

Non-Medical Help Charter

Charter for Non-Medical Help Providers

Foreword

This document is the first circulation of this Charter which relates to the principles that providers of Non-Medical Help (NMH) should adhere to in order to facilitate the provision of high quality academic study support¹, appropriate to the needs of disabled students and which represents value for money².

The Charter has been championed by the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) but the work has been driven from within the sector by various representatives from Universities, FE providers and suppliers of NMH study support alike. There has been widespread consultation over a two year period (2009 - 11) utilising meetings throughout England with over 100 representatives of FE and HE disability support services and NMH study support providers. Discussions have been had with representatives from Student Finance England and the Department for Business Innovation & Skills and drafts of the Charter have been presented to delegates at the NADP autumn conference. The Charter identifies a comprehensive series of principles covering matters relating to the arrangement of support workers in further and higher education. It provides a reference point for the assurance of quality and standards within NMH provision.

The Charter assumes that each NMH Provider will have in place their own systems for quality and standards and will be responsible for the effectiveness of their own quality assurance systems. Furthermore this Charter acknowledges that institutions will have their own management and organisational processes which will take in to account institutional need, culture and decision making processes and already adhere to an ethical and professional framework³. It is proposed that providers of non-medical help study support adhere to the following:

Charter

To facilitate the provision of high quality academic student support, appropriate to the needs of disabled students, providers of non-medical helper (NMH) academic study support should adhere to the precepts:-

1. That providers utilise a robust recruitment process, which must include the collection of references, right to work entitlement, copies of qualifications and CRB checks where appropriate and reflecting individual Further and Higher Education Institution's CRB policy and practice.
2. That policies and procedures relevant to the provision of NMH academic study support in Further and Higher Education are in place. These must include professional indemnity, public liability and employee liability insurance as well as risk assessment, provision for off-campus events, field trips, placements, lone working arrangements, health and safety and complaints policy and procedure.
3. That provision is made for a training, induction and ongoing support process that is appropriate to each role and to the academic experience of the student.
4. That providers utilise a robust screening process, to select academic support workers with appropriate role specific skills
5. That providers publish NMH academic study support role descriptors, appropriate to the academic experience of the student, and which refer to relevant Funding Body and DSA Guidance.
6. That a matching rationale, to place appropriate academic support workers with students in line with the Study Aids and Study Strategies report recommendations (or equivalent), is utilised by providers.
7. That clear and accurate records of communication with regard to individual students and between all stakeholders are maintained.
8. That providers have in place a clear and transparent charging structure for NMH academic study support and that this be reviewed annually.
9. That all NMH academic study support commissioned is monitored and recorded with reference to individual students' funding streams to ensure DSA allowances or equivalent are not exceeded.
10. That providers utilise a quality assurance process which includes the recording and monitoring of regular (at least annual) stakeholder feedback.

Precepts

- 1. That NMH providers utilise a robust recruitment process, which must include the collection of references, right to work entitlement, copies of qualifications and CRB checks where appropriate and reflecting individual Further and Higher Education Institution's CRB policy and practice.**

Disabled students have a right to know that they are being supported by qualified and competent support workers.

NMH providers must satisfy the legal frameworks with regard to Right to Work entitlement.

NMH Providers should take account of the practice of each institution with regard to the CRB disclosure and checking process.

Providers must therefore routinely collect references, comply with Right to Work entitlement legislation, verify qualifications through sight of certificates, and scrutinise the employer CRB disclosure documentation resulting from an Enhanced Disclosure.

- 2. That policies and procedures relevant to the provision of NMH academic study support in Further and Higher Education are in place. These must include professional indemnity, public liability and employee liability insurance as well as risk assessment, provision for off-campus events, field trips, placements, lone working arrangements, health and safety and complaints policy and procedures.**

Support workers are entitled to know that they are fully insured and that there are practices in place to oversee their health and safety whilst working.

NMH providers must arrange full insurances for their workers or be assured their workers have suitable insurance cover for their role.

NMH providers must ensure health and safety arrangements for support workers have been considered by way of a risk assessment or similar.

NMH providers must have a complaints policy and procedure in place. Students and support workers must have easy access to a complaints policy and procedure.

3. That provision is made for a training, induction and ongoing support process that is appropriate to each role and to the academic experience of the student.

NMH providers must make available appropriate guidance and training to support workers which facilitates the academic experience of the student.

Students have a right to be supported by support workers with training in, and an understanding of, the academic study support role that they are delivering.

Support workers have an entitlement to obtain guidance, training and ongoing support from Providers.

Providers must have a process in place to offer continued support to academic study support workers to ensure their continued practice is current and professional.

4. That providers utilise a robust screening process, to select academic support workers with appropriate role specific skills.

Providers must make sure that academic study support workers have the skills and qualifications for the role in which they will work.

Students have an entitlement to be supported by academic study support workers screened and selected specifically for the role in which they will work, acknowledging the underlying principle that disabled students should receive high quality academic study support, appropriate to their assessed academic needs.

5. That providers publish NMH academic study support role descriptors, appropriate to the academic experience of the student, and which refer to relevant funding body and DSA Guidance.

Providers must make sure that relevant descriptors are publicly available for the academic study support roles that they provide for the benefit of both the student receiving academic study support, as well as the academic study support worker.

Academic study support workers have a right to a relevant role description for the role/s in which they work to ensure they have a full understanding of their remit and boundaries.

Students have a right to be supported by academic study support workers with a clear role description in relation to the role in which they deliver support in order that they can be clear in their expectations of academic study support

6. That a matching rationale, to place appropriate academic support workers with students in line with the Study Needs Assessment recommendations (or equivalent), is utilised by NMH providers.

Providers must make sure that they have a matching rationale, in relation to skills, qualifications, experience and availability in order to deliver appropriate and timely support at an optimal time for the student.

Students have a right to be matched to academic study support workers with appropriate skills, qualifications, and experience, to deliver appropriate support at an optimal time for the student.

7. That clear and accurate records of communication with regard to individual students and between all stakeholders are maintained.

NMH providers must ensure that they keep detailed, clear and accurate records of communication between all stakeholders. This would include interactions between students, NMH academic study support workers, case workers and other relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholders may have a right to be able to access, in line with Data Protection policy and practice, detailed, clear and accurate records of all communication with regard to the support provision.

8. That providers of NMH academic study support have in place a clear and transparent charging structure for NMH academic study support and that this be reviewed annually.

Stakeholders have a right to know the charges that will be made for the support delivered and that they represent 'value for money' as defined by the Audit Commission (2009)².

NMH providers must make sure that they have in place a clear and transparent charging structure, publicly available to all Stakeholders.

9. That all NMH academic study support commissioned is monitored and recorded with reference to individual students' funding streams to ensure DSA allowances or equivalent are not exceeded.

It is good practice that students monitor or have their support monitored by NMH academic study support providers. This ensures that academic study support hours do not exceed the funding available as recommended by a Study Needs Assessment (or equivalent), having been approved by the relevant funding body. Monitoring this expenditure ensures that any further discussion of support requirements with students and subsequent discussions with funding bodies and other relevant institutional support providers are able to take place in a timely fashion.

10. That providers utilise a quality assurance process which includes the recording and monitoring of regular (at least annual) stakeholder feedback.

All providers of NMH academic study support must have good quality assurance practices in place which are accessible to stakeholders either publicly via a website or annual report or on request from the provider.

NMH providers must offer regular feedback opportunities and conversely actively seek regular feedback from students.

NMH providers must ensure that they keep detailed, clear and accurate records of all feedback.

¹ Academic study support should not be confused with subject specific study support which would normally be provided and funded by the institution. Disabled students may receive both academic and subject specific study support

² As noted by the Audit Commission (2009), value for money is about obtaining the maximum benefit over time with the resources available. Decisions about value for money are a daily reality in all our lives. We are constantly choosing which items or services to buy, and judging the right balance for us between quality and cost. It is about achieving the right local balance between economy, efficiency and effectiveness – the 3Es: spending less, spending well and spending wisely. This means that value for money not only measures the cost of goods and services but also takes account of the mix of cost with quality, resource use, fitness for purpose and timeliness to judge whether or not, together, they constitute good value. (AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit: <http://www.vip.amosshe.org/>)

³ See the NADP Code of Practice at <http://www.nadp-uk.org/join-nadp/code-of-practice/> for an example of the assumed ethical and professional standards envisaged.