support from 1 place.

Non-medical help



We strongly believe that you should **not** make money from giving support to students with extra needs.



We want colleges and universities to be responsible for giving their students non-medical helpers.



They could use providers from outside of the university or college. But universities and colleges would still be responsible for:



- setting agreements with the providers



- making sure the providers are working well



- making sure providers do not make money from giving the service



- making sure all helpers have the right training and experience. And are allowed to work in the UK.



Universities and colleges have a duty of care for their students. They must care for and support students.



Non-medical helpers are an important part of support for students.



We think it would be better if universities and colleges were in charge of non-medical helpers. That way, they can make sure they are meeting their duty of care.

4. Raising awareness



We want to hear your ideas for raising awareness of **DSAs**.

Schools and colleges

Schools and colleges do not always support their students to get **DSAs** because:



- they do not know about or fully understand **DSAs**



- they do not have enough time.



So, many students may not know they can get support through **DSAs**.

Universities and colleges have done work to raise awareness. They have:



- visited schools



- sent out leaflets



- told school staff they can contact them to ask questions.



But we still need to do more. The **York report** said **DSAs** staff should work more closely with staff in education.



Health professionals

Some health professionals, like doctors, do not know enough about **DSAs**.



So, students have found it very hard to get the proof they need from their doctor to get **DSAs**. It can cost a lot and be quite upsetting.



We need to do more about this. We are already doing some of the things suggested in the **York report**. For example making a video to help students apply for **DSAs**. But we would like to know what you think too.

Hard words

Grant

A grant is an amount of money you can get that you do not have to pay back.

Postgraduate

Postgraduate means a course you do after your degree.

Study needs assessment

A study needs assessment is when a specialist advisor talks to you about your disability. And how this might affect your studies. They will say what extra support you need.