



# DSA-QAG

## NMH Provider Sole Trader Guidance



DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE  
QUALITY ASSURANCE GROUP

Version 1.0

## Introduction

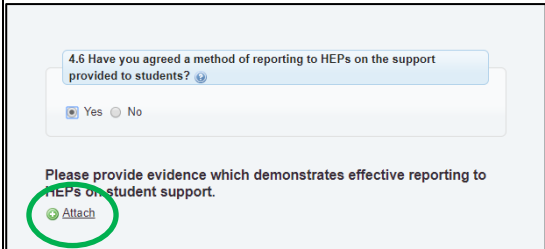
This guidance document aims to provide further assistance to sole trader NMH providers, by detailing the response or evidence to be presented when completing action points identified in the post audit summary – action plan.

The guidance was drawn from the standards which had the highest number of non-compliances identified in the 2017 audit cycle and is broken down in to the three main sections:

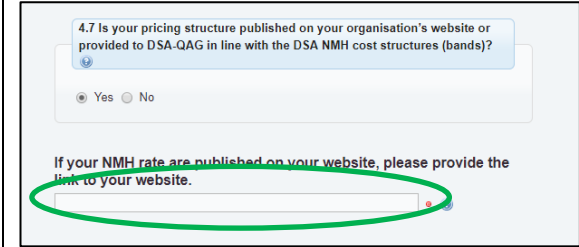
- **Self-assessment form** (*listed in self-assessment question order*)
  - Reporting to HEPs – QAF Standard 2.8
  - Pricing Structure – QAF Standard 1.7
  - Complaints Procedure – QAF Standard 1.11
  - Lone Working – QAF Standard 1.12
  - Risk Assessment – QAF Standard 1.13
  - Insurance – QAF Standard 1.14
  - Information Commissioners Office – QAF Standard 1.15
  - Employee Register of Interest – QAF Standard 1.18
  - Sole Trader Register of Interest – QAF Standard 1.19
  - Formal Student Feedback – QAF Standard 2.7
  - AdHoc Student Feedback – QAF Standard 2.6
  - Student Feedback Service Improvements – QAF Standard 2.6
  - Formal HEP Feedback – QAF Standard 2.8
  - Formal HEP Feedback Service Improvements – QAF Standard 2.8
  
- **Student validation**
  - Student Workplan / ILP – QAF Standard 4.2
  - Responding to Students request for support – QAF Standard 1.3
  - Students session bookings – QAF Standard 1.3
  - Session timesheet – QAF Standard 1.10
  - Session timesheet and DSA2 Letter – QAF Standard 1.2
  
- **Support worker validation**
  - Support worker CPD – QAF Standard 2.4

The following guidance relates to the questions presented during the completion of the self-assessment form.

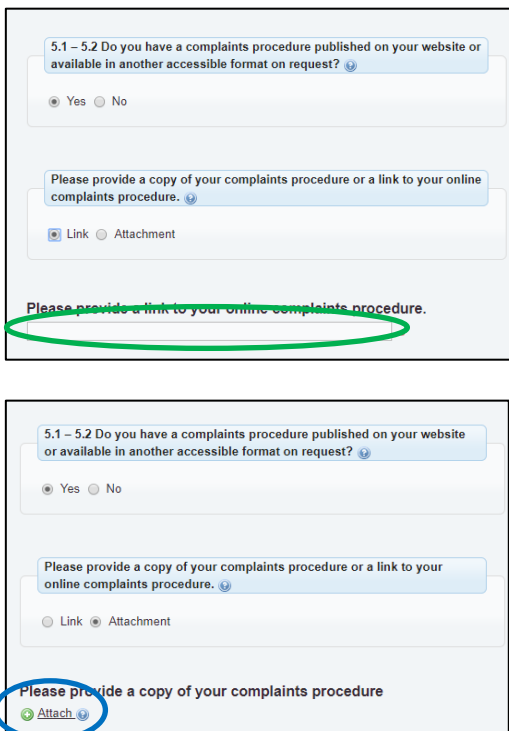
### 1. Reporting to HEPs – QAF Standard 2.8

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>4.6 Have you agreed a method of reporting to HEPs on the support provided to students?</p> 	<p>If you have an agreed method of reporting to HEPs on student support, please select 'yes'.</p> <p>You should upload, by clicking on the 'attach' link, circled in green opposite, the template provided to HEPs demonstrating the reporting of agreed information between yourself and the HEP.</p> <p>It should be noted that this only applies where students have completed a consent declaration allowing information to be shared. This consent document must be held on file.</p> <p>When attaching the template please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p> <p>If you have not agreed a method of reporting, please select 'no' and provide a reason in the text box provided.</p>

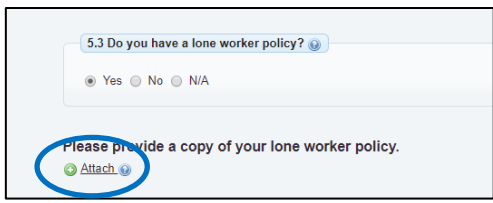
### 2. Pricing Structure – QAF Standard 1.7

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>4.7 Is your pricing structure published on your organisation's website or provided to DSA-QAG in line with the DSA NMH cost structures (bands)?</p> 	<p>If your pricing structure is in line with the DSA NMH structure, please select 'yes'. Please note that NMH Rates Template v3.0 should be used, unaltered, displaying a valid date range. The template can be downloaded via the link below:</p> <p><a href="https://dsa-qag.org.uk/download_file/view/1230/1128">https://dsa-qag.org.uk/download_file/view/1230/1128</a></p> <p>If you operate a website, you should provide the link to the webpage, in the field noted opposite, circled in green, where the rates table is displayed.</p> <p>Where you do not have a web presence, DSA-QAG will publish the rates table on your behalf. It is your responsibility to provide DSA-QAG with a rates table which displays the roles you are approved for and has a valid date range.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p>

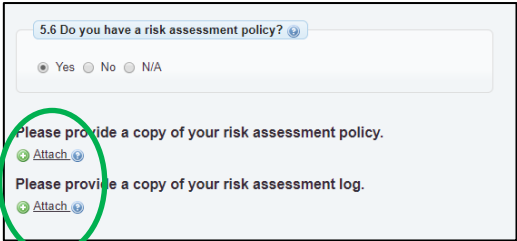
### 3. Complaints Procedure – QAF Standard 1.11

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.1 /5.2 Do you have a complaints procedure published on your website or available in another format on request?</p> 	<p>If you have a complaints procedure published, containing all mandatory elements of QAF Appendix 1 on your website, please select ‘yes’, then select the URL/link and enter the webpage in the field opposite, circled in green. If you have an alternative format please click ‘yes’, then the attachment and click on ‘attach’, circled blue opposite and upload the complaints procedure.</p> <p>You can find QAF Appendix 1 on p.40 of the Quality Assurance Framework. The complaints procedure should be the your own. Procedures presented which are headed for professional bodies or HEPs for instance, will not be accepted.</p> <p>If the response is ‘no’, please provide a reason why.</p> <p>When attaching the template please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

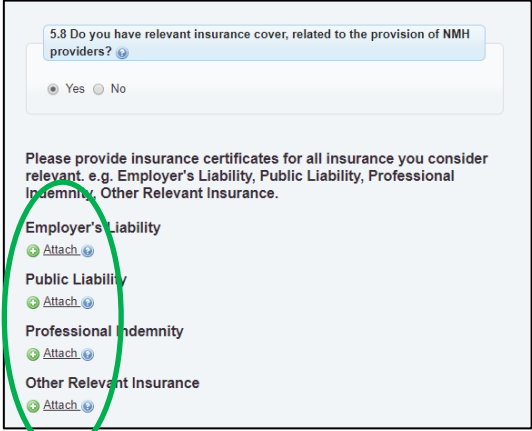
### 4. Lone Working – QAF Standard 1.12

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.3 Do you have a lone worker policy?</p> 	<p>If you have a lone worker policy, please select ‘yes’ and upload the policy by clicking ‘attach’ (circled green opposite).</p> <p>Your policy should cover, as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring risks are assessed, reviewed and mitigated before working alone</li> <li>- A robust system to ensure you have returned safely to their home or base once their task is completed</li> <li>- Consideration of what instruction, training and supervision may be necessary for lone working</li> </ul> <p>If the response is ‘no’, please provide a reason why.</p> <p>If the response is ‘N/A’, please provide a reason why.</p> <p>Where you do not operate lone working, you should clearly state this and indicate how you maintain your safety.</p> <p>When attaching the policy please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

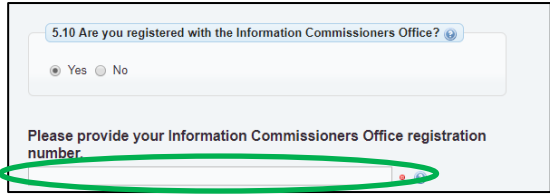
## 5. Risk Assessment – QAF Standard 1.13

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.6 Do you have a risk assessment policy?</p> 	<p>If you have a risk assessment policy, please select 'yes' and upload the policy by clicking 'attach' (circled green opposite). In addition a copy of the risk log, as per template 6 of the QAF must also be uploaded (circled in green opposite). The policy must make reference to the minimum risk assessments as noted below, as outlined in QAF 1.13:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work environment</li> <li>• Work equipment</li> <li>• Mental wellbeing</li> <li>• Travelling</li> <li>• Working Alone</li> <li>• Fire</li> </ul> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>If the response is 'N/A', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>Please note that a Risk Assessment Policy and log is <u>not required if you do not provide support to students on designated distance learning courses, or in the student's residence.</u></p> <p>When attaching the policy please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

## 6. Insurance – QAF Standard 1.14

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.8 Do you have relevant insurance cover, related to the provision of NMH providers?</p> 	<p>If 'yes', please provide copies of the insurance certificate(s) by attaching the policy certificates for each of the sections, select 'attach' for each certificate (circled in green opposite).</p> <p>Public Liability insurance is mandatory and Professional Indemnity insurance is encouraged as best practice. You would not be expected to have Employer' Liability insurance.</p> <p>Please ensure the certificates evidenced are <b>valid</b>. Expired insurance certificates will be rejected as non-compliant.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>When attaching the certificates, please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

## 7. Information Commissioners Office – QAF Standard 1.15

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.10 Are you registered with the Information Commissioners Office?</p> 	<p>If you are registered with the Information Commissioners Office, please select 'yes' and enter your registration number in the field (circled in green opposite). Your registration number will begin with Z.</p> <p>If not, please select 'no' and provide a reason.</p> <p>All registered NMH providers, including sole traders, <u>must be registered in their own right with the Information Commissioners Office.</u></p>

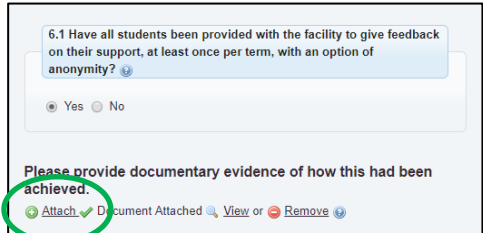
## 8. Employee Register of Interest – QAF Standard 1.18

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.11 Do you maintain a Register of Interest (ROI) log and update it annually for all of your employees?</p>	<p>For sole traders, this point is <b>non-applicable</b>. Please select 'N/A'.</p>

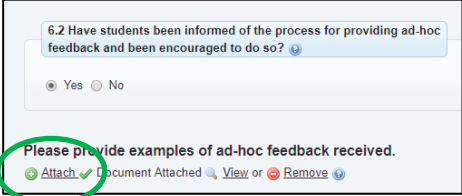
## 9. Sole Trader Register of Interest – QAF Standard 1.19

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>5.12 Do you maintain an organisational Register of Interest (ROI) for your organisation?</p>	<p>If you have responded to the 2017 Conflict of Interest declaration request from DSA-QAG, please indicate 'yes'.</p> <p>DSA-QAG will check for compliance with this standard.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p>

## 10. Formal Student Feedback – QAF Standard 2.7

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>6.1 Have all students been provided with the facility to give feedback on their support, at least once per academic year, with an option of anonymity?</p> 	<p>If all students have been provided with the facility to give feedback on their support, at least once per academic year, with an option of anonymity, please select 'yes' and upload the template provided to students by clicking on 'attach' (circled in green opposite).</p> <p>You may wish to use a third party survey website to do this, e.g. Survey Monkey. Alternatively, you may provide students with a mailing address to send anonymous feedback to.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>When attaching the template, please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

### 11. AdHoc Student Feedback – QAF Standard 2.6

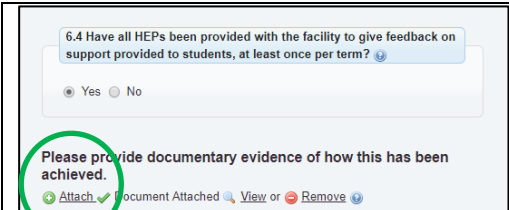
SAF Section	Guidance
<p>6.2 Have students been informed of the process for providing ad-hoc feedback and been encouraged to do so?</p> 	<p>If all students have been informed of the process for providing ad-hoc feedback and been encouraged to do so, please select 'yes'.</p> <p>You should upload evidence of ad hoc feedback received, e.g. screenshots of emails or text messages from students. Please provide evidence of the process students should follow to provide ad-hoc feedback.</p> <p>Feedback can be encouraged by detailing the student's methods of ad hoc feedback on student support agreements or other relevant documentation. The process, template and examples of adhoc feedback can be uploaded by clicking on 'attach' (circled in green opposite).</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>When attaching the template, please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>

### 12. Student Feedback Service Improvements – QAF Standard 2.6

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>6.3 Has student feedback been collected and used to develop service improvements?</p>	<p>If student feedback has been collected and used to develop service improvements, please select 'yes' and provide details of improvements made to your service.</p> <p>You should provide examples of service improvements arising from student feedback.</p> <p>In the event that no student feedback has been received, please advise the process followed to ensure feedback will be reviewed and used to develop service improvements in the event of feedback being collected. For example, an actions log.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>If the response is 'N/A', please provide a reason why.</p>

### 13. Formal HEP Feedback – QAF Standard 2.8

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>6.4 Have all HEPs been provided with the facility to give feedback on support provided to students, at least once per academic year?</p>	<p>If all HEPs have been provided with the facility to give feedback on support provided to students, at least once per academic year, please select 'yes'.</p> <p>You may choose to provide HEPs with a template or a survey for providing feedback. If feedback is requested via email, please retain copies of communications issued to relevant HEPs. Please upload the template or process for providing feedback and any examples of by clicking on 'attach' (circled in green opposite).</p>

	<p>When attaching the template, please note, the portal will only accept a <b>Word</b> or <b>PDF</b> document to be uploaded.</p>
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#### 14. Formal HEP Feedback Service Improvements – QAF Standard 2.8

SAF Section	Guidance
<p>6.5 Has HEP feedback been collected and used to develop service improvements?</p>	<p>If HEP feedback has been collected and used to develop service improvements, please select 'yes', and provide details of improvements made to your service.</p> <p>If no HEP feedback has been received, please advise the process followed to ensure feedback will be reviewed and used to develop service improvements in the event of feedback being collected. For example, an actions log.</p> <p>If the response is 'no', please provide a reason why.</p> <p>If the response is 'N/A', please provide a reason why.</p>



## Student validation

The following guidance relates to the validation of the evidence presented for the student validation exercise.

### 15. Student Workplan / ILP – QAF Standard 4.2

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
<p>The support worker and the student should agree the work to be undertaken and expected outcomes. This must be documented, reviewed and updated at least every 3 months.</p> <p>This should include a student/ NMH agreement to articulate expectations on both sides.</p>	<p>If you are required to provide a work plan / ILP for each student, this should be uploaded during the sample upload stage of the audit process.</p> <p>This does not apply to Band 3 roles or the following Band 4 roles-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSL Interpreter</li> <li>• AT Trainer</li> </ul> <p>If it has been identified during the audit that you have not provided a workplan for any students you will be required to provide us with the process / procedure you have adopted to ensure a workplan / ILP is completed every three months. In addition you will be required to upload a template of your workplan / ILP.</p>

### 16. Responding to Students request for support – QAF Standard 1.3

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
<p>Students should be contacted using their preferred method of communication to arrange their session within 1 working day of receipt of request for support.</p>	<p>You should upload evidence of the initial communication with the student. ‘Initial contact’ from the student is the first contact, following the receipt of their DSA2 letter, to begin arranging their support with you. Ideally, if you have communicated to the student via email, you should upload evidence of correspondence.</p> <p>It is recommended that you keep a log of student contact, in cases where the student communicates face-to-face or via telephone.</p> <p>Where it has been identified as a result of your audit that there was insufficient evidence provided, you will be required to provide a copy of the process or procedure you have implemented to ensure that students are acknowledged/responded to <b>within 1 working day</b>.</p>

### 17. Students session bookings – QAF Standard 1.3

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
<p>The NMH provider must make sure that all sessions are booked and confirmed with the student before attending.</p>	<p>Sole traders should upload evidence of the student’s session being booked and confirmed in advance. The following information should be confirmed with the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Date of session</li> <li>- Time of session</li> <li>- Location</li> <li>- Support role</li> </ul>

	For further details, please refer to QAF standard 1.3.
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**18. Session timesheet – QAF Standard 1.10**

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
Where required by the Funding Body, the NMH Provider must provide the organisations NMH session timesheet.	<p>The sole trader should upload the timesheet for the most recent session with the student. The sole trader must use SFE’s <b>mandatory timesheet</b>, which should be signed by both the support worker and the student.</p> <p>Where it has been identified as a result of your audit, that there were timesheets missing or not completed fully, you will be required to provide a copy of the process or procedure implemented to ensure that SFE’s mandatory timesheet has been implemented, additionally you may be requested to upload a copy of the revised timesheet.</p>

**19. Session timesheet and DSA2 Letter – QAF Standard 1.2**

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
<p>The NMH provider only supplies DSAs-funded support that has been authorised by the funding body (evidenced by the support delivered matching the support awarded), and monitors against overall entitlement.</p> <p>The NMH provider must maintain up-to-date records (by student) of quantity and type of support that has been approved and delivered.</p>	<p>You should upload a copy of the student’s DSA2 letter. The DSA2 letter must include the front page as well as the page indicating the support has been awarded to the you.</p> <p>Evidence from the DSA2 letter is then compared with the timesheets to ensure the type of support being delivered is identical to the type of support awarded.</p> <p>You should take care to clarify the exact type of support on the timesheet. For example, if the student has received Specialist Mentoring, please indicate whether this was AS-specific or to support a student with a mental health condition.</p> <p>Where it has been identified as a result of your audit that there were DSA2 letters or timesheets missing or not completed fully, you will be required to provide a copy of the process or procedure you have implemented to ensure that DA2 letters o and or timesheets are retained on a student’s record and available for future audits.</p>

## Support Worker Validation

The following guidance relates to the validation of the evidence presented for the support worker validation exercise.

### 20. Support worker CPD – QAF Standard 2.4

Student Evidence Validation	Guidance
<p>The NMH provider must ensure that all support workers undertake CPD and relevant training annually, covering as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Relevant professional development in their specialist role(s)</li><li>- updating skills in new practices</li></ul> <p>CPD and personal training records must be maintained and made available for audit.</p>	<p>You should upload copies of certificates for courses attended or confirmation of attendance at events which are relevant to the support roles you are registered to provide.</p> <p>It should be noted, if your role requires you to be registered with a professional body, you <b>do not</b> need to provide evidence of CPD for that role.</p>