



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Information For Disabled And Dyslexic Students.

Welcome

The University of Sheffield aims to achieve excellence in learning, teaching and research. We recognise that encouraging diversity and exploiting the benefits of difference is crucial to achieving excellence in these areas. We therefore recruit students from all sectors of society. We also work hard to provide the practical support they need in order to flourish at university and beyond.

We welcome applications from disabled students and those with specific learning difficulties (SpLD). In 2009-10, there were approximately 2,000 students at the university who had declared a disability (about 8.36% of the total student population). Of these approximately 1428 used the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service.

The Service facilitates students' full inclusion in academic life. It works closely with both academic staff and other student services (such as the University Health Service and the Accommodation and Campus Services) to help ensure that all students are supported in all aspects of their study.

The number of disabled and SpLD students grows each year, and the Service evolves to meet their needs. For example, the Service has recently opened a newly-refurbished suite of rooms which provide a dedicated space for students to meet regularly with their support and guidance mentors in a quiet environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success with your future studies, as you consider the choices before you.

Professor Keith Burnett

Vice-Chancellor



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1. What is the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS)?

The DDSS is a friendly and confidential service made up of a team of disability advisers, support workers and clerical staff. We provide support and advice to students with disabilities who are registered at the University of Sheffield with the aim of enabling them to access their studies and perform academically to the best of their abilities. We also offer support to prospective students and applicants with disabilities.

How we define disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who 'has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' In an educational setting 'normal day-to-day activities' are taken to include everything from reading and writing to attending taught sessions. Therefore, for the purposes of our service (and within this handbook) the term 'disability' refers to any impairment that has lasted or is likely to last for more than 12 months and which has a significant and sustained impact upon an individual's ability to access and perform upon an academic course.

Any student with an impairment which falls within this definition is eligible for support, and individuals with a huge variety of respective disabilities (from Specific Learning Difficulties and sensory impairments to medical conditions and mental health difficulties) access our service. If you have any queries about whether you will qualify for support please contact us.

This booklet aims to give you an idea of the support available for disabled students at the university, and how to go about accessing it. However, it is not an exhaustive guide. If you have any other disability-related questions about studying here do get in touch and we will be happy to provide additional information and advice.

2. How to contact us

General enquiries regarding disability support can be made via the reception desk.

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 21303

Email: disability.info@shef.ac.uk

Fax: +44 (0)114 22 21373

Postal Address: The Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
The Hillsborough Centre
The University of Sheffield
Alfred Denny Building
Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN
United Kingdom

Our opening hours are outlined on our website:

www.sheffield.ac.uk/disability



L-R: Mark Lubelski, Margaret Evans, Claire Shanks, Louise Loughlin, Suzanne Russell, Sarah Armour, Alison Wheeler, Annette Rushton, Mary Jacques, Alison Jones, Jayne Woodward, Fiona Clifford.

3. Applying to the university and accessing support

a. Making your application

We aim to support students with disabilities from the point of application onwards. Both the university and the UCAS application forms ask students to indicate whether they have a disability and it is helpful to let us know at this stage so that we can offer timely advice on the facilities and services available for disabled students at the university. This will mean that you are well-equipped to decide whether the support that we can offer will suit you.

In line with the university's Equal Opportunities Policy any applications from students with disabilities are considered on an individual basis and assessed against the same academic criteria as all other applicants. No presumptions will be made about an individual's disability and how it may impact upon his/her performance on a chosen course.

Disclosure

Whilst it is not essential for you to disclose your disability at the point of application - or at any stage during your time at University - we believe that doing so is a positive step.

Disclosing information about your disability and support requirements will enable us to both provide you with details of what our service can offer you and ensure that appropriate support is put in place when you arrive.

Anything you tell us about your disability will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially, and you can choose to either not disclose to other university departments or to limit the information which is passed to them. However, in order for our service to facilitate some types of adjustment being made for you during your time at university (such as alternative exam arrangements) we will need to liaise with other staff/departments within the institution. We will ask for your consent to do this, and it is important to note that not permitting us to share your disability information may limit the amount of support that you can be offered.

Please do contact our service if you would like further information on our disclosure and confidentiality policy or if you have any questions regarding it.

b. Attending an open day

If you are applying to the university and have a disability it is particularly important that you attend an open day as this provides an ideal opportunity to go on a tour of the campus (including accommodation), visit your chosen department, discuss your course and assess the facilities and support available.

It is also important to note that the University of Sheffield's buildings are spread out over relatively hilly terrain. Visiting the institution on an open day can be useful as it provides an opportunity for you to ascertain whether the layout of the university and the geography of the city in general will suit you – a key consideration for students with disabilities which result in impaired mobility.

If you decide to attend an open day, please inform your chosen department well in advance of any disability support you are likely to require both when you visit and throughout your time on your chosen course. This will help them to ensure that your visit goes smoothly, and that where possible any disability-related requirements you have are met. You can find information about upcoming open days by visiting www.shef.ac.uk/opendays

It is often also useful to arrange for a meeting with a member of staff from our service to take place on the same day as your open day visit. This provides an ideal opportunity for one of our disability advisers to discuss your individual support requirements with you, and for you to ask any questions which you may have about the support available. To arrange an appointment please contact our service as far in advance as possible and we will try to schedule one.



c. After you have been made an offer

If you are offered a place at the university and have disclosed a disability on your application form you will receive a welcome letter from our service. This will ask you to fill in an online Self-Assessment Form (SAF), which asks you to outline your likely academic support requirements. Please make sure that you complete the SAF as early (and in as much depth) as possible so that before your course begins we have a clear idea of the support you may need.

At this stage, departments offering clinical training such as the Medical School (where professional body requirements must be adhered to) will also ask students who have been offered a conditional place to complete an Occupational Health Questionnaire. This is intended to gather information on whether (and how) any disability or health problem is likely to impact upon an individual's capacity to train or practise as a clinical professional, and also aims to ascertain how an individual can best be supported whilst s/he undertakes the course.

If you have any disability-related queries at this stage you can also contact our service directly.

d. Providing evidence of your disability

In order to access support during your time here you will need to provide our service with documentary evidence of your disability. You can send this through to us at any point after you have received an offer from the university. Below is information on what we will require from you as evidence, depending upon your disability.

Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

You need to provide us with a post-16 diagnostic report produced by either an Educational Psychologist or a teacher who has 'Approved Teacher Status' awarded by either the British Dyslexia Association or PATOSS (the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties).

If you arrive at university without this documentation but have some written evidence from (e.g.) a specialist teacher which indicates that you have a specific learning difficulty then we will generally make support recommendations to ensure that you are not disadvantaged. However, these adjustments will usually only be in place for an 'interim' period of one semester, after which you will be required to provide more extensive evidence in order for support to continue.

If you are unsure whether your evidence is suitable or needs to be updated please contact our service and we will advise. It is best to ensure that you have had the appropriate diagnostic tests before your arrival at university, as you can then apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (see section 4.g) in advance and we can ensure that all the support you require is in place from early on in your course. However, if you do not have the evidence required to access our support or apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) after you have registered at the university then we can refer you for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment which we will pay for in full.

Students with other disabilities

Evidence is usually in the form of an up-to-date GP or consultant's letter, ideally with information detailing:

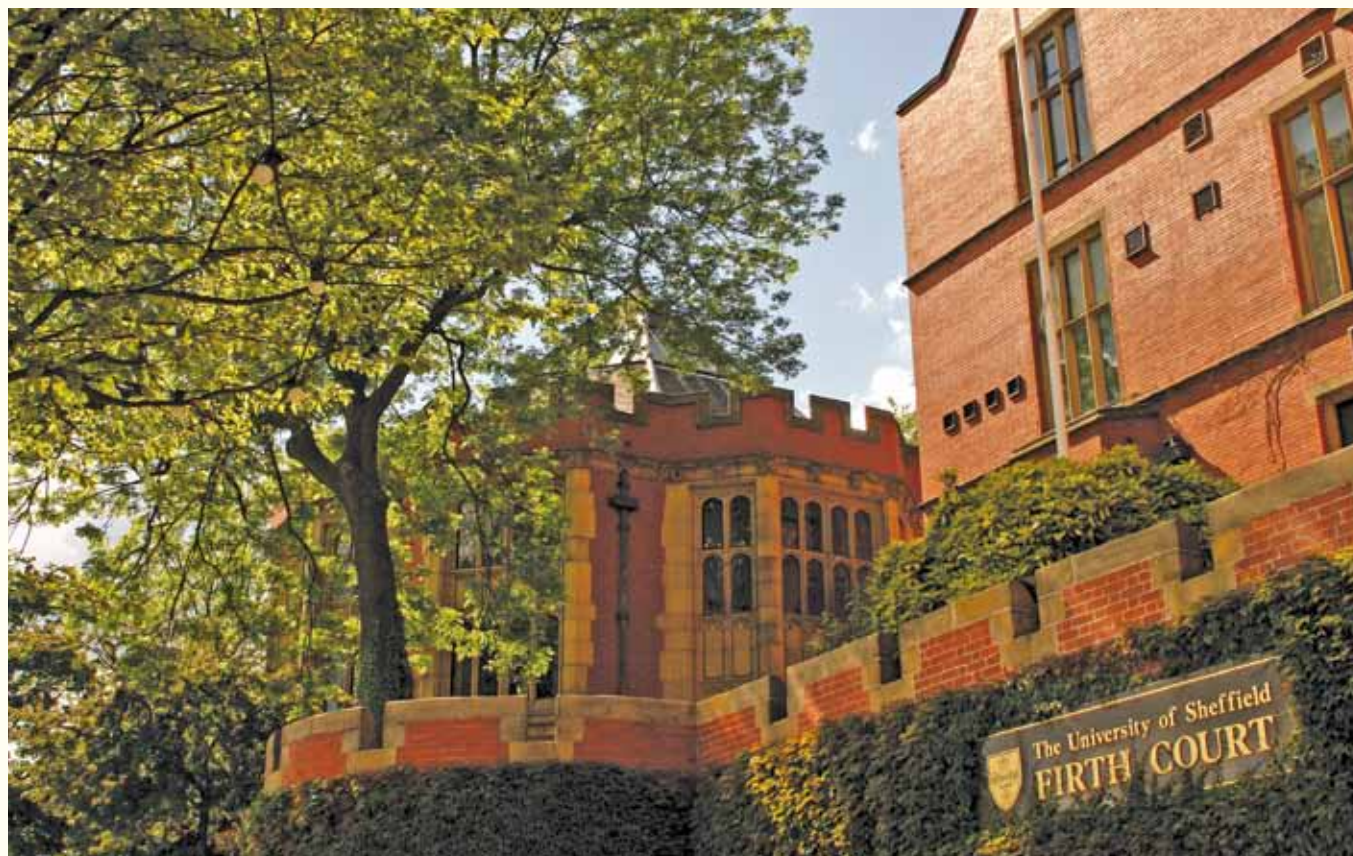
- how your disability is likely to impact upon your ability to study
- any treatment/support you are currently receiving or have received
- information about the symptoms and side-effects of any medication you are taking

e. Setting up support after you have arrived at university

It is important to note that academic disability support which has been identified as suitable for you during the application process will not be put in place automatically after you have registered to study at the university.

As well as providing us with evidence of your disability (if you have not already done so by this point), upon arrival you will also need to meet with a disability adviser in order to discuss your support requirements. Where possible, we encourage you to make an appointment to meet one of our advisers in person, but discussions can also be held over the phone or by email. It is crucial that you contact us as soon as possible after your arrival at the university so that it can be ensured that we have plenty of time to meet with you and put any required support in place.

If you have a disability but have not disclosed it on your application form - or if you develop a disability whilst you are studying - you should contact our service in order to begin the process of accessing support.



4. What support is available?

a. Disability advisers

The team of disability advisers working in the DDSS have a great deal of knowledge and experience of supporting disabled students at university level.

Your disability adviser can support you in many different ways during your time at university, from arranging support workers and ensuring that alternative exam adjustments are made where required to liaising with your academic department and other services in order to ensure that you receive the support to enable you to fully engage with your studies. Some students may meet with an adviser only a few times during their time at university, whilst others may find that regularly catching up helps them to feel in control and supported. The service is flexible enough to allow for a wide range of different requirements.

b. Mental health adviser

If you are struggling with your mental health during your studies the mental health adviser can support you in order to help ensure that you are able to fully participate in university life. This might mean helping you to identify and reduce triggers that induce stress or signposting you to other support services within and outside of the university. It could also involve helping you to assess how your mental health is impacting on your studies, and assisting you in monitoring changes in your mental health. The mental health adviser can support you at times of crisis, and can visit your department or university accommodation to offer support if appropriate.

Booking an appointment

Both the disability advisers and the mental health adviser work with an appointment system. You can book a meeting with an adviser either by popping into our reception or by phoning us on 0114 222 1303.

c. Support Worker Service

Our Support Worker Service employs a pool of skilled workers dedicated to assisting disabled students in accessing their studies at the university.

Below is an outline of the various roles which support workers can be provided to undertake. Your disability adviser will be happy to discuss the different options available and whether particular kinds of support are likely to meet your individual requirements.

- **Note-taker:** A support worker who attends and makes notes in a student's taught sessions to ensure that s/he has a good quality record of what is covered in them.
- **Reader:** A support worker who reads course material to a student, enabling him/her to access written resources in a preferred format.
- **Library support worker:** A support worker who assists a student in accessing the library and its resources. This often involves the support worker collecting texts and/or making photocopies of articles from them for a disabled student.
- **Personal assistant:** A support worker who offers mobility assistance and support in any academic situation where a disabled student may require additional support, such as in the laboratory.
- **Induction support:** Primarily intended for students with Asperger Syndrome. A support worker who helps to familiarise a new student with the university campus and increase his/her confidence in a new environment.
- **Support and guidance mentor:** This role is very flexible, and is individually tailored to a student's requirements. Broadly speaking, a mentor provides continuous advice and assistance to help a student to work in an organised and effective manner and minimise the impact of a disability on his/her studies.
- **Proof-reader:** A support worker who will read through a student's academic work prior to submission and highlight areas where further work is needed.
- **Academic support mentor:** A support worker who has studied in a similar academic area to the student, and who can discuss issues relating to course content as well as helping a student to organise and manage his/her workload.
- **SpLD support tutor:** A tutor who aims to increase a student's competence in learning independently, through developing the skills needed to cope with study difficulties. The sessions are tailored to the specific needs of individual students and are provided by staff working in the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC). Referrals are made for this support through our service.

d. Loan equipment

Students who apply for Disabled Students Allowances ('DSA' - see section 4.g) are often provided with an individually-tailored equipment and software package. Our service also has a small bank of equipment (including items such as laptops and digital recorders) which can be loaned to students for short-term periods. Equipment is loaned to students who are either not eligible for DSA or are in the process of applying for it.

e. Learning and teaching support

The university strives to ensure that all aspects of learning and teaching are inclusive and accessible. MOLE (My Online Learning Environment) provides a prime example of this approach. Through MOLE all students at the university are given 24/7 access to course information and printable notes/handouts via the internet. This electronic resource also enables students to view and produce materials in their choice of formats.

Our service works closely with academic departments to see that the specific support needs of individual disabled students are met. Once you are registered as a student and have met with a disability adviser a number of support adjustments may be recommended for you on your chosen course – often informed by suggestions made in a Disabled Students' Allowances needs assessment (see section 4.g for more information).

Usually your disability adviser will communicate your individual support needs to your department, but where possible it is also useful for you to discuss these with a member of the academic staff. Ideally this should be either your personal tutor or your departmental Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) – the member of staff who we will generally contact regarding your academic support requirements. More details of the DLO role can be found in section 4.i.

Please be assured that articulating support adjustments to a department does not necessarily require us to disclose information about your disability.

Examples of support and adjustments include:

- Ensuring that teaching environments are accessible, e.g. adequate lighting, access to power sockets for laptops, and wheelchair space.
- The provision of specialist equipment such as ergonomic chairs, height adjustable desks and portable induction loops.
- Conversion of teaching materials into large print, E-Text or Braille.
- Permitting the use of digital recorders in taught sessions so as to ensure that you are able to concentrate on participating and developing your note-taking skills.
- Support workers (e.g. note takers, library assistants and support and guidance mentors) to assist you with your academic studies.

- Liaison with your department's placement coordinator in order to ensure that support recommendations are communicated to your placement provider.
- Negotiation of alternative forms of assessment, depending upon individual support requirements/circumstance.

f. Exams and assessments

The university works to ensure that exams and assessments are accessible for all students. Academic departments generally use a range of assessment methods (e.g. coursework, exams and presentations) in order to take account of the different learning styles of students, and feedback is given on all formal assignments undertaken by students in order to assist them in developing their academic skills and abilities.

Adjustments to exams

Exams are the types of assessment which most frequently require alteration. There are a wide range of adjustments which can be made to these for students with disabilities, from the provision of extra time and use of a computer to the arranging of alternative exam locations and production of language-modified assessment papers. These kinds of adjustments are arranged on an individual basis after a student has met with a disability adviser to discuss his/her support needs.



Adjustments to assessments

Departments will always consider requests for adjustments to assessments in cases where a student feels that the standard assessment method may unfairly disadvantage him/her as a result of a disability. In the first appointment you have with your disability adviser you will discuss the types of assessment you are likely to undertake on your course. After this (if necessary) we will work with you and your department to both identify any assessments which might be difficult for you to complete due to your disability and agree adjustments to these to ensure that you are not disadvantaged.

Adjustments are made on an individual basis and are tailored to fit a student's particular support requirements. In some cases the adjustments made may be minor (allowing a student extra time to deliver a presentation, for example), whereas in other cases they may be more significant (e.g. creating a substitute non-oral assessment for a student so that s/he does not have to deliver a presentation).

Accessible Assessment Scheme

Students with written communication difficulties (generally either specific learning difficulties, hearing impairments or Asperger Syndrome) can opt into the accessible assessment scheme, whereby they will be provided with a set of stickers which can be affixed to each piece of written assessed work they submit. Stickers can be used on both electronically and paper-submitted coursework as well as on exam answer papers.

Using a sticker does not mean that your assignments will be marked more generously - its purpose is to let markers know that the work in front of them was produced by a student with written communication difficulties, so that they can ensure that the feedback they provide is as constructive as possible.

If you think you are eligible for the sticker scheme and wish to opt in you should discuss this with your disability adviser.

g. Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA)

1. What is DSA for?

DSA helps to pay for extra study-related costs that you may incur as a direct result of your disability.

DSA can help with the cost of:

- support workers such as note-takers and mentors (as discussed in section 4.c)
- items of specialist equipment (e.g. computers and assistive software)
- travel between your accommodation and university premises
- other academic expenses such as photocopying and printing.

2. Am I eligible to apply for DSA?

DSA is non-means tested. You can apply for it if you are:

- A UK student
- An EU student who has been living in the UK for the three years immediately before the start of your course
- An international student with either settled status or indefinite leave to remain in the UK

In addition to falling into one of the above categories, you also need to be doing an undergraduate or postgraduate course (including a distance-learning course) that is either:

- full-time and lasts at least one year
- part-time, lasts at least a year and doesn't take more than twice as long to complete as an equivalent full-time course

**If you do not think you are eligible for DSA please refer to question 9 in this section.*

3. When should I apply for DSA?

You can apply at any stage of your course, but as the process can take several months to complete it is best to get started as soon as possible. As your support needs are likely to be similar whichever university you go to, you can apply for DSA before you have a confirmed place at any institution. Applying early will maximise the chances of support being in place from the outset of your course.

4. To whom do I apply for DSA, and how?

You apply to your funding body - the organisation which provides you with a student loan, bursary or scholarship to pay for some or all of the costs associated with your studies. Even if you are not in receipt of this kind of funding (and do not intend to apply for any) you can still apply for DSA; in such cases you simply apply to the organisation that you are eligible to receive funding from.

- Depending upon his/her home address, a new undergraduate student will usually apply to either Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland for DSA, as will a postgraduate student not in receipt of any Research Council funding for his/her course of study.

To apply for DSA students within these categories simply fill out a DSA application form and send it to the relevant funding body with the appropriate evidence. The forms are available from the below Directgov web-page:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/index.htm

- Students who are eligible for NHS funding for their courses (postgraduate Social Work students, for example) apply for DSA through the NHS Grants Unit. The process of applying is the same as the one outlined in this section, but is done using an NHS-specific DSA application form. This (along with other information on how to apply) is available from the NHS bursaries website: www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk/
- Postgraduate students who are funded by a particular Research Council need to apply to this organisation for DSA. The procedures for securing DSA differ between these funding bodies and so if you are likely to be funded in this way please contact us with any queries and we can offer specific application advice/assistance.

5. What evidence do I need to provide with my application?

Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

As outlined in section 3.d, in order to apply for DSA your diagnostic evidence must be in the form of a post-16 report from either an appropriately trained Educational Psychologist or from a teacher who has 'Approved Teacher Status' awarded by either the British Dyslexia Association or PATOSS (the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties).

Students with other disabilities

An up-to-date GP or consultant's letter, ideally with information detailing how your disability is likely to impact upon your ability to study.

6. What happens after I've applied?

Your funding body will write to you giving permission for you to go for a study needs assessment, where you will meet with a qualified assessor to informally and confidentially talk about your study needs in relation to your course.

There are assessment centres around the country, and you can consult the DSA-QAG website in order to locate the one nearest to you.

www.dsa-qag.org.uk/

7. What happens after my needs assessment?

Based on the support requirements identified at your needs assessment, the needs assessor will write a report detailing the equipment and support you are likely to require during your time at university in order to ensure that you are not disadvantaged by your disability. Copies of this document will be sent to you, your funding body and also (with your permission) to the disability adviser at the university you are likely to attend.

Your funding body will consider the recommendations in the report and will write to you confirming what they are willing to pay for.

8. When and how do I get the support recommended in my needs assessment report?

Equipment

The funding confirmation letter that you receive from your funding body will outline how to go about ordering equipment. This letter is important as it provides evidence that your funding body have agreed to pay for your support, and you may be asked to show it to equipment suppliers before they will deliver equipment to you.

Generally students are not allowed to arrange for their equipment to be delivered until after they have formally registered at university. However, in some cases (generally where the equipment which is to be provided will take a lot of getting used to, or where a student will require support in the run-up to the start of the year), specialist equipment and support can be provided before the start of a course. The letter will indicate whether this is possible in your case.

Non-medical help and other support

When you arrive at the university it is important that you make an appointment to meet with one of our disability advisers as soon as possible so that they can talk to you about the support which you have been recommended and arrange for it to be put in place. Be sure to bring a copy of both your needs assessment report and your funding body approval letter to this meeting.

If you receive your funding confirmation letter in advance of your arrival at university it is helpful if you send a copy of this to our service as soon as possible. This enables us to begin making arrangements to ensure you are supported from the outset of your course (or before it begins in some cases), although you will still need to come in and meet with an adviser upon arrival in order for support to be put in place.

9. I'm not eligible to apply for DSA: what should I do?

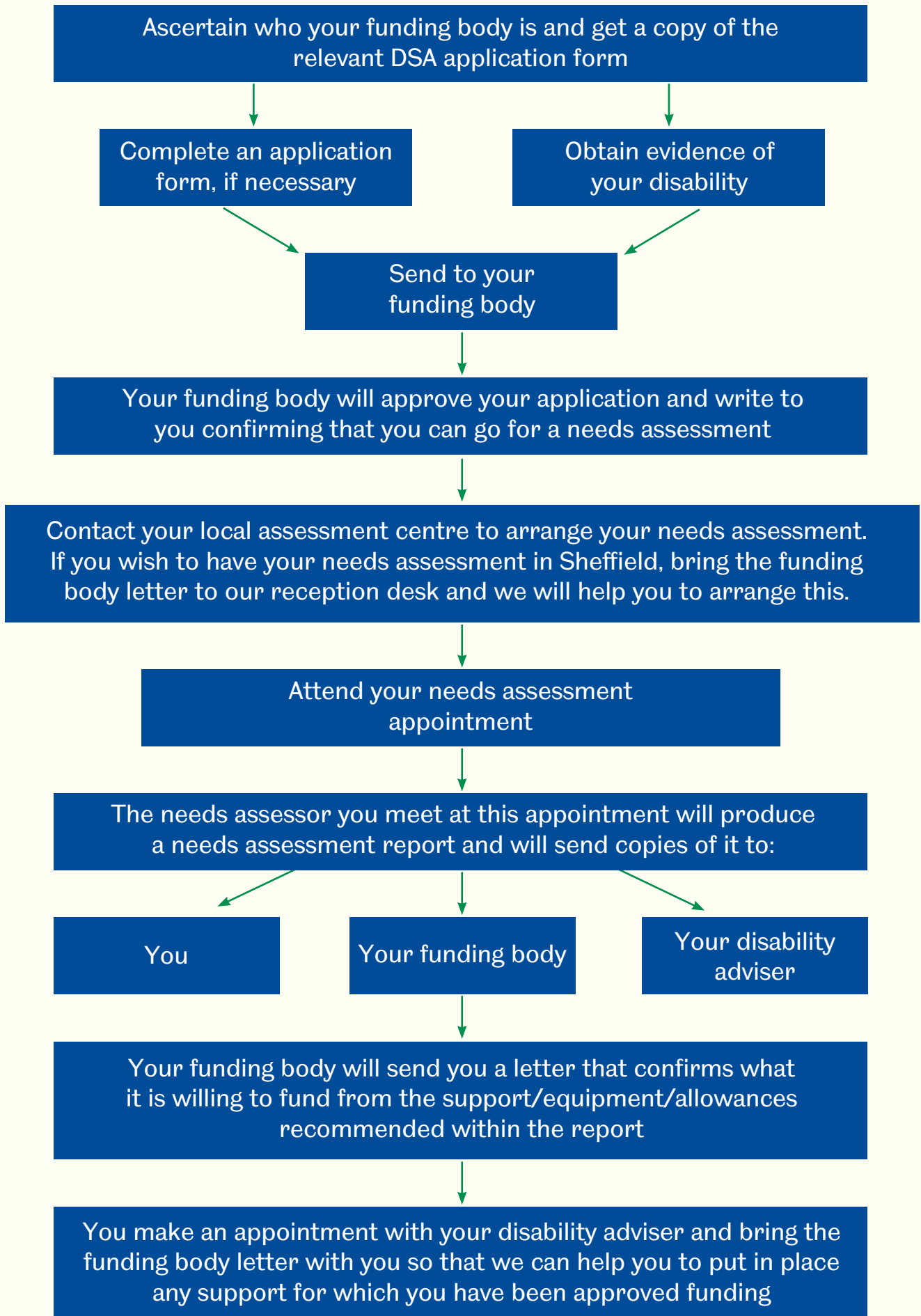
Generally funding is available to ensure that disabled students who cannot apply for DSA are supported and can fully engage with their studies.

As soon as you have a fully confirmed place at the university contact our service, outlining the nature of your disability and its likely impact on your studies. An adviser will then contact you in order to begin assessing the academic support you may require.

[More information on the support available for international students can be found in section 6.h.](#)



Applying for Disabled Students' Allowances:



h. Support for international disabled students

As an overseas student you are not eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). However, there is potentially a lot of support available through our service to ensure that you are not disadvantaged during your studies as a result of a disability.

We appreciate that it may be difficult for you to visit the university in advance in order to ascertain exactly what academic support you will need. However, it is very helpful if you provide us with as much information as possible about your disability before you arrive in Sheffield. This way we can begin to discuss your requirements with you and can then make plans to ensure that support is in place from the outset of your course. As soon as you arrive at the university you should make an appointment to see a disability adviser.

Please note that the university is unable to fund any individual healthcare support. Therefore, before coming here you should ensure that you have sufficient funding to cover any such costs you are likely to incur.



i. Disability Liaison Officers

Our service has developed a network of departmental contacts who act as Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs). The DLO network is crucial in helping to ensure that the university is proactive and inclusive in supporting disabled students.

We liaise with DLOs about the support requirements of individual students within their departments. You can contact your departmental DLO to discuss support available within your department, and to talk through any disability-related issues or concerns which relate to your course.

More information about the role of DLOs and a list of departmental contacts can be found at www.shef.ac.uk/disability/support/dlo.html

DLO profile

Nathan, The Management School

“As a member of administrative staff, one of my key responsibilities within the Management School is that of Disability Liaison Officer (DLO). This gives me the unique position of liaising between my department and the DDSS on certain student matters. For instance I receive information from the DDSS relating to student support requirements, and I then advise lecturers and tutors accordingly, such as arranging for lecture handouts to be made available in advance of a series of lectures.



Another aspect of my DLO role is facilitating information visits. This involves prospective disabled students visiting the University to assess whether departments and services are right for their future university life.

As a DLO I also attend training sessions that the DDSS hold throughout the year. These are of great value for developing our understanding of disability issues, both from an academic perspective and within a wider context (plus the DDSS provide us with cakes and sandwiches!).

Furthermore, being completely deaf in one ear and currently nearing the end of a level two qualification in British Sign Language, the role of DLO is personally relevant to me and I feel privileged to be able to assist with disabled student inclusion at the University of Sheffield. The sense of job satisfaction that comes with being a DLO is fantastic!

5. Disabled student profiles

Student Profile

Carolyn, Human Communication Sciences

I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome at the start of the second year of my Masters course in Speech and Language Therapy. I quite suddenly found myself unable to walk more than a couple of minutes at a time, and had problems with concentration, which meant that I needed a lot of help to continue with my studies. I wasn't aware of the existence of DDSS at the time, but Student Services put me in contact with them.



Throughout my course I received a lot of support from DDSS: a note-taker, a personal assistant to push my wheelchair, and a library support worker. They also helped me to obtain a University disabled parking permit for my car so that I could be as independent as possible. In addition, through the help of DDSS I was granted Disabled Student's Allowance which paid for voice recognition software for my computer which helped me to complete essays, and taxi fares to and from clinical placements.

Probably the area where DDSS helped me most on my course was with liaising with my department concerning the provision of clinical placements. Through constant negotiation with DDSS and clinical tutors my department agreed to let me undertake block placements on a part-time basis, which made them more manageable for me. My department also ensured that the placements were local, and physically accessible for me.

Although completing this course has at times been a bit of a battle, I would never have been able to do it without the help of DDSS. Through their provision I have become more aware of what my rights as a disabled person are, and what I am capable of achieving despite my limitations both in an academic environment and in the workplace.

Student Profile

Chris, Urban Studies and Planning

I am a fourth year student with Asperger Syndrome, which has caused problems with anxiety – loud noises and keeping places clean are particular concerns. Yet in other ways my condition has been most helpful, particularly when managing deadlines and keeping to schedules - both of which are important for my degree. Before I came to university I was apprehensive about living and working in a communal environment therefore being allocated a room in a hall of residence was rather worrying at first. However, instead of being a challenge this acted as a base for increasing personal confidence, partially down to regular assistance from DDSS to ensure Accommodation and Campus Services were fully aware of my support needs. I regularly use the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service for mentoring, academic and exam support, as well as for meetings in my role as the Disabled Students' Councillor.



There have not been any glitches with the service as far as my support has been concerned. I do not find it particularly difficult to get appointments at short notice which is very good considering DDSS staff have a high number of students to advise.

If you have a disability, don't hold back from accessing the services provided by DDSS. The department has grown tremendously over the past 3-4 years both in capacity and expertise. It is about time Universities have adequate support services for disabled students and Sheffield is going in the right direction. For students already here, it is never too late to consult DDSS. Should you have any issues in your time at Sheffield it is worth arranging an appointment with an adviser to see how they can assist you to make your time here the best it can be.

Student Profile

Henry

I came back to the University of Sheffield as a mature student, having been an undergraduate some 20 years ago. I have been suffering from a mental illness for most of my adult life and I wanted my visit back to Sheffield to be an opportunity to explore some difficulties I have found in working life but within a safer environment.

It was apparent early on that things were going to be difficult. While I enjoyed the academic work, balancing this with my other work and trying to get the most out of the time at the University was going to be impossible for me by myself.

My first introduction to DDSS was rather emotional. I had struggled alone for so long it took some time to adjust to accepting help. I was rather swamped with the amount of assistance available and I found making decisions difficult. But DDSS were happy to work at my pace. They've provided equipment which has eased the pressure and increased the quality of my work. A mentor has been invaluable in keeping an eye on my health and learning new ways of working.

I can't help thinking my life would have turned out differently if I had had access when I first came to Sheffield many moons ago. So I would urge undergraduates to make contact with them and make best use of your time as a student. As a mature student, knowing about the support available would have made the decision to return to University much easier. DDSS have ensured that I made the right decision.

Student Profile

Lucy, Music

I have thoroughly enjoyed my studies so far and much of this positive experience is due to the hard work and support of Sheffield University DDSS. I have Cerebral Palsy which affects my mobility and means that whilst my academic work presents no excessive difficulty in itself, the physical effort of study (which often has no impact on other students) is huge for me. That is why I felt it so important to ease this burden by accessing the DDSS as soon as possible and I would advise any student with an additional need (no matter how big or small) to do the same.

University is full of challenges, but your disability should not be one of them because the DDSS are there to make sure you have all the support you need - all you have to do is ask! From help with enrolling, to getting support for those long hours in the library, to making sure you graduate without a hitch, the DDSS can help. They might be able to offer support you never thought possible so that is why it is important that you get in touch with them and discuss your needs and worries from the start – at an open day, when you apply and just before you begin your course.

Accessing the DDSS will not set you apart from your peers or diminish your independence; it will enhance it, because the service works for each student on an individual basis and will only get involved if you request it. As a fresher in the first few weeks of university their support could prove invaluable - that helping hand and friendly face you need to put you on the right track while you're making new friends and getting to grips with the roller-coaster of student life!

As a post-graduate student my experience of university is now a more independent one, especially because my course is distance learning (I study online from my home in Nottingham). However, my need for support from the DDSS is no less – in fact in many ways it has been more because I do not have all the campus services at hand. Despite working from Nottingham, the DDSS have helped arrange a library support worker in my home town and a personal assistant for the occasions I am required to study in Sheffield. The DDSS can also help you to make a Disabled Students' Allowances application. In fact, they became my greatest ally in helping to monitor my application and see it through to its conclusion. While they can't guarantee a successful application, I found that they can and will do as much as possible to ensure you have every chance of receiving the extra financial support you are entitled to.

The greatest support the DDSS have provided for me during my studies (and I believe for any student with an additional need) is that of advocacy. Understanding and well-informed staff have listened to my concerns (often presented by other agencies/services) and have consequently liaised with them on my behalf to achieve a successful outcome, an outcome I am sure I would not have reached without their positive and ongoing support. They can work with other campus services to ensure disabled students get what they need because they have the knowledge to diplomatically intervene in disability-related matters ranging from your academic department to issues with accommodation. You won't have any major headaches to cope with (other than those you inflict on yourself in the student union of course!).

So all that's left for you to do now is to enjoy the warm and friendly northern welcome of Sheffield and don't forget, when you've bagged your free beans and signed up to the society with the biggest social calendar, go and say hello to the DDSS team.

Student Profile

Greg, Sociological Studies

In coming to university I didn't really know what to expect at all and went with a very optimistic mindset assuming that I would make a fresh start and not need any help with my mental health as I have suffered from depression for about 3 years. I was a bit too optimistic though unfortunately!

After seeing my GP in Sheffield from the University Health Service and discussing my situation with him, it was recommended that I seek further help and advice from the Disability and Dyslexia Student Services, which was the first time I'd really heard depression called a 'disability', which I found really strange as I just feel it's a part of me really and not an illness.



I had previously seen a NHS counsellor once every 2-3 weeks, and I felt like I needed someone to talk to more regularly. D&DSS sorted me out with a mentor I visit once a week to chat about whatever I want and it's fantastic! I know now that I should have registered with the department as soon as I could, even before I started Uni, as it's made so much of a difference! I still find it hard but the mentor support has been such a help. I can talk to someone regularly about problems or life in general and not feel I'm being judged or putting any pressure on them.

D&DSS also helped me to apply for Disabled Student's Allowance, which I also found weird due to the world disabled again but I've come to realise people can take it as what they want and it really doesn't matter. This enables me to gain additional support in materials to help with my studying and extra costs can be refunded. All this DSA support costs nothing and is done by Student Finance so don't worry about costs!

The service had also been great communicating with my home department and the university services. They keep everything confidential and only let people who you want to know about your problems know. I receive extra time and rest breaks in exams too, which are both VERY useful! Being able to just step out of an exam to relieve the stress is amazing, I've used that a lot and it helps so much!

I honestly can't think of a negative point about the Disability services, and I would have put it if I'd thought of anything but it's just fantastic! It's helped me so much and the only regret I have is that I waited until 2 months into my degree to find out about it! My advice is register as soon as you can and you'll find adjusting to life at Uni so much less stressful, even if you hardly use their support you know they're there to help if you ever feel you're slipping or need some help.

Student Profile

Ali, Institute of Lifelong Learning

Hi, I'm Ali, a part time mature student studying for a BA in English Literature and Creative Media. I'm also a severely disabled wheelchair user.

My first encounter with DDSS was to organise a disability car parking permit. This was achieved easily without any problem and meant I could access Uni car parks to be nearer buildings where my classes are held or the Information Commons.

Then my Disabled Students' Allowances assessment report came along and from this my disability advisor made sure the recommendations were put into practice, ensuring (for example) that I have more time for exams and the use of a laptop or pc in them. I can also record the classes on a digital recorder, which was paid for by my local authority as part of the recommendations from my assessment. I must admit that once I realised how much slower I was than other students, I was really grateful for my digital recorder. I still try to make my own notes too as I find that actually doing so helps me remember things, as well as allowing for my own referencing system of related information the tutor mentions. But it really helps to be able to read through my notes while listening to the recording on my lap top.

I also experience depression and unless I'm careful things can feel quite overwhelming. It's great that the DDSS are there to support as necessary, especially if I feel unable to organise some things for myself. If needs be my adviser can also be in touch with my tutors on my behalf in order to explain to them that things take me much longer. Conversely, when I'm feeling good, the way DDSS works means I am fully backed when sorting out my Uni disability related issues on my own.

All in all, the support I have received from the DDSS staff and my department means my experience of being a severely disabled student at the University of Sheffield continues to be a positively life-changing one.

6. Other university services and information

a. Accommodation and Campus Services (ACS)

The University of Sheffield offers a wide range of catered and self-catering accommodation for students – from brand new apartments to Victorian houses.

Disabled students' individual requirements are given special consideration when places are allocated in University accommodation. Several rooms in University properties have been adapted for students with disabilities, with the provision of everything from overhead tracking hoists and flashing beacons to vibrating pillows and walk-in showers. If you are a full-time student with complex disabilities, you may also be able to stay in University accommodation for the duration of your academic course.

You apply for accommodation through the ACS web-pages, and can do so at any point after you have notified UCAS that the University of Sheffield is your firm or insurance choice. Before completing your application form, please consider whether your disability means that you will require alternative/adapted accommodation or arrangements (e.g. a wheelchair-accessible room or catering tailored to a particular 'free-from' diet). It is important to make ACS aware of any specific requirements you have as early as possible in the application process, so that it can be ensured that they are met.

Web: www.sheffield.ac.uk/accommodation

Email: accommodationoffice@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 0114 2224488

Postal Address: Accommodation Office
Accommodation and Campus Services
The Edge
The Endcliffe Village
34 Endcliffe Crescent,
Sheffield S10 3ED

b. University Health Service (UHS)

The UHS is a National Health Service (NHS) practice which offers full health services to all students at The University of Sheffield if they choose to register.

The UHS practice is modern, friendly and fully accessible, and is situated very close to the university's central campus. The service consists of a team of doctors, nurses and health care professionals.

All students are advised to register with the University Health Service during Intro/Fresher's Week, especially those with a pre-existing medical condition or mental health difficulty, as it can then be ensured that appropriate referrals to specialists are made as early as possible.

Web: www.sheffield.ac.uk/health

Email: health.service@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 22100 (24hrs)

Fax: +44 (0)114 22 22123

Postal Address: University Health Service
53 Gell Street
Sheffield S3 7QP

c. Counselling Service

The Counselling Service is free and available to all registered undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Sheffield.

Counselling provides an opportunity to think and talk in confidence about difficulties, experiences, feelings, thoughts and problems that may be concerning you now or have done in the past. Counsellors work to provide appropriate and useful support to each individual, which can include helping you to gain a clearer understanding of your concerns, offering emotional support and helping you identify appropriate ways of coping.

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/counselling

Email: UCS@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 24134

Postal Address: University Counselling Service
36 Wilkinson Street
Sheffield S10 2GB

d. Library Services

The University of Sheffield offers one of the UK's leading academic libraries with a wealth of both physical and electronic material to support learning and research. Through the Additional Support Service, the Library aims to ensure that all of its resources are accessible to all students. It can assist disabled students in numerous ways and information about all its services is provided on the web pages.

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/library/services/addsupport.html

Email: lib-support@lists.shef.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 27294

e. English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC)

The ELTC offers a range of services to all students registered at the University of Sheffield. These include the Writing Advisory Service, which provides students with the opportunity to discuss their work in a one-to-one situation with a specialist writing tutor. In addition, the 'How2' programme of group study skills sessions offered by the service covers a different area of study technique (from planning to proof-reading) each week during term time.

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/eltc/services

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 1780

f. Computing Services

Corporate Information and Computing Services (CiCS) deals with the provision and maintenance of the computing facilities across the University, and aims to ensure that these are fully accessible to students with disabilities. All IT centres have a number of computers with large screens, and there are also a number of computers in University open access areas with assistive software such as Zoomtext, Dragon and Inspiration. Texthelp Read & Write is available on all University-managed computers.

If students encounter any computer problems or are experiencing difficulties accessing information via the university network then CiCS will assist in any way possible.

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/cics/access

Telephone: +44 (0)114 222 1111

g. Sheffield Union of Students

The Union of Students is at the heart of student life, with a wide range of facilities on offer, including bars and catering services, shops and banks, and social/study areas. It also provides a base for numerous clubs and societies.

The Union building also houses both the Student Services Information Desk (SSID) and the Student Advice Centre. SSID is a one-stop information service which deals with enquiries covering all aspects of student life, whilst the Student Advice Centre provides free, professional and confidential advice, information and advocacy for students on a wide range of issues.

Further information about the Union of Students, SSID and the Student Advice Centre is available at:

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/union

www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/

www.shef.ac.uk/union/advice/advice-centre.php

h. Careers Service

Careers Advisers are available to offer confidential and individually-tailored advice and guidance to disabled students at any point during their studies. The Careers Service also holds a broad range of reference and takeaway materials on occupations, employment and further study.

Web: www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/equalops

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 20910

i. Disability Outreach Project

Based within the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service, the Disability Outreach Project is engaged in work in work in schools, colleges and community groups throughout the South Yorkshire region with the aim of raising the aspirations and motivation of disabled learners. With the assistance of disabled students who are currently studying at University level the Outreach Officer provides information, advice and guidance to prospective students about the transition to Higher Education and the support available whilst undertaking a University-level course.

Web: www.sheffield.ac.uk/disability/prospective/outreach.html

j. Disabled and Dyslexic Student Forum (DDSF)

The DDSF is run by disabled students for disabled students, and always welcomes new members. The group acts upon issues that affect disabled students, with the aim of making the University environment more accessible and inclusive.

Web: www.shef.ac.uk/union/student-voice/ddsf/

Email: ddsf@sheffield.ac.uk

k. Getting to/from the University

1. Public Transport

The University is served by a large number of bus services and also has its own Supertram stop - connecting it with the train station and city centre as well as to numerous other parts of Sheffield. All Supertram stops/trams are accessible for people with mobility impairments and wheelchair users.

More information about local transport links can be found on the Travel South Yorkshire website:

www.travelsouthyorkshire.com

Some students may be entitled to a mobility pass on the grounds of their disabilities, meaning that they can travel at a concessionary rate (or sometimes for free). To ascertain whether you would qualify for the pass and for further information on Sheffield's accessible transport options visit:

www.sheffield.gov.uk/safe--sound/social-services/help-with-travel

2. Car Parking Facilities

Parking around most academic departments and on other University property including residences is restricted to permit holders only.

Disabled students will be issued with University disabled parking permits free of charge if they are holders of a disabled person's blue badge. Information on how to apply for a blue badge can be found at the Sheffield government web-address given in the above section regarding public transport.

Students should apply online via MUSE for University parking permits.

Telephone: +44 (0)114 22 29060

Email: roompark@sheffield.ac.uk

I. Securing Personal Care Support

UK students

If you will need assistance during your time at university with aspects of personal care (e.g. cooking, shopping or toileting) this is normally arranged through Social Services. Arranging personal care support can take a very long time; as soon as you have chosen which university you will be going to you should contact your local Social Services to discuss your personal care requirements.

For further information on the personal care support available to disabled students:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_4000917

International Students

As an overseas student you will not be eligible for personal care support through Social Services, and the university is unable to fund this. Therefore, if you are likely to require any personal care support you need to ensure well in advance of arrival that you have sufficient funding to cover the cost of this. It is also important that you provide our service with as much information as possible about your disability so that we can assist you in establishing exactly what support you are likely to require.

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The
University
Of
Sheffield.

This guide is also available in large print,
Braille, audio and electronically from:

Disability and Dyslexia Support Service

The Hillsborough Centre
Alfred Denny Building
Western Bank
Sheffield S10 2TN
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)114 222 1303

Fax: +44 (0)114 222 1373

Email: disability.info@sheffield.ac.uk

Web: www.sheffield.ac.uk/disability