

Improving access to Higher Education for disabled students



Information for teachers in secondary school

Recent research by Lancashire AimHigher Disability project has identified the following questions and sources of information that it may be useful to consider when thinking about how you support pupils on the SEN register who are predicted to **achieve 5 or more GCSEs grades A-C** and show potential to study for a Higher Education (HE) qualification.

Information, Advice and Guidance

- ? How and when do SEN pupils, pupils without a 'transition review' discuss educational opportunities available after school?
- ? Do pupils know that studying for HE is an option?
- ? Do they know that you can study for a HE qualification at home, as well as some Further Education (FE) and HE Colleges and university?
- ? Are pupils aware that the qualifications they study after their GCSEs will influence their access to HE – how can you help them leave their options open?

Higher Education

- ? Are pupils aware of the potential benefits of a higher education qualification, for example greater choice in terms of employment?
- ? Do pupils know that the term SEN is not used in HE, instead they use the term 'disabled students' which includes students with physical or sensory impairments, specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, mental health difficulties such as depression, unseen disabilities or health conditions such as asthma, epilepsy and autistic spectrum disorders.
- ? Do you know what opportunities there are for pupils to visit HE providers to find out about the courses they offer, the facilities and support they provide?

Summer Schools

Summer schools provide an ideal opportunity for a young person to experience what studying in HE might be like. They can give an SEN, disabled or school action plus pupil the chance to find out about disability support and funding available and how this is organised in HE. Summer schools are organised by Aimhigher and your school Aimhigher Co-ordinator should have further details, if not contact North West Summer Schools.

- ? Do you and your pupils know about Summer Schools including those organised by Aimhigher?
- ? Are SEN pupils given the same opportunities to participate in these taster experiences?
- ? Is there support available to fill in application forms and discuss their concerns about summer schools?

North West Summer Schools

For information about summer schools or to discuss how they might support a particular pupil

http://www.summer-schools.info/power_search.php?pflag=search®ion=North+West

Improving access to Higher Education for disabled students



Additional Financial Support for Disabled Students

Although it may seem a long way off it may be useful to mention to parents / guardians about the funding support available for HE students since some may rule HE out because they are concerned about the cost. Funding for learner support and equipment is organised differently in the school, FE and HE sectors. In HE disabled students may apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance, which provides funding for equipment, transport, personal and academic support incurred because of a disability.

Disabled Students' Allowance Fact sheet:

Information for parents / guardians and links to websites about what to study, where to study, support for disabled students, financial support and careers
<http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/disabled-students-allowance.php>

Working with Parents / Guardians

The role of parents in supporting and making decisions about HE is crucial

- ? How do parents / guardians in your school receive information about: post-GCSE options including funding and support arrangements in FE and HE, 6th Form and FE Open Days, summer schools?
- ? Would you be able to organise a meeting to bring together parents of pupils with SEN to discuss: their hopes and fears about their son or daughter's future, post-GCSE options, how personal and academic support is organised and funded in FE and HE?

Lancashire Aimhigher Families web site

Information for parents / guardians and links to websites about what to study, where to study, support for disabled students, financial support and careers
<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/families/index.htm>

Promoting positive images of disability

Material for citizenship classes from the Disability Rights Commission can be used to increase awareness of all pupils www.drc.org.uk/citizenship/introduction.asp
Case studies of disabled students to illustrate the range of issues they face when entering higher education <http://dart.lboro.ac.uk/case.html>

Other LAD Information Sheets that may be of interest:

LAD Information Sheet 1 Learning support staff and disability advisors' contact details
LAD Information Sheet 6a Websites: Information, Advice and Guidance
LAD Information Sheet 6b Websites: Institutional Issues and Staff Development
LAD Information Sheet 6c Websites: Teaching and Learning

Improving access to Higher Education for disabled students



Prepared on behalf of Lancashire Aimhigher

For further information about supporting disabled learners, or copies of other resources, contact:

✉ Lancaster University, Department Educational Research, REAP: Researching Equity, Access and Participation, County South, Lancaster, LA1 4YD

☎ 01524 593684

✉ Jess Walmsley: j.m.walmsley@lancaster.ac.uk or

✉ Ann-Marie Houghton: a.houghton@lancaster.ac.uk to change contact details

🌐 <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/REAP/projects/LAHDIsability.htm>