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# TRAILBLAZERS

Part of the Young Campaigners' Network

# UNIVERSITY

# CHALLENGE



## THE TRAILBLAZERS' EDUCATION REPORT

Report 2 of the Inclusion Now series  
August 2009

**“Studying at university when you are a disabled student is no different than studying as an able-bodied student. The social life is brilliant, the courses are great and really interesting, and your fellow students will be completely accepting and open to you. Just make sure that you have all your needs sorted out well in advance of your first term, and then everything else should follow smoothly.”**

**Zoë Hallam, Walsall, studying at Oxford University**

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## ABOUT TRAILBLAZERS

*Trailblazers* is a nationwide organisation of young disabled and non-disabled campaigners. We are part of the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, the leading UK charity focusing on all muscle diseases. We aim to fight the social injustices experienced by young people living with muscle disease or a related condition and ensure they can gain access to the services they require.



Jessica Berry and James Lee at Parliament

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly crowded job market academic qualifications have become more important in securing employment. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) the number of wheelchair users attending university increased by almost 230% between 1995 and 2008, yet *Trailblazers* continues to hear of difficulties and challenges that disabled students face when planning for and studying at university.

In 2002 the Department for Work and Pensions found that non-disabled people were twice as likely to have studied in higher education as disabled people. The same report revealed that 44% of all disabled people were economically active, compared with 79% of non-disabled people. If you are disabled you are less likely to have studied at university and also less likely to be in employment. For disabled people to be able to achieve their economic potential and fully contribute to the national economy, it is essential that higher education is accessible to all.

The figures from HESA reveal that universities and the support services provided are making commendable improvements that mean disabled students can access university. However more can be done and universities must continue to provide adjustments for disabled students so they are not excluded, missing out not only on higher education, but also potential future employment.

More than 100 *Trailblazers* investigated the challenges facing disabled students applying to and studying at university. In this report, *University Challenge*, the second in the *Inclusion Now* campaign series, the *Trailblazers* have put universities to the test. They interviewed university representatives about how their facilities and services are adapted to ensure disabled students have the same chance as their non-disabled peers of achieving academic success. The *Trailblazers* also assessed the information on universities' websites, judging it against five key criteria. Finally, the *Trailblazers* combined their diverse experience of applying for and studying at university to put together a collection of top tips for a smooth, productive and enjoyable time in higher education.

## UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

### INCLUDES :

- top tips from *Trailblazers* for disabled people on how to get into and get the most out of university;
- the findings of the *Trailblazers*' investigation into universities' facilities for students with mobility difficulties;
- a review of the information on universities' websites;
- recommendations on the action required to ensure impairment is not a barrier to a student enjoying a full university experience;
- links to useful websites.

## THE EVIDENCE IN THIS

### REPORT COMES FROM :

- *Trailblazers*' first-hand experiences
- University and Students' Union representatives
- UK university websites
- Skill (A national independent charity that promotes opportunities for people in learning and entry to employment)
- Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Zoë and Wes Hallam at University College London



## KEY FINDINGS

- One in ten disabled students will not have accessible accommodation, and cooking and dining facilities that are fully integrated into mainstream university life.
- Nearly four out of ten universities do not provide a freshers' guide to the university for disabled students.
- One in four universities does not have rooms available for personal assistants, which could force disabled students to live at home rather than with their fellow students.
- 30% of inter-campus transport is not accessible to disabled students.
- One in ten universities admits that they do not have good links with local care agencies and support services.
- The UCAS clearing system disadvantages disabled students as it leaves them less than a month to choose their preferred course and university as well as investigate access, accommodation and arrange care.
- Almost a third of university websites do not have a direct point of contact for disabled students.
- Only 12% of the top 100 university websites could provide all the information requested.
- Nearly 10% of the websites did not provide any of the information searched for.
- Half of the websites lacked information on accessible leisure facilities.

## Action needed:

### We are calling on the Government, local authorities and universities and colleges to:

- recognise the importance of an engaged disability officer to make the transition to university as smooth as possible. All universities must prioritise at least one person in this role so disabled students receive expert advice and support at a potentially stressful and uncertain time;
- guarantee that no student will be unable to study a course (that they have the qualifications and academic background to study) on the grounds of their disability;
- guarantee full funding for the increased care needed when a young disabled person leaves home and goes to university so they can study where they choose, without being reliant on family for care;
- ensure disabled students have the same level of choice as non-disabled students when choosing their university accommodation;
- guarantee the provision of free accommodation for personal assistants, required by disabled students who need 24-hour care;
- ensure that all inter-campus university transport is accessible to all students;
- provide guidance and support for disabled students who need to hire personal assistants;
- ensure all university and college websites have fully comprehensive and accessible information for disabled students.

# UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

## MAKING THE MOST OF FURTHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

### CHOOSING A COURSE

### AND UNIVERSITY

*Trailblazers* recommend choosing a university based on what you think is the best course for you. Don't be put off by people saying you can't do a course because of disability. Most subjects can be studied by anyone if you have the qualifications, skills and dedication. Therefore, extensive research into potential courses is key to a happy university experience. Get yourself well acquainted with the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (see Useful links for more information), the universities' websites and their prospectuses.

**"I'd definitely recommend visiting any university that you're serious about applying to: I found that what is accessible or inaccessible on paper is often different in reality, and places which I thought might be inaccessible to me could actually be made accessible without much effort."**

Zoë Hallam, Walsall, studying at Oxford University

And don't forget the option of distance learning so consider The Open University.

As well as enjoying the course you're going to study, you'll want to be at a university that makes you feel at home. We recommend visiting as many of the universities you have short-listed as possible.

When choosing a university it's best to start research early. Some *Trailblazers* have started their hunt for the right university up to two years before starting their course. The sooner you know what you want to do the more time you have to get a proper understanding of the support at your top choices.

**"I had a shortlist of three universities to visit. When I was looking around I explored the practicalities – how accessible campus was, how close things were, what the disability advisers were like etc – but the main one for me was accommodation. It was important for me to find a room which was big enough to fit a wheelchair and portable hoist in as well as all the normal things I'd need."**

Catherine Alexander, the Wirral, hopes to study at Lancaster University

Some universities are built on one campus with accommodation, lecture theatres and leisure facilities all in one place while others have buildings scattered around a town or city. It is worth deciding sooner rather than later what suits you best as this will help you to narrow down your options.

If you don't have time to visit all the universities you are seriously considering you can always visit the universities' websites. Each site should have information on the support services available, including specific disability services. Some websites may also provide campus and buildings access maps, as well as giving you a good idea of the location of the university in relation to the nearest town or city.

We would also recommend reading Skill's Into Higher Education Guide which provides a comprehensive and informative guide to choosing a university.

### TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY

- Select the right course for you.
- Start looking one to two years in advance.
- Visit as many of your choices as you can.

**"I chose a uni based on the best course for me. I went on seven open days at universities all around the country but when it came down to it the course was the deciding factor."**

Sulaiman Khan, London, hopes to study at the University for the Creative Arts



Sulaiman Khan helps out at the A-Level helpline

**"All the universities that I visited were really helpful and accommodating - giving me tours of lecture theatres, accommodation and of course the student bars! I also had the opportunity to meet the Disability Support Teams who were going to be key in my student life."**

Lauren West, Cardiff, hopes to study at the University of Manchester

## ACCESS AT UNIVERSITY

Thousands of disabled students now have new rights to better access on university and further education campuses under new laws that came in to force from 1 September 2005.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), universities and colleges must make reasonable changes to their premises to make them more user-friendly for Britain's disabled students. Campuses have to ensure that lecture halls, libraries, ICT suites and halls of residence are more accessible. This includes altering steps, providing lifts, dropping kerbs, and making sure better lighting and clear signage are provided where reasonable. A failure to do so could result in disabled students taking legal action.

To make sure you can access all your lecture theatres or seminar rooms see if you can get hold of your timetable at the earliest possible opportunity. You should also make sure your subject faculty knows you are a student in their department so they can put a face to a name and ensure your classes are scheduled to take place in an accessible room.

If this sounds like a lot of responsibility and trouble, don't panic, you're not alone and every university should have a disability adviser or support unit who will liaise with the academic and accommodation departments whenever accessibility is an issue. Be sure to seek them out. It is also worth writing a list of things that concern or interest you regarding accessibility after a university open day. This way you'll be sure to remember key issues when you meet an adviser.

**"I went to an open day in the summer before I was due to start uni. The campus itself was small, but ideal for somebody using a wheelchair. I found that most of the campus was accessible, with ramped access to every building and automatic door openers on those that were most used. However, as with many universities, a lot of the buildings are old, so they don't have lifts to the upstairs rooms. But despite this, the lecturers or timetable planners never have a problem moving the classes downstairs, as long as you make them aware."**

Jessica Berry, Macclesfield, studying at Manchester Metropolitan University

**"The university I attended already had stair lifts installed and disabled toilets facilities. The only problem was I required a hoist for the toilet. It took a year for the hoist to be installed, after much debating about funding and contractors. On the plus side the staff and disability advisers were fantastic with the situation and kept fighting for the hoist to be installed as soon as possible."**

Hayleigh Barclay, graduate of the University of the West of Scotland



## TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON BUILDING ACCESS

- Have a good look around your chosen university and make a list of concerns.
- Get hold of your study timetable as soon as you can.
- Work with the disability advice team to iron out problems.

**"All five of the universities I applied to had excellent accessible accommodation, social facilities and surrounding cities, and were really keen to make any changes to lecture theatres, halls or communal facilities that I needed."**

*Zoë Hallam and friends relax after exams*

Zoë Hallam, Walsall, studying at Oxford University



## ACCOMMODATION

If you intend to stay in university accommodation you will want to look into the range and size of the rooms.

The majority of universities already have plenty of accessible accommodation and will help you design a room that caters to all your needs. If you need a desk fitted, a hoist installed or an application that opens the door for you, the university will be able to provide it and the disability advice teams and university staff should do all they can to make sure your accommodation needs are met.

Other things you might want to consider include the availability of additional rooms for personal assistants, the adaptation of kitchen and communal rooms and whether the halls are used by both disabled and non-disabled students. These are all things you should ask a member of a disability advice team about early on so the university can make sure the facilities are all available for you from day one.

Once you have got hold of your new room you may want to stay there throughout your time at the university, so it's important to find out where you stand on this. Most non-disabled students will move in to private rented accommodation after their first academic year and if you have other plans you will need to inform the university as soon as you can.

**“While on my travels around the universities I got to see the accommodation at Manchester University and it suited my requirements. I also made contact with the Disability Accommodation Officer there and made it perfectly clear which room I wanted, providing details of specific bedrooms and kitchens that met my needs. This made it a lot easier when applying for accommodation.”**

Lauren West, Cardiff, hopes to study at Manchester University

Many people decide that there is no need to move half way across the country to study at university when they would be just as happy at their local college or university. The convenience of being able to stay at home combined with the cost of studying and living away from home has increased the number of people who choose to study near home.

For those who seek a new adventure and see independent living as a major part of the university experience living on campus and with your friends can be very attractive. Lots of *Trailblazers* have moved away from home to live and study at the universities that they want to and have had fantastic experiences.

### TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON ACCOMMODATION

- Decide if you would rather stay at home, on campus or non-campus.
- Make a list of all the equipment you will need in your room, kitchen and communal areas and make sure you let the accommodation and disability teams know.
- See as many rooms as you can before selecting the one that best suits you and your needs.

**"I recommend having a list of all the equipment you may need for accommodation that you can give to the occupational therapists who will provide the equipment from your university's local social services."**

Judith Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Keele University

**"Because I had chosen a local university, I decided to live at home and commute to uni. Although I had attended an open day, freshers' week was my first opportunity to explore the whole campus. I found that all the buildings were accessible, and the majority of those with more than one floor had a lift."**

Jon Hollowell, graduate of Northampton University

Laura Merry in the snow at Roehampton University



## DISABILITY SUPPORT

### TEAMS

Every university should have a disability support adviser or team who provides pro-active advice, support and links to other departments and services at the university.

The disability advice team should offer to meet with prospective students and take you on a guided tour of the campus lecture theatres, leisure facilities and accommodations so you can get an early feel for the accessibility around the university.

The sooner you make yourself known to a disability advice team the sooner they will be able to help you get what you need from the university. They can help with anything from enabling note-taking in lectures and organising accessible accommodation to arranging personal care and providing advice on the Disabled Students' Allowance and other funding streams.

## TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON

### DISABILITY SUPPORT TEAMS

- Make contact with the disability support advisers at the first opportunity.
- Make the most of opportunities to take guided tours of the facilities.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.

**"My disability adviser helped to set up exam arrangements which included having extra time and a scribe. This information was then passed on to the relevant admin departments who were on the ball every year to ensure that the support was in place on time and that there was no added stress when it came to arrangements nearer the exam period."**

Hayleigh Barclay, graduate of University of the West of Scotland

**"The Disability Support Team is very helpful and knowledgeable. They've been reasonably good throughout the application and accommodation process, although I will know more once I start."**

Sulaiman Khan, London, hopes to study at the University for the Creative Arts

**"Most of the disability advisers I've met have been great. They seem really knowledgeable about what they do and try to make university as easy as possible, recognising that although their uni may not be the most accessible place to go, there are ways to get around these barriers."**

Catherine Alexander, the Wirral, hopes to study at Lancaster University

## DISABLED STUDENTS'

## ALLOWANCES (DSAs)

Disabled Students' Allowances are grants to help meet the extra course costs students can face as a direct result of an impairment. The grants are aimed at ensuring disabled people can study on an equal basis with other students.

### Eligibility

Full-time, part-time and postgraduate students can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances.

The amount you get doesn't depend on your household income. Disabled Students' Allowances are paid on top of the standard student finance package, and don't have to be paid back.

What they can be used for  
Disabled Students' Allowances can help pay for:

- specialist equipment you need for studying, for example computer software
- a non-medical helper, such as a note-taker or reader
- extra travel costs you have to pay for because you are disabled, for example a taxi

*"When applying for student finance I was introduced to the term 'DSA', which is an allowance for any equipment, such as a lightweight laptop, and photocopying allowance, or any assistance, such as a personal support worker, you may need while at university."*

Jessica Berry, Macclesfield, studying at Manchester Metropolitan University



University is a great place to make friends

### There are four types of allowance:

**1. Specialist equipment allowance:** this covers computers, dictaphones and other equipment. You can also use it to pay for training on how to use equipment, help in setting it up or insurance. In 2009/2010 the maximum amount was £5,161 for the whole course.

**2. Non-medical helper's allowance:** for note-takers and other non-medical helpers. In 2009/2010 the maximum amount was £20,520 (£15,390 on a pro-rata basis for part-time students) per year.

**3. General disabled students' allowance:** for photocopying, extra books, tapes or paper, or can be used to top up the specialist equipment and non-medical helper's allowances. In 2009/2010 the maximum amount was £1,724 (£1,293 on a pro-rata basis for part-time students) per year.

**4. Travel allowance:** to finance extra travel costs you have because of disability. You will not have all your travel costs paid but, for example, if you need a taxi to get to the campus when most other students use public transport, you will get the difference between the two fares. There is no maximum amount limit.

DSAs are allocated for a specific purpose and can only be used for that support.

**“While on my travels around the universities I got to see the accommodation at Manchester University and it suited my requirements. I also made contact with the Disability Accommodation Officer there and made it perfectly clear which room I wanted, providing details of specific bedrooms and kitchens that met my needs. This made it a lot easier when applying for accommodation.”**

Lauren West, Cardiff, hopes to study at Manchester University



University is a great place to meet new friends

**“Once I had received my formal offer, I was contacted by the access team at the uni to arrange an assessment regarding the DSA. The staff at the university made this process very simple, and everything was tied up before I even received my A-level results.”**

Jon Hollowell, graduate of Northampton University

**“I was given information about the DSAs and how to go about it by my transition worker. Information is available on the Local Education Authority (LEA) website but you have to trawl through a lot of information. Once done, I received a letter saying how much my DSA grant would be. This was then approved by student support and then I could start the student loan process. The DSA goes straight to the university and once they’ve received it they can start ordering equipment for me.”**

Judith Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Keele University

## HOW TO APPLY

You can apply for DSAs at the same time you apply to UCAS and fill in your main student finance application. Tick the Disabled Students' Allowance box and you should then receive a DSA application form. You may also be able to download a PDF from links from the UCAS website.

You will need to provide information about your disability on this form, how it affects your study and the support you think you need. The sooner you do this the better as your local awarding authority will be dealing with many people and it can be a long and protracted process.

Your study needs will then be assessed. Your awarding authority should provide you with information about how to arrange this, including a list of local accredited assessment centres near your university. You should be able to set up an appointment once you have been offered a place at the university and your awarding authority has agreed that you're eligible for support.



Cath McNicol on graduation day

## TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON

### DISABLED STUDENT ALLOWANCES

- Apply as early as possible.
- Make a list of everything you might need to help you study at university.
- Book your needs assessment.

**"The DSAs were relatively easy to apply for. I had my DSA needs assessment at home via an assessor from Central London Assessment Services (CLASS) and received the final assessment report about five weeks later. I had the assessment in the comfort of my home and my assessor is really wonderful and helpful. Then, about a month later I received a letter of approval for DSA and equipment. Overall, the DSA process has been good, but I do strongly believe it could be streamlined."**

Sulaiman Khan, London, hopes to study at the University for the Creative Arts

**"The whole process of my DSA needs assessment was surprisingly straightforward. I met with Manchester's disability team who carried out the first part of the assessment which identified the problems I would face at university. The second part was held at an independent assessment centre. After many years of fighting the system for the equipment I've needed while in school this process was amazing and couldn't have been easier."**

Lauren West, Cardiff, hopes to study at the University of Manchester

## PERSONAL CARE AND

## DIRECT PAYMENTS

It's the middle of August, you've got your A-level results and you've been accepted by your first or second choice university. Now is the time you hope that your preparation will bear fruit. However, for a disabled student, the time between A-level results and starting university is potentially the most stressful because care packages now need to be confirmed.

Personal assistance is funded and arranged by the local authority of your permanent residence. So, if your family live in Manchester but you want to study at Plymouth University, the local authority in Manchester will pay for your living needs, but you will often manage your care through direct payments (see [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)). To get to this stage you will need a care assessment, which is your right. Your disability adviser can help arrange this.

**"What caused issues for me was the fact that my local social services (who were responsible for my care package and equipment) seemed unable to comprehend that I would not only need a fairly dramatic increase in the amount of care required as I was no longer dependent on my parents, but also another height adjustable bed, armchair and desk for my college room. The problem with the transition to university is that it comes at a similar time to when most of us are moving from child to adult services, which is difficult enough in itself. As such my case seemed to frequently get lost in endless piles of paper."**

Zoë Hallam, Walsall, studying at Oxford University

Some of the *Trailblazers'* experiences showed that many social services departments have little experience of implementing feasible care packages for disabled students going away to university. The best piece of advice we can give is don't take 'no' for an answer.

If you require personal assistance and are using direct payments there are a number of options available to you.

One option is to work with local care agencies and find out about their costs, working hours and practices. It's important to know how flexible they are regarding working hours.

Another option is to employ fellow students at the university who may be looking for a bit of extra cash. Be careful though as you will become an employer and may have to pay tax and national insurance contributions, as well as being responsible for the assistant as an employee.

You could also investigate Community Service Volunteers who provide young care workers and personal assistants from overseas (see Useful Links).

**"When I first contacted social services about going to uni they were very shocked. They didn't really know what to do. They said it was extremely rare to get a disabled student wanting to move that far away from home. They just need to be a bit more clued up around it really. They seem to think that if you're disabled you're going to spend your life at home."**

Ben Gordon, graduate of St Mary's University College, Twickenham



## TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON

### PERSONAL CARE AND

### DIRECT PAYMENTS

- Be organised – document your research and any meetings you attend at different universities as it may help you to make your final choice.
- Make sure you receive Disability Living Allowance and that you're receiving the right amount.
- If you already receive direct payments, book a reassessment before you start university to make sure you receive enough to pay for personal assistants. If you don't receive direct payments, contact your local social services to see if they offer the scheme or an alternative.
- Look at local care agencies, their price range and if they're flexible. Ask to meet the people who may be helping you.
- When hiring assistants, try advertising through the university job support centre. Hiring students can be a good choice if you only need basic care – it means you can choose the people you want and ensure they have a similar lifestyle to you.
- Make sure you speak to your direct payments team to find out about your responsibilities as an employer.

*"I spent weeks calling the care agencies my transition worker had helped me to find in Staffordshire. I found it difficult finding carers who would suit the hours of a university lifestyle. I trialed one agency for a week but it didn't work out. The best way, I found, was advertising for assistants at Keele's Union jobcentre and then interviewing them myself, with a friend present to offer a second opinion."*

Judith Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Keele University

*"For my personal care at uni, I'm going to use a program called CSV – Community Service Volunteers. This means I'll get 24-hour care as I'll have three CSVs to rotate over the 24 hours. It also means that they'll be a similar age to me and I won't have to 'schedule' my life around carers coming in at certain times!"*

Catherine Alexander, the Wirral, hopes to study at Lancaster University

*"When I first started at university I used an agency to source personal care. The agency wasn't ideal for me as the working hours are set and it was costly. I put up adverts around uni and on the job site, which is where I got most of my replies and ultimately proved successful."*

Laura Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Roehampton University

## SOCIAL LIFE

And finally, a big part of university for many people is the chance to get involved in student life through clubs, pubs and other activities. Here, some of the graduate *Trailblazers* give you an insight into their experiences of university social life and the under-graduates share their expectations.

**"The social life in Crewe is fairly limited as many places in town are inaccessible to wheelchair users. There are a number of student societies but most are sports activities which don't interest me. From my experience when going out it is important to find out about the access for yourself in advance, and not to rely on others, as often people will tell you they're accessible and when you get there it turns out they're not."**

Jessica Berry, Macclesfield, studying at Manchester Metropolitan University

**"The key is to be as confident as possible. Everyone is pretty much in the same boat when starting uni, so introduce yourself straight away to the people in your corridor or who live near you. There's no guarantee that they'll become your close friends but it's good to strike up early relationships."**

Judith Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Keele University

**"Social life at uni has been great – I've met so many people although I'm not able to attend all the social events as they're not all accessible. As with anyone, it depends what interests you have as to what you make use of at uni."**

Laura Merry, Aylesbury, studying at Roehampton University

## TRAILBLAZERS' TOP TIPS ON

### FOR THE PERFECT

### SOCIAL LIFE

- Be as confident as you can.
- Remember everyone is in the same boat and is as new as you are.
- Check out the accessibility of venues and bars before you arrive.

**"The social life at university can be fantastic. Despite living off campus, I had great fun. The student union had countless theme nights and parties with some celebrities visiting. There wasn't a specific disabled student's society, however I don't really feel I suffered or lost out as a result. My main advice for freshers' week is to talk to other students. Whether it's in the queue for enrolment, the uni bookshop, or the SU bar everyone is in the same boat. Be as approachable as possible and you'll find you make some of the best mates you can imagine."**

Jon Hollowell, graduate of Northampton University



Parties are a big part of university life

**"I would advise you to visit the university and ask about local clubs and societies within the university and access to them, supermarkets, leisure centres, shopping malls etc."**

Matilda Ibini, London, hopes to study at Brunel University

**"Of course, I'm slightly apprehensive about moving 300 miles away, the process of making new friends and having 24-hour care, but it's all part of the experience. I could have stayed at home and gone to my local university – but what's the fun in that!"**

Lauren West, Cardiff, hopes to study at Manchester University

**"Studying at university when you are a disabled student is no different than studying as an able-bodied student. The social life is brilliant, the courses are great and really interesting, and your fellow students will be completely accepting and open to you. Just make sure that you have all your needs sorted out well in advance of your first term, and then everything else should follow smoothly."**

Zoë Hallam, Walsall, studying at Oxford University

# APPENDICES

## The investigation background

Many *Trailblazers* have first-hand experience of accessing higher education as disabled students. With this in mind the *Trailblazers* decided to compile questions they saw as being key to understanding the standard of accessibility and support available at a university.

This information was then shaped into 15 standard questions to be asked to all students' unions or university disability advice teams from the top 100 UK universities, taken from *The Times Good University Guide 2009/10*.

## Methodology and evaluation

*Trailblazers* ambassadors contacted university students' union officers by telephone and by email to ask them about the facilities and services at their university. If the union representative was not available or wasn't happy about answering the questions the *Trailblazer* contacted the university disability advice unit who were, in most cases, able to answer all 15 of the questions.

*Trailblazers* contacted the students' unions first because they hoped to be able to gain the students' perspective on accessibility at the university and remove potential elements of bias. Therefore, in the table that follows we have differentiated between data that was provided by a representative from the student union and a university employee.

The research does not include Oxford and Cambridge Universities. As there are 69 individual colleges, it was agreed that time was best spent on a broader range of universities around the UK. It also excludes The Open University as the report concentrates on the problems faced by disabled students in conventional face-to-face universities. The *Trailblazers* recommend that students

intending to study at either university use the 15 questions as a guide when investigating the colleges themselves. Or visit the OU website (see useful links for more information)

## Questions asked to representatives from students' unions and universities

1. Does the university run a Disability Equality Scheme?
2. Are all university teaching rooms, study rooms and libraries fully accessible for all students with mobility difficulties?
3. In all university halls is there a) accessible accommodation and b) rooms available for personal assistants?
4. Does the university provide support in lectures and seminars for all students with a mobility difficulty?
5. Are all university bars, cafes and leisure facilities accessible to all students with mobility difficulties?
6. Does the university have good links with local care agencies and support services?
7. Are all of the university buildings unaffected by listed status restrictions, which would delay the installation of lifts and other adaptations?
8. Does the university have a) specialist disability advisers, b) health staff and c) people responsible for adaptations and study support?
9. Does every university building have at least one accessible toilet with a hoist?

10. Is the accessible accommodation, and the cooking and dining facilities fully integrated into mainstream university life?

11. Is there a disabled student union group or society?

12. Does the university provide a freshers' guide to the university for disabled students?

13. Is all inter-campus transport accessible?

14. Would you describe the surrounding city or town as having good accessibility for people with mobility difficulties?

15. Does the university provide bespoke career guidance for disabled students?

# RESULTS

Y = Yes N = No ? = Didn't know the answer N/A = Not applicable  
 (SU) = questions answered by a students' union welfare or disability officer  
 (University) = questions answered by a representative from the university disability advice team or equivalent

| University name  | Q1 | Q2 | Q3a | Q3b | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8a | Q8b | Q8c | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Total % |    |
|--|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|----|
| <b>East Midlands</b>                                       |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |    |
| Leicester (SU)   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 89 |
| De Montfort (University)                                   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | ?   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y       | 88 |
| Loughborough (SU)  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 83 |
| Northampton (University)                                   | Y  | Y  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 83 |
| Nottingham (University)                                    | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 78 |
| Nottingham Trent (University)                              | Y  | Y  | N   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 67 |
| <b>East of England</b>                                     |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |    |
| Hertfordshire (University)                                 | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 88 |
| Lincoln (University)                                       | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y       | 78 |
| Essex (University)   | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 72 |
| Bedfordshire (SU)  | N  | N  | N   | N   | N  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | N   | N   | N   | N   | Y   | Y       | 33 |
| <b>London</b>  |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |    |
| Brunel (SU)  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 94 |
| Royal Holloway (SU)  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 78 |
| University College London (SU)                             | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 78 |
| City (SU)  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | ?  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N/A | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 76 |
| Queen Mary London (SU)                                     | Y  | Y  | N   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y       | 76 |
| Westminster (SU)   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | ?   | N/A | Y   | Y   | ?   | Y   | Y       | 76 |
| King's College London (University)                         | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 72 |
| School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) (University) | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | Y       | 72 |
| Goldsmiths College (University)                            | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N/A | N   | Y   | Y       | 71 |
| Roehampton (University)                                    | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | ?  | Y   | Y   | ?   | N   | Y   | ?   | Y       | 67 |
| <b>North East</b>  |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |    |
| Teesside (University)                                      | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y       | 83 |
| Durham (SU)  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | Y       | 78 |
| Newcastle (University)                                     | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y       | 76 |
| Northumbria (University)                                   | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | N   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 72 |
| Sunderland (University)                                    | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | ?  | Y  | ?  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | ?   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y       | 72 |

Y = Yes N = No ? = Didn't know the answer N/A = Not applicable  
 (SU) = questions answered by a students' union welfare or disability officer  
 (University) = questions answered by a representative from the university disability advice team or equivalent

| University name                             | Q1 | Q2 | Q3a | Q3b | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8a | Q8b | Q8c | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Total % |  |
|---|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|--|
| <b>North West</b>                           |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |  |
| Lancaster University (SU)                   | Y  | N  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | 82      |  |
| Manchester (SU)                             | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 78      |  |
| Salford (University)                        | Y  | Y  | N   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 72      |  |
| The Manchester Metropolitan University (SU) | N  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | Y   | 71      |  |
| Edge Hill (SU)                              | Y  | Y  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | ?  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N/A | Y   | ?   | 59      |  |
| <b>South East</b>                           |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |  |
| Chichester (University)                     | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | ?   | Y   | Y   | 89      |  |
| Reading (University)                        | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | ?  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 83      |  |
| Southampton (University)                    | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 83      |  |
| Brighton (University)                       | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | 78      |  |
| Winchester (University)                     | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | Y   | 76      |  |
| Oxford Brookes (University)                 | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | N  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 67      |  |
| Kent (University)                           | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | ?   | 65      |  |
| Surrey (University)                         | Y  | N  | Y   | ?   | Y  | Y  | ?  | ?  | N   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | ?   | N/A | Y   | ?   | 65      |  |
| Canterbury Christ Church (University)       | Y  | N  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | 61      |  |
| <b>South West</b>                           |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |  |
| West of England (SU)                        | Y  | Y  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 94      |  |
| Bournemouth (University)                    | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 89      |  |
| Exeter (University)                         | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 89      |  |
| Gloucestershire (SU)                        | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 83      |  |
| Plymouth (SU)                               | Y  | Y  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | 83      |  |
| Bristol (SU)                                | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | 78      |  |
| Bath (SU)                                   | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | N   | 67      |  |
| Bath Spa (SU)                               | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | N   | 67      |  |
| <b>West Midlands</b>                        |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |         |  |
| Coventry (University)                       | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | 100     |  |
| Wolverhampton (SU)                          | Y  | Y  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | 89      |  |
| Aston (University)                          | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | N   | 88      |  |
| Warwick (University)                        | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | 88      |  |
| Birmingham (University)                     | Y  | N  | N   | N   | Y  | Y  | ?  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N/A | Y   | ?   | 59      |  |

| University name                        | Q1 | Q2 | Q3a | Q3b | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8a | Q8b | Q8c | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Total% |    |
|--|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|----|
| Yorkshire and Humber                   |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |    |
| Sheffield Hallam (University)          | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | ?  | ?  | ?  | Y   | Y   | Y   | ?  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 83 |
| Hull (University)                      | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | ?  | Y  | ?  | ?  | Y   | Y   | Y   | ?  | ?   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 78 |
| Bradford (SU)                          | Y  | Y  | N   | N   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 72 |
| Huddersfield (SU)                      | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | N  | ?  | ?  | Y   | N   | Y   | N  | N   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y      | 67 |
| Sheffield (SU)                         | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 67 |
| York (SU)                              | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 67 |
| York St John (SU)                      | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | ?  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | ?   | ?      | 65 |
| Leeds (SU)                             | Y  | ?  | Y   | Y   | ?  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | ?   | ?   | ?  | ?   | Y   | ?   | Y   | Y   | ?   | ?      | 44 |
| Northern Ireland                       |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |    |
| Queens University Belfast (University) | N  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | N/A | N   | N      | 76 |
| Scotland                               |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |    |
| Aberdeen (University)                  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 89 |
| Edinburgh Napier (University)          | Y  | Y  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 89 |
| Glasgow (University)                   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y      | 83 |
| Stirling (University)                  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | Y   | Y   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y      | 82 |
| Edinburgh (University)                 | Y  | N  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 78 |
| St Andrews (University)                | Y  | N  | Y   | N   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y      | 72 |
| Dundee (University)                    | Y  | Y  | N   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 67 |
| Heriot-Watt(University)                | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | Y  | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | N   | ?   | ?      | 61 |
| Abertay (University)                   | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | Y   | ?   | ?   | N   | N      | 50 |
| Robert Gordon (University)             | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | ?  | N  | N  | N   | Y   | N   | Y  | Y   | N   | Y   | ?   | ?   | ?   | ?      | 44 |
| Wales                                  |    |    |     |     |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |        |    |
| Swansea (University)                   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 89 |
| Cardiff (University)                   | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | N  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 78 |
| UWIC Cardiff (University)              | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y      | 78 |
| Aberystwyth (University)               | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N/A | N   | Y   | Y      | 71 |
| Bangor (University)                    | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N/A | N   | Y   | Y      | 65 |
| Glamorgan (University)                 | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | N  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | N   | N   | N   | N/A | Y   | Y   | Y      | 65 |
| Glyndwr (University)                   | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | N   | N   | N/A | Y   | N   | N      | 65 |
| Lampeter (University)                  | Y  | Y  | Y   | Y   | Y  | Y  | Y  | N  | Y   | Y   | Y   | N  | Y   | Y   | N   | N/A | Y   | N   | N      | 65 |

### The websites – background

For a young disabled person, finding out about university is often more complicated than for a non-disabled person so a good website with all the information someone with mobility difficulties might need is a must. *Trailblazers* studied the websites of the top 100 UK universities according to *The Times Good University Guide 2009/2010* and ranked their websites according to five specific criteria:

1. Is there easily accessible information for disabled students?
2. Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students?
3. Does the website have information about disabled-access accommodation?
4. Does the website have easily available information about adaptations to university buildings?
5. Does the website have easily available information about how accessible leisure facilities are?

The websites were scored out of five, with a point awarded for meeting each criterion.



## WEBSITE RESULTS

| Universities in descending order | Rating | Is there a tab/with easily accessible information for disabled students on the home page? | Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students? | Does the website have information on accommodation? | Does the website have easily available info on adaptations to university buildings? | Does the website have easily available information on accessibility to leisure facilities? |
|----------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|--|
|----------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|--|

### Universities ranking at a 5

|                            |   |   |     |   |  |  |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----|---|--|--|
| Aberdeen                   | 5 | Yes, subtabs within A-Z section               | Yes | Yes, through the Disabled Go website                          | No, but there are contact details for more info  | Yes, through the Disabled Go website               |
| Abertay                    | 5 | Yes, sub tab of student support               | Yes | Yes, a full student guide with policies, accom and facilities | Yes, through the disabled students guide         | Yes, through the disabled students guide           |
| Birmingham                 | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through student support services            | Yes, through student services                      |
| Brunel                     | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the disability and dyslexia service | Yes, through the disability and dyslexia service   |
| City                       | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the study at city tab               | Yes, through the study at city tab                 |
| Coventry                   | 5 | Yes, sub tab of student support               | Yes | Yes, good source of info on how to do so                      | Yes, through the health and well-being services  | Yes, through the welfare and disability service    |
| Durham                     | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through disabled students service           | Yes, through disabled students service             |
| Essex                      | 5 | Yes   | Yes | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |
| Imperial College           | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through student support services            | Yes, through student services                      |
| Liverpool                  | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the student support service         | Yes, through departments and services              |
| London School of Economics | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through disability and well-being service   | Yes, through the disability and well-being service |
| Queen's Belfast            | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the student guidance centre         | Yes, through the student guidance centre           |
| Royal Holloway             | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the disabled students guide         | Yes, through the disabled students guide           |
| Surrey                     | 5 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the student life tab                | Yes, through the student life tab                  |

### Universities ranking at a 4

|                    |   |                                 |     |  |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----|--|---|---|
| Brighton           | 4 | Yes, sub tab of student support | Yes | Yes, but limited                         | Yes, through the student life tab         | No  |
| Central Lancashire | 4 | No, there is a quick search     | Yes | Yes, good source of info on how to do so | Yes, through the student affairs services | Yes, through the student affairs services |
| East Anglia        | 4 | No, there is a quick search     | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website           | Yes, through student residencies          | Yes, through the student services         |

| Universities in descending order              | Rating | Is there a tab/ with easily accessible information for disabled students on the home page? | Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students? | Does the website have information on accommodation?           | Does the website have easily available info on adaptations to university buildings? | Does the website have easily available information on accessibility to leisure facilities?      |
|---|--------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Edinburgh                                     | 4      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, on disability website  | No, but there is a quick search   |
| Exeter  | 4      | Yes  | Yes   | No  | Yes   | Yes   |
| Huddersfield                                  | 4      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, a full student guide with policies, accom and facilities | Yes, through student support services   | Yes, through student support services   |
| Kent  | 4      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the student affairs services   | Yes, an access map of the university and surrounding area can be found through student services |
| Loughborough                                  | 4      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search   |
| Reading                                       | 4      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search   |
| School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) | 4      | Yes  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through student services   | Yes, through student services   |
| Staffordshire                                 | 4      | Yes  | Yes   | Yes, good source of info on how to do so                      | Yes, through student services   | No info on accessibility  |
| University College London                     | 4      | Yes, there is a quick link   | Yes   | Yes, with search  | Yes   | No  |
| York  | 4      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                                | Yes, through the disability service   | No, but there is a quick search   |

#### Universities ranking at a 3

|                          |   |   |     |   |   |                                 |
|--------------------------|---|---|-----|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Aberystwyth              | 3 | No, there is a quick search                   | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                  | Yes, through student services                             | No                              |
| Bangor                   | 3 | Yes, but have to go through a few sub tabs    | Yes | No, unless you contact the relevant team        | Yes, through the new students tab                         | No                              |
| Bath Spa                 | 3 | Yes, sub tab of support services              | Yes | Yes, good source of info on how to do so        | No, but there is a quick search                           | No, but there is a quick search |
| Birmingham City          | 3 | No, there is a quick search                   | Yes | Yes, good source of info on how to do so        | Yes, through the disability service                       | No, but there is a quick search |
| Bournemouth              | 3 | Yes, sub tab of academic support              | Yes | Yes, but weighted more to learning difficulties | No, but there is a quick search                           | No, but there is a quick search |
| Bradford                 | 3 | No, there is a quick search                   | Yes | Yes, good source of info on how to do so        | Yes, there is a disability statement guide                | No, but there is a quick search |
| Canterbury Christ Church | 3 | No, there is a quick search                   | Yes | Yes   | Yes, there is a disability statement guide                | No, but there is a quick search |
| Cardiff                  | 3 | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services | Yes | Yes, clearly stated on website                  | No, but there is a quick search                           | No, but there is a quick search |
| Chichester               | 3 | Yes, sub tab of student support               | Yes | Yes, for some disabilities                      | No, but through student support there are contact details | No                              |
| Cumbria                  | 3 | No, there is a quick search                   | Yes | Yes, one for each campus                        | Yes, through the future students tab                      | No, but there is a quick search |

| Universities in descending order | Rating | Is there a tab/ with easily accessible information for disabled students on the home page? | Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students? | Does the website have information on accommodation?          | Does the website have easily available info on adaptations to university buildings? | Does the website have easily available information on accessibility to leisure facilities? |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|---|--|---|--|
| De Montfort                      | 3      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | Yes   | Yes, with visit  | No, but there are contact details through student services                          | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Glasgow                          | 3      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | No, but there is a quick search   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Gloucestershire                  | 3      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | Yes   | Maybe, limited information                                   | Yes, through student services   | No   |
| Goldsmiths College               | 3      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | No, but there is a quick search   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Hertfordshire                    | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, but weighted more to learning difficulties              | Yes, in FAQs and there are contact details for more info                            | No   |
| Manchester                       | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Manchester Metropolitan          | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, there is a guide, more catered to learning disabilities | No, but there are contact details for more info                                     | Yes, a guide to access in and around the campus  |
| Newcastle                        | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Nottingham                       | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Oxford Brookes                   | 3      | No, there is a quick   | Yes   | Yes, with visit  | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Portsmouth                       | 3      | No, there is a quick search, but the information is not easy to use                        | Yes   | Yes, with visit  | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Queen Margaret Edinburgh         | 3      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team                     | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Queen Mary London                | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | Yes, through student services   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Sheffield                        | 3      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | Yes, through disability and dyslexia service  | No   |
| Southampton                      | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes  | Yes   | No   |
| Strathclyde                      | 3      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website                               | No, but there is a quick search   | No   |
| Swansea                          | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, but only with prior visit                               | No  | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Teesside                         | 3      | No, there is a quick search, but the information is not easy to use                        | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team                     | Yes, through student support services   | No   |
| UWIC Cardiff                     | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, good source of info on how to do so                     | Yes, through prospective students tab   | No   |
| Warwick                          | 3      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | Yes  | Yes   | Yes  |
| York St John                     | 3      | Yes, sub tab of support services   | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team                     | Yes, through student services   | No   |

| Universities in descending order | Rating | Is there a tab/ with easily accessible information for disabled students on the home page? | Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students? | Does the website have information on accommodation?                                 | Does the website have easily available info on adaptations to university buildings? | Does the website have easily available information on accessibility to leisure facilities? |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Universities ranking at a 2      |        |  |   |   |   |  |
| Aston                            | 2      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | No  | No  | Yes, through the accommodation tab  | No   |
| Bedfordshire                     | 2      | Yes, sub tab of 'student life'   | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team  | No  | No   |
| Dundee                           | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, clearly stated on website  | No, but there is a quick search   | No   |
| Edge Hill                        | 2      | No, there is a quick search and numerous websites  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team  | Yes, through the study and accommodation tab  | No   |
| Edinburgh Napier                 | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, however, uses the term 'special needs'   | No, but there are contact details   | No   |
| Glamorgan                        | 2      | No, the process is long not easy to find requires some searching                           | Yes   | Maybe - It is unclear of how to go about it   | Yes, through accommodation tab, contact details for more info                       | No   |
| Glyndwr                          | 2      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | Yes   | Maybe - There is no spec person to contact directly rather more an information desk | No, but there are contact details for more info                                     | No   |
| Kingston                         | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team  | Yes, through support departments  | No   |
| Lampeter                         | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No information on the website   | Yes   | No   |
| Leeds                            | 2      | Yes, sub tab undergraduates, support services  | No  | No  | Yes, through prospective students tab   | No   |
| Lincoln                          | 2      | Yes, sub tab of student support  | No  | No, not enough information on website   | Yes, through accommodation tab  | No   |
| Northampton                      | 2      | Yes, sub tab fo student support  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team  | No, must contact team for more info   | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Robert Gordon                    | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | Yes, with visit   | No, but there are contact details for more info                                     | No, but there is a quick search  |
| Roehampton                       | 2      | No, sub tab of 'study here', sub tab of student support                                    | Yes   | No, not enough information on website   | Yes, through the study here tab   | No   |
| Sheffield Hallam                 | 2      | No, website confusing  | Yes   | Yes, once you find the information it is extensive                                  | Yes, with contact details   | No   |
| Ulster                           | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team  | Yes, through the student support tab  | No   |
| University of the Arts London    | 2      | Yes, sub tab of new students - then student support  | Yes   | No, there is nothing for physical disabilities on the website                       | No, but there is a quick search   | No   |
| Worcester                        | 2      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, it is unclear how to go about it  | Yes, through the student life tab   | No   |

| Universities in descending order | Rating | Is there a tab/ with easily accessible information for disabled students on the home page? | Is there a direct point of contact for disabled students? | Does the website have information on accommodation?                                      | Does the website have easily available info on adaptations to university buildings? | Does the website have easily available information on accessibility to leisure facilities? |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Universities ranking at a 1      |        |  |   |  |   |  |
| Bristol                          | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | Yes   | No   |
| Cambridge                        | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | Yes, with visit  | No, but there are contact details for more info                                     | No, but there are access maps  |
| Chester                          | 1      | No, no spec info   | No  | No information on the website  | Yes   | No   |
| Glasgow Caledonian               | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, unless you contact the relevant team   | No  | No   |
| Heriot-Watt                      | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | Yes   | No   |
| Keele                            | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | Yes, through the study here tab   | No   |
| King's College London            | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | Yes   | No   |
| Liverpool John Moores            | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, there is no spec page for disabled students just contact details & a guide for staff | No  | No   |
| Northumbria                      | 1      | No, long and convoluted search needed  | No  | No, unless you contact the relevant team   | No, but there are contact details   | No   |
| Nottingham Trent                 | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No, unless you contact the relevant team   | No, but there is a quick search   | No   |
| Oxford                           | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | Yes - with visit   | No, but there are contact details   | No   |
| Plymouth                         | 1      | No, website confusing  | No  | No   | Yes   | No   |
| St Andrews                       | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | Yes   | No   |
| Sussex                           | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | Yes, clearly stated on website   | No  | No   |
| Westminster                      | 1      | No, there is a quick search  | Yes   | No, if you can it is not obvious how to do so  | No, but there are contact details   | No   |
| Universities ranking at a 0      |        |  |   |  |   |  |
| Bath                             | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | No  | No   |
| Hull                             | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | No  | No   |
| Lancaster                        | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | No  | No   |
| Leicester                        | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | No  | No   |
| Salford                          | 0      | No, nothing on website   | No  | No, nothing on website   | No  | No   |
| Stirling                         | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No   | No  | No   |
| Sunderland                       | 0      | No, there is a quick search  | No  | No, link doesn't work  | No, but contact details for more info   | No   |
| Winchester                       | 0      | No   | No  | No, link doesn't work  | No  | No   |

## USEFUL LINKS

### **Community Service Volunteers**

**[www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk)**

Provides younger care workers from overseas.

### **DirectGov**

**[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

Provides information on Government services and those responsible for them.

### **DirectGov**

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/index.htm)**

Provides information on government services in relation to universities and higher education.

### **DisabledGo**

**[www.disabledgo.info/Education](http://www.disabledgo.info/Education)**

On a university-by-university basis, you can check physical access to places such as halls of residence, refectories, lecture halls, student unions and the nearest train stations.

### **Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**

**[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)**

The home of campaigning for equality in the United Kingdom.

### **National Union Of Students (NUS)**

**[www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)**

A voluntary membership organisation of students and its member students' unions.

### **The Open University (OU)**

**[www.open.ac.uk/study/](http://www.open.ac.uk/study/)**

The UK's part-time distance learning university with about 10,000 disabled students annually.

### **Skill**

**[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)**

A national independent charity that promotes opportunities for people in learning and entry to employment.

### **The Times Good University Guide**

**[extras.timesonline.co.uk/tol\\_gug/gooduniversityguide.php](http://extras.timesonline.co.uk/tol_gug/gooduniversityguide.php)**

The Times newspaper's guide to the best universities in the UK.

### **The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)**

**[www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)**

The organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK.

## **GET INVOLVED**

**Take action, campaign, learn skills, make friends. Interested in becoming a Trailblazer? We always welcome people to join our thriving campaigning community.**

Contact Bobby Ancil on **020 7803 4807**, email him at **b.ancil@muscular-dystrophy.org** or visit **www.muscular-dystrophy.org/trailblazers**

To find out more about the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign call **0800 652 6352** (freephone), email **info@muscular-dystrophy.org** or visit **www.muscular-dystrophy.org**

**This report has been researched, compiled  
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**Muscular  
Dystrophy**  
Campaign

