

DSA-QAG

NMH Newsletter

April 2018



Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Disabled Students Allowances – Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG) for Non Medical Help Providers. An edition for assessment centres and ATSPs is issued separately.

We have been busy working on the following items which we will cover in greater detail within the newsletter:

- Completion of the 2017 Audit Cycle
- Publishing of the 2017 Audit Analysis Report
- Preparing for the 2018 Audit Cycle, Self -assessment Form, guidance documents and audit tools updates
- Publishing sole trader audit guidance document
- Introduction of NMH Sanctions
- Service Level Agreement Review
- Engaging with professional bodies, PATOSS and ADSHE
- NMH roadshows for the Regions

NMH 2017 Audit Cycle

Due to some inclement weather towards the end of December 2017 there were a small number of audits carried over in to January 2018. All organisation who were due to be audited in the 2017 cycle have now been completed. We are working closely with those providers who were audited later in the cycle and have not yet been accredited, we hope to have this final group of providers fully accredited on satisfactory receipt of their post audit action plan submission shortly.

2017 NMH Audit Analysis Report

In February, we issued to all registered NMH providers, the first year's audit analysis report, a summary of the main outcomes was:

- 589 Registered Providers
- 291 audited, 298 not audited due to informing DSA-QAG of 'zero students'
- 104 withdrawals
- 3020 support workers validated against DfE mandatory criteria
- 693 support workers deemed ineligible
 - over 50% subsequently ceased providing support
- Over 6,500 students were validated
- Average audit outcome for an organisation - 81%.

Whilst the overall average outcome was 81%, it should be noted that this is a positive result given that this was first year of the new NMH programme. This figure will now be used as the benchmark going forward and we envisage a

figure closer to 90% at the end of the 2018 audit cycle, demonstrating to the DfE that NMH Providers are adhering to the NMH quality assurance framework.

NMH 2018 Audit Cycle

In December 2017, we began to contact NMH providers with a view to booking the first of the 2018 audit cycle. NMH providers who received an audit in the 2017 cycle should expect their audit to be scheduled close to 12 months from the date of the beginning of the previous year's audit date, rather than from the date of accreditation. Therefore, if your self-assessment form was due to be submitted on 01/06/17, for example, you should expect to submit your self-assessment form to be a May – June date in 2018.

Following feedback received from NMH providers, including the roadshows we carried out in late 2017, DSA-QAG is aiming to continue to provide a personal service throughout the audit process in 2018. A designated compliance officer from the NMH Team will be assigned to each NMH Provider engaged in the audit process. You will be introduced to your designated compliance officer when they contact you to book your audit date. Your compliance officer will be available to offer assistance from the start of your audit until you have achieved your accreditation.

As a result of the release of version 2 of the framework, we have updated the self-assessment form and associated documentation, including the audit guidance. However, if you are unsure of what is required, please contact your dedicated designated compliance officer who will be more than happy to help.

You can also contact the NMH Team direct via their dedicated telephone number 0141 227 6763 or NMHUpdates@dsa-qag.org.uk.

Guidance for NMH Providers - Recurring issues

Following the completion of the 2017 cycle, the NMH team have conducted an analysis to identify recurring non-compliance and areas for improvement. Some of the most common issues have been collated below with guidance on how to achieve compliance with the Quality Assurance Framework. We have also published a guide for sole traders which covers the most common non-compliant points and what information or evidence is expected to demonstrate and ensure the standard is met. This guidance can be found at, <https://dsa-qag.org.uk/practitioner/nmh-providers/nmh-audit-general-faqs>.

Support Worker List Updates

All NMH providers are required to maintain a list of support workers and support roles offered to the student. If the NMH provider is a sole trader who meets the mandatory criteria in multiple roles, DSA-QAG should be notified of all roles potentially offered to SFE DSA funded students. Likewise, if the NMH Provider is a business, agency or Higher Education Provider, DSA-QAG must be notified using the most recent version of NMH Staff List Updates template, to add a support worker within 10 working days of their induction. DSA-QAG will then review the template and advise whether or not the support worker has met the mandatory criteria to provide support. With regards to removing a support worker, the same process should be applied using the 'deletions' tab of the staff list.

The staff updates or deletions template can be downloaded from here:

https://dsa-qag.org.uk/application/files/4915/1300/2142/NMH_Staff_List_for_Updates_v4.0.xlsx

Once completed, can we ask that you return direct to nmhupdates@dsa-qag.org.uk for review. Please do not use administration@dsa-qag.org.uk as this will delay your submission being processed by the correct team.

Support Worker and Student sample selection

The first step for NMH providers engaged in the audit process is to complete the self-assessment form. Part of the requirement at the self-assessment stage is to provide an up-to-date list of support workers who can provide support to the student in the event that support is awarded to the NMH provider by the funding body. The list of support workers should be comprised of those who are able to provide support, rather than only those who have been engaged in a session with a student. Furthermore, if a support worker can provide multiple roles, all roles must be listed (one line per support role) this will allow DSA-QAG to validate the roles(s) against the DfE mandatory criteria.

Similarly, the organisation should provide a list of students. The list should be populated with students who meet the following criteria:

- Had at least one session in the last 12 calendar months from your audit date agreed
- SFE DSA funded only and require Band 3 or Band 4 support
- Initial needs assessment was post 28/04/16

Students who do not meet all of the above criteria should not be included on the student list template.

CPD requirements for Support Workers

It is a requirement of the Quality Assurance Framework that all support workers registered must demonstrate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at least annually. For some support workers who meet the mandatory criteria via professional body membership, this requirement is automatically met as it is accepted (as agreed by DfE) that these support workers update their skills and practices through their professional body.

For all other support workers, evidence must be provided by the NMH Provider of the training undertaken which meets the criteria outlined by the DfE:

This could be demonstrated in the following ways for the purposes of compliance with the NMH framework:

- 1) The organisation providing the training is externally accredited to provide training in the relevant subject area e.g. accredited by CPDUK <https://cpduk.co.uk/>, CPD Standards Office <https://www.cpdstandards.com/> or similar, or is a HE institution with degree awarding powers.
- 2) The training course is externally accredited by an accreditation /awarding body or is provided by a HE institution with degree awarding powers.
- 3) The training is provided by one of the professional bodies listed on the NMH mandatory criteria grid.

Introduction of Sanctions

On 27 March 2018, we circulated the NMH sanctions introduced by the DfE to ensure all providers of support comply with their obligations of meeting the standards of the NMH quality assurance framework. As noted, the sanctions will not be applied without due consideration of the circumstances for being non-compliant.

SLA Feedback

Each year DSA-QAG conducts a review exercise with practitioners to ensure the service level agreement (SLA) between DSA-QAG and practitioners is current. If you have recently registered with DSA-QAG, you may not be aware of this process.

The current SLA can be found via the DSA-QAG website at

https://dsa-qag.org.uk/application/files/6215/2326/5017/Practitioners_SLA_2017_18_v1.0.pdf.

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We would like to offer NMH providers the opportunity to review the SLA items relevant to NMH providers (*excludes assessment centre and ATSP items*) and provide feedback for consideration via the online facility which is open until Friday 27 April 2018. The online form can be accessed via, <https://goo.gl/forms/3eQzlQwlo7b7Af2w2>.

Engaging with professional bodies, PATOSS and ADSHE

Recently, Karen Docherty (CEO) and Jim Kersse (Operations Manager), met with Lynn Greenwold (CEO) of PATOSS and Lisa Cooper (chair) of ADSHE who took up the invitation to visit our office in Glasgow. The meeting gave Lynn and Lisa the opportunity to discuss the challenges being faced by their members. During the visit, Lisa and Lynn spent time with the NMH Compliance Team going through each of the audit stages and heard some of the issues the team face on a day to day basis. Going forward, we agreed that the meeting was beneficial to all, and DSA-QAG will be setting-up regular meetings to work closer with PATOSS and ADSHE, to allow concerns from both the members of the professional bodies and DSA-QAG to be highlighted and openly discussed.

Roadshows in The Regions

Following on from the roadshows completed towards the end of 2017, it is our intention to deliver additional local roadshows which are provider focussed. In addition to this, DSA-QAG will be participating in the forthcoming annual general meeting of the Association of Non- Medical Help providers.

Useful Contacts

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DSA-QAG is committed to providing a quality service to practitioners, students and stakeholders. We welcome all suggestions you may have for our consideration.

Please email your suggestion to administration@dsa-qag.org.uk