

NASMA DSA Update 22nd October 2024

Funding Information Services Team
Student Loans Company

Disabled Students' Allowance provides help towards the additional costs a student may face as result of their disability, long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.

- For [Student Finance England](#) the maximum allowance of **£26,948** applies to both full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate DSA recipients in **2024/25**.

DSA Support:

- Is available in addition to the standard student finance package,
- Does not have to be repaid,
- Is not affected by household income,
- Looks at the specific needs of the individual student

Who Can Qualify For DSA?



Disabled students have a wide array of impairments. These may include:

specific learning differences, such as dyslexia or attention deficit hyperactivity

mental health conditions, including anxiety, anorexia or depression

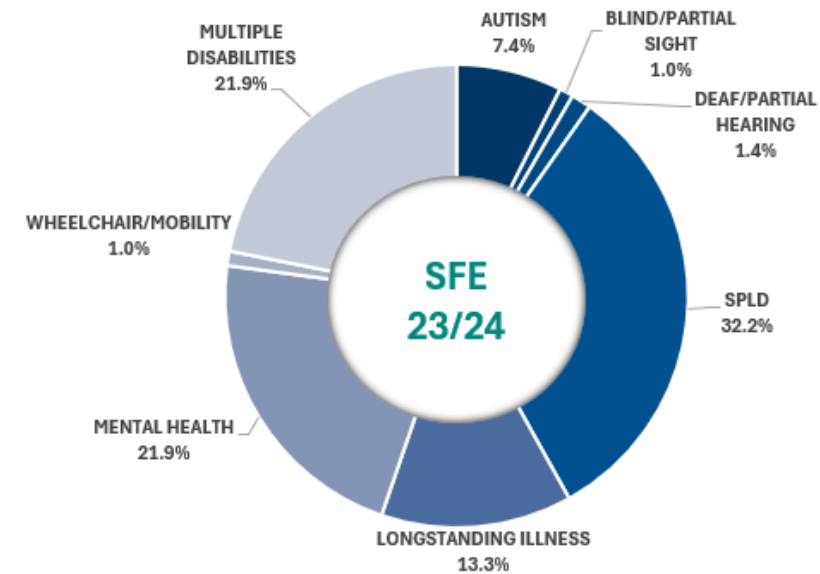
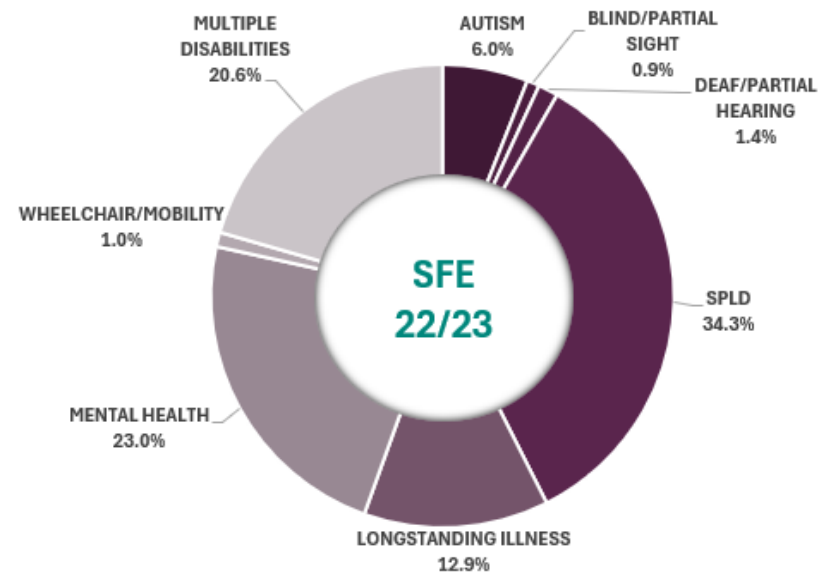
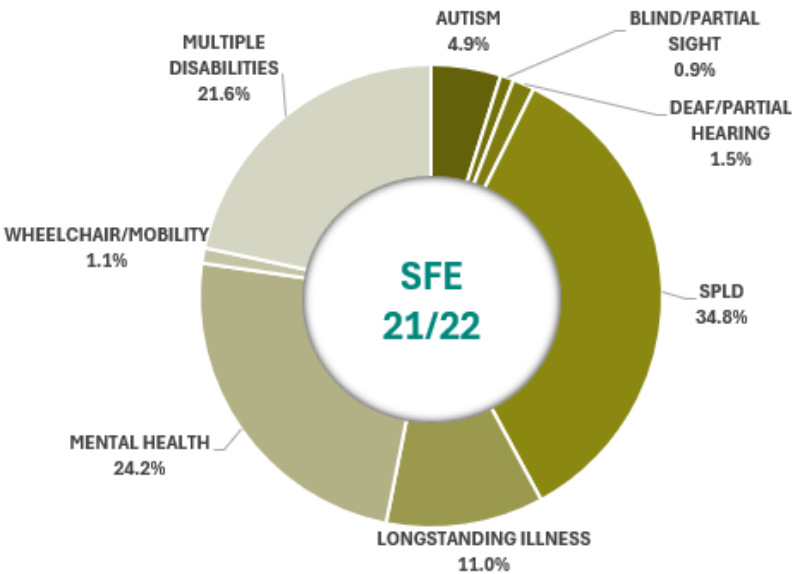
social or communication impairments, such as Asperger's syndrome or another autistic spectrum disorder

long-term health conditions, including cancer, Crohn's disease or HIV

physical disabilities affecting mobility or dexterity

sensory impairments such as deafness or severe sight loss

SFE Applications by Disability Type



DSA Applications How And When

Applications – How And When



- Students can apply online for DSA support at the same time as core support for SFE at www.gov.uk/slc
- Full Time Undergraduates who have applied for all support do not need to apply each year
- If the student only requires DSA, are studying Part Time or Postgraduate then they must apply for DSA each year
- Further information available at www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/how-to-claim

GOV.UK Apply for Disabled Students' Allowances

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What type of disability do you have?

To get DSAs your disability must meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

[What is the Equality Act?](#)

The Equality Act 2010 has made it illegal for universities and colleges to discriminate against disabled students by treating them less favourably in admissions policies or the services they provide. Under the Act, universities and colleges must make reasonable adjustments so that students with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who are not disabled.

This means that you can tell your university or college about your disability, long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty in confidence to make sure you receive the support you need.

The Act applies to you if you have a substantial and long term condition that affects your day-to-day activities, including education.

You'll be asked to send evidence of your condition as part of your application.

Select all that apply

- ☐ Physical disability
For example you have a physical impairment or mobility issue, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- ☐ Blind / Partial Sight
For example you are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- ☐ Deaf / Partial Hearing
For example you are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment
- ☐ Long term health condition
For example you have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- ☐ Mental health condition
For example you have a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
- ☒ Specific learning difficulty
For example you have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D

GOV.UK Apply for Disabled Students' Allowances

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What is your disability?

[Add another](#)

Continue

Applications – How And When




Medical Evidence needs to be submitted to support the DSA Application and will generally be in one of these three formats:

- Diagnostic Report (specific learning difficulties)
- Letter from a GP or other Medical Professional
- [SFE Disability Evidence Form](#)

1. 2017 / 2018 Full time GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATHS ▼ Collapse

STATUS APPLICATION SUBMITTED


Your to-do list

 **1. Give us your valid UK passport details**

So we can check your identity, you need to give us your valid UK passport details.

[Enter passport details](#)

[Can't provide your passport details?](#)

 **2. Disabled Students' Allowances**

You've told us you want to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs).

[Complete your application](#)

[Tell me more about the DSAs application process](#)

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What happens next?

It can take up to 14 weeks to get your DSAs support in place. Your application will be processed separately from your application for student finance. We'll keep in touch with you while we process your application to let you know what to do next and if we need more information or evidence.

Provide evidence

- we'll need you to provide evidence of each disability you have
- we'll tell you what you need to provide once you've submitted your application
- we cannot start processing your application until you do



We will send a DSA1 Letter – this confirms they are eligible for DSA

Once the student is assessed as eligible by SFE, we will assign the customer a designated supplier.

This means the student will have a single point of contact for their needs assessment, assistive technology and training requirements.

Dear [Student Title Surname]

Next steps to get your Disabled Students' Allowance [Academic Year]

We've reviewed your application and can confirm that you're eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) for [Accepted Disability].

The following three steps will explain what'll happen next:

Step 1 – Arranging a study needs assessment

To make sure you are getting the right support to help you complete your course, you need to have a study needs assessment.

[If the student HAS provided CTS]

This will be with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and they'll email you within the next five days to arrange this.

If you haven't heard from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX by day six, you can contact them on the following details:

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

[If the student HAS NOT provided CTS]

This will be with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. As you have not given us consent to share you'll need to contact them directly to arrange this. You can contact them on the following details:

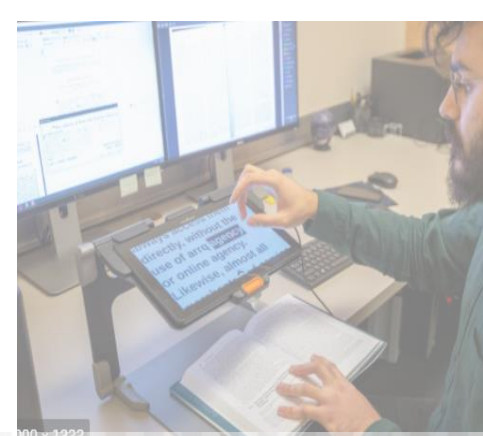
Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Applications – How And When



Depending on the level of consent to share given by the student, the assigned supplier will either contact the student directly to arrange their Study Needs Assessment, or the student can follow a link in the letter we send to them and book themselves in for the assessment.

The Study Needs Assessment – it's their chance to have a discussion with a specialist advisor about their disability and its impact on their studies. During the assessment, the advisor will work out what they need to help them get the most from their time at university or college. This will determine the student's package of support





We will send the student a DSA2 Letter – this confirms what support the student will be getting.

The supplier will then contact the student to arrange delivery of their assistive technology, install and set up the equipment and provide any required familiarisation and training.


The letter will also confirm any non-medical help, travel and general allowance. We will confirm what support DSA can pay for. We will also give the student instructions on how to access this support within the letter.



Suppliers will invoice the DSA Team directly for support they have provided to students (SFE supported students are liable for a £200 contribution of any laptop/PC recommendations)

Students who receive a General Allowance can send receipts (student claims) to claim back these costs


Your to-do list



1. Choose evidence to send us

You need to give us evidence to support your application.

[Choose evidence](#)



2. Claim expenses for your Disabled Students' Allowances support

You can send receipts and invoices of any costs you have had to pay in connection with your studies due to a reason relating to your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

[Upload receipts](#)

Upload your receipts

You can upload receipts and invoices of any costs you have had to pay in connection with your studies due to a reason relating to your disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

▶ [If you cannot upload your receipts and invoices](#)

What we accept

If you do not already have a digital copy of your receipt, you can take a photograph or scan and upload it here.

The image must be of the entire document and has to be readable by our staff.

We only accept BMP, JPEG, PDF, PNG or TIFF files up to 16MB.

Please ensure you do not upload files that are password protected.

File name	Status
No Files Uploaded	

[+ Add a File](#)

[Submit](#)

[Back to account](#)

[Home](#) > [Benefits](#) > [Benefits and financial support if you're disabled or have a health condition](#)

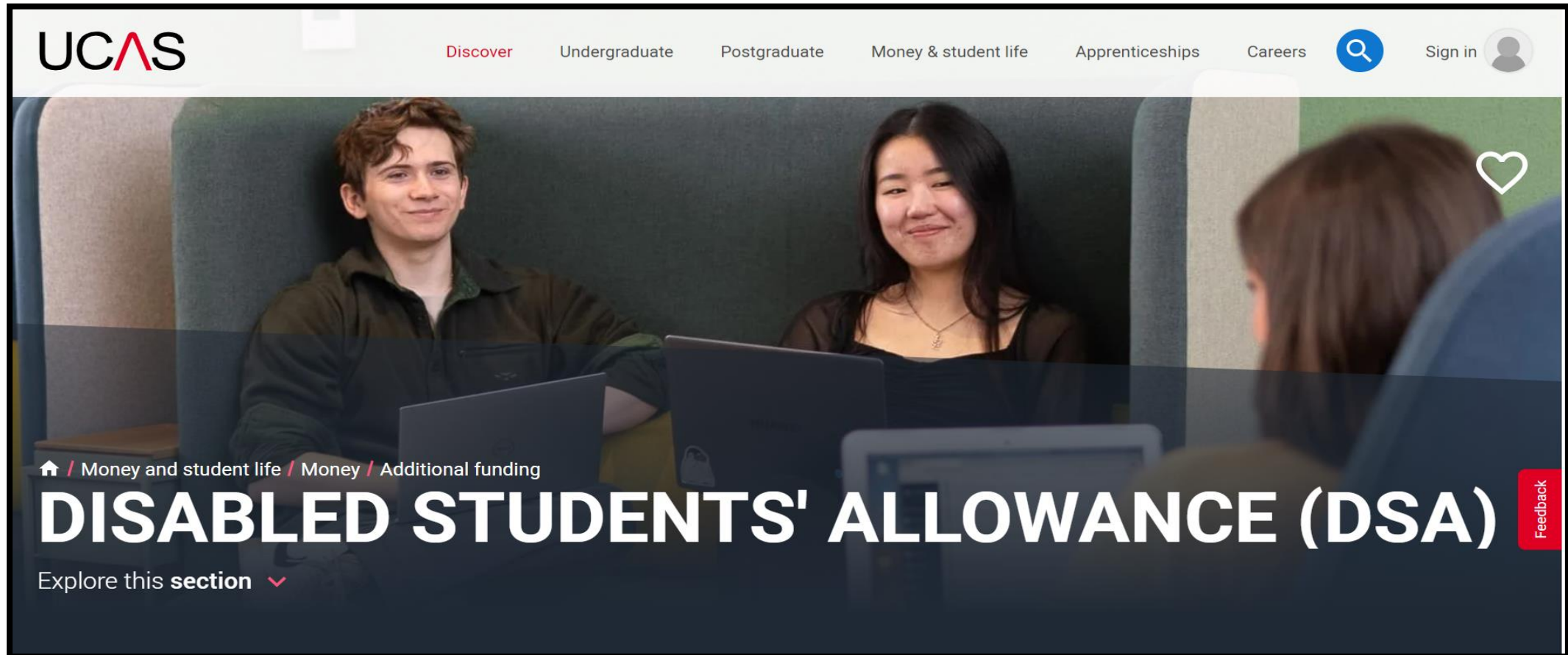
Help if you're a student with a learning difficulty, health problem or disability

Contents

- [Disabled Students' Allowance](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [How to apply](#)
- [Further information](#)

Disabled Students' Allowance

www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa



UCAS

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Sign in

Home / Money and student life / Money / Additional funding

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA)

Explore this section ▼

Feedback

www.ucas.com/money-and-student-life/money/additional-funding/disabled-students-allowance-dsa

DSA Reforms

The story so far

On 26 February 2024, SLC introduced a new [DSA service model](#). Under the new model, students continue to apply to SLC for their DSA, and once their eligibility is confirmed by our team, one of the two contracted suppliers (**Study Tech or Capita**) is allocated to be responsible for the provision of needs assessment, assistive technology equipment, assistive technology training and aftercare.

The reforms to DSA are a result of a ministerial decisions to put contracts in place for the provision of needs assessments, assistive technology and assistive technology training. The reforms are designed to:

- Improve the application journey for students by having a single point of contact (supplier) for their end-to-end support for the services above.
- Introduce formal contractual controls for SLC to hold suppliers to account for their performance and quality.
- Enhance value for money for the student and the taxpayer.
- Enable opportunity by widening access and participation in higher education.

The previous process, where multiple suppliers interacted with the student at different points during the journey, was too long and complex, with no one party taking overall ownership for the support received by the student

DSA Reforms

How they work

The new service applies to students receiving DSA from Student Finance England (SFE) and Student Finance Wales (SFW) only:

Students studying in Scotland and Northern Ireland:

- Students who receive **SFE or SFW** funding and study in Scotland or Northern Ireland will be covered by the new arrangements
- Students who receive **SAAS or SFNI** funding and study in England or Wales will not be affected by the new model
- These applicants will continue to be supported, as at present by the relevant student funding administration

The New Student Journey



01

New customers will apply to SLC for DSA in the usual way.



02

SLC will continue to process their application and assess their eligibility.

03

Once the customer is assessed as eligible by SLC, SLC will assign the customer to Study Tech or Capita.



04

The customer will then have a single point of contact for their needs assessment, assistive technology and training requirements.



08

The supplier will be responsible for the customer's installation, set-up and familiarisation of their equipment and software, and any training as required.



07

The supplier will then contact the customer to arrange delivery of their assistive technology.



06

SLC will inform the customer and supplier of the agreed recommendations.



05

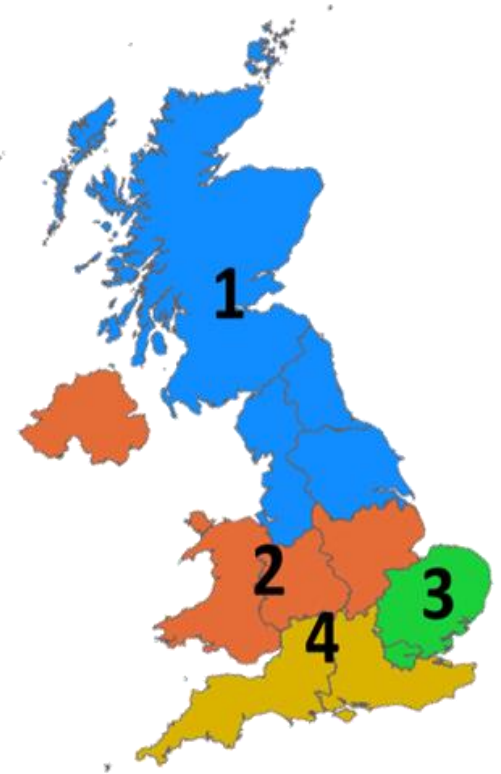
Needs Assessment Reports will continue to be sent by the supplier to SLC for review.



Capita and Study Tech have each been awarded **two geographical lots** across the UK

In their respective geographical lot areas, they will be responsible for:

- Managing the end-to-end DSA process for needs assessment
- The delivery of assistive technology equipment
- Familiarisation and training
- Ongoing aftercare



Geographical Regions



Zone	Territory	Supplier
1	Scotland North West England, North East England Yorkshire and the Humber	Study Tech
2	West Midlands, East Midlands Wales and Northern Ireland	Capita
3	East England and London	Capita
4	South West England and South East England	Study Tech

*Services provided in Wales will be available in Welsh and English

How students are assigned to suppliers

Generally, under the new model, students will be assigned to a framework supplier based on the contact address they provide to SLC:

- Following term start, the student will be assigned to a framework supplier based **on their higher education provider (HEP) address**
- This is to minimise numbers of students who may have otherwise been allocated to a supplier who is no longer best placed to offer a face-to-face assessment
- Where a supplier has provided a needs assessment, they will be responsible for supplying assistive technology, training and support/after care **for the duration** of the student's course, even if they are now located in a different zone
- Only in exceptional circumstances would SLC consider re-assigning a student to the alternative supplier post needs assessment approval
- Students on **distance learning** courses will always be allocated to appropriate suppliers based on their home address

Non-Medical Help (NMH) **is not** within scope of the new framework:

- As such, the existing process remains unchanged, and suppliers are expected to **continue to** recommend/source NMH provision for students in accordance with the respective funding body guidance
- Needs Assessors are required to continue to source two quotes from registered NMH providers who are able to meet the needs of students
- SLC will also continue to review/approve needs assessment recommendations and will select the supplier with the most competitive quote (where there are no exceptional circumstances)
- New guidance for selecting NMH has been produced in collaboration with DfE and the Welsh Government which is available at:

<https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/exchange-blog/2019/november/guidance-for-assessment-centres/>
<https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/practitioners/guidance-for-assessment-centres/>

Comms/stakeholder engagement

We are working closely with stakeholders and sector specialists to share best practice, insights and feedback including via our Disabled Students' Stakeholder Group chaired by Professor Geoff Layer and our DSA Quality Committee.

- The remit of the DSA Quality Committee is to provide independent validation that Capita and Study Tech are adhering to the agreed quality standards, and that the quality standards are driving the intended outcome of an improved customer journey. Members of the group include the Thomas Pocklington Trust, Disability Rights UK, Student Minds, National Deaf Children's Society and the British Dyslexia Association.
- We have also established a new monthly DSA Operations Group for practitioners which started on 27 August, to provide feedback and insights on the DSA customer journey; highlight emerging or potential issues; create a feedback loop between practitioners and SLC.
- A new resource: *'What to expect from a Needs Assessment'* will soon be published to better inform students about the standards and experience they should expect at their needs assessment. We have engaged with DSA suppliers and disability practitioners to get their feedback and input.
- Our DSA Customer Panel, made up of current and former DSA students, meets four times a year.

Contacting SLC

- For general or student specific queries, please contact:
- Disability Adviser disability_adviser@slc.co.uk
- 01325 215194
- If you have any questions or feedback on the new DSA service, please contact: DSA_Requests@slc.co.uk.

How to contact Study Tech and Capita

- Study Tech and Capita have dedicated higher education teams. If you have any questions or feedback on the new DSA service, please contact:
- Study Tech: HEP Liaison, Email: jane.fraser@study.tech
- Capita: HEP Liaison, Email: dsahepmanager@capita.com

Who Is Your Regional FIS Account Manager?



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Lesley McDowell
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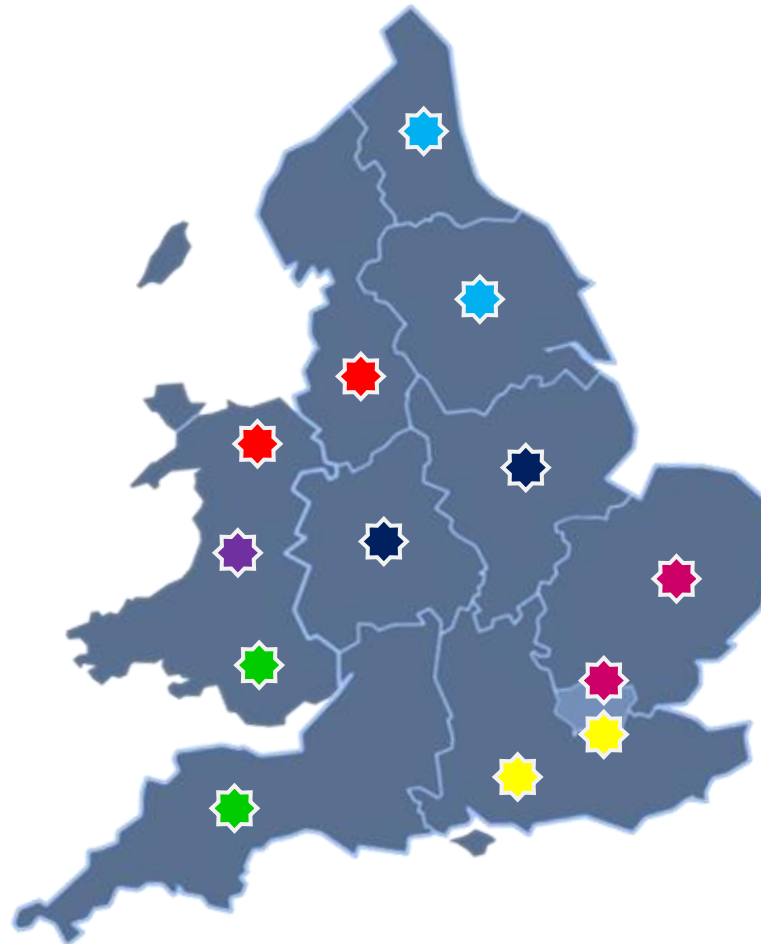
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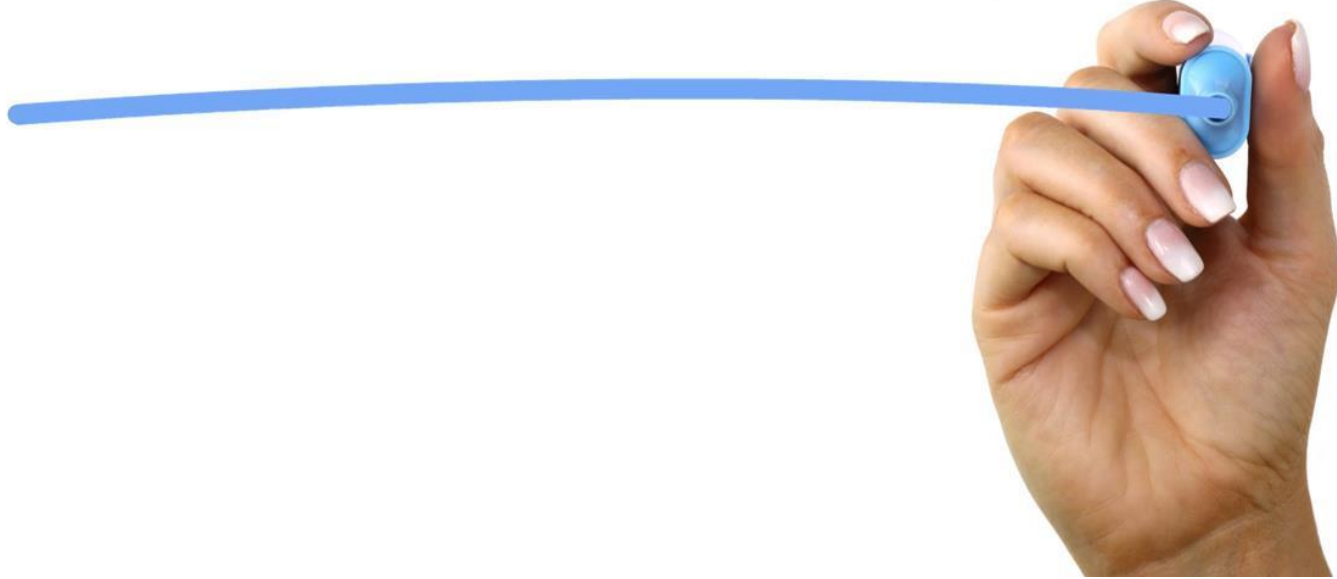
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QUESTIONS



This now concludes today's session. Many thanks for attending.

If you want to discuss any Student Finance issues, ask questions or arrange a visit, please don't hesitate to contact SLC using the details below.

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