



Disabled Students' Commission

Annual Report 2022–2023: Enhancing the
disabled student experience

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Disabled Students' Commission

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Foreword

This is the final report of the Disabled Students' Commission (DSC), which was established for a three-year period by the Universities Minister in 2020, and I am proud to have been involved in such an initiative.

Establishing a new initiative such as this – a few days before the first COVID-19 lockdown in the UK – was never going to be easy but we have worked with students, staff and agencies in the sector to address the requirements of disabled students. There is no doubt that universities care about their students and the student experience, and we have always been impressed with the commitment to reflect on what is currently happening and how the experience can be improved.

Disability is a protected characteristic that seems to be low on the agenda for strategic higher education (HE) approaches across the sector. We know that disabled students are not a homogenous group; people can become disabled while being a student, some have multiple disabilities, for many there is a worry about sharing personal information and there are challenges presented by intersectionality. The challenges are persistent and ongoing, but as some of our most vulnerable learners, disabled students need to be in an environment where they are supported to achieve and do not have to spend a disproportionate amount of time asking for that support. Anticipatory reasonable adjustments should be a part of the overall strategy, one which does not differentiate between students' needs on the basis of available funding.

What is clear is that universities and colleges require a step change in their approach to improving the disabled student experience and the support they provide to disabled learners. This is not easy to achieve, but the current approach is not sustainable and simply does not work for many disabled students. All too often we heard from practitioners and students that the system focussed on putting the support needs in place for an individual learner, only to then discover that the budget was not big enough or colleagues were not following the agreed learner plan, that support was difficult to get and it was often late.

No one is supportive of such an outcome and the issue is not about lack of commitment but more about the absence of institutional ownership. In other words, we have a “bitty” system focussed on getting support in place for the individual, which is important, but does not address the fundamental issues of the student experience. The DSC's role has been to influence and challenge the sector and the bodies within it. Over the last three years, we are proud to have played a part in a number of significant achievements which are fundamentally addressing how the sector needs to change. The Disabled Student Commitment, launched on 24 April 2023, is the challenge to the sector that is needed to move us all forward and to seriously address the student experience. We are greatly looking forward to the step change towards a more inclusive HE environment for all.

Thank you for supporting the DSC.

Geoff Layer, Chair of the DSC

1. Overview

1.1 The Disabled Student Commitment

In its final year of operation and culminating in three years of consultation and research with disabled students, practitioners and sector organisations, the DSC has laid down a blueprint to make the step change that is required to create a more inclusive HE environment. This blueprint, named the Disabled Student Commitment, is a call to the sector and its organisations to take a structured, comprehensive and partnership approach with their disabled students to assess what needs to change. It encourages higher education providers (HEPs) to say how they intend to support disabled students and to ensure that they are able to realise their full potential, and it encourages critical self-regulation.

Information-gathering activities and listening carefully to the needs of the sector and disabled students has been at the heart of the DSC's activity since its inception in March 2020. This enabled the DSC to create a draft publication that was based on a representative and holistic account of experiences of disabled student support across the student lifecycle. Initial consultation on the draft of the Commitment comprised the following:

- + **Sector roundtables** gathering feedback from disabled students, disability practitioners, sector body and organisation representatives, third sector organisations, and senior leaders with a responsibility to lead and implement policies that support disabled applicants, students and recent graduates.
- + Gathering feedback from **student bodies and grassroots organisations** working directly with disabled students.
- + **Reviewing literature and report recommendations** published by other sector bodies and organisations.

The DSC published a formal consultation on the Commitment, on 31 October 2023. A total of 70 responses were received, including responses from representative bodies on behalf of all universities and colleges in the UK. Responses were also received from current disabled students, disability practitioners, third sector organisations and a range of other bodies and organisations such as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). The DSC published an analysis of the responses to the consultation on 26 January 2023, confirming a high level of support for the Commitment and reaffirming disability and inclusion as a sector priority.

The Disabled Student Commitment was launched on 24 April 2023. Further information about how the Commitment will be taken forward is outlined in Section 3.

Links to all other DSC reports published since its inception, which have in turn fed into the development of the Commitment, are provided in Appendix 2.

1.2 DSC activity

Since the publication of our 2022 annual report, the DSC has continued to progress through the student lifecycle mode outlined in its original work plan (see Appendix 3) to structure its work, and has collaborated closely with sector organisations and interest groups to meet its five important objectives:

- + To promote improved and enhanced access and transition to HE for disabled students.
- + To promote an inclusive student support and wellbeing approach.
- + To promote the enhancement of inclusive learning and teaching.
- + To seek to enhance the employability of disabled students.
- + To inform the sector of progress with enhancing the experience of disabled students.

In Section 2 we outline our achievements over the past year, demonstrating progress in our agreed areas of priority.

We have continued to consult and listen to diverse voices across the sector while eliciting the views and feedback of disabled students to inform our work.

2. DSC achievements

The DSC is proud of its achievements in 2022–2023. In particular, we would like to celebrate the way in which our partnerships with sector organisations have led to the initiation of key pieces of work which shine a light on and seek to address the disabled student experience, at all stages of the HE lifecycle.

- + **The DSC's response to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) review: right support, right place, right time consultation was cited in the SEND and alternative provision (AP) improvement plan of the Department for Education (DfE).**

The DSC responded to the DfE SEND and AP consultation, which closed on 22 July 2023. In its response, the DSC drew on some of the parallel issues experienced by disabled students in the HE sector, and outlined how best colleges and universities could support the transition of children and young people with SEND into HE. This included recommending a partnership approach between universities and colleges and APs at a local level and providing university staff with the appropriate guidance to support disabled students. In its published *Improvement Plan* (HM Government, 2023), the DfE agreed with this recommendation and cited the Disabled Student Commitment as an appropriate place for this to be embedded further.

- + **The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) produced an in-depth study on the experience of disabled students in HE.**

A foreword provided by the DSC commended the UCAS's commitment to focussing on the intersectional experiences of disabled students applying to HE. The release of their report *Next Steps: What is the Experience of Disabled Students in Education?* in partnership with Pearson and the DSC, was a further cause for celebration as it marked a move away from the use of 'disclosure' to describe individuals "sharing" their impairment type and personal circumstances. Disclosure is a term that traditionally might have contributed to an environment of fear and stigma around disabled students. The DSC looks forward to more inclusive language, and culture, being adopted across the sector.

The DSC welcomed an opportunity to work in partnership on this report, particularly as the findings give vital weight to our recommendations around transition outlined in the Disabled Student Commitment. The expansion and personalisation of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for disabled applicants applying and searching for available support on UCAS's webpages, including a student-facing version of the Commitment, can only be a positive thing to support transition into HE.

+ The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) has been able to review criteria and remove barriers for disabled students during the complaints process.

The DSC welcomed an opportunity to feed into the third edition of the OIA *Good Practice Framework: Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals*. Published in December 2022, the Framework set out guidance to help providers approach complaints and academic appeals fairly. While it is acknowledged that providers' policies and procedures will vary, both the DSC and OIA agreed that the Commitment should further reinforce the recommendation that policies and practices remain consistent with the Framework. Coupled with a call for improved and more accessible IAG, the DSC are confident that this will reduce the instances in which disabled students are required to avoid or overcome barriers which have the potential to translate into complaints submitted to the OIA.

+ The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) both reviewed their Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and engaged with PSRBs on disabled student inclusion.

In 2022, the DSC created a Disabled Student Inclusion Framework to encourage greater reflection of inclusive practice within SBS. The DSC's partnership with QAA saw the DSC review and feedback on 14 Statements that were published in March 2022, with the framework rolled out and embedded for Advisory Groups reviewing future rounds of Statements.

The aim of the framework was to reduce the number of instances in which academic staff are unclear about the non-negotiables within the delivery of their subjects, in turn reducing the subject-based barriers experienced by disabled students. This will ensure that the needs of disabled students are prioritised through greater flexibility in the learning, teaching and assessment strategy at a modular level, enabling them to realise their full potential. The DSC's partnership approach with QAA has since been enshrined in the Commitment, wherein it calls upon QAA to support SBS Advisory Groups in exploring how key competences can be identified in all the Statements. You can read more about our work with QAA in our joint blogpost.

Furthermore, the DSC engaged with PSRBs via QAA's biannual forum, to gauge their awareness and understanding of supporting disabled students. What is clear is that the barriers experienced by disabled students in relation to a lack of clarity around competence standards need to be urgently addressed by academic communities and PSRBs in tandem, to ensure delays and disappointment for disabled students are overcome. Both groups will be encouraged to sign up to and embed the principles of the Commitment.

+ Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) published in-depth research into what works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students in HE.

The recommendations provided in the TASO recently-published report mirror what the DSC has been advocating for some time. TASO called upon the DSC to feed into its

recommendations and to sense-check their impact and validity. In particular, the review found that while transitions support can be effective for disability inclusion overall, not enough is known about the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments that are often implemented on a case-by-case basis, leading to unforeseen barriers and an inconsistent approach further on in the HE journey. The DSC supports the recommendation for better evaluation of interventions that take into account inequalities and the intersectional experiences of disabled students in HE.

The DSC was particularly pleased to see that the report endorses the content of the Disabled Student Commitment, in particular the section on 'Requests to share information', which focusses on the improved processes of data collection and sharing both within and across HEPs.

+ The DSC published a joint ambition statement with Health Education England (HEE) to help develop and promote support for health learners to progress into employment in the National Health Service (NHS) and the wider health and social care economy.

The joint statement with HEE was shaped by the lived experiences of disabled learners, trainees and colleagues within the NHS. Information to develop the statement was gathered through a range of methodologies, including a deep dive into current data and research on disabled health graduates, and a roundtable event attended by senior representatives from a range of organisations including NHS employers, the Disabled Doctors Network, HEE and the NHS. The statement reflected a shared ambition between HEE and the DSC to help develop and promote support for health learners to successfully transition into employment in the NHS and wider health and social care economy.

+ The DSC supported the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and colleagues working on the evaluation of the pilot to develop the Disability Adjustments Passport.

In the DSC's previous annual report (Disabled Students' Commission, 2022), the DSC stated that it had advised on the design and development of a new government 'passport' to support disabled graduates into employment. Since then, supported by the DWP and the DfE, the Adjustment Passport Scheme has been piloted in three HEPs, eliciting views from disabled students, potential employers and disability support staff. Positive findings emerging from the trial to be disseminated in summer 2023 have led to a number of organisations, including TASO and UCAS, to support the expansion of the rollout of the passport across the sector and at all key touchpoints of the HE journey. Similarly, the Disabled Student Commitment calls upon HEPs to support and promote the passport, reducing the number of times a disabled student is potentially asked to share their disability.

+ Involvement at external events.

Throughout the duration of the DSC, commissioners have been involved in multiple events and presented at numerous conferences. Attendance at these events ensured information and guidance related to the DSC had a greater impact and was able to influence a wider audience. A list of key events and conferences attended is presented below:

Information presented	Organisation
Did three months make a difference? Exploring the impact of Covid-19 on disabled students	Advance HE Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Conference
Breaking barriers for supporting disabled students in FE and HE	Breaking Barriers Conference
The use of automatically generated captions in higher education	University of Surrey (SMART Project on Live Subtitling and Convergence)
Covid19 and disabled students: How business schools can make a difference	Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS)
How disabled students can engage with PSRBs, and how to implement more flexibility and choice in assessment	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)/Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) Forum
Enhancing the experience of disabled students – A focus on the Postgraduate Research community	Academic Registrar Community (ARC)
Furthering disability equality for students and staff	Advance HE
Summary of the recommendations within Disabled Students' Commission: Three months to make a difference	National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP)
Streamlining the transition process to university and improving student life on campus	Westminster Higher Education Forum (WHEF) – Next Steps for Supporting Disabled Students in Higher Education
Action points from the DSC – What does high impact support look like?	National Students Services Conference
The Disabled Student Commitment	National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) Online Summit
The Disabled Student Commitment	Universities UK (UUK) – Access, Participation and Student Success Conference

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Action points from the Disabled Students' Commission – what does high impact look like?	Inside Government – National Student Services Conference
Co-production: Embedding student voices into enhanced provision and teaching and learning practice	Inside Government – Closing the Awarding Gap in Higher Education Conference
Exploring the impact of Covid-19 on disabled students' experiences	Advance HE EDI Conference
Presentation on the Disabled Student Commitment	Diversity and Ability: What Does Inclusion Look Like?
Presentation on the Disabled Student Commitment	Advance HE EDI Conference
Accessibility and flexibility built into Subject Benchmark Statements and the Disabled Student Commitment	QAA; Enhancement and Quality for Educators (ENQUIRE)

3. Looking forward: beyond the DSC

While reflecting on next steps for the sector in relation to improving the experiences of disabled students, it is a concern that some of the progress made and subsequent positive changes (including those introduced or embedded during COVID-19) are either reversed or left behind.

It has been well-documented that the HE sector has made significant changes to its policies and practices since the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, in many cases furthering advantages yet, unfortunately in others, entrenching disadvantages experienced by disabled students. Disabled Students UK demonstrated in their report *Going Back is Not a Choice* (2022) that HEPs had an opportunity to learn important lessons on accessibility moving forward. The report called out what still needs to change, including streamlined systems and improved communication between university departments and funding streams, as well as reducing the administrative burden for disabled students.

Gaps also continue to persist in relation to disabled student access, academic outcomes, experiences and employment opportunities. Research has shown that despite narrowing to some extent, the attainment rate for disabled students has been consistently lower over the past five years (The Office for Students, A&P Resources Sector Summary, 2022).

Furthermore, disabled graduates are significantly less likely to be in full-time employment (AGCAS, What Happens Next? 2022). Recently published reports supported by contributions from the DSC have highlighted further gaps in relation to disabled student support:

- + [TASO: What works to reduce equality gaps for disabled students](#) stated the need for improved data collection in relation to sharing a disability, disaggregation of said disability data to better understand intersecting experiences, improved and expanded evidence on reasonable adjustments in terms of how they are delivered and their impact on disability inclusion, and an evaluation of institutional approaches to inclusive practice.
- + [UCAS Next steps: What is the experience of disabled students in education?](#) suggested that engagement with disabled applicants and the support they can access once they have arrived at HE should commence at an earlier stage. The report recommended that there should also be greater transparency and detail about support available in HE for disabled students through the improved provision of IAG. Finally, the report also called for the expansion of DWP's Access to Work Adjustment Passport scheme (2021), to ease the transition of students into HE and across their education lifecycle.

The Disabled Student Commitment calls for the sector to make a quantum shift to move these recommendations forward, instead of going back. HEPs are asked to take the following steps to embed the principles:

- + Look holistically at policies and practices in consultation with their disabled students.
- + Outline how they intend to enhance the disabled student experience via a jointly-made statement.
- + Publish the jointly-made statement on progress in an updated form annually on the HEP website.
- + Display the logo of the Commitment in the appropriate places, with disabled applicants and students encouraged to look for this.

In committing to the principles within the Commitment, HEPs, PSRBs and other sector organisations are communicating a vital message to disabled students: that they are committed to the widespread adoption of inclusive practice via a joined-up approach (DSSLG, 2017), that they are committed to enhancing the student experience and finally that they are committed to improving the four 'C's for disabled students:

- + **Certainty** – Certainty that support for their disability will be in place at the commencement of their studies, and in the event of a delay or shortfall, interim support will be available.
- + **Consistency** – Consistency across different university departments around disability support availability and regular updates on proposed or actioned changes.
- + **Communication** – Continual engagement with disabled students, including communicating when policies change.
- + **Choice** – A choice in teaching, learning and assessment practices that support and accommodate individual requirements.

The Office for Students (OfS) and DfE will reflect on and communicate to the sector how they will review progress with the Commitment.

To drive forward the important work already conducted with the remit of the Disabled Student Commission, the Office for Students (OfS) intends to establish an advisory panel to support disabled students. The key aim of the advisory panel is to bring together a panel of experts to continue to support disabled students in the HE sector and continue the momentum of the vital work of the DSC, including the commitment. It will be a vital platform going forward for this work and ensuring the sector has a real and meaningful opportunity to demonstrate its capacity for taking forward the DSC commitment and making it a reality.

4. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the DSC has made significant strides in helping institutions to improve the disabled student experience in HE.

As the work of the DSC comes to an end, it is hoped that HEPs and the sector will embrace the Disabled Student Commitment and use it as an effective tool for continual change, ensuring that communication, consistency, choice and certainty for disabled students remain top of the agenda. The Commitment calls for the sector to make a step change and to ensure disabled students are supported and informed, to enable their needs to be met and to self-regulate its implementation.

We would like to sincerely thank all those who have contributed, encouraged and supported the work we have undertaken over the lifespan of the DSC, and for your ongoing commitment to support disabled students in HE.

References

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Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) (2023). *What Works to Reduce Equality Gaps for Disabled Students?*, London: TASO.

UCAS (2022). *Next Steps: What Is the Experience of Disabled Students in Education?*, London: Pearson.

Appendix 1: About the DSC

The DSC is an independent and strategic group with a key priority to advise, inform and influence English HEPs and sector bodies to improve support for disabled students. Its vision is to help the sector achieve more positive outcomes for disabled students in relation to access, participation, success and progression.

The creation of the DSC was announced in June 2019 by former Universities Minister Chris Skidmore, and established in March 2020. It is funded by the OfS and is supported by a secretariat provided by Advance HE for a period of three years.

The DSC challenges, influences and supports the DfE, the OfS, HEPs and other relevant sector organisations to accelerate the pace of change in creating inclusive learning and living environments for disabled students across the student lifecycle.

The Commissioners were appointed through a public appointments process run by the OfS, and comprise:

Member	Role	Representation
Professor Geoff Layer	Adviser to the Vice Chancellor, Coventry University and formerly Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton	Chair
John Blake	Director for Fair Access and Participation, The Office for Students	The Office for Students
Professor Sarah Greer	Vice Chancellor, University of Winchester	HEP representation
Professor Deborah Johnston	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Framework), London South Bank University	
Patrick Johnson	Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Law	
Susan Daniels	Chief Executive, National Deaf Children's Society	Third sector organisation
Sean Cullen	Doctoral Researcher, Brunel University	Student voice
Piers Wilkinson	Disability Adviser and Consultant	
Sam Parrett	CEO, London and South East Education Group	Further education adviser

John Blake succeeded Chris Millward, previous Director for Fair Access and Participation at the OfS and DSC Commissioner, who left his post in December 2022.

Further information about the DSC, its Terms of Reference and its work to date can be found on the DSC's campaign page at www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/disability-equality-higher-education/disabled-students-commission.

Appendix 2: DSC reports

Since its inception in March 2020, the DSC has published various reports and guidance designed to directly support disabled applicants and students at all levels of study. Links to all of the reports and guidance are included below:

- + [Three months to make a difference](#) (2020). The DSC ran a series of roundtables to inform this publication, which outlined the urgent areas for HEPs to address to support disabled students during COVID-19, three months ahead of the new academic year.
- + [Considerations for disabled students when applying to university in light of COVID-19](#) (2020). This guidance, a practical toolkit for disabled students, was informed by a series of roundtables run by the DSC in July 2020, in response to COVID-19.
- + [DSC's annual report: enhancing the disabled student experience](#) (2021). The DSC's first annual report presents a picture of the landscape for disabled students during COVID-19, including a summary of the guidance published by the DSC to support disabled students during this time. The report also looks beyond COVID-19 and sets out what the Commission will focus on in its next phase of work.
- + [Considerations for disabled applicants applying to undergraduate courses](#) (2021). This booklet is a practical toolkit which aims to support disabled applicants by providing questions to help ensure a smooth transition into their HE journey.
- + [Guidance for captioning rich media](#) (2021). This guidance, authored by McNaught and Wilkinson, outlines best practice and approaches for HEPs to support disabled learners in relation to digital accessibility.
- + [Considerations for disabled applicants applying to postgraduate courses](#) (2021). This booklet is a practical toolkit which aims to support disabled postgraduate applicants to access the appropriate support and IAG on their course.
- + [Post qualification admission principles](#) (2021). Following independent research, the DSC published eight principles for the sector to consider to ensure the needs of disabled students are taken into account with a proposed move to a post-qualifications admissions system.
- + [Considerations for disabled applicants to higher or degree apprenticeships](#) (2021). This booklet is a practical toolkit which aims to help disabled apprenticeship candidates navigate the support for reasonable adjustments provided by their employer and learning provider.
- + [Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on disabled students' experiences](#) (2021). The DSC commissioned a survey between May and June 2021 to gain an understanding of the impact of the pandemic on disabled student experiences. The report details the findings from the survey.
- + [Guidance on disabled graduate employment](#) (2021). The DSC set out 13 recommendations for universities and colleges, Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Directors, Confederation of British Industry and employers to improve the experience of disabled graduates entering the workforce.
- + [Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on disabled students' experiences: in-depth report](#) (2022). This report sets out the in-depth findings from a series of focus groups with disabled students focussed on the impact of the pandemic on their experiences in HE.
- + [Exploring the use of automated captioning and its impact on disabled students in HE](#) (2022). Based on roundtable feedback, this report provides an overview of the challenges related to automated captioning and looks forward to how this practice could

become an informal, embedded component of inclusive learning and teaching provision, while mitigating the potential negative equalities impacts among staff.

- + [DSC's annual report: enhancing the disabled student experience](#) (2022). The DSC's second annual report details the DSC's achievements over the previous year, including the impact of the advice and guidance that was published, a rapid review of evidence from the sector relating to disabled students' experiences, and the areas of priority and objectives for 2022–2023.
- + [Joint ambition: Health Education England and the Disabled Students' Commission](#) (2023). HEE worked with the DSC to produce a short joint statement reflecting a joint ambition to help develop and promote support for health learners to successfully transition into employment in the NHS and wider health and social care economy.
- + [The Disabled Student Commitment](#) (2023). The purpose of the Disabled Student Commitment (the Commitment) is to secure an enhanced and improved experience for disabled students within higher education. The DSC calls upon HEPs, Government, funders, agencies, regulators and PSRBs (henceforth referred to as other organisations) to adopt and promote the Commitment.

Appendix 3: DSC work plan

The following work plan sets out the DSC's work for the remaining year. The final column on 'impact' helps to conceptualise and map the DSC's activities against its Terms of Reference to challenge, inform and influence effective practice.

Theme	Objective	Actions	Sector organisation / interest group	Output	Impact
1	To promote improved and enhanced access and transition to higher education for disabled students	1.1. To help shape IAG guidance through UCAS forums, and begin to address issues for non-UCAS applicants	UCAS, HESA, Uniconnect and Discover Uni	Create a sector standard for the presentation of IAG for disabled students	Effective Practice at sector organisation or organisation level
		1.2. To promote comprehensive IAG for disabled students in institutional processes, including information on DSA	UCAS, NADP, SLC	Clearer information base and HEP ownership of providing IAG	Effective Practice at provider level
		1.3. Ensure disability question wording in HE is reflective of the social model of disability, and matches up with language used in school and FE contexts. Work to make language and vocabulary used in the HE sector around disability as transparent as possible	UCAS, HESA, SLC, OfS, NADP	Updated question wording for UCAS, HESA, OfS, SLC, HEP's	Influence and guidance for sector agencies and providers
		1.4. Address issue of multiple identification of disabled students	OfS, SLC, DfE, Disability	Seamless system that recognises	Influence at sector level. This is an

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		and follow-up support given through DSA	Passport Trial members	an individual's disability	established policy problem and is reflected in the National Strategy
		1.5. Work with the SLC and DfE to ease the DSA process	SLC, DfE, OfS	Disabled students have DSA adjustment in place at the start of their course	Influence sector level. This is an established policy problem
2	To promote an inclusive student support and wellbeing approach	2.1. Determine what existing data is held on disabled students' complaints and work with Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) on understanding trends and issues. Consider ways to improve the complaints procedure process for disabled students in respect of implementation of the DSA	OIA	Separate complaints procedures from access to support issues	Developing high quality evidence to challenge and inform sector and provider practice- New data or presentation of data to inform the sector and providers
		2.2. Tie in with work on Student Space and other allied mental health support based on impact of pandemic on disabled students' mental health and wellbeing	OfS, Student Minds, UUK/ GuildHE	Promote fully inclusive access to student mental health support for disabled students	Effective practice at provider level
3	To promote the enhancement of inclusive learning and teaching	3.1. Recommend actions around improving digital accessibility and pedagogical approach in light of blended learning approach i.e. the	JISC/ Advance HE/OfS	Comprehensive guidance on technological and pedagogical options	Effective practice at provider level

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		provision of automated captioning and use of online platforms			
		3.2. Investigate elements of QAA work that interact with the work of the DSC, i.e. online proctoring and the issues this may cause for disabled students	QAA	Greater recognition of disability in QAA guidance	Challenge and influence sector organisation
		3.3. Investigate HEA fellowship criteria (professional standards framework) to embed disability awareness consistency across modules. Potential to tie in with NADP work on accreditation of specialist disability staff.	Advance HE, NADP	Secure amended accreditation criteria to specifically include disability within inclusive learning	Effective practice at provider level
		3.4. Option to produce guidance to complement the Quality Code to include information on inclusivity and reasonable adjustments	QAA, Advance HE	HEPs signing up to revised quality code with impact on the curriculum	Challenge and influence sector organisation
		3.5. Continue to influence the SLC through membership of the DSSG	SLC	Agreed with SLC	Influence sector organisation
4	To seek to enhance the employability of disabled students	4.1. Enhance existing employability guidance to understand key barriers for disabled graduates entering employment or placements, by impairment type	AGCAS, Advance HE	Employability framework for the sector	Effective practice for providers, PSRBs and employers

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		4.2 Co-produce guidance exploring the transition of disabled health learners into the medical workforce and wider NHS economy	HEE	Guidance for the sector	Effective practice for providers and employers
		4.3. Work with PSRBs, and elicit feedback on how they can implement more flexibility and choice in assessment	QAA	Change in approach by PSRBs to understand the need for greater flexibility	Challenge and influence sector (PSRBs) agencies
		4.4. Ensure that disability issues and the student experience are addressed in the skills agenda	AoC, UUK, OfS	Guidance materials for the sector	Effective practice for providers and employers
5	To inform the sector of progress with enhancing the experience of disabled students	5.1. Design and conduct primary research addressing learnings from the pandemic, with a disabled student experience focus	Advance HE, OfS	Robust and systematic data collection of disabled student experience across the sector and provider types	Developing high quality evidence to influence and inform effective practice at provider and sector organisation level
		5.2. Liaise with OfS over APP monitoring	OfS	Combined HEP progress with embedding disability strategy	Influence and challenge sector organisation (OfS)

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		5.3. Revisit recommendations made in DSC publications and guidance, possibly picking up elements in series of tweets or poster campaign	OfS, Advance HE	Poster campaign at the start of each academic year, increase student-facing visibility of issues.	Challenge, inform and advise the sector. Develop further evidence of effective practice as required
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