Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) Provider Information Pack

This document contains guidance for DSA providers regarding invoicing and some other related processes. This document should also be used in conjunction with the [Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) Non-Medical Help (NMH) Guidance](#) which provides further advice specifically regarding the delivery of NMH. For the purpose of this document Assistive Technology Training is included within the bracket of NMH.

Commonly used abbreviations:

- DSA – Disabled Students' Allowance
- NMH – Non-Medical Help
- SFE – Student Finance England
- CRN – Customer Reference Number
- HEP – Higher Education Provider
- DSA2 – Students Notification of Entitlement Letter

Version	Date	Description
1.0	17/05/2022	Release to live
1.1	06/10/2022	Update – NMH Provider FAQs
1.2	01/03/2024	Update – E-Invoice and E-Signature

1   Submitting Invoices

There are three ways in which DSA providers can submit invoices to SFE.

1.1   Post

Invoices can be posted to Student Finance England, Memphis Building, Lingfield Point, PO BOX 294, Darlington, DL1 1RW.

1.2   Email

Invoices can be sent via email to dsa_submit_invoice@slc.co.uk. There are some specific rules that need to be followed so that invoices can be extracted from the email:

- Invoices and timesheets must be attached as a PDF
- It is preferable for both the invoice, timesheet and any support evidence to be within the same PDF
- Invoices and timesheets should not be password protected
- An email should contain only 1 invoice/timesheet
- The subject should be the student's CRN and Invoice Number
- Content of emails will not be read or responded to. Any queries should be sent to invoice_team@slc.co.uk

1.3   Electronic Invoice Submission (E-Invoice API)

SFE have an electronic system in place for secure transfer of invoices via an E-Invoice API, however this requires the provider to build or purchase their own secure front end to link to this system. Providers who wish to know more about can find a copy of the Electronic Invoicing Information pack at Guidance for NMH Suppliers (slc.co.uk).

Further enquiries about this can be sent to DSA_Electronic_Queries@slc.co.uk

2   Invoice Payments and Remittances

SFE aim to review invoices within 10 working days of receipt of the invoice. Once processed and accepted, payment will be made via BACs, which can take 5-7 working days. Providers will be notified of successful payments by way of remittances.

2.1   Paper Remittances

SLCs formal way of providing remittances for paid invoices is via post and these will be issued automatically via SLC systems once the payment is approved. Suppliers are advised to retain copies of paper remittances in order to cross reference and match payments to their own internal systems and accounts.

2.2 Electronic Remittances

A digital emailed remittance is also available and suppliers who do not receive these are asked to email dsa_remit@slc.co.uk with their preferred email address to receive these.

This involves the sending of a daily CSV containing details of all payments for that day. Suppliers are advised that this is not SLCs formal provision for remittances and is not a full replacement for the paper invoices.

Due to system limitations, where digital remittances are not sent due to technical issues, they cannot be manually resent. Unfortunately at this time these electronic remittances are only available for Student Finance England payments.

3 Invoice Requirements

All invoices must adhere to the below standards and contain the outlined information:

- Student name and Customer Reference Number (CRN) or student name and date of birth.
- Provider's name, address, email address and phone number
- Payment details - payee name, sort code and account number
- Unique invoice number
- Date invoice was raised
- Balance to pay in GBP with appropriate VAT breakdown
- Type of support or service being invoiced for
- Invoices must relate to one student only
- Invoices cannot span multiple academic years

Actual Course Start Date lies between	SFE Academic Year Start Date used for all internal processing
Between 1st August and 31st December	1st September
Between 1st January and 31st March	1st January
Between 1st April and 30th June	1st April
Between 1st July and 31st July	1st July

Depending on the type of service being invoiced for there are additional requirements:

- **Equipment Invoices** must show the agreed quote number and delivery date as well as an itemised list of all equipment provided outlining the cost of each individual item and whether VAT has been charged. They must also confirm any contributions or upgrade costs paid by the student.

- **Travel Invoices** must confirm each journey date, time, the pick-up and drop-off points (including postcodes) and any amount paid by the student for the equivalent public transport costs. SFE cannot fund additional costs due to waiting times or additional pick-ups/drop-offs. SFE also reserve the right to query invoices that include travel at an unusual times.

- **NMH Invoices** must confirm the number of hours and support type(s) provided as per the NMH descriptors outlined in the Guidance Chapters which can be found at https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1879/2122-dsa-guidance.pdf

Where an invoice is queried, an email will be issued to the provider outlining the reason for non-payment and advice on how to rectify this. Depending on the rejection reason, information may also be requested from the student and their HEP. These requests are sent from invoice_team@slc.co.uk and all responses should be returned to this inbox.

4 DSA2 Notification of Entitlement

Prior to delivering support to students, providers should obtain a copy of the student's DSA2 letter. The DSA2 letter confirms what SFE have agreed to fund and payment will only be made where the invoice matches the agreement entitlement:

- **Equipment Agreements** – provider name and contact details, quote number, costs, and student contribution (if applicable)

- **NMH Agreements** – type of NMH support, provider name and contact details, number of hours, frequency, and cost.

- **Travel Agreements** – provider name and contact details, to and from destinations, number of journeys, frequency, costs, and student contribution (if applicable)

Students will usually receive one DSA2 letter which will last the duration of their course. SFE would update a DSA2 letter where support changes. If a provider change occurs, the original provider will be contacted and advised the agreement with them is no longer valid.

DSA funding should be used for its intended purpose only, therefore any unused/remaining NMH hours or travel journeys are not to be claimed by the agreed supplier. Only support/journeys provided to the student are to be invoiced and the banking of hours for later use is not permitted.

As well as checking the DSA2 letter for relevant agreements, providers should pay particular attention to the first page of the DSA2 letter as this page will highlight any potential funding exceptions including occasions where the total cost of the support recommended for the student exceeds the DSA maximum allowances.

5 Additional Support Required

Providers should keep accurate records of the support provided and ensure they don't provide more support than has been agreed. Should a student need further support (usually additional NMH hours or travel journeys) they should be directed to their Needs Assessor to discuss additional recommendations.

Providers should wait until additional funding has been approved and an updated DSA2 letter has been issued before delivering additional support.

6   Incorrect Payments

There may be occasions where administrative errors lead to payments made to providers in error. Where this does happen SFE will contact the provider to request that a refund is made. Providers should be aware that overpayments cannot be offset against future invoices as all invoices are paid from the students individual allowance so we are unable to balance an account that way.

7   Eligibility for DSA Funding

Full time undergraduate students do not need to reapply for DSA each year. Their DSA support will remain in place as outlined in their DSA2 letter provided they are continuing on the same course and have had their tuition fee/maintenance funding approved. Where providers are seeking confirmation of eligibility for DSA for future years, they can ask the student to confirm they have student finance in place i.e., their notification of entitlement letter which is available in their online account. This will be sufficient evidence that they are still eligible for DSA support.

Part time, postgraduate and students only applying for DSA are currently required to reapply for DSA each year. Students who have reapplied for DSA will receive correspondence in the form of either a DSA Renew Email or an updated DSA2 letter confirming their support is ongoing.

SFE cannot fund support which has been provided to a student after their official course end date. Providers should ensure they are aware of the course end date.

Where a student withdraws from or suspends their course, they should notify the provider themselves. Where this does happen, the support should be stopped. SFE will also notify providers directly. Any support provided after this will not be paid.

8   Conflicts of Interest

Public funds should be used fairly, transparently, and for the purpose intended. Anyone making decisions about the administration, distribution or use of DSAs must always be conscious of any relationships or links they have, or any actions they take or do not take, that could raise doubts about their impartiality or probity. This includes relationships or links – including personal, financial, business, or familial – that could be seen to have an influence on their decision making.

Furthermore, due to the potential conflicts of interest, DSA funding will not be available to any company, partnership or other organisation that is owned or controlled by the student being supported, or in which the student has a financial interest or personal investment.

In addition to this, students will not be permitted:
- To deliver DSA funded support to friends or family members, due to the potential conflict of interest and the difficulty in maintaining professional boundaries
- To receive DSA funded support from friends and family members, due to the potential conflict of interest and the difficulty in maintaining professional boundaries
- To deliver DSAs funded support, if they have been assessed as 'needing' similar DSAs funded support by a DSAs study needs assessor.

Where a conflict of interest is identified in line with any of the above bullet points, either in advance of support being provided or whilst support is being provided but regardless of duration, SFE will look to request a change of provider for the student.

Full guidance on conflict of interest is available at: [Guidance for NMH Suppliers (slc.co.uk)](#)

9   Outsourcing Support

It is not permitted for the agreed provider on the student's DSA2 letter to outsource support to another company or individual. If the agreed supplier cannot provide the support as outlined in the student's DSA2 letter, they must inform SFE who can then source an alternative provider for the student. Invoices, timesheets or supporting documents received from providers not agreed on the DSA2 letter will be rejected. Freelance support workers must use the agreed supplier's documentation when providing support.

10   Timesheet Requirements (NMH Invoices)

SFE require providers to supply evidence of all work undertaken, confirmed by both the student and support worker. This is done by using a timesheet (Appendix A) which should be submitted alongside each NMH invoice.

Timesheets must not be signed prior to a session taking place by either the student or support worker.

There are three acceptable ways for providers to obtain conformation from a student that support has taken place.

10.1   Wet (ink) Signature

The student is presented with the paper timesheet to sign during or after the NMH session has taken place.

10.2   Email Confirmation

Where it is not possible to obtain a wet signature from a student for example due to remote delivery, SFE are able to accept email confirmation from the student's registered email address or HEP email address. The provider should submit the standard timesheet (signed by the support worker) and the email confirmation from the student with the invoice.

The email out to the student should be sent following the session that has taken place and it should contain details of the session e.g. Mentor Support, along with the date, time, support workers name and should ask the student to reply to confirm that they attended the session.

10.3   Electronic Verification (E-Signature)

This is something that can be achieved in a number of ways. Previously accepted solutions range from online e-signature capture services such as pandadoc and docusign to full customer management systems where students log in and verify the sessions have taken place. SLC are unable to accept the typing of the student's name into timesheet or non verified e-signatures.

Providers who wish to know more about can find a copy of the Electronic Verification Information pack at [Guidance for NMH Suppliers (slc.co.uk).](https://slc.co.uk)

Suppliers must seek approval before implementing e-signatures and further enquiries about this can be sent to [DSA_Electronic_Queries@slc.co.uk.](mailto:DSA_Electronic_Queries@slc.co.uk)

10.4   Session Length

Support sessions lasting more than 8 consecutive hours are expected to include a break which should be declared on the timesheet. 'Comfort' breaks (less than 15 minutes in length) taken during shorter sessions do not need to be declared. SFE are not able to fund break times during sessions of Non-Medical Help. SFE also expects that support providers are taking breaks and lunches in line with their employers working time policy. Invoices suggesting that support workers are conducting support for more than 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week may be queried.

NMH agreements on a DSA2 letter will specify a number of hours agreed for each role. In general, it is presumed that most booked sessions of specialist support would be an hour in length. Some support will be dictated by the length of a student's lecture e.g. Specialist Notetaking Support.

Where sessions either finish earlier than planned or run over, time should be claimed in in periods of 15-minute blocks. This is the minimum time period that should be invoiced for to allow SLC to accurately track and monitor used and remaining hours.

10.5   Keeping Records / Learning Plans

The provider should keep clear evidence of the work undertaken with the student via the timesheet as covered above. They should also keep Work Plans/ Learning Plans where applicable which includes:

- Location
- Start and end time
- Details of the support provided during the session
- Student confirmation of support received

The NMH Provider should maintain records containing only sufficient relevant information to enable them to meet their liabilities relating to support for the student. Records should be retained for a minimum of 6 years from the date of the student's last session. Students' data should be managed in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations.

10.6   Cancelled NMH Sessions

The full policy around cancellation charges when students fail to attend a pre-arranged NMH session can be found in the DSA Guidance Chapters (https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1879/2122-dsa-guidance.pdf). NMH providers especially must make themselves aware of this policy.

10.7   Student Guidance – What to Expect From Your NMH

Guidance has been created and a link is given in the students' DSA2 letter regarding what they should expect from their NMH support. NMH providers should also familiarise themselves with this guidance which can be found here: https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/exchange-blog/2022/january/your-disabled-students-allowance-funded-non-medical-help-nmh-support-what-can-you-expect/

11   Frequently Asked NMH Provider Questions

Q. I am at capacity for a particular NMH role – how can I remove this from the register?

A. NMH Providers can contact DSA_Requests@slc.co.uk to ask for a role to be removed from the NMH Register for a temporary period or to be removed completely. The NMH Provider should then contact the same email address to have a role added back on once there is availability. Please note, the NMH Register is usually updated weekly, so changes may not be instant.

Q. I would like to register to provide a new NMH role – how can I do this?

A. To add a new role, providers should contact DfE directly:

https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/exchange-blog/2020/september/10092020-guidance-for-nmh-suppliers/

Q, I would like to increase my hourly rate for NMH – how can I do this?

A. NMH Providers can increase their hourly rates at any time, however, it is important to understand that this would only apply to **new students**. Where a student has a DSA2 letter confirming an agreement based on a quote that was provided previously, this cannot be increased.

SFE do not hold or manage a database of hourly rates and therefore do not need to be informed of hourly rate changes. NMH hourly rates should be inline with the cost bands provided for each NMH role as per the DSA Guidance Chapters (https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1879/2122-dsa-guidance.pdf)

NMH Providers are encouraged to host their own hourly rates on their own website so that Needs Assessors can access this and ensure they are including the most up to date quote information in the Needs Assessment. NMH Providers may also wish to reach out to Assessment Centres to confirm hourly rates or liaise with the Association of NMH Providers who host hourly rates on their website.

Where an NMH Provider receives a DSA2 letter for a new student and they believe the hourly rate is incorrect, they should contact the DSA_Team@slc.co.uk who will review the case.

12   SFE/DfE Audits

NMH Audits will be carried out as standard practice by DfE as per the guidance on the practitioners website: Guidance for NMH Suppliers (slc.co.uk)

SFE may also be required to carry out audits in response to potential concerns raised. On receipt of a query from DSA or DfE, the provider must respond within the given timeframe. Valid reasons for non-compliance will be considered at audit.

The DSA team responsible for carrying out the SFE led audits is the Further Investigations Team and they can be contacted at dsa_further_investigation@slc.co.uk.

13   DSA Team Contact Information

Email Addresses:
Invoice Submission – dsa_submit_invoice@slc.co.uk
Invoice Queries – invoice_team@slc.co.uk
Entitlement/Eligibility Queries – dsa_team@slc.co.uk
Further Investigations Team – dsa_further_Investigation@slc.co.uk
NMH Register Queries – dsa_requests@slc.co.uk
E-Invoice and E-Signature Queries – dsa_electronic_queries@slc.co.uk

Phone Numbers:
DSA Response Line – 01325 215 194 (Provider Queries)
Student Helpline – 0300 100 0607 (Student Queries)

Appendix A

Example - Standard Timesheet

Student Name	
Student CRN	
Student D.O.B	
Support Type	

INVOICE NUMBER	
Company Name	
Funding Body	

LOGO

Attended Sessions

Location	Mode of Delivery	Date	Start Time (HH:MM)	Finish Time (HH:MM)	Total Breaks* (HH:MM)	Total Hours	Student Signature	Support Worker (PRINT NAME)	Support Worker Signature

*Breaks – Support provided more than 8 consecutive hours are expected to include a break. Breaks must be recorded within 15min blocks. 'Comfort' breaks taken during shorter sessions do not need to be declared

Missed or Cancelled Sessions

Only chargeable missed/cancelled sessions should be included in this section. To ensure that we can process the invoice in a timely manner, please state the date and time when you were informed by the student that the session was cancelled along with the reason for cancellation. For non attendance please enter "NA" into the *Date and Time Informed* box below.

Reason	Date	Start Time (HH:MM)	Finish Time (HH:MM)	Total Hours	Date & Time Informed

TOTAL TIMESHEET HOURS	