# Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter for Assessment Centres (ACs) and Assistive Technology Service Providers (ATSPs). An edition for Non-Medical Help Providers will be issued separately.

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

- Recruiting new staff due to our extended remit for Non-medical Helper Provider registration and annual audits
- We have been working with DfE, IAC and NNAC representatives on the development of a quality assurance of needs assessment reports system to launch in November 2018
- We have set-up a pilot project to test the quality assurance of needs assessment reports
- We have issued the results of student feedback submissions on ATSP Aftercare  - the support students receive post equipment /software delivery, for example, technical assistance
- We have updated the Portal to launch Outreach Centre KPI collection for centres who operate outreach centres

These are only a sample of the work the team in Glasgow have been engaged in over the last few months.

## DSA-QAG Staffing

To support the DSA-QAG team in the delivery of the compliance programmes for all practitioners, we have appointed an Assistant Operations Manager, Lynda Hunter, who joined DSA-QAG in February.

Lynda has many years' operational experience in both public and private sector organisations delivering process and quality improvement programmes.

We have also recruited a Compliance Officer, Alexis Pepper, to assist the Assessment Centre and Assistive Technology Practitioner team in the delivery of the compliance programmes. Alexis started with DSA-QAG in January.

Alexis has 10 years administration and compliance experience in various roles.

## Quality Assurance of Needs Assessment Project

As you are aware from previous communications from the Department for Education (DfE) and DDA-QAG, DfE has mandated DSA-QAG to introduce a quality assurance of needs assessment reports process. The new process will be implemented for the assessment centre audit cycle commencing in November 2018.

We issued an invite to assessment centres to take part in the pilot QA of NAR process in December 2017 and received 18 volunteers, from this; the following 10 assessment centres will be taking part in the pilot process.

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|---|---|
| AbilityNet DSA Assessment Centre - Brighton | Hull Assessment Centre |
| Access2Learn DSA Centre - Hammersmith | Iona Kent & SE Assessment Centre |
| ATOP Chester | Staffordshire Regional Access Centre |
| Central London Assessment Services (CLASS) | Nottingham University ACCESS Centre |
| Cheltenham Assessment Centre | WSDAC Limited |

To assist the pilot centres, we produced detailed audit guidance, a step by step guide to the pilot process. Lynda Hunter, Assistant Operations Manager is the dedicated contact for the pilot centres throughout the process. In addition, a dedicated mailbox was set-up for the pilot centres to submit questions on the process.

We have recruited two QA Executive Officers and are awaiting the finalisation of the DfE's audit criteria for quality assuring needs assessment reports, allowing DSA-QAG to develop the audit tools for the pilot. We aim to start the pilot in May and will provide assessment centres with an analysis of then needs assessment reports quality assured post pilot.

## Assessment Centre Audit Process Review

We have been working closely with IAC and NNAC representatives to develop an online needs assessment report (NAR). The aim is for the online system to be developed and completed over the summer months. During the creation of the online system, we will be inviting assessment centres to become involved in the testing of the online facility.

Following completion of the online NAR system, we will be providing training events and guidance documentation for assessors on the new system.

We have also completed the review of the current assessment centre audit process and will be moving towards-

- An online self-assessment form submission by centre managers - this will replace the centre manager and needs assessor interview forms
- A reduced onsite visit which will cover the onsite facilities and equipment check with KPI re-performance

The first draft of the self-assessment form has been drafted by DSA-QAG, and will be circulated to IAC and NNAC representatives for their input and feedback.

We also plan to conduct a small pilot in the summer months to test the audit process prior to the implementation date of November 2018, the start of the new AC audit cycle.

## DSA-QAG Contact Details

To assist practitioners to direct their query to the correct team within DSA-QAG, we have separate contact details for assessment centres and ATSPs and NMH. By using the contact details provided below, it will ensure you receive a prompt response to your enquiry. Please circulate these details within your organisation.

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|---|---|
| **Assessment Centres & ATSP Team**<br>(AC', Outreach, ATSPs and General Queries)<br><br>**Email:** administration@dsa-qag.org.uk<br>**Phone:** 0141 227 **6771** | **NMH Team**<br>(NMH Providers and NMH related queries)<br><br>**Email:** NMHUpdates@dsa-qag.org.uk<br>**Phone:** 0141 227 **6763** |

## ATSP Aftercare Survey

In February, we issued to assessment centres and ATSPs, the analysis of the ATSP aftercare survey for the period 1 January 2017 through to 31 December 2017.

The purpose of this survey is to gain feedback from students on the reason(s) why they contacted their ATSP who supplied their equipment and/or software, how the issues were resolved and how they found the services provided by their ATSP.

The analysis of the results indicated that the feedback received was an overall positive experience by students.

A copy of the analysis can be found via https://dsa-qag.org.uk/application/files/6015/1974/9992/2017_Aftercare_Survey_January_-December_v1.0.pdf

## Outreach Centre KPI Collection

As of 1 April 2018, assessment centres that operate an outreach centre(s) will be required to submit a separate KPI return for each outreach centre they operate, rather than the current process, for the organisation as a whole. This will allow DSA-QAG to monitor the performance at each outreach centre location.

Assessment centres were notified in February that the collection exercise would start in April for the March KPI data submission. The impact of submitting individual outreach data should be minimal to centres, as centres already collate this information when submitting the main centre's KPI data.

The KPI guidance for assessment centres and outreach centres issued previously can be found via https://dsa-qag.org.uk/file-centre/documentation/assessment-centre-documentation/assessment-centre-kpi-documentation

Robyn Fraser will be the dedicated point of contact for assessment centres to assist with the collection of outreach KPI data and can be contacted via robyn.fraser@dsa-qag.org.uk or 0141 227 6771.

**For assessment centres that do not operate outreach centres, there will be no change to the KPI reporting facility.**

## DSA Computer Specification Matrix

The 2018 computer specification matrix has recently been approved by the working group with an implementation date of 1 June 2018. There were delays with issuing the matrix which was out with DSA-QAG's control pending authorisation and agreement with SFE and DfE.

The computer specification matrix contains the minimum specification that can be used for computer quotations. ATSPs are required to issue quotations based on the agreed matrix.

The latest version (v5.0) of the computer specification matrix can be found via https://dsa-qag.org.uk/practitioner/assessors

DSA-QAG has now passed the facilitation of the Computer Specification Group back to SFE and DfE.

## Selection of Suppliers - NMH Providers Inclusion

In October 2017, we issued the 2017-18 Assessment Centre framework for assessment centres to review and implement for the start of the new audit cycle which commenced in November 2017. One of the framework revisions related to standard *2.2.7 – Independence*. This standard was updated to include NMH Providers, as part of the centre's supplier selection policy and procedure to be adopted by needs assessors.

Since the start of the assessment centre audit cycle in November 2017, more than 50% of centres have had this point raised as an area for improvement during their audit. It appears that a number of centres have not yet updated their supplier selection policy to include NMH providers.

If you have not been audited, we are flagging this to assessment centres to review, and ensure that your policy is updated to meet the requirements of QAF standard 2.2.7.

## General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – May 2018

**Coming Soon** – DSA-QAG, like all organisations are reviewing our policies, procedures, frameworks and associated documentation to ensure we are able to demonstrate that we are meeting the new GDPR requirements. Our solicitors are currently reviewing our data sharing agreement with practitioners which we will be issuing to practitioners in due course allowing DSA-QAG to continue to engage with practitioners through the audit and associated processes.

The revised agreement will outline the responsibilities and obligations of both DSA-QAG and each practitioner. In addition, we are reviewing the student consent form which will be incorporated in to the framework revisions.

## Useful Contacts

**Assessment Centre & ATSP related queries**
**General enquiries**
Tel: 0141 227 6771
Email: Administration@dsa-qag.org.uk

**NMH Providers - NMH related queries**
Tel: 0141 227 6763
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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