**Non-Medical Helper Student Handbook**

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# Overview

Welcome to the Non-Medical Helper Student Handbook, which contains the key information you need to know about your DSA-funded support.

This guide has been written by the **Accessibility team** at **Falmouth Exeter Plus**. If you have any questions or issues, you can contact us by telephone or text on (01326) 253629, or email us at accessibility@fxplus.ac.uk

## What is a Non-Medical Helper?

A Non-Medical Helper (NMH for short) is a support worker who is allocated to a student with a disability or condition who requires support during their studies.

## What is the purpose of an NMH?

Your NMH will help you to develop strategies to maximise your potential whilst at university, as laid out in your Needs Assessment Report. The aim is to support you in becoming more autonomous and independent in your studies.

## What can an NMH do?

This depends on what type of NMH support has been allocated. Your NMH will discuss how they can support you in your first session.

## What can’t an NMH do?

An NMH can’t offer advocacy (speaking on your behalf), counselling, personal care or personal assistant duties. Similarly, study skills NMHs are not subject specialists and are not able to teach or provide content.

# Session Bookings

Once allocated, your NMH will contact you to introduce themselves and arrange your first session. During your first session they will discuss how often you would like sessions, what days/time and locations suit you and how you would like to be contacted (email, text, phone). They will check you have read and understood the Privacy Statement and Terms of Provision. You will draw up aims and objectives for what you want to work on together.

## The ‘Cudos’ system

We use an online system called ‘Cudos’ which makes it easy for you to view and manage your support. You can access this by going to <https://fxplus.cudossystems.co.uk/> and logging in with your university email and password.

We will send you a separate Cudos manual with full details of how to use it.

## How do I book a session?

You can book a session by contacting your NMH by phone, text or email. Your NMH will then offer you a day, time and location. (Currently, most sessions take place online, using Teams video, Skype or Zoom). Your NMH should reply to you within one working day. Once a session has been booked, you will receive an email notification via our Cudos system confirming the date, time, length of the session and the type of support. You will also get a further automatic reminder of the session two days beforehand.

## How do I contact my NMH?

Once you have been matched with your NMH(s), you will be able to see their name(s) and contact details on your Cudos home page.

In your first session, you and your NMH can discuss the best way to contact each other, but please be aware that you will also receive emails from Cudos to confirm and remind you about your next sessions. Cudos will also send you emails requesting that you approve timesheets.

## How often do I have sessions?

We recommend that you use your hours as suggested in your report in order to successfully develop strategies. However, it is up to you how often you have sessions as long as you don’t go over the number of hours agreed in your Needs Assessment Report. If you don’t meet with your NMH at least once a month, we will remove you from their caseload.

## Engaging in support

Please reply to your NMH when they contact you to offer support. They will try to contact you at least three times in two or more different ways over a two-week period. If they don’t hear back from you, we will remove you from their caseload then contact you to discuss your options.

## Where and when will my support take place?

Due to Covid-19, most sessions are being delivered remotely via online platforms (Teams, Skype, Zoom). Support sessions on campus will only be possible in exceptional circumstances (such as for disability-related reasons), subject to health and safety guidelines.

# Cancellations

## What do I do if I need to cancel a session?

If you need to cancel a session you should contact your NMH with at least 24 hours’ notice. They will then arrange an alternative session with you. If you do not give at least 24 hours’ notice, the session will usually come out of your DSA allowance.

## What happens if I miss a session?

If you miss a session, please contact your NMH as soon as possible, explaining the reasons why. They will take the missed session out of your DSA allowance and arrange an alternative session with you. If you miss your session because your timetable changes at the last minute, please let us know so we can discuss this with your course team. In this case, the session will not be taken out of your DSA allowance.

## What happens if I miss more than two sessions in a term?

If you cancel with less than 24 hours’ notice or miss a session more than twice in a term, then we will contact you to discuss the reasons why and see how you can be better supported to attend. Please be aware that we may need to reallocate you to a different NMH. If you do not reply to us within three weeks, then we will put your support on hold. You will need to contact us if you later wish to restart your support.

# Sessions

There are certain things that need to be covered during your sessions with your NMH. You and your NMH will discuss these during your first session. You will also need to click a box when registering for the first time on Cudos to say you have read and understood the Terms of Provision and Privacy Statement. Please ask your NMH to explain anything that isn’t clear.

## Aims and objectives

You and your NMH will decide on aims and objectives together during your first session and these will be recorded in Cudos as a ‘work plan’. Afterwards, you will get an email asking you to approve the work plan. If you want to change or add anything, you will be able to. Cudos will send a reminder to review the work plan and set new aims and objectives every three months.

## Timesheets and work plans

At the end of each session your NMH will usually share their screen with you and fill out a timesheet in Cudos. (Sometimes this might happen after the session). There is a box to fill in with details of what you have worked on together. Your NMH might also ask you what you want to work on next time and add that. Ideally, you will arrange the next session then too, but that can be done later if you are not sure when you will be free.

When your NMH submits the timesheet, you will get an email from Cudos asking you to approve it by clicking a link. Please do this as soon as possible. If you think any of the details are wrong, you can dispute the timesheet.

## Administration

The last ten minutes of each session are needed for administration: filling in the timesheet, reviewing the work done and booking the next session.

# Confidentiality

When you first sign into Cudos, you will see the Student Services Privacy statement, which explains how we collect, store and use personal information in order to support you. Your information will be shared on a strictly ‘need-to-know’ basis in order to provide your support (or where there is a concern for your safety). You will need to tick a box to say you have read and understood the statement. If you do not tick the box, we cannot support you.

## Can I discuss confidential information with my NMH?

Yes, you can, but your NMH may decide that they need to share the information if they are concerned about your (or someone else’s) safety.

# Changes to support

There may be times when you want to make changes to your support. If this is the case, you can either discuss it with your NMH or you can discuss it directly with us.

## What if I want a different NMH?

If you feel that a different NMH would be better for you then let us know. We will allocate you a new person and ask for some confidential feedback. We will also inform your original NMH that you have transferred.

## What if I want a different supplier?

If you no longer want your NMH support to be provided by Falmouth Exeter Plus, you will need to contact your funding body (e.g., Student Finance England or Wales) directly to request a different support provider.

## What if I need more hours and/or a different type of NMH support?

In this case, you should contact your DSA Needs Assessor to request this. We can help with this, but there is no guarantee that your request will be approved.

## What if I don’t want support any more?

In this case, please contact us to let us know.

# Feedback and Complaints

We aim to provide the best possible quality in our NMH provision and welcome any feedback from students. Feedback, both positive and negative, informs our work and helps us develop the service.

## How will I be asked for feedback and how often?

Your NMH welcomes your feedback at any time, but particularly at the end of the session when they are filling in the timesheet. Once every three months, you and your NMH will review your work plan, which is an opportunity for you to give them more detailed feedback about how you feel the support is going.

## Can I give feedback at any other time?

You can visit our page at <https://studyhub.fxplus.ac.uk/accessibility-inclusion/feedback> at any time to give feedback. Alternatively, you can provide feedback by emailing us at accessibility@fxplus.ac.uk or calling/texting (01326) 253629.

## How do I complain?

If you aren’t satisfied with your support and wish to complain then please follow our NMH provision complaints procedure at <https://studyhub.fxplus.ac.uk/accessibility-inclusion/feedback/complaints>. If you need any support submitting a complaint, you can contact the Students’ Union at <https://www.thesu.org.uk/>.