



# Non-Medical Helper (NMH) Service

## Guide for NMHs and providers at the University of Chester 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.

### Introduction

This guide has been written for NMH service providers and support workers, and is designed to inform you of the NMH service at the University of Chester, and what is expected of you as part of this service.

### Welcome to Disability and Inclusion

Disability and Inclusion (D&I) is a department within Student Service at the University of Chester (UoC). We provide information, advice and guidance to students with a wide range of disabilities including:

- Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) (such as dyslexia and dyspraxia)
- Asperger's syndrome/Autism
- mental health conditions
- physical disabilities
- sensory impairments
- unseen disabilities such as chronic fatigue, epilepsy, and diabetes

Our role is to support students to access higher education, benefit from university life and achieve their academic potential. We can assist students in:

- making applications for additional funding (e.g. Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA))
- obtaining suitable medical evidence
- arranging suitable accommodation at university
- arranging parking permits on disability-related grounds
- arranging specialist equipment loans
- obtaining reasonable adjustments through the creation of an Inclusion Plan (IP) and exam arrangements through an SN1

Disability and Inclusion also have responsibility for co-ordinating NMH provision at UoC.

### Overview of the NMH Service

UoC coordinates its NMH support as part of D&I and work closely with a range of local and national accredited providers to provide NMH roles to students.



The Department for Education (DfE) introduced a number of changes to the way non-specialist (Band 1 & 2) NMH support was funded and delivered in Higher Education for Academic Year 2016/17.

Following these changes, UoC introduced two new roles – Disability Assistant 1 and Disability Assistant 2 – to deliver non-specialist support to our students. Our current supplier of these roles is Barry Bennett Ltd.

- Disability Assistant (e.g. practical support, note taking, exam scribing, transcription)
- Specialist Note taker (Hearing Impaired and Visually Impaired students)
- Specialist Mentor (Mental Health)
- Specialist Mentor (ASC)
- Specialist One-to-One Study Skills Tutor (SpLD)
- Specialist One-to-One Study Skills Tutor (ASC)

We aim to work with NMHs and providers to ensure an effective supportive service which enhances student independence and achievement. We welcome feedback on the service and use any comments to reflect and improve on current practices.

## General information

All NMHs act on behalf of a provider – they are not staff of UoC. The NMH provider is responsible for the payroll and associated Human Resources procedures. This includes tasks such as but not limited to ensuring that NMHs are eligible and compliant to work, meeting Department for Education (DfE) qualification and professional body membership requirements, sourcing references, and arranging Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

NMHs are required to confirm booked support sessions in advance of the session taking place. NMHs are also required to keep a log of the work undertaken to support students in each session. Additionally, we ask NMHs to review their students' aims and objectives on a regular basis via an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), to ensure the most suitable support is being provided for a student's needs.

NMH providers administer payment to NMHs and NMHs will need to record hours worked and students are then required to authorise timesheet(s). If a student has not authorised a timesheet within 5 working days of submission please advise your provider, or the NMH team at UoC.



## NMH Responsibilities

- All NMHs are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to working one-to-one with any student. This is arranged by NMH providers and not UoC.
- NMHs are expected to ensure they meet the current mandatory requirements of the role you have been employed to do, as defined by the Department for Education and relevant funding bodies.
- NMHs must attend regular training and good practice sessions offered by providers and UoC. Good Practice sessions are held twice a year, with dates are circulated to providers prior to the sessions. Attendance at these sessions ensures the continued quality of the NMH service, provides you a link to other support workers and UoC, and provides a forum for sharing good practice and skills development. These sessions are arranged and facilitated by the NMH team at the university, and you are expected to attend at least one session per academic year.
- NMHs should report any planned and unplanned absence(s) ASAP to providers so that alternative support arrangements can be made.
- When allocated a new student to support, NMHs should aim to contact them within 2 working days of being matched to introduce themselves and plan to meet them. NMHs will receive the student's contact details and a brief description of their needs and awarded support allocation. If a NMH is not able to make contact (via phone and/or email) with the student within two weeks of receiving the allocation for support, you must inform D&I as soon as possible.
- During a first meeting with a student, NMHs are expected to go through the NMH Student Guide to ensure the student understands its contents. It is also beneficial to discuss the student's understanding of your role in supporting them as well as your role boundaries; to agree methods of contact and agreed hours of availability; and to determine what they would like to achieve from the support. You should also complete the student's ILP during this first session.
- NMHs should maintain confidentiality within your role at all times. For example, information regarding a student's disability should not be discussed with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties outside of D&I or your provider.
- **NMHs should not promise to keep all interactions with a student confidential.** There may be some occasions when information will need to be shared (e.g. if a student is thought to be a risk to themselves or others, or where sharing of information is required by law.)
- D&I will advise a student's academic department and tutors that a student might use a support worker during their lectures through an IP. This is drafted by D&I in conjunction with the student and forwarded to relevant members of staff. NMHs supporting a student in a lecture/seminar, please discreetly explain to staff that you are attending the session as NMH to one of the students in the class, this applies to both in person and remote sessions. Do not disclose which student you are working with unless the student has given prior permission for you to do so.
- NMHs must not give advice or offer personal opinions in any teaching situation.



- NMHs must not provide any additional support other than that for which you have been employed (e.g. a Disability Assistant should not be providing mentoring support; a Specialist Mentor should not provide study skills tuition or proof read a student's work).
- NMHs must not exceed the number of allocated support hours a student has without prior agreement from D&I and the student's funding body. NMHs will be advised how many hours a student has funding for when initially matched. If a student's support is being funded by DSA, this information is also available to them on their funding agreement letter, often referred to as a DSA2 letter.
- NMHs should not support students outside of term time (e.g. during summer vacation) without prior agreement from D&I. If a student feels they need to access support outside of term time (e.g. if they have deferred assessment to the reassessment period or have extended deadlines they are working towards outside of the academic year), they are advised to contact D&I to discuss their needs further with a Disability Support Officer.
- NMHs must pre-book all support sessions.
- Support must be delivered in a public space on the university campus unless prior agreement has been given by Disability and Inclusion and the student's funding body (e.g. via Skype). You **must not** deliver support in a student's residence or home. Typically, students meet their support worker in one of the university libraries. It may be possible to book a quiet study space if a student requires this; the student is responsible for booking a room, and this can be done via LIS or their academic department.
- You must complete a session log at the end of each session which details the support delivered in that session.

## Booking support sessions, student attendance and cancellation

- You should arrange support sessions a minimum of a week in advance.
- If block-booking sessions with a student, these can be booked on a termly basis.
- If the student does not attend a booked session for any reason, or cancels with less than 24 hours' notice, any remaining booked sessions must be cancelled, and no further session can be booked until the student is able to confirm attendance – subsequent support sessions must not be booked nor take place until the student has confirmed them.
- To assist students in attending their booked support sessions, we would suggest that support workers send an email or text reminder to students 24 hours before the session is due to take place. If a student does not attend, please contact the student to request the reason for non-attendance (copying in [NMH@chester.ac.uk](mailto:NMH@chester.ac.uk) to any email correspondence). The reason for non-attendance should be logged on your timesheet. It is important to provide information about non-attendance as this is required by funding bodies as evidence for processing payments. Please ensure you choose the correct option for non-attendance. If you are unsure, please contact your provider or the NMH team for advice.
- If a student provides less than 24 hours' notice of cancellation, you are entitled to claim for the hours you had been booked to work. Therefore, this would be classed as a non-attendance and should be recorded in the same way. Students should also provide a



written reason for late cancellation.

- If a student does not respond to your request for clarification of non-attendance, please advise the NMH team or your provider as soon as possible so that this can be followed up.
- If a student misses three sessions in a term then their support will be temporarily put on hold until they have discussed their non-attendance with Disability and Inclusion. You will be advised if this applies. **During this time, you must not book any further sessions with the student, and any pre-booked appointments must be cancelled until further notice. Failure to abide by this may result in sessions not being funded.**
- Disability and Inclusion will advise in writing (by email) when sessions can be booked again.

### **For Disability Assistants who provide note taking support**

- Unless otherwise instructed by Disability and Inclusion or your provider, you must NOT take notes for a student in their absence.
- If a student fails to attend a lecture whilst you are designated to note take, please complete the lecture notes and report the failure to attend to Disability and Inclusion ASAP.
- If a lecture/seminar is cancelled or relocated, it is the student's responsibility to advise you of any changes with at least 24 hours' notice – or as soon as they are made aware. Should this be less than 24 hours' notice of cancellation, you are entitled to claim for the hours you were booked to work. No claim can be made for any cancelled booking with more than 24 hours' notice.

### **Contacting Disability and Inclusion**

Your provider should be contacted in the first instance for all queries relating to your employment, payroll, sickness absence or booking system/online platform. The NMH team can be contacted if you have any concerns about the student you are supporting (e.g. personal or academic wellbeing), or their support needs.

Our contact details are:

- Address – Student Services Info Point - Disability and Inclusion  
005 Binks Building  
Parkgate Road Campus  
University of Chester  
CH1 4BJ
- Telephone – 01244 511550
- Email – [nmh@chester.ac.uk](mailto:nmh@chester.ac.uk)