

# THE SNOWDON AWARD SCHEME

*Helping students with physical disabilities  
in further and higher education or training*

## The Snowdon Survey 2006

'From time to time one thing was always going up and down inside me. The thing is called confidence. Upon receiving the Snowdon Award, I was on an equal chance with others that had no disability and I told myself that there's no excuse.'

*Lydia Kidarsa - a past Snowdon student*

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## Executive summary

### Background

When The Snowdon Award Scheme was established in 1981, Lord Snowdon expressed a hope that, by the millennium, the need for such charitable support would be obsolete.

The scheme's trustees would be the first to acknowledge the vast improvements that have been put in place for disabled students since 1981. Indeed, some of the more recent changes were made following the 1998 Snowdon Survey which, together with other contemporary reports presented to the Government, argued a cogent case for more equality of access for disabled students.

The majority of disabled students do now receive the additional funding and support that they need. However each year the scheme continues to receive far more applications for support than it can satisfy.

Clearly, some awkward questions remain.

- **Who are the students that are missing out and why?**
- **Why are disabled students failing to receive good information and guidance about the statutory funding and support available to them?**

And, most importantly,

- **What should be done about it?**

### The Snowdon Survey 2006

In this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the charity, it seemed appropriate to take a fresh look at the current issues. Our 2006 research has included:

- a review of available statistics from various sources
- analysis of Snowdon Award applications
- questionnaires to disability officers at universities and to recent Snowdon awardees
- anecdotal feedback received alongside the quantitative findings of our surveys and when handling recent student applications.

### The key issues

#### **1. Students with severe visual, hearing or mobility impairments often have to simply 'make do' with far less support than they need.**

- Students with visual, hearing and mobility impairments make up just 10% of all disabled students applying for higher education (HE) courses, yet they account for over 80% of applications for Snowdon Awards.
- Of university disability officers surveyed, 75% highlighted hearing and visually impaired students as those with the most difficult funding problems.
- The maximum DSA non-medical helpers allowance is insufficient for the needs of students who require expensive human support in the form of non-medical personal carers, sign language interpreters and note takers. (The

shortfall is even worse for students studying a course which has high taught-hours content.)

- The maximum DSA equipment allowance can fail totally blind students who are Braille users.

***'It is the support funding for those with profound sensory impairments who frequently find that the DSA just doesn't stretch far enough. Large numbers of hours of support workers (readers, interpreters) rapidly eat up the annual limits.'*** – university disability officer.

## **2. Disabled postgraduate students in England and Wales lose out even more.**

- Postgraduates make up around 20% of all HE students, but they account for over 50% of the HE students applying for Snowdon Awards.
- In England and Wales the maximum postgraduate DSA is less than one third of the maximum undergraduate award. This clearly prevents many disabled students from pursuing a postgraduate qualification.
- Postgraduate DSA has only recently been introduced in Scotland, but it is now set at the same level as for undergraduates.
- The fall in the percentage of postgraduate disabled students compared with undergraduates suggests that more than a sixth (or around 17%) of capable students who could go on to postgraduate studies, fail to do so.

## **3. Students studying less than 50% of full time hours get no DSA support.**

- The Snowdon Award Scheme regularly receives applications from students whose disabilities mean they are simply unable to maintain study at 50% + of full time hours.
- The fall in the percentage of part-time disabled students compared with full-timers suggests that some disabled students are being discouraged from part-time study by the DSA restriction.

## **4. The DSA process can be highly stressful for disabled students and their families.**

- The process of going away to university can be stressful enough for any young adult. For students with a disability, there is even more to worry about. The DSA process and timing (with students having to attend an assessment and often not knowing until the last minute what additional support and funding they will receive) can add huge anxiety.
- Too many disabled students and their families have to struggle to obtain the support that they are entitled to.

***'I think all tend to have difficulties with the cumbersome and time consuming DSA process.'*** – university disability officer.

## **5. Disabled students in further education (FE) lose out too.**

- FE students under 19 do not generally pay fees, but from age 19 there is no statutory fee provision. This can disadvantage disabled students who may have had their learning disrupted or who simply need to work at a slower pace.
- While funding for learning support staff in FE is generally much better than in HE (up to £19,000 pa per student - considerably more than the DSA non-medical helpers allowance of £12,135); funding for equipment and capital

items is often far less forthcoming since equipment costs cannot be reclaimed in the same way.

- Over 50% of Snowdon FE student applications over the past 3 years were for equipment. Only 1% was for assistance with non-medical helpers.

#### **6. Across both HE and FE there is huge variation in the quality of support services, information and funding provided to disabled students.**

The following key issues have arisen from the anecdotal feedback received from numerous sources.

- Some universities and colleges provide excellent support, others are not fully embracing their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) for provision of accessible materials and providing an inclusive learning experience as part of “reasonable adjustment”.
- Information provided to students and their families on sources of funding and support available varies widely. There are wonderful examples of students who have been fully briefed and supported with their DSA assessment. But in the worst cases, students come to the Scheme without knowing that statutory funding ought to be available to them.
- There is huge variation in the fees levied by universities for their costs in supporting a disabled student. The sum charged by the university as an administration fee can vary from nothing, to up to 25% of the DSA awarded.

***‘Unfortunately, so much seems to depend on where you live, where you are studying and the people with whom you are dealing.’*** – Snowdon Award Scheme administrator.

#### **Recommendations:**

As a result of these findings, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Students must be given clear information and advice on DSA availability, process and timescales and should be fully supported through the application and assessment process.
2. The DSA for both undergraduates and postgraduates should cover **all** the student’s assessed additional disability-related costs. To deliver true equality for all students, there should be no arbitrary upper financial limit.
3. The requirement to study at least 50% of full time hours to qualify for DSA should be reviewed.
4. Provision of equipment to support disabled students in FE must be improved and its funding should be reviewed.
5. Students whose circumstances have forced them to undertake FE at a later stage in their lives should not be penalised with course fees.
6. Process must be put in place to ensure greater consistency of quality advice and support services, from colleges, universities and other agencies. This should include regular reviews, evaluation and sharing of best practices.

As noted in the postscript of this report, any action taken in respect of the final recommendation above should recognise broader disability issues, in addition to those of funding and access. Ideally, they should take into account the whole learning experience and participation of students with impairments and should encompass areas such as attitudes of staff and other students towards disability.

## Part One Introduction and background

### 1.1 Introduction to The Snowdon Award Scheme

The Snowdon Award Scheme is a UK registered charity set up by Lord Snowdon in 1981. Its objective is to assist disabled students of further or higher education (including those re-training after the onset of a disability), with the additional disability-related costs of their studies and where statutory funding is either unavailable to them or insufficient for their needs. This would include such vital support as carers, translators for deaf students, computers, wheelchairs, or special accommodation and equipment.

2006 is the twenty- fifth anniversary year of The Snowdon Award Scheme and it was felt to be a good point to review its past success and consider its future, particularly in the light of the changes in government legislation over that time. The aims of the study fell into three parts:

- firstly, reviewing the current legislation affecting disabled students and the help now available to them, both financial and non financial;
- secondly, assessing the numbers of disabled students in both higher and further education, and analysing where problems in funding tend to occur. This was achieved through a survey of the disability officers in higher education establishments and analysing the applications from further education students to The Snowdon Award Scheme;
- and thirdly, gathering the experiences of the Snowdon students themselves, both present and past. These experiences were sought through a questionnaire to students from the past three years, as this would reflect a true picture of the current situation of a disabled student under the current legislation. The same questionnaire was then sent to a sample of past students to gather their experiences and see how their Snowdon Award had helped them in their life.

### 1.2 Current legislation

#### i. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) Part 4 education (2001)

This legislation was brought in as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, which became part 4 of the DDA and was implemented in September 2002.

The first duties under the DDA Part 4 to make reasonable adjustments came into force in September 2002. The requirement to provide additional auxiliary aids and services (such as note takers or specialist equipment) came into force in September 2003. Adjustments to the physical environment had to be made by 1 September 2005. The post-16 sections of the Act apply to the following responsible bodies in England, Wales, and Scotland:

- Higher and further education institutions
- Local education authorities or education authorities providing adult and community education
- Youth services (except voluntary groups such as Scouts etc)
- Other designated institutions (including specialist further educational residential colleges)

Institutions in Northern Ireland are not covered within this part of the Act at the moment, but similar legislation is now being introduced there.

Under the Act, responsible bodies must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled student is not placed at a substantial disadvantage. These might include:

- Changing admissions, administrative and examination procedures
- Changing course content, including work placements
- Changing physical features and premises
- Changing teaching arrangements
- Providing additional teaching
- Providing communication and support services
- Offering information in alternative formats
- Training staff

When determining whether or not an adjustment is 'reasonable', the education provider can take account of factors such as the maintenance of academic standards, cost and resources, and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is to all disabled students, not just a particular individual. Therefore, providers must anticipate what adjustments may be necessary for disabled people in the future and where appropriate, make adjustments in advance. The importance of this anticipatory duty should not be underestimated. It is no longer acceptable merely to respond to an individual's needs when they arise.

## **ii. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005**

In April 2005, the Government passed new legislation to amend the DDA. Most of the changes are expected to be implemented in 2006.

The most relevant changes are:

- The requirement that mental health conditions are 'clinically well recognised' has been removed.
- Cancer, HIV, and multiple sclerosis will be covered from the point of diagnosis, that is before the condition has an effect on normal day to day activities.

These areas were provisionally implemented in December 2005.

The government strategy in this area is given on the following websites:

[www.officefordisability.gov.uk](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk)  
[www.strategy.gov.uk](http://www.strategy.gov.uk)

### **1.3 Funding in higher education**

If students wish to apply for support from statutory funds, they must first apply to the Student Loan Company (SLC), whether or not they accept the loan offered. They can then apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), which are not means tested. The rates for 2006-7 are shown in Appendix A. The student cannot apply for DSA if they have any outstanding loans with the SLC from a previous course.

Once they have taken up their place, they could be eligible for money from the college or university's Access to Learning Fund (ALF). This fund is means tested. In Scotland, this could be called the Hardship Fund, and in Northern Ireland, the Support Fund. In Wales, the Financial Contingency Funds Scheme provides similar assistance.

The Access to Learning Fund is based on government funding, sourced by every college and university. The institution must apply prior to the start of the academic year, with an estimate of how much money it will need to support a range of students with financial problems. Priority is given to the following groups: students with children (especially lone parents), mature students, students from low income families, disabled students, students who have entered higher education from care, students from care hostels or who are homeless, students receiving the final year loan rate, who are in financial difficulty, and part-time students receiving a fee waiver.

The amount received by the student is discretionary and means-tested, and will depend both on the students' needs and the amount of funds available. Awards can be between £100 and £3,500. Applications normally take two weeks to assess from receipt of application, except during the start of the academic year, when it may take up to four weeks. Colleges and universities also usually have a separate hardship fund, for students struggling financially. Any awards from this would again be discretionary.

### **1.4 Funding in further education**

Around 84% of further education colleges in England are supported by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Colleges must appoint a learning support adviser who has responsibilities for disabled students. They must also have a 'Disability Statement' setting out the help available to disabled students. Colleges can apply for grants up to £19,000 to cover the needs of a disabled student for human support and other adaptations required. More money can be applied for in exceptional circumstances. It does not cover equipment, which can be supplied by the college on a loan basis, and for which the college can claim the costs of depreciation. It also does not cover travel, other than between sites, or for course related activities. Travel costs can be applied for from the students' local authority or social services. This would be discretionary.

The funding bodies for Wales (the National Council for Education and Training); Scotland (the Scottish Further Education Funding Council); and Northern Ireland (funded through the Department for Employment and Learning) work in a similar way to the LSC.

## Part Two – Population of disabled students and key problem areas

As both areas of post-16 education, that is training and further education, and higher education (both undergraduate and postgraduate) – have very different funding sources, each sector has been considered separately.

### 2.1 Overall numbers of disabled students in higher education

A very large proportion of all students applying for a higher education course do so through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The application form includes a section on whether the student has a disability and, if so, categorises it. This service publishes data on the numbers of students applying each year.

The numbers of disabled students in higher education has grown steadily, at a slightly faster rate than the overall growth in student numbers.

This can be seen in the following tables taken from UCAS statistics. The first table shows actual numbers and in the second these are represented as percentages:

| Disability       | 2001    | 2002    | 2003    | 2004    | 2005    |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| No disability    | 310,174 | 315,930 | 317,587 | 317,549 | 340,531 |
| All disabilities | 15,298  | 15,795  | 16,355  | 16,746  | 19,713  |
| Total            | 325,472 | 331,725 | 333,942 | 334,295 | 360,244 |

Table 2.1a: Overall numbers of disabled students in higher education

| Disability       | 2001           | 2002           | 2003           | 2004           | 2005           |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| No disability    | 95.21%         | 95.13%         | 95.03%         | 94.91%         | 94.49%         |
| All disabilities | 4.79%          | 4.87%          | 4.97%          | 5.09%          | 5.51%          |
| Total            | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

Table 2.1b: Overall percentages of disabled students in higher education

UCAS also gathers statistics on the number of accepted students with different types of disability. These are shown in the tables below.

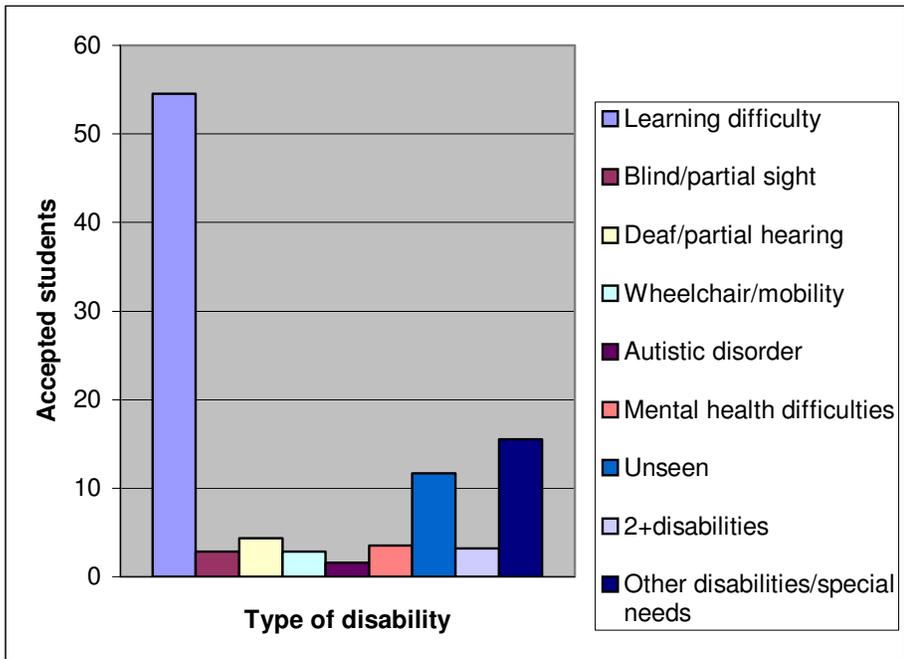
| <b>Disability</b>                        | <b>2001</b>    | <b>2002</b>    | <b>2003</b>    | <b>2004</b>    | <b>2005</b>    |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| No disability                            | 310,174        | 315,930        | 317,587        | 317,549        | 340,531        |
| Dyslexia                                 | 7,570          | 8,153          | -              | -              | -              |
| Learning difficulty                      | -              | -              | 8,866          | 9,238          | 10,756         |
| Blind / partial sight                    | 467            | 501            | 507            | 470            | 558            |
| Deaf / partial hearing                   | 696            | 709            | 715            | 722            | 854            |
| Wheelchair/mobility                      | 371            | 458            | 536            | 481            | 563            |
| Need personal care support               | 15             | 31             | -              | -              | -              |
| Autistic disorder                        | -              | -              | 139            | 202            | 305            |
| Mental health difficulties               | 444            | 380            | 495            | 549            | 687            |
| Unseen (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma) | 2,648          | 2,238          | 2,226          | 2,069          | 2,306          |
| 2+ disabilities/special needs            | 504            | 482            | 542            | 554            | 621            |
| Other disabilities/special needs         | 2,583          | 2,843          | 2,329          | 2,461          | 3,063          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>325,472</b> | <b>331,725</b> | <b>333,942</b> | <b>334,295</b> | <b>360,244</b> |

Table 2.2a: Numbers of accepted students declaring a disability on their UCAS form (compared with students with no disability) *UCAS*

| <b>Disability</b>                        | <b>2001</b>    | <b>2002</b>    | <b>2003</b>    | <b>2004</b>    | <b>2005</b>    |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| No disability                            | 95.30%         | 95.24%         | 95.10%         | 94.99%         | 94.53%         |
| Dyslexia                                 | 2.33%          | 2.46%          | -              | -              | -              |
| Learning difficulty                      | -              | -              | 2.65%          | 2.76%          | 2.99%          |
| Blind / partial sighted                  | 0.14%          | 0.15%          | 0.15%          | 0.14%          | 0.15%          |
| Deaf / partial hearing                   | 0.21%          | 0.21%          | 0.21%          | 0.22%          | 0.24%          |
| Wheelchair/mobility                      | 0.11%          | 0.14%          | 0.16%          | 0.14%          | 0.16%          |
| Need personal care support               | -              | 0.01%          | -              | 0.00%          | -              |
| Autistic disorder                        | -              | -              | 0.04%          | 0.06%          | 0.08%          |
| Mental health difficulties               | 0.14%          | 0.11%          | 0.15%          | 0.16%          | 0.19%          |
| Unseen (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma) | 0.81%          | 0.67%          | 0.67%          | 0.62%          | 0.64%          |
| 2+ disabilities/special needs            | 0.15%          | 0.15%          | 0.16%          | 0.17%          | 0.17%          |
| Other disabilities/special needs         | 0.79%          | 0.86%          | 0.70%          | 0.74%          | 0.85%          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>100.00%</b> |

Table 2.2b: Percentage of accepted students on each category *UCAS*

If we then consider the numbers of disabled students in each category, the data could be represented as follows:

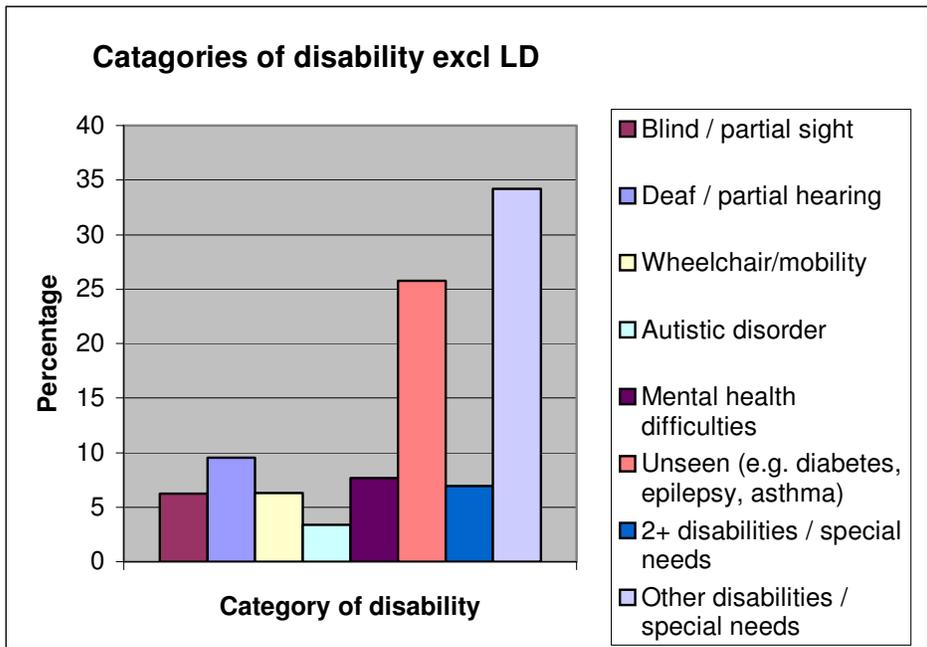


Graph 2.1

Comparison of categories of disability *UCAS*

This graph shows the dominance of the learning difficulties category.

The Snowdon Award Scheme focuses largely on students with physical disabilities; therefore if the learning difficulties category is omitted, the percentages of other disabilities can be more easily compared. Thus, it can be seen that, within this group, the predominant category is other disabilities/special needs.



Graph 2.2 Comparison of categories of disability excluding SpLD *UCAS*

There are a number of data sources for the number of first year students entering higher education, and all differ slightly as to what they include or omit. The figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) exclude international students; UCAS figures exclude Open University students and some students undertaking higher education courses at further education colleges; but they are broadly comparable. The HESA figures are shown in Appendix E.

## **2.2 Problem areas experienced by disabled students in higher education**

Every education establishment has a disability officer (or similar) who is responsible for ensuring that the needs of disabled students are met.

A survey was carried out of these officers, to establish three main things. These were:

- i. whether nearly all disabled students declare their disability at application stage or after they have been accepted on a course;
- ii. which categories need the most help;
- iii. which categories had the most difficult funding problems and why.

The survey was carried out through the Internet site DIS-FORUM; a site restricted to disability officers and their support staff. There are 346 institutions who provide higher education courses and all 31 responses were from these, giving a 9% response level. The responses covered all areas of the country, and also both old and new universities and colleges. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix C.

Examining each of these categories in turn:

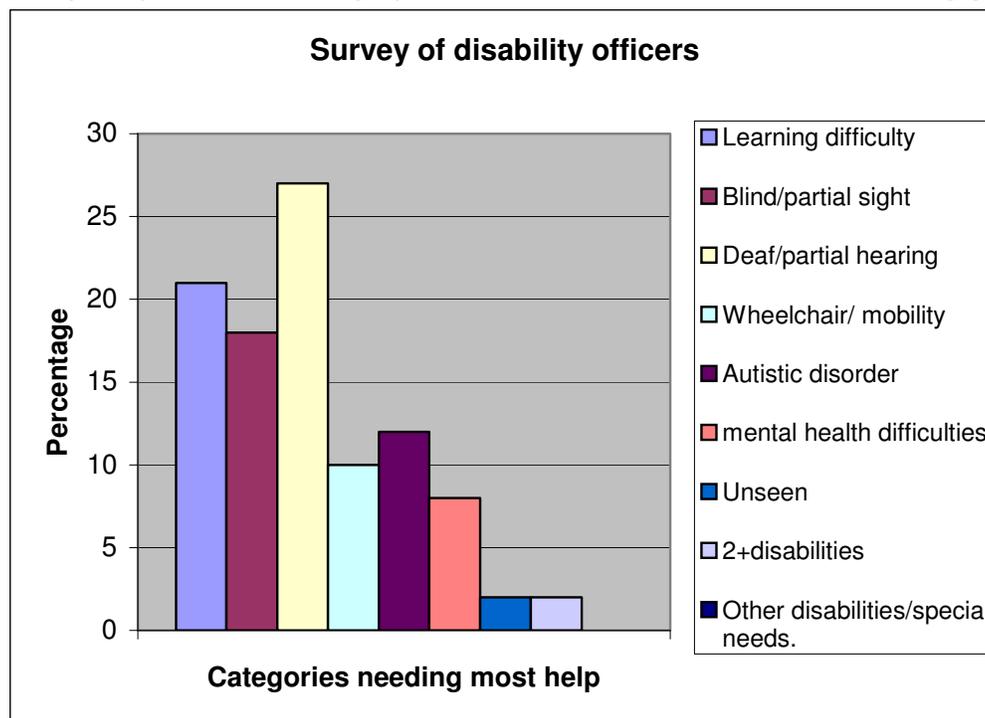
### **i. Whether nearly all disabled students declare their disability at application stage or after they have been accepted on a course**

Two thirds of those surveyed felt that most applicants declare their disability at application stage. Of those students who do not, a typical comment was, *'Most of the students who come to us after enrolment are ones who have been unable to get a diagnosis before or have not realised they have a disability; particularly true of dyslexic students.'*

The general consensus was that those with a well-established physical disability would be very likely to declare this on their form. This view is supported by results from a survey of Snowdon Award Scheme students, of whom 92% said that they declared their disability at application stage or before.

## ii. Which categories need most help

Disability officers were asked which category of disability needed most help. Analysis of the frequency that each category was mentioned is shown on the following graph:



Graph 2.3 Categories needing most help – *Snowdon questionnaire*

The graph shows that the deaf or partial hearing category requires most help.

Typical comments included:

*'Deaf/partial hearing – quite a lot to be done with arranging support and the financial constraints of this need to be worked out (BSL interpreters mean the students exceed DSA funding).'*

*'Deaf – arrangements for note taking, BSL interpretation videoing, lecture sessions, autism/ASD – fine tuning with departments.'*

*'While students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs), get a great deal of support, primarily through study skills support, they are relatively well supported and easy group to accommodate. Those with sensory disabilities demand more involved support throughout the course.'*

*'Category 2 (blind/partial sight) getting text in alternate formats fast enough...we have experienced major technical problems with accessing maths and logic in Braille.'*

Other areas of concern highlighted included dyslexia, specific learning difficulties (SpLD) and those with Asperger's spectrum disorder (ASD).

*'Individual dyslexia support and wheelchair/mobility access difficulties.'*

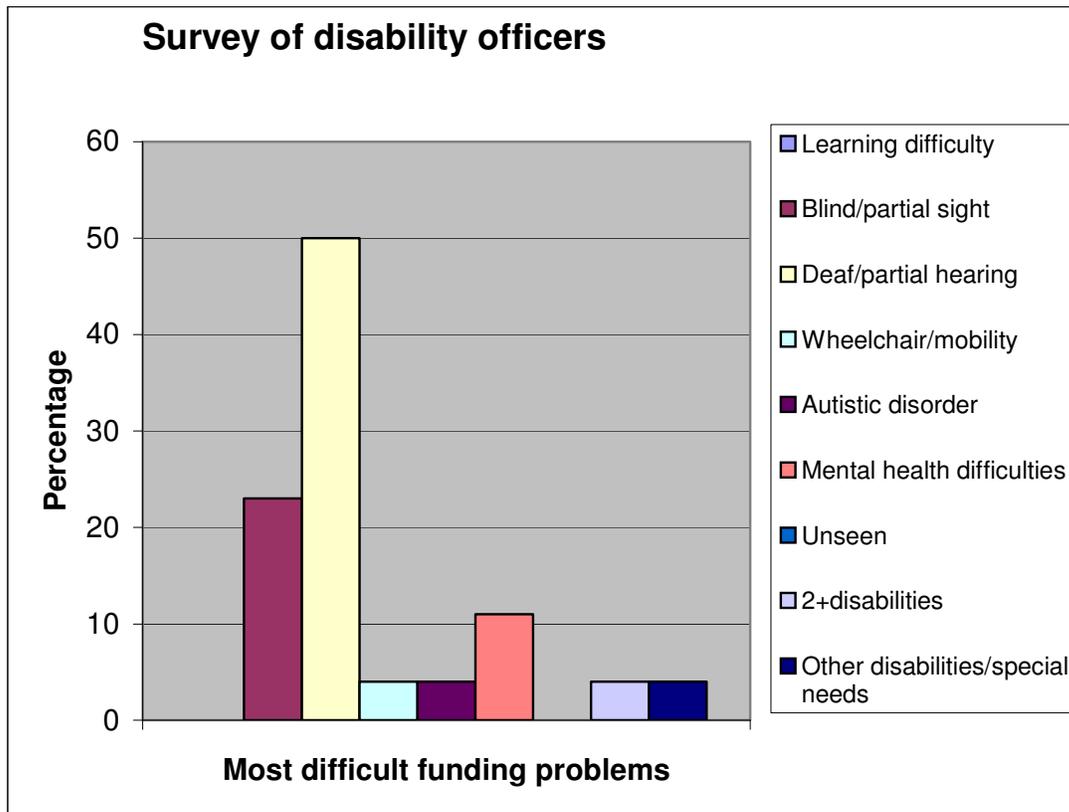
*'The main workload comes from dyslexic students who have regular one to one appointments with the in-house study advisors who provide 5-6 hours a day to students.'*

*'Students with SpLDs tend to need the most support and constitute by far the greatest numbers of all disabled students.'*

*"Most help is required by students on the autistic spectrum. This involves academic support as in one to one support with any practical sessions, orientation, organisation, daily living skills such as personal care, budgeting, cooking, laundry etc. There is often significant involvement and liaison with external agencies in the support of the student and regular meeting to review progress and discuss changing needs.'*

### iii. Which categories had most difficult funding problems and why

An analysis of survey results to see how often each category of disability was highlighted gave the following results.



Graph 2.4 Categories with the most difficult funding problems  
*Snowdon questionnaire*

Despite being one of the smallest categories in terms of numbers, deaf students were highlighted by the disability officers as experiencing the most difficult funding problems.

Typical comments on funding problems include:

*'Students who are deaf and require an interpreter, note taking and language support are often the ones who really struggle. This is because the DSA is not enough to cover all these costs.'*

*'Deaf students, due to the high cost of human support required.'*

*'Deaf, because profoundly deaf students have two support workers, communication support and note taker, also study skills to help with writing essays and English language skills which can be very costly and the DSA does not cover it. Students with more severe disabilities, i.e. a wheelchair user who has a high support need including driver, personal carer, note taker etc. can also exhaust the DSA.'*

*'Deaf students – many deaf students need a BSL communicator and a note taker and language tuition.... There is never enough money in the DSA for this. Overseas students.'*

Another area of difficulty occurred if finance had to be sought from various sources to cover different areas of need for a student.

*'Establishing funding packages for students with care requirements can be an involved process, especially where the student's social worker has never arranged a package for the student before. However, it is the support funding for those with profound sensory impairments who frequently find that the DSA just doesn't stretch far enough. Large numbers of hours of support workers (readers, interpreters) rapidly eat up the annual limits.'*

*'...there is a lack of awareness of how long it takes to get DSA (or other funding), and actual support arrangements, in place. This seems to us to be due in part to lack of awareness about who has to initiate the process – most students will have had support provided at school will not have had to set it up themselves, and they often expect that this will continue at university.'*

*'DSA is only available for extra costs directly related to studying, not to the costs of daily living. The amount of course-related personal help under DSA is limited, and the actual costs may exceed this amount; and for half time students the amount is half the full allowance. Getting social work departments to make an assessment of students' care needs and contributing towards costs is a major headache for such students.'*

*'I think all tend to have difficulties with the cumbersome and time- consuming DSA process. We have major difficulties with International and EU students, for whom funding is a major issue.'*

Other problems resulted from the lower level of DSA for postgraduate students (see Appendix A for details of DSA).

*'The biggest problem is that the level of DSA available for postgraduates is often far too low.'*

*'Deaf postgraduate students as they have nowhere near enough funding to cover interpretation and note taker costs when the DSA available to them is £5640. Costs for these services over a heavily taught masters course would be more in the region of £12000-14000 – more if you are in somewhere like London.'*

*'Postgraduates who need a lot of human support e.g. sign language users, blind and visually impaired students who need readers etc.'*

Various other areas of concern emerged from the survey:

*'... mental health difficulties, overseas students and graduate students funded by research bodies who are not clear about disability support.'*

*'Overseas students with SpLDs (and other disabilities) have the most funding problems.'*

*'International students, and home students who are on courses that don't qualify for DSA.'*

*'People with physical disabilities who want to travel abroad as part of their course. Social work departments don't seem to want to pay for care provided outside the UK and DLA requires the recipient to be in the country for more than 26 weeks. This makes it virtually impossible for some students to take up the year abroad option which is grossly unfair.'*

### **2.3 Overall numbers of disabled students in further education**

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) fund 84% of all learners in further education in England and Wales. Comparable figures for Scotland are shown in Appendix B. Courses which are not funded by the LSC operate on a full cost-recovery basis, either from the learner themselves or from their employer. Many such courses are designed to meet a specific requirement for a particular employer. Other examples of non-LSC funded courses include summer schools and schools teaching English as a foreign language.

The LSC document *Funding Guidance for Further Education in 2006/7* is available on the LSC website:

<http://www.LSC.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/FundingLearning/Furthereducation.htm>

The following table shows the combined figures for both LSC and non-LSC funded learners split by age band. Learners under 16, and over 59 have been excluded. Also, the no-disability category figures includes learners with learning difficulties, as they are recorded separately by the LSC, so are shown together with the no-disability category on the table. Overall, 95% of all learners either have no disability, or have not declared a need. These figures cover all learners in further education in the academic year 2004/5, whereas the UCAS statistics only refer to the first year students.

Nevertheless, orders of magnitude can be considered. For example, approximately 2,150 students with a hearing impairment were present in higher education in 2004/5, compared with 16,250 in further education. This difference in size appears to be true for all other categories. Despite this, The Snowdon Award Scheme receives far more requests from students in higher education than in further. This could be because individual funding is better in further education, or because there is lack of awareness of The Snowdon Award Scheme.

|   | 16-18         | 19-20         | 21-24         | 25-59          | Missing age  | Totals         | Type of disability % |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Disability affecting mobility                             | 1190          | 540           | 1000          | 14840          | 90           | 17660          | 9.36                 |
| Emotional/behavioural difficulties                        | 2380          | 480           | 560           | 2850           | 20           | 6290           | 3.33                 |
| Hearing impairment  | 2810          | 780           | 1010          | 11580          | 70           | 16250          | 8.61                 |
| Mental ill health   | 1040          | 590           | 1500          | 14950          | 150          | 18230          | 9.66                 |
| Multiple disabilities                                     | 1380          | 690           | 1210          | 9390           | 100          | 12770          | 6.77                 |
| Other medical condition (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) | 12660         | 2470          | 3390          | 22780          | 70           | 41370          | 21.92                |
| Other physical disability                                 | 1240          | 430           | 700           | 8400           | 30           | 10800          | 5.72                 |
| Profound complex disabilities                             | 210           | 180           | 230           | 1200           | 10           | 1830           | 0.97                 |
| Temporary disability after illness (e.g. post-viral)      | 310           | 70            | 100           | 1290           | 0            | 1770           | 0.94                 |
| Visual impairment   | 3330          | 780           | 1020          | 8460           | 150          | 13740          | 7.28                 |
| Other disabilities  | 11680         | 3100          | 4100          | 28910          | 210          | 48000          | 25.44                |
| No disability / learning difficulties                     | 650890        | 179860        | 317500        | 2106210        | 14000        | 3268460        | N/A                  |
| Not known/information not provided                        | 89730         | 28470         | 55580         | 407980         | 8830         | 590590         | N/A                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>778850</b> | <b>218440</b> | <b>387900</b> | <b>2638840</b> | <b>23730</b> | <b>4047760</b> | <b>100</b>           |

Table 2.3: Disabled learners in FE in 2004/2005 split by age band LSC

This table also shows the relative percentage of each category of disability. These figures cannot be compared directly with those for higher education, as they do not include a category for learning difficulties. The comparable figures for Scotland are shown in Appendix B. They show a similar pattern for the relative sizes of the different categories of disabilities.

## **2.4 Problem areas experienced by disabled students in further education**

The main problem areas experienced by disabled students in further education are:

- Availability of expensive specialist equipment. This tends to occur because further education colleges can only claim the costs of depreciation for any equipment that they lend to the student from the LSC; so would be subject to budget restrictions.
- Travel costs to and from college. These are not available from the college budget. They can be claimed from the local LEA, but this is on a discretionary basis; the criteria for which seems to vary greatly between LEAs.

## Part 3 The Snowdon Award Scheme students

### 3.1 Categories of disability

The Snowdon Award Scheme has helped 180 students over the past three years. These students would have benefited from the increased levels of DSA and changes brought about by the Disability Discrimination Act, so their experiences would reflect the current situation for disabled students.

The successful applications for the last three years was analysed to see how the different categories of disabilities of the students corresponded to the UCAS categories. Sixteen students received awards for more than one year in this time period, therefore 196 awards, in total, were given out in the three years to 180 students.

The results are shown on the table below, comparing with the UCAS figures both including and excluding learning difficulties. Thus, for example, 24% of Snowdon students (excluding those with learning difficulties) fell into the blind/visual impairment category, compared with 6% for UCAS. This implies that a disproportionate number of disabled students in this category are applying to The Snowdon Award Scheme as their DSA is insufficient. Again, this shows that certain groups have greater funding needs than others.

| Type of disability         | 2003      | 2004      | 2005      | Total      |             | Exc LD     | UCAS        | UCAS excl.LD |            |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Learning difficulty        | 3         | 2         | 1         | 6          | 3           |            |             |              |            |
| Blind/visual impairment    | 9         | 20        | 17        | 46         | 23          | <b>24</b>  | 3           | 558          | <b>6</b>   |
| Deaf/partial hearing       | 8         | 6         | 14        | 28         | 14          | <b>15</b>  | 4           | 854          | <b>10</b>  |
| Wheelchair/mobility        | 29        | 32        | 27        | 88         | 45          | <b>46</b>  | 3           | 563          | <b>6</b>   |
| Autistic disorder          |           |           |           |            |             | <b>0</b>   | 2           | 303          | <b>3</b>   |
| Mental health difficulties |           | 1         |           | 1          | 0.5         | <b>1</b>   | 3           | 687          | <b>8</b>   |
| Unseen                     | 4         | 1         | 4         | 9          | 5           | <b>5</b>   | 12          | 2306         | <b>26</b>  |
| 2+ disabilities            | 9         | 5         | 3         | 17         | 9           | <b>9</b>   | 3           | 621          | <b>7</b>   |
| Other                      |           |           | 1         | 1          | 0.5         | <b>1</b>   | 15          | 3063         | <b>34</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>62</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>196</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>8955</b>  | <b>100</b> |

Table 3.1: Snowdon students by type of disability compared with UCAS statistics

### 3.2 Type of help requested over the last three years

The type of help requested by students was analysed according to the type of course that they were undertaking. Where the student had requested funds for more than one area, all categories were included. The results are shown in table 3.2.

The main shortfalls for all types of study were for equipment and travel. The difference in funding between further education (FE), and higher education (HE), can be seen in that only 1% of all requests from FE students were for non medical helpers (note takers, readers, BSL interpreters and carers), whereas these accounted for 30% in HE.

Another clear area showing a shortfall in funding is equipment, which accounts for 50% of requests in further education, in contrast to 26% in higher education. Within the postgraduate category, fees account for nearly one third of all requests, (24 out of 74).

|                          | Fees | Travel | Equipment | Non medical help | Accom | Total |
|--------------------------|------|--------|-----------|------------------|-------|-------|
| FE + Training            | 13   | 20     | 35        | 1                | 1     | 70    |
| % of total FE + Training | 19%  | 29%    | 50%       | 1%               | 1%    | 100%  |
| Undergrad                |      | 15     | 20        | 24               | 5     | 64    |
| Post Grad                | 24   | 11     | 16        | 18               | 5     | 74    |
| % of HE                  | 17%  | 19%    | 26%       | 31%              | 7%    | 100%  |
| Total                    | 37   | 46     | 71        | 43               | 11    | 208   |

Table 3.2: Type of help requested

An interesting comparison can be made with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) figures (see Appendix E), which show postgraduate disabled students as only 22% of the number of undergraduate disabled students, (8,695 compared with 40,430), whereas The Snowdon Award Scheme actually helps more postgraduates than undergraduates, (74 compared with 64).

Although the HESA figures do not include international students, the scale of the difference would outweigh this discrepancy between the two data sets. This implies that the reduced DSA for postgraduate students forces them to look elsewhere to top up their funding.

Of the Snowdon students over the past three years 84% have had UK residency, and would therefore qualify for whatever grants were relevant. Therefore, this would again indicate that the grants available are insufficient in certain areas.

|                 | Training | FE | Under-graduate | Post-graduate | Total |
|-----------------|----------|----|----------------|---------------|-------|
| UK resident     | 7        | 47 | 49             | 61            | 164   |
| Non UK resident | 1        | 8  | 10             | 13            | 32    |

Table 3.3: Residency compared with type of course

### 3.3 Survey of recent Snowdon students

170 major award holders from the last three years were contacted with a questionnaire in order to find out where their shortfalls in funding occurred and their views and experiences as disabled students. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix D.

Fifty-seven replied, giving a response rate of one third. The breakdown of their type of courses is given below.

|           | Training | Further education | Under-graduate | Post-graduate | Total |
|-----------|----------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-------|
| Full Time | 1        | 9                 | 19             | 14            | 43    |
| Part Time | 5        | 4                 | -              | 11            | 20    |
| Total     | 6        | 13                | 19             | 25            |       |

Table 3.4: Type of course undertaken

Note:

- N = 63 (because four students received two grants and one received three).
- The number of postgraduate students is greater than the number of undergraduates.

A comparison of whether Snowdon students receive DSA is shown below.

|                   | Undergraduates | Postgraduates |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Receiving DSA     | 18             | 17            |
| Not Receiving DSA | 1              | 8             |

Table 3.5: Number of Snowdon students receiving DSA

Of the nine students in total not receiving DSA, five were international, three did not appear to know about DSA and for one, the course was not eligible.

The students were asked:

- i. Who was most helpful in finding additional funding?
- ii. Who was most helpful in finding non-financial support?
- iii. What was the biggest shortfall in finances?
- iv. What are they doing now?

Their responses are summarised below.

**i. Who was most helpful in finding additional funding?**

The students were asked whom they found had been most helpful in finding additional funding. The results are shown on the table below

|   | Great help | Some help | No help | Total |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Friends or family                                     | 26         | 14        | 8       | 48    |
| Tutor at college/university                           | 3          | 16        | 24      | 43    |
| Disability officer/learning support officer           | 15         | 12        | 21      | 48    |
| SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities | 5          | 8         | 19      | 32    |
| Local Authority (LA) or equivalent                    | 12         | 12        | 19      | 43    |
| The Snowdon Award Scheme                              | 42         | 8         | 3       | 53    |
| Other   | 10         | 2         | 5       | 17    |

Table 3.6: Who was most helpful in finding additional funding?

This table shows, for example, that of the 48 students who mentioned their disability officer (or equivalent), 15 found them to be of great help, 12 of some help, and 21 of no help in finding additional funding.

Other sources of help included The Law Society, The Prince's Trust, social workers, Funderfinder database, advisory team in the student union, various bursaries held by some university disability resource centres and other trusts.

It is interesting that the main sources of information for the students – tutor, disability officer, SKILL, LA – were all highlighted by a significant number of students as being

of no help. Clear information would seem to be a key to a disabled student being able to participate in higher education.

The students highlighted some websites that they had found useful in looking for additional funding:

- [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)
- [www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople/educationAndTraining](http://www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople/educationAndTraining)
- [www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)
- [www.ahrb.ac.uk/ahrb/website](http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/ahrb/website)

**ii. Who was most helpful in finding additional non-financial support?**

|   | Great help | Some help | No help | Total |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Friends or family                                     | 20         | 12        | 8       | 40    |
| Tutor at college/university                           | 1          | 17        | 17      | 35    |
| Disability officer/learning support officer           | 10         | 11        | 15      | 36    |
| SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities | 2          | 6         | 20      | 28    |
| Local Authority (LA) or equivalent                    | 4          | 15        | 15      | 34    |
| The Snowdon Award Scheme                              | 23         | 10        | 6       | 39    |
| Other   | 5          | -         | 3       | 8     |

Table 3.7: Who was most helpful in finding additional non-financial support?

Sources of help cited were the Access to Learning Fund, Social Services, university disabilities service departments, Royal National Institute of the Blind, scribes, and disabled student web pages.

The same pattern has emerged as in finding financial support. Significant areas, which could be expected to provide emotional support, fail to do so and this implies that there is a need for more training or clear information available to those in these roles. Not surprisingly, since these students have received assistance from the scheme, comments about the charity and its staff were always very positive. For example:

*'... always so helpful and clear with what to do, also patient as I called quite a few times when I was doing the application and awaiting the result.'*

*'I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody at The Snowdon Award Scheme for helping me to fund my course. It has made a huge difference.'*

**iii. What was the biggest shortfall in finances?**

|                     | Receiving DSA |     | Total |    |
|---------------------|---------------|-----|-------|----|
|                     | Yes           |     |       | No |
|                     | U/G           | P/G |       |    |
| Cost of Equipment   | 7             | 4   | 10    | 21 |
| Cost of Fees        | 4             | 5   | 11    | 20 |
| Cost of Non-Medical |               |     |       | 14 |
| Other – Transport   | 2             | 2   | 5     | 9  |
| -Various            |               |     |       | 5  |

Table 3.8: What was the biggest shortfall in finances?

Most students experience a shortfall in more than one area. There is a wide range of non-medical expenses eg the cost of an interpreter and academic supporter worker, personal counselling as part of a diploma in counselling or personal assistance, some of which may have fallen within DSA criteria and some not.

**iv. What are they doing now?**

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Still Studying       | 41 |
| Employed – full time | 4  |
| Employed - part time | 9  |
| Unemployed           | 5  |
| Other                | 6  |

Table 3.9: What are they doing now?

As this was a sample of students from the last three years, unsurprisingly, most were still studying. The other category listed included voluntary work and other training.

The students were asked whether, if they were working, was it the type of job they were looking for? Of the 13 employed, full or part time, seven were doing the type of job they had hoped for. These included a part time lecturer in the history of art, a freelance art practitioner, a sensory rehabilitation worker, a psychotherapist and a program manager.

### 3.4 Survey of past Snowdon students

76 students from the past 25 years were contacted to compare their experiences, and see where they are now. The same questionnaire was used. 15 replied. The responses to the questions who was most helpful in finding additional financial funding; and who was most supportive in a non-financial way are shown in the tables below.

|   | Great help | Some help | No help | Total |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Friends or family                               | 1          | 2         | 2       | 4     |
| Tutor at college/university                     | 3          | 2         | 5       | 10    |
| Disability Officer/Learning Support Officer     | 2          | 3         | 4       | 9     |
| SKILL: Nat. Bur. for students with disabilities | 0          | 2         | 5       | 7     |
| LEA (or equivalent)                             | 1          | 3         | 5       | 9     |
| The Snowdon Award Scheme                        | 9          | 3         | 0       | 12    |
| Other   | 1          | 0         | 3       | 4     |

Table 3.10: Who was most helpful in finding additional financial funding?

|   | Great help | Some help | No help | Total |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Friends or family                               | 13         | 0         | 0       | 13    |
| Tutor at college/university                     | 8          | 2         | 2       | 12    |
| Disability Officer/Learning Support Officer     | 1          | 5         | 3       | 9     |
| SKILL: Nat. Bur. for students with disabilities | 0          | 0         | 7       | 7     |
| LEA (or equivalent)                             | 0          | 1         | 6       | 7     |
| The Snowdon Award Scheme                        | 4          | 5         | 2       | 11    |
| Other   | 0          | 0         | 1       | 1     |

Table 3.11: Who was most supportive in a non-financial way?

Even with a much smaller sample size, the same picture emerges of no clear source of help, financial or non-financial.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Still studying        | 3 |
| Employed – full time  | 4 |
| Employed - part time  | 2 |
| Unemployed            | 2 |
| Other- voluntary work | 2 |
| Self employed         | 2 |

Table 3.12: What are they doing now?

The type of employment included film extra, partner in a firm of solicitors, personnel officer, lecturer in English and communications, and a post-doctoral research associate in magnetic resonance neuroimaging. Most said that it was the type of work that they had been hoping for.

## Part 4 Additional feedback

When compiling this research, the author spent time speaking with:

- university disability officers
- contacts at local authorities
- the charity's administrators and selection panel members
- some past and present students

During various conversations further feedback was received in addition to that provided in response to specific points raised in questionnaires. This has highlighted the following additional issues.

- The process of going away to university can be stressful for any young adult. For students with a disability, there is even more to worry about. The DSA process and timing can add huge anxiety. Many students do not get their DSA assessment until September and therefore will not know until the last minute what additional support and funding they will receive.
- Information provided to students and their families on sources of funding and support available appears to be inconsistent.
- The level of support a student gets through the DSA application and assessment process also seems to vary greatly. Some local authorities clearly try to ensure their disabled students are fully briefed and supported with their DSA assessment. But there are numerous cases of students applying to The Snowdon Award Scheme without knowing that statutory funding ought to be available to them. (So, in cases where the DSA should be sufficient for the student's needs, the Scheme's staff can spend a lot of time providing information to the student and reviewing unnecessary applications.)
- Experiences of students once they get to college or university seem to differ – especially with what is regarded as a 'reasonable adjustment'. For example, some colleges seem reluctant to supply equipment such as laptops for students to use outside college premises.
- Whilst universities will generally expect a student to pay for additional 'adjustments' from their DSA; in cases where the DSA is insufficient for the student's needs, some seem happy to go further than others to help. An example here is providing upgraded accommodation for a disabled student who needs say en-suite bathroom facilities at standard room rates.
- Some universities seem to provide excellent support, others do not always appear to be fully embracing their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) for provision of accessible materials and providing an inclusive learning experience.
- The disability officer role is critical, but other studies are suggesting it is not always well supported and that its importance is often overlooked when looking at membership of key decision-making committees.
- Universities are allowed to charge a fee for administration of services provided to a disabled student. This appears to range greatly and it is not clear whether this variation is justified. It would seem that some do not charge at all, but others charge fees of up to 25% of the total DSA awarded.

These issues would all take more time to quantify or to analyse in more detail, but for the sake of completeness they have been included in this section of the report.

## Part 5 Conclusions

Across further and higher education, processes are in place to provide for the additional individual needs of disabled students. For most students, these operate satisfactorily and funding provision is adequate.

However, The Snowdon Award Scheme's experiences show that there are still a significant number of students whose needs are not being fully met and in certain cases, the shortfalls are substantial.

### **Higher education and Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA)**

The findings show that, in higher education the DSA allowances regularly fail to meet the needs of students with severe visual, hearing or mobility impairments and they often simply have to 'make do' with far less support than they should receive.

- Students with visual, hearing and mobility impairments make up just 10% of all disabled students applying for higher education (HE) courses, yet they account for over 80% of applications for Snowdon Awards.
- Of university disability officers surveyed, 75% highlighted hearing and visually impaired students as those with the most difficult funding problems.
- In their additional feedback, disability officers stated that the current maximum DSA non-medical helpers allowance is frequently insufficient for the needs of students who require expensive human support in the form of non-medical personal carers, sign language interpreters and note takers. Also, that the maximum DSA equipment allowance can fail totally blind students who are Braille users.

In addition, disabled postgraduate students were highlighted as frequently being underfunded in England and Wales since their allowances are greatly reduced. In Scotland, postgraduate DSA has only recently been introduced, but it is now at the same level as for undergraduates.

- Postgraduates make up around 20% of all HE students, but they account for over 50% of the HE students applying for Snowdon Awards.
- In England and Wales the maximum postgraduate DSA is less than one third of the maximum undergraduate award.
- HESA statistics show a fall in the percentage of postgraduate disabled students compared with undergraduates which suggests that around 15% of capable students who could go on to postgraduate studies fail to do so.

A further area of shortfall is for part-time students. Whilst they generally receive a pro-rata DSA, those studying less than 50% of full time hours get no DSA support at all.

- HESA statistics show a noticeable fall in the percentage of part-time disabled students compared with full-timers, which suggests that some disabled students are being discouraged from part-time study by the DSA restriction.
- Whilst not quantified in this study, administrators of The Snowdon Award Scheme advise that they regularly receive applications from students whose disabilities mean they are simply unable to maintain study at 50% + of full time hours.

The DSA process is often lengthy and complex and can be stressful for disabled students and their families. Throughout school and further education, provision for the additional needs of disabled students is provided by the school or college. In higher education, the whole process is different, with the student receiving the DSA to fund their own support package. University disability officers offer a great deal of support and assistance but the prospect often appears daunting.

- In their additional feedback, disability officers described the DSA process as 'cumbersome and time consuming'
- Additionally, whilst not noted elsewhere in this report, we understand the experience of Snowdon Award Scheme administrators is that they frequently speak with students and their families who are frustrated by the process and the lack of support they receive throughout.

### **Further education**

In further education funding for learning support staff is generally much better than in higher education, Up to £19,000 pa per student is readily available through the local LSC with more available from central funding if required. This is considerably more than the DSA non-medical helpers allowance of £12,135. However, equipment costs cannot be reclaimed by colleges in the same way and this means funding for equipment and capital items is often less forthcoming.

- Over 50% of Snowdon FE student applications over the past 3 years were for equipment. Whereas only 1% was for assistance with non-medical helpers.

FE students under 19 do not generally pay fees. From age 19 there is no automatic fee provision although students can apply on a means tested basis for a fee waiver. We feel this can disadvantage disabled students who may have had their learning disrupted or who simply need to work at a slower pace.

- 48% of Snowdon Award applications from FE students are for assistance with fees and travel costs.

### **Generally**

In addition, whilst not specifically noted elsewhere in this report, feedback received from numerous sources including students and their families, disability officers, Snowdon Award administrators and selection panel members suggest that there is substantial variation in the quality of support services, information and funding provided to disabled students.

- Some universities and colleges provide excellent support, whereas others seem not to be fully embracing their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) for provision of accessible materials and providing an inclusive learning experience as part of 'reasonable adjustment'. There also seems to be substantial variation in the fees levied by universities for their costs in supporting a disabled student.
- Information provided to students and their families on sources of funding and support available is hugely variable. There are wonderful examples of students who have been fully briefed and supported with their DSA assessment. But in the worst cases, students can find their way to the scheme without even knowing that statutory funding ought to be available to them.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Higher education:**

1. Disabled people planning to enter higher education should be given clear information and advice on DSA availability, process and timescales. This should include preparation for the DSA assessment and support, where appropriate, during the assessment to ensure the student's needs are fully understood by the assessor.
2. Ideally, the amount of the DSA for both undergraduates and postgraduates should cover **all** the student's additional disability-related costs, for human support, equipment, travel and accommodation. There should be no arbitrary upper financial limit for any of these needs.
3. The need for a student to study at least 50% of full time hours to qualify for DSA support needs to be reviewed, bearing in mind that some disabled students are simply unable to study at this rate.

#### **Further education:**

4. Provision of equipment to support disabled students needs to be improved and funding of equipment needs should be reviewed.
5. Special consideration should be given to funding course fees for disabled students whose circumstances have forced them to undertake further education at a later stage in their lives than non-disabled students.

#### **Generally:**

6. Process should be put in place to ensure far greater consistency of quality advice and support services for disabled students from colleges, universities and other agencies. This should include regular reviews, evaluation and sharing of best practices.

## Postscript

Whilst this document has looked primarily at funding and accessibility issues for disabled students, the Scheme's Trustees are keen for readers to understand that funding and access are not the only areas where students with impairments face discrimination.

What is important for them is not simply inclusion, but their whole learning experience, including participation, choices of subjects, and the fairness with which they can compete with others.

It is often attitudes of staff (including senior management) and other students that can lead to disabled students experiencing discrimination. We understand that other studies and research looking at broader disability equality issues are suggesting there is an urgent and major task to re-educate staff to ensure their informed understanding of current legislation relating to disability and the entitlement of disabled students.

In this respect, we feel that action taken in respect of our final recommendation (recommendation no. 6) should be extended to take into account at least these examples of wider issues.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) England and Wales 2006/2007

##### Full-time undergraduate (including distance learning students)

|                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Specialist equipment allowance | up to £4,795 (whole course)          |
| Non-medical helpers allowance  | up to £12,135 (per annum for course) |
| General allowance              | up to £1,605 (per annum for course)  |
| Travel                         | reasonable spending on extra costs   |

##### Part-time undergraduate (including distance learning & relevant OU students)

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Specialist equipment allowance | up to £4,795 (whole course)              |
| Non-medical helpers allowance  | % of full-time allowance up to 9,105 pa  |
| General allowance              | % of full-time allowance up to £1,200 pa |
| Travel                         | reasonable spending on extra costs       |

##### Postgraduate (full & part-time, including relevant OU students)

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| All disability-related study costs | up to £5,780 (per annum for course<br>depending upon needs assessment) |
|------------------------------------|--|

Information obtained from 'Bridging the Gap' DfES publication 2006/7

- [www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport)

The provision in Scotland is the same for undergraduates as in England and Wales. However, postgraduates in Scotland can claim the same level of DSA as undergraduates (£18,535 maximum for a single year course).

## Appendix B Students attending Scottish FE colleges in 2004-5

| Age of student (start of academic year)                    | 16-18  | 19-24  | 25-59   | 60-64  | OVERALL |        |
|--|--------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| Disability   | Count  | Count  | Count   | Count  | Count   | %      |
| <b>Undefined</b>   | 0      | 0      | 5       | 0      | 5       |        |
| <b>No known disability</b>                                 | 59,488 | 49,749 | 174,070 | 9,293  | 292,600 | 76.10% |
| <b>Dyslexia</b>  | 2,092  | 1,237  | 1,779   | 32     | 5,140   | 1.34%  |
| <b>Blind / are partially sighted</b>                       | 208    | 156    | 560     | 44     | 968     | 0.25%  |
| <b>Deaf / have a hearing impairment</b>                    | 227    | 200    | 1,096   | 184    | 1,707   | 0.44%  |
| <b>Wheelchair user / have mobility difficulties</b>        | 156    | 225    | 1,755   | 234    | 2,370   | 0.62%  |
| <b>Personal care support</b>                               | 44     | 56     | 226     | 19     | 345     | 0.09%  |
| <b>Mental health difficulties</b>                          | 179    | 384    | 2,937   | 135    | 3,635   | 0.95%  |
| <b>An unseen disability, eg diabetes, epilepsy, asthma</b> | 1,787  | 1,162  | 3,814   | 259    | 7,022   | 1.83%  |
| <b>Multiple disabilities</b>                               | 435    | 420    | 2,113   | 126    | 3,094   | 0.80%  |
| <b>A disability not listed above</b>                       | 1,977  | 1,542  | 6,270   | 475    | 10,264  | 2.67%  |
| <b>Information refused</b>                                 | 1,038  | 1,049  | 6,123   | 472    | 8,682   | 2.26%  |
| <b>Information unknown</b>                                 | 5,460  | 5,078  | 17,195  | 623    | 28,356  | 7.38%  |
| <b>Information refused / not known</b>                     | 2,883  | 3,380  | 13,476  | 542    | 20,281  | 5.28%  |
| <b>OVERALL</b>   | 75,974 | 64,638 | 231,419 | 12,438 | 384,469 |        |

Source: Scottish Funding Council – [www.hefc.ac.uk](http://www.hefc.ac.uk)

| <b>Relative percentage of each category of disability</b>               |               |                   |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
|   | <b>Totals</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| <i>Disability affecting mobility</i>                                    | 2370          | 6.93              |
| <i>Dyslexia</i>   | 5140          | 15.03             |
| <i>Hearing impairment</i>   | 1707          | 4.99              |
| <i>Mental ill health</i>  | 3635          | 10.63             |
| <i>Multiple disabilities</i>  | 3094          | 9.05              |
| <i>Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)</i> | 7022          | 20.53             |
| <i>Visual impairment</i>  | 968           | 2.83              |
| <i>Other</i>  | 10264         | 30.01             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>34200</b>  | <b>100</b>        |

Source: Scottish Funding Council – [www.hefc.ac.uk](http://www.hefc.ac.uk)

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire to disability officers

#### SNOWDON AWARD SCHEME QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you feel that nearly all disabled students tick the box on the UCAS form saying that they have a disability, or do many come to you for help after they had been accepted on the course?
  
2. Using the UCAS definitions of types of disability, which categories have you found need most help from you, and could you say what sort of help? UCAS categories: 1 Specific learning difficulties; 2 Blind /partial sight; 3 Deaf/partial hearing; 4 Wheelchair/mobility; 5 Autistic disorder; 6 Mental health difficulties 7- unseen (eg diabetes, epilepsy, asthma); 8 2+ disabilities/special needs; 9 other disabilities/special needs.
  
3. Which categories tend to have the most difficult funding problems and why?
  
4. What other sources of help do you recommend?
  
5. Have you heard of The Snowdon Award Scheme? (Please underline your answer)
  - A. Not until now
  - B. Yes, but don't really know what they do
  - C. Yes, am aware of what they do
  - D. Yes, and have referred students to them for support.

Thank you very much for your help.

Appendix D

**The Snowdon Award Scheme**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

1. Date of start and finish of study: ...../...../..... to ...../...../.....

i) Was the course: a. part time?   
b. full time?

ii) Was the course: a. further education   
b. undergraduate   
c. postgraduate   
d. training

2. When did you tell your place of study about your disability?

a. when I applied   
b. when I was accepted   
c. when I arrived   
d. other, please specify

3. Did you receive DSA? a. yes

(Disabled Students' Allowances) b. no  because;

(i) the course was not eligible   
(ii) other, please specify

.....  
What other financial help did you receive?  
.....

4. Who was most helpful in finding additional financial funding?

|   | Great help               | Some help                | No help                  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Friends or family?                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Tutor at college/university?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Disability officer/learning support officer?     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. SKILL: Nat. bur. for students with disabilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. LA: Local authority (or equivalent)?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. The Snowdon Award Scheme?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Other, please specify?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

.....

5. Who was most supportive in a non-financial way?

|   | Great help               | Some help                | No help                  |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Friends or family?                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Tutor at college/university?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Disability officer/Learning support officer?     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. SKILL: Nat. Bur. for students with disabilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. LEA (or equivalent)?                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. The Snowdon Award Scheme?                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Other, please specify                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

.....

6. Where was the biggest shortfall in your finances?

- a. cost of equipment
- b. cost of fees
- c. cost of non medical help  please specify what sort:

.....

- d. other  please specify:

7. What are you doing now?

- a. Still studying
- b. Employed (i) full time   
(ii) part time
- c. Unemployed
- d. Other, please specify

If you are now working, what is your job title and is it the kind of job that you were hoping for?

.....

Thank you very much for your help. Please add any additional comments that you wish.

We may wish to contact you with a request for further details or your experiences as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary project. If this is acceptable how would you wish to be contacted?

Name .....

Postal address .....

Email .....

Telephone .....

## Appendix E

First year UK domiciled HE students by qualification aim, mode of study, and disability 2004-5 have been provided by HESA.

An extract, with percentage analysis is shown below. The full detail is in the following table 11b

| <b>First year UK domiciled HE students 2004/05</b> | <b>Total Students</b> | <b>% of total students</b> | <b>Total known to have a disability</b> | <b>% of disabled students</b> |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Research for a higher degree</b>                | 15,330                | 1.81                       | 885                                     | 1.80                          |
| Full-time  | 10,440                | 1.23                       | 625                                     | 1.27                          |
| Part-time  | 4,885                 | 0.58                       | 260                                     | 0.53                          |
|  |                       |                            |   |                               |
| <b>Taught course for a higher degree</b>           | 69,445                | 8.18                       | 3,875                                   | 7.89                          |
| Full-time  | 29,960                | 3.53                       | 2,085                                   | 4.24                          |
| Part-time  | 39,485                | 4.65                       | 1,790                                   | 3.64                          |
|  |                       |                            |   |                               |
| <b>Other postgraduate</b>                          | 90,390                | 10.65                      | 3,935                                   | 8.01                          |
| Full-time  | 36,665                | 4.32                       | 2,235                                   | 4.55                          |
| Part-time  | 53,725                | 6.33                       | 1,700                                   | 3.46                          |
|  |                       |                            |   |                               |
| <b>First degree</b>                                | 379,150               | 44.66                      | 26,085                                  | 53.10                         |
| Full-time  | 320,865               | 37.80                      | 22,890                                  | 46.60                         |
| Part-time  | 58,285                | 6.87                       | 3,195                                   | 6.50                          |
|  |                       |                            |   |                               |
| <b>Other undergraduate</b>                         | 294,630               | 34.71                      | 14,340                                  | 29.19                         |
| Full-time  | 53,145                | 6.26                       | 3,920                                   | 7.98                          |
| Part-time  | 241,485               | 28.45                      | 10,420                                  | 21.21                         |
|  |                       |                            |   |                               |
| <b>Total - Postgraduate</b>                        | 175,165               | 20.63                      | 8,695                                   | 17.70                         |
| <b>Total - Undergraduate</b>                       | 673,775               | 79.37                      | 40,430                                  | 82.30                         |
| <b>Total - All levels</b>                          | 848,940               |                            | 49,125                                  |                               |

*Excerpt of statistics provided by HESA*

**Note the relatively lower percentage of both postgraduate and part time students that have disabilities**

**First year UK domiciled HE students by qualification aim, mode of study and disability 2004/05**

|  | <b>Total</b>  | <b>Total known to have a disability</b> | Dyslexia | Blind/ Partially sighted | Deaf/ Hearing impairment | Wheelchair user/ Mobility difficulties | Personal care support | Mental health difficulties | Autistic spectrum disorder | An unseen disability (#12) | Multiple disabilities | Other disability | No known disability | Not known/ sought |
|--|---------------|---|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Research for a higher degree</b>      | <b>15330</b>  | <b>885</b>                              | 280      | 20                       | 50                       | 50                                     | 0                     | 40                         | 5                          | 255                        | 45                    | 135              | 14040               | 405               |
| <b>Full-time</b>                         | <b>10440</b>  | <b>625</b>                              | 225      | 20                       | 25                       | 25                                     | 0                     | 30                         | 5                          | 175                        | 30                    | 90               | 9555                | 265               |
| <b>Part-time</b>                         | <b>4885</b>   | <b>260</b>                              | 55       | 5                        | 20                       | 30                                     | 0                     | 10                         | 0                          | 80                         | 15                    | 45               | 4485                | 140               |
| <b>Taught course for a higher degree</b> | <b>69445</b>  | <b>3875</b>                             | 1685     | 105                      | 185                      | 175                                    | 5                     | 150                        | 15                         | 890                        | 210                   | 455              | 61750               | 3820              |
| <b>Full-time</b>                         | <b>29960</b>  | <b>2085</b>                             | 1070     | 55                       | 65                       | 75                                     | 0                     | 85                         | 5                          | 420                        | 90                    | 225              | 27400               | 475               |
| <b>Part-time</b>                         | <b>39485</b>  | <b>1790</b>                             | 615      | 50                       | 120                      | 100                                    | 0                     | 70                         | 10                         | 475                        | 120                   | 235              | 34350               | 3345              |
| <b>Other postgraduate</b>                | <b>90390</b>  | <b>3935</b>                             | 1475     | 85                       | 270                      | 160                                    | 5                     | 75                         | 15                         | 1020                       | 180                   | 645              | 83030               | 3425              |
| <b>Full-time</b>                         | <b>36665</b>  | <b>2235</b>                             | 925      | 40                       | 105                      | 65                                     | 5                     | 45                         | 5                          | 555                        | 85                    | 405              | 33920               | 510               |
| <b>Part-time</b>                         | <b>53725</b>  | <b>1700</b>                             | 550      | 50                       | 165                      | 90                                     | 0                     | 35                         | 10                         | 465                        | 95                    | 240              | 49105               | 2920              |
| <b>First degree</b>                      | <b>379150</b> | <b>26085</b>                            | 13180    | 630                      | 1005                     | 740                                    | 35                    | 1220                       | 200                        | 4355                       | 1970                  | 2745             | 326980              | 26080             |
| <b>Full-time</b>                         | <b>320865</b> | <b>22890</b>                            | 12400    | 560                      | 855                      | 595                                    | 30                    | 905                        | 200                        | 3905                       | 1105                  | 2335             | 296690              | 1280              |
| <b>Part-time</b>                         | <b>58285</b>  | <b>3195</b>                             | 780      | 70                       | 155                      | 145                                    | 5                     | 315                        | 0                          | 450                        | 865                   | 410              | 30290               | 24800             |
| <b>Other undergraduate</b>               | <b>294630</b> | <b>14340</b>                            | 4380     | 470                      | 1255                     | 1020                                   | 40                    | 875                        | 60                         | 2955                       | 1415                  | 1875             | 233690              | 46600             |
| <b>Full-time</b>                         | <b>53145</b>  | <b>3920</b>                             | 2050     | 90                       | 185                      | 90                                     | 5                     | 125                        | 20                         | 760                        | 190                   | 405              | 48500               | 725               |
| <b>Part-time</b>                         | <b>241485</b> | <b>10420</b>                            | 2330     | 380                      | 1065                     | 930                                    | 35                    | 745                        | 40                         | 2200                       | 1225                  | 1470             | 185190              | 45875             |
| <b>Total - Postgraduate</b>              | <b>175165</b> | <b>8695</b>                             | 3440     | 215                      | 500                      | 385                                    | 10                    | 270                        | 35                         | 2170                       | 430                   | 1240             | 158815              | 7650              |
| <b>Total - Undergraduate</b>             | <b>673775</b> | <b>40430</b>                            | 17560    | 1100                     | 2260                     | 1760                                   | 75                    | 2095                       | 260                        | 7315                       | 3385                  | 4620             | 560670              | 72680             |
| <b>Total - All levels</b>                | <b>848940</b> | <b>49125</b>                            | 21000    | 1315                     | 2760                     | 2145                                   | 85                    | 2365                       | 295                        | 9485                       | 3815                  | 5860             | 719485              | 80330             |

In this table, 0, 1 and 2 are rounded to 0. All other numbers are rounded up or down to the nearest 5.

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