

**Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:
Next steps for supporting disabled students in Higher Education**

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 26th February 2025

Taking Place Online



**WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **'Key lessons from complaints received from disabled students and priorities moving forward'**
Jo Nuckley, Head, Outreach and Insight, Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Current experiences of disabled students in higher education and priorities for improved support**
Student representative
- 9.40 **Strategies for improving student experience, retention, and graduate outcomes**
key considerations for the Disability in Higher Education Advisory Panel | implementing the Disabled Student Commitment and addressing barriers to wider uptake | legal obligations for universities and local authorities | strategies for ensuring equity and financial sustainability of provision | funding | assessing effectiveness of current support systems and priorities for implementing improvements | next steps for disability passports | establishing best practices across supporting bodies | mitigating challenges faced in accessing education | best practice for retention and supporting academic achievement | integration of student voices in policy development | senior champions in governance teams
Christopher Fry, Solicitor, Inspire Legal
Professor Mark Bradley, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Curriculum Leadership, University of Nottingham
Dr Elliott Spaeth, Senior Consultant, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Advance HE
Senior representative, local authority
- 10.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 **Implications of changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance and funding considerations**
Senior representative, finance
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 **Priorities and best practice for improving accessibility and provision of support**
broadening access and support provision | responsibilities of universities and the Student Loans Company in non-medical help | reform to non-medical help provision funded through the Disabled Students' Allowance | provision of needs assessments and training | role of the private sector in assistive technology and needs assessments | implementing strategies to enhance support systems | next steps following findings from Disabled Students UK's Access Insights report | communication and cohesive provision
Dr Sean Cullen, Lecturer, Mechanical Engineering, Brunel University
Amelia Underwood-King, Manager, Snowdon Trust Disabled Leaders Network
Senior representative, technology
Senior representative, university
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.50 **Preparing students for life after higher education**
improving recruitment and careers advice | provisions for ongoing study | coordination with Skills England and the Get Britain Working white paper | progression into high-skilled employment and leadership roles | collaboration between government, universities, and support bodies | breaking down employment barriers and bridging skills shortages
Angela Matthews, Head, Policy and Research, Business Disability Forum
Senior representative, employers
Senior representative, careers service
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Next steps for policy in supporting students with disabilities**
Katherine Bayliss, Team Leader, Disabled Students' Allowance, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum