

# HE Student Disability Support Policy

APPROVED BY Academic Board ON 21 July 2025

<b>Applies to:</b>	
Harrogate College	
Keighley College	
Leeds City College	
Leeds Conservatoire	X
Leeds Sixth Form College / Pudsey Sixth Form College	
Luminate Group Services	
University Centre Leeds	X

## CHANGE CONTROL

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<b>Name of author:</b>	Nicholas White	
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<b>Next review date:</b>	August 2028	

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## **1. Introduction**

Leeds Conservatoire and University Centre Leeds are both Higher Education Providers within the Luminate Education Group (*the Provider* here forwards), which is committed to ensuring equal access to all of their students, including those with disabilities. By providing an inclusive learning environment throughout Higher Education courses, *the Provider* helps to ensure that every student has full access to their chosen course and can achieve their full potential during their time studying in Higher Education. We work closely with our students and staff to identify and remove any disability-related barriers to success that may occur, guided by feedback and collaboration.

## **2. Policy Aims/Objectives**

Our goal is to ensure:

- equal access to learning and experiences for all disabled students studying in Higher Education.
- disabled students receive the support they require to achieve their full potential and full access to their studies.
- curriculum and assessment strategies are designed to be inclusive for all.
- students can continue their studies if they become disabled during their course.

## **3. Details of the Subject Matter**

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 (*the Act* here forwards), which replaced legislature including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, places a duty on Higher Education Providers to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and promote equality for disabled students. This policy is formed around the protected characteristic of 'disability', but the full list of protected characteristics that are covered by *the Act* are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race

- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

#### **4. Definition of ‘Disability’**

Disabled students are covered by the protected characteristic of ‘disability’ detailed in *the Act*, where difficulties are considered to have a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to undertake their ‘normal daily activities’. Conditions meeting the criteria for the ‘disability’ protected characteristic are defined in *the Act* as follows:

- ‘substantial’ is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer for them to complete a daily task, such as processing verbal information, or getting themselves dressed in the morning
- ‘long-term’ is a difficulty that lasts, or is likely to last 12 months or more, e.g. a long-term mental health difficulty, such as clinical depression

This protected characteristic covers long-term physical, mental, and sensory difficulties, including learning differences, autism spectrum conditions, neurodiversity, mental health difficulties and other health conditions that would be considered as ‘long-term’. Some conditions are covered by *the Act* from the first day that they are identified, such as cancer and HIV.

#### **5. Equal Opportunities for all**

*The Act* informs *the Provider* on how to actively work towards eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, whilst promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Amendments made to *the Act* in 2011 introduced a ‘public sector equality duty’, also known as ‘the general duty’ (*the duty* here forwards), which replaced the separate duties previously in place in relation to race, disability and gender equality.

The aim of *the duty* is to ensure that in all of *the Provider’s* activities, positive contributions are made towards a fairer society through embedded equality considerations in policies, processes and services. *The duty* states that *the Provider* must adhere to, exercise in their functions, and have due regard towards the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by *the Act*

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

In order to advance equality of opportunity for disabled students, *the Provider* must:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by students due to their relevant protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the different requirements for students who share a relevant protected characteristic
- encourage participation in public life or any other activity by underrepresented groups
- take steps to meet the different requirements of disabled students

There may be rare instances where *the Provider* may have to treat a disabled student in a way that could be perceived as more favourable than other students without disabilities. For example, it would be considered reasonable to give a wheelchair-using student favourable access to seating on the bottom level of a stepped lecture theatre.

## **6. *The Act* definitions for discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

*The Act* outlines how discrimination, harassment and victimisation can occur as follows:

- **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably due to a disability.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** Applying rules, practices or policies that unfairly disadvantages disabled people.
- **Discrimination by Association:** Direct discrimination based on their association with somebody who has a disability.
- **Discrimination by Perception:** Direct discrimination based on other people assuming that the person has a disability.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted behaviour that violates a person's dignity due to their disability, or behaviour that creates a negative environment for the person with a disability.
- **Harassment (third party):** Where it is believed that harassment is being committed towards a disabled person by somebody who is not a staff member or student.

- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly for raising a complaint or grievance regarding a disability covered under *the Act*. This would include the failure to make reasonable adjustments for a person with a disability covered under *the Act*.

## **7. Reasonable adjustments**

*The Act* offers guidelines to ensure that Higher Education Providers make *reasonable adjustments* for students whilst they study, detailing the duty owed to disabled people generally, regardless of whether the Higher Education Provider has been made aware of a particular student's disability or not. *Reasonable adjustments* are adaptations made in an anticipatory manner to remove or reduce disability-related barriers that students may face during their studies. *The Provider* is committed to enacting anticipatory *reasonable adjustments*, helping to ensure that disabled students studying in Higher Education are given the chance to achieve their full potential. *The Provider* is also committed to the development of further inclusive approaches to drive positive change across the HE sector, helping to ensure that accessibility is considered and embedded across all aspects of study and structure. *Reasonable adjustments* are provided through:

- provisions, practices and services
- physical features
- auxiliary aids

## **8. Disability Support and Health & Wellbeing Support**

Students are encouraged to disclose disabilities to *the Provider* throughout the application cycle and during their time as enrolled students. *The Provider* ensures that there is a supportive culture from each of their Higher Education Providers, helping to provide a comfortable atmosphere in which students recognise the importance that seeking support has for them and their studies. Student Support and Wellbeing employs specific Disability Support and Health and Wellbeing staff, who provide *the Provider's* students with tailored support information and sessions, including the following non-exhaustive list of support functions:

- advice and guidance about Disability Support and wellbeing
- adjustments plans
- diagnostic screenings and assessments
- information about applying for external support

- wellbeing sessions
- counselling
- anxiety management
- disability specific social and advocacy groups

Information on the respective referral processes, contact routes and support offers available from each of *the Provider's* Higher Education Providers can be found in the **policy, procedure and process** section links at the end of this policy.

## 9. Confidentiality

Personal data shared by disabled students with *the Provider* is only available to view on adjustments plans created by teams within Student Support & Wellbeing. Any student with an adjustments plan can view their support document in full, with only relevant staff being able to view the data solely in order to enact any *reasonable adjustments* detailed in a student's plan. Students are given adjustments plans containing individualised *reasonable adjustments* to support them throughout their studies when they disclose specific disability information to *the Provider*.

Due to recommendations from the Equality and Human Rights Commission in their 'Note of Learning' released on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024, *the Provider* have informed their students that staff (student-facing) with connection to academia may enact *reasonable adjustments* on their behalf in certain circumstances only. This process helps to ensure that the aforementioned group of staff have the tools to directly enact *reasonable adjustments* when they have observed, been informed of, or otherwise been made aware of any disability-related or mental health difficulties (including suicidal ideations) that the student may require support for.

*The Provider* recognises that students with disability-related/mental health difficulties may disengage with their studies and support services when struggling, and this process helps to ensure that support is available in an anticipatory manner. Although students have been informed that they may have adjustments enacted without using formal referral channels to disclose a disability to *the Provider*, they have also been informed that they can remove a support plan enacted through this process at any point in their studies, which is also reiterated to each student receiving a plan in this format when receiving the plan itself.



Further information about the general student data retention policies that apply to the Higher Education Providers in *the Provider* are detailed in the respective **policy, procedure and process** section links at the end of this policy.

## 10. Admissions, accessibility and auditions

Applicants are given a number of opportunities to request disability-related adjustments when booking their interview or audition, and *the Provider* ensures that all applicants are assessed based on their skill and knowledge required for the subject, not on their disabilities. *The Provider* makes accommodations for disabled applicants in terms of academic approach, facilities, and interview/audition support, helping to ensure that they have a barrier-free experience and ensuring they can flourish on their journey from applicant, to student.

## 11. Complaints

If students have issues in relation to their disability during their studies at a Higher Education Provider within *the Provider*, they are encouraged to raise concerns through the respective formal complaints process, with links available in the **policy, procedure and process** section at the end of this policy.

## 12. Policy, procedure and process

Student Code of Conduct

Support to Study Policy

Complaints Policy

Disciplinary Policy

Harassment, Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy

Additional Considerations Policy

**Owner:** HE Group Student Disability Support Team

**Introduced:** Group HE Disability Support Manager

**Last review:** July 2025

**Next Review:** August 2028

The Provider reserves the right to review the policy at any time. This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and inclusive.

Change Summary		
Version	Date	Summary of Changes
