



# Non-Medical Helper (NMH) Service

## Guide for Students v2 – July 2024

We are happy to provide the information in this booklet in alternative formats upon request: please email [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk) or call 01244 511550 to discuss your requirements.

### Welcome to Disability and Inclusion

Disability and Inclusion provides information, advice and guidance to students with a wide range of disabilities including: SpLDs (such as dyslexia and dyspraxia); Asperger's Syndrome/Autism; mental health conditions; physical disabilities; sensory impairments; and unseen disabilities such as chronic fatigue, epilepsy, and diabetes.

Our role is to support students to benefit from university life and to achieve their academic potential. Part of this involves co-ordinating the Non-Medical Helper (NMH) Service.

This leaflet explains key information regarding your NMH Support. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, please contact Disability and Inclusion to discuss.

### The Role of the NMH

NMHs are support workers and other non-medical assistants you might need to use to benefit fully from your course. These can include Disability Assistants, Specialist Mentors, Specialist Study Skills Tutors, and BSL Interpreters, for example.

The type of NMH support you get will depend on your individual needs, but your NMH should have a good understanding of the support you need, and be reliable and trustworthy. To get the most effective help possible from your NMH, you should let them know if you have any specific requirements. For example:

- if you have a Disability Assistant who provides you with typed-up lecture notes, you should let them know what font and text size is best for you. You should also give them a copy of your timetable and let them know as soon as you are aware of any class time or room changes/cancellations.
- If you are uncomfortable meeting in a busy, noisy venue like the open-plan areas of the library, you should let your support worker know that you'd prefer to book a quiet space on campus to meet. NMHs work within the requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE) on behalf of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Your supplier is listed on your DSA award letter known as a DSA2, along with their contact details. If you are an Apprentice student in receipt of ESFA LSF funding, you will receive an Apprenticeship ANA Entitlement Letter which is equivalent to a DSA2.

All the NMHs have been interviewed and, where appropriate, under-taken relevant tests and meet the appropriate mandatory qualifications and professional body registration requirements set by the government and DSA funding bodies. This enables them to offer appropriate and relevant support as determined by a Disability Support Officer, Needs Assessor, and/or Educational Psychologist report.



## Service delivery

The focus of the support sessions is to work with you to enable you to achieve your academic potential. This may include assisting you in developing skills such as time management or organisation; or providing physical assistance in travelling around campus or note taking.

## Preparation for your NMH Support Worker Session

You are responsible for directing the session and obtaining the most from your support.

## Booking and Cancellation of Support Sessions

Disability and Inclusion wish to make you aware of our procedures with regard to:

- Booking appointments
- Attendance
- Non-attendance
- Cancellation
- Contact with Disability and Inclusion

**Please note** that when you first access NMH support you will be deemed to have read and agreed to these procedures.

## Booking appointments

You should be contacted initially by either Disability and Inclusion or your NMH service provider to confirm your NMH support arrangements. If you have not heard anything from your provider, please contact them using the contact details given to you on your DSA award letter or Apprenticeship ANA Entitlement Letter award letter.

If you are accessing support, your allocated NMH will then contact you to set up a regular day and time to meet, as per your support recommendations and academic timetable. Once confirmed, booked sessions will be added to an online booking system.

During your first meeting, your NMH will discuss and agree the mode of contact you should use to arrange and cancel meetings (e.g. by email or text message). Whilst you may book appointments in advance, if you are unable to attend for any reason then you must give your NMH at least 24 hours' notice of this where possible, and you must also then reconfirm attendance at additional pre-booked appointments in the future.

## Attendance

It is expected that you prepare and plan for the NMH in advance by deciding what you would like to focus on during your support sessions. If your support requirements are of a more practical nature, please advise your NMH of what support you require from them and what you would like to manage yourself. If your support takes place in a timetabled session (e.g. notetaking) then it is courteous to teaching staff to inform them prior to the start of teaching that you will be being supported by a NMH, this applies both to in-person and remote sessions.

## Non-attendance

We understand that at times you may be unable to attend a booked NMH session for various reasons; you should give 24 hours' notice of this wherever possible. This will allow your NMH to book appointments with other students during that time slot.

## Cancellation of appointments

- If you are unable to give 24 hours' notice of cancellation please let your NMH know as soon as you are able, and email [NMH@chester.ac.uk](mailto:NMH@chester.ac.uk) to inform us of the reason for the cancellation.
- If you do not provide 24 hours' notice of cancellation, or do not attend (DNA) a booked NMH session for any reason, your support worker is still entitled to claim the full cost of the session that should have taken place, and this will be claimed from your funding body (e.g. Student Finance England) against your DSA/Apprenticeship award. Your NMH will submit a timesheet for you to authorise in the usual way.
- If you do not advise of your reason for absence, you may be contacted by your provider and/or Disability and Inclusion or your support provider by email asking you to provide details. It is important that you respond to these requests as promptly as possible.
- If you DNA or if you cancel with less than 24 hours' notice on one occasion for any support type, your NMH provider will contact you to advise that this has been recorded as a DNA and remind you of this booking policy as regards the cancellation of appointments.
- If you DNA three times in a term for the same support role, then that support will be temporarily put on hold until you have spoken with a member of Disability and Inclusion. We will discuss your reason(s) for absence, and whether your current support is suitable for your needs. We will also go through this booking policy with you and give you the opportunity to raise any issues or concerns around your support.
- We will restart your NMH support when we have discussed reasons for non-attendance and looked at attendance strategies and your support needs with you, subject to approval for funding any further missed sessions.
- You may choose to cancel pre-booked NMH sessions with more than 24 hours' notice and take up support at a later date. In this instance, an NMH will not claim for the support and no timesheet will be submitted for authorisation.

## Changes to your circumstances

You may decide that you are managing well with your studies and do not require your recommended support. If this is the case, please let us, your provider or funding body know as soon as possible. You must also let us know if you change your mode of study (e.g. from full time to part time); if you will be studying abroad at any time throughout your course; if you need to take an interruption of studies; or if you need to defer any of your modules to a later date. All of these changes in circumstance have implications on your funding and NMH support provision, so you must advise us of changes as soon as possible.

## Payment for your NMH

You will be asked to authorise a timesheet via email or an online portal. For students whose support is funded through DSA, authorised timesheets will be forwarded to the funding body who will then pay for the support session from your DSA award up to your cap.



If you are one of the very few students whose recommended support is not fully covered by DSA funding, please contact D&I as soon as possible to discuss your plans for alternative funding.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are eligible for funding and reapply, if necessary, in good time so that you can continue your support.

**Please be aware of important changes to how we will deal with Non-Attendance (Did Not Attend/DNAs) at booked NMH sessions with effect from 1st January 2017:**

- Disabled Students' Allowance **will not** fund more than two missed sessions per support type in a term. Terms are defined by funding bodies as:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December
  - 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> April
  - 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> August
- Failure to attend two or more scheduled Non-Medical Helper sessions in a term, without providing at least 24 hours' notice of cancellation, **may result in you being charged for the full cost of the missed session.**
- If you can provide evidence of a disability-related reason for not being able to attend a session, then DSA/University of Chester will cover the cost of a missed session.
- If you provide more than 24 hours' notice that you will not be able to attend a session, this will not be classed as a DNA, and you will not be charged.
- Failure to pay the outstanding amount for any sessions which you have missed, without providing sufficient notice of cancellation, may result in your debt being passed on to a third party for collection; additionally, your support may be temporarily put on hold until the issue has been resolved.

*Examples:*

1. *STUDENT A has Specialist Mentor support and Note Taking support funded through DSA. STUDENT A misses three Mentor sessions and one note taking session in the same term. Mentoring support is then temporarily put on hold, but note taking can continue as usual. Following discussion with Disability and Inclusion, Mentoring support is reinstated. STUDENT A then misses another Mentoring session in the following term. STUDENT A's support will not be put on hold at this point, as the missed session falls in a different term to the previous missed sessions. However, if STUDENT A misses a third Mentoring session in the second term, support will again be temporarily put on hold and STUDENT A will need to speak to Disability and Inclusion to discuss whether support can be reinstated.*
2. *STUDENT B has Specialist Study Skills support funded through DSA, and a Disability Assistant funded through University of Chester. STUDENT B misses three booked sessions for each support role in the same term, and support is temporarily put on hold. Following discussion with Disability and Inclusion, it is decided that support can be reinstated for both roles. STUDENT B then has a further DNA for each role type in the same term. STUDENT B can provide evidence that their non-attendance at the booked Disability Assistant session was for disability-related reasons; Disability and Inclusion agree that this is acceptable evidence and support can continue as usual. However, STUDENT B cannot provide evidence for the missed Study Skills session. The Study Skills support is temporarily put on hold for the remainder of that term, and an invoice for the missed session is issued to STUDENT B.*

3. *STUDENT C has Specialist Mentor support funded through DSA. STUDENT C misses three booked sessions, so Mentoring support is temporarily put on hold. Following discussion with Disability and Inclusion, support is reinstated. STUDENT C then needs to miss a further booked session in the same term, but provides more than 24 hours' notice of non-attendance to their support worker. This is not counted as a DNA so support can continue as normal.*

## Contact with Disability and Inclusion

To book or cancel a NMH session, please contact your NMH using the agreed method.

Alternatively, you can contact the NMH team within Disability and Inclusion:

- Telephone Disability Support on Chester 01244 511550
- Email [nmh@chester.ac.uk](mailto:nmh@chester.ac.uk)
- Visit the shared Info Point in CBK 005 on the Exton Park, Chester campus. This is the central Information Point for all spoke sites.