



How can we make consideration of disabled students' needs the norm?

Geoff Layer, Chair of the Disabled Students' Commission

Three Months to Make a Difference: Key areas of challenge for institutions

1. Support disabled applicants through clearing
2. Ensure access to funding for reasonable adjustments
3. Ensure student support considers disabled students
4. Consider accommodation issues
5. Enable participation in induction and welcome
6. Blended learning to be delivered inclusively
7. Embed accessibility across all technologies

Student voice: experiences during Covid-19

- Survey exploring the impact of Covid-19 on disabled students' experiences, completed by 473 disabled students
- Follow-up online discussion groups with disabled students, segmented by stage in the higher education lifecycle
- Feedback included asking providers to focus on anticipation of reasonable adjustments

“Disabled students are a heterogeneous group and accessibility needs to be considered in the implementation every step of the way. As always, we need staff training, improved structures of accountability and structures for gaining insight from disabled students, and a reduction in the administrative burden.”

Postgraduate student

Student voice: experiences during Covid-19

- Anticipation of reasonable adjustments and support across the student lifecycle currently not being met:
 - **Transition into higher education:** lack of communication and understanding of when support will be in place
 - **Remote teaching, learning and assessment:** experiences vary by impairment type, and a blended approach brings benefits
 - **Mental health and wellbeing:** consistent with research gathered across the sector, with 80% of all respondents stating that Covid-19 negatively impacted on their mental health and wellbeing
 - **Transition into employment:** only 7.9% of disabled students aware that disability-specific careers advice available

Four c's

- **Communication**
 - **Certainty**
 - **Consistency**
 - **Choice**

“I had to reiterate my needs multiple times during the first few months of my course. One of my reasonable adjustments is to access timetables and course materials early, and this frequently did not happen, with lectures being rescheduled last minute, online materials failing to be uploaded, and assessment information taking a long time to be sent out.”

Postgraduate student

Agenda for change: Disabled Student Commitment



To commit to securing an enhanced and improved disabled student experience within higher education across the following areas:



Agenda for change: Disabled Student Commitment



- Share disability information once only
- Anticipatory reasonable adjustments in place in advance
- IAG which shows support available by condition and not guided by marketing
- Comprehensive transition programme focussed on creating sense of belonging
- No one size fits all approach- recognise diversity and intersectionality

Agenda for change: Disabled Student Commitment



- Senior Champion to resolve impasses
- Mandatory disability awareness training for all academic staff
- Training by condition where appropriate
- All modules to have student choice on the form of assessment
- Employability guidance to include by condition