DRC 2010/11 Annual Report

The University of Cambridge's Disability Service





The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) Annual Report outlines the significant achievements made over the past academic year by the DRC team, during which the Disability Discrimination Act was replaced by the Equality Act (October 1st 2010). The DRC team have worked hard to support the Collegiate University and student community to interpret and understand changes within the Act and to further develop support structures and guidance for disabled students and all staff who support them. In conjunction with these activities the DRC has maintained a professional and efficient service with limited resources in the face of increasing numbers of disabled students.

During the 2011/12 academic year, the DRC will transfer from the HR Division to the Academic Division. This decision has been taken after due consideration of the benefits to this service of being part of a wider student support network that spans the colleges, departments and faculties at both undergraduate and graduate level, and will allow the DRC to be more closely integrated into the academic functions of the University.

As Chair of the Joint Committee on Disability, and the University's Disability Equality Champion, I once again commend the DRC team for their hard work and dedication, and look forward to supporting and helping the team in achieving their aims for the coming year and beyond.

Dr Nick Bampos Chair of the Joint Committee on Disability and University Disability Equality Champion

2010/11 has been an important year for equalities – the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 significantly refreshed and expanded the agenda and created a valuable checkpoint for the University and its services. As this Annual Report shows, the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) has embraced these challenges positively and demonstrated its value as an integral part of the University's commitment to excellence, equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination.

The Report illustrates the range of services the DRC offers to students, departments and colleges and the high standards of expertise and professionalism that underpin its functions. Within the wider University, the DRC has been managed as part of the Equality & Diversity team in the HR Division and governed by the Joint Committee on Disability, which in turn is chaired by the University's Disability Equality Champion. These relationships provide the DRC with essential senior support, reflecting the importance that the University places in this service and its team.

Indi Seehra Director of Human Resources

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1. Overview of 2010/11 and Priorities for 2011/12

Throughout the 2010/11 academic year the DRC has worked hard to support Colleges, Departments, Faculties and Institutions, the disabled students at the University and those staff who support them. This year saw the enactment of the Equality Act (2010) and the DRC has worked with the University to promote understanding and awareness of the changes with regard to support for disabled students. Specific action on behalf of the Collegiate University has led to greater levels of disability disclosure, which is an extremely positive development. The approval for the establishment of the International Disabled Students' Fund will greatly increase access to support for this group of students.

The DRC has worked with the Academic Division to build understanding of inclusive teaching and learning, reasonable adjustments and to celebrate and promote good practice across the Collegiate University. It has also worked with the Equality and Diversity team and the HR Division in the promotion and development of the University's Equalities duties, objectives and aspirations.

Demand for Services

The 2010/11 academic year, as in previous years, saw an increase in the number of students disclosing a disability to the DRC. The total number of disabled students at the end of the academic year (June 2011) was **1421**, an increase of **18%** on the previous year (1201). The number of undergraduate applicants disclosing a disability during this period also rose from **558** to **664**, an increase of **19%**.

Staffing

During the year the DRC welcomed to the team James Keenoy: Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Administrator; Aless McCann: Finance Administrator and Sarah Norman: Administrative Assistant and said goodbye to Charlotte Yates, Sonya Kirk and Jennie Hastie.

Key Achievements in 2010/11

- The establishment of the International Disabled Students' Fund
- Continued success of the College Additional Disclosure process
- Learning, Teaching, Support (LTS) briefing, 'Disabled Students: Making Reasonable Adjustments', May 2011
- Annual Disability Lecture, 'Disability Identity: Disability Pride', March 2011
- Official visit from Lord Low, the Vice-President of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), March 2011
- Development of draft 'Teaching Disabled Students' guidance document and on-line resources
- Developments in provision, training and recruitment for the Non-Medical Assistance (NMA) Scheme
- The DRC's provision for SpLD cited by the sector professional body, PATOSS, as a model of best practice in Higher Education
- Continued national and international recognition for the work of the Asperger Syndrome Project
- Significant process improvement activity to streamline and add efficiencies to the DRC's internal advisory and administrative processes

1. Overview of 2010/11 and Priorities for 2011/12

Governance and Resources

Demand for the DRC's services increases year on year. A review of the DRC's resources is planned for 2012, after the formal transfer of the DRC from the HR Division to the Academic Division. The DRC would like to express its thanks to the Equality and Diversity team and the HR Division for all the support we have received over the last 4 years.

The DRC Manager acts as the Secretary to the Joint Committee on Disability and Chair of the DRC Development Forum, and attends the University's Health Services Management Committee.

DRC Priorities for 2011/12

The DRC will move from the HR Division to the Academic Division during the 2011/12 academic year, reporting to the Head of Educational and Student Policy. The Priorities of the DRC for are 2011/12 are:

- To complete a comprehensive review of the roles, activities and resources of the DRC, with a view to ensuring that the DRC has appropriate staffing levels to meet demand and institutional duties with respect to provision for disabled students.
- To integrate effectively within the Academic Division and to maintain and develop shared projects with the Equality and Diversity section
- To continue to develop and promote inclusive teaching and learning practice, including the launch of the following initiatives:
 - 'Teaching Disabled Students: Making Reasonable Adjustments' Guidance Document
 - Good Practice Guide for inclusive teaching and learning
 - Teaching Disabled Students on-line training materials
- To complete the existing projects to develop, update, and integrate the DRC's internal and external publications and website
- To implement the recommendations of the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) review, including an increased focus on DLO training and events
- To evaluate the International Disabled Students' Fund's first year of operation
- To continue to support College and University activity to increase levels of disability disclosure, via both the College Additional Disclosure process and the support of the development of the University's Equality Objectives (due to be published in April 2012)
- To support the development of the Universities Equalities Objectives and the Equality Assurance Assessment process

2. Staffing

Head of Service John Harding, BA (Hons), MA, PGCE, DipSpLD, NADP

Office Manager Tori McKee, BA (Hons), MPhil (Oxon), CIPS

Disability Adviser (Specific Learning Difficulties) Helen Duncan, BA (Hons), PGCE, DipSpLD, SpLD APC, AMBDA

Disability Adviser (Other Disabilities) (part-time, job share) Margot Chadwick, BSc (Hons), NADP

Sally Ivens, BA (Hons), NADP

Disability Support Co-ordinator (part-time) Carrie Roberts, NADP

Disability Development Consultant (part-time) Kirsty Wayland, BA (Hons), FHEA, PGCPSE (Open)

Asperger Syndrome Project Officer Joanna Hastwell, BA, PGCert, DSA Assessor

Finance Administrator Aless McCann, BA (Hons), ILM

Specific Learning Difficulties Administrator James Keenoy, BSc (Hons)

Administrative Assistant Sarah Norman, BSc (Hons) Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) is a term that covers a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and, for the purposes of support, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Service Demands

The total number of current students who have disclosed a Specific Learning Difficulty or were in the process of being diagnosed as of June 2011 was over **750**, a **21% increase** on the previous year (620). The DRC currently employs a temporary external specialist SpLD Assessor during terms to assist with the increasing volume of case-work.

Service Development

Following the recommendations of the SpLD Working Group, current students are now being assessed by an Educational Psychologist from an approved pool. The DRC has implemented a robust quality assurance process for Educational Psychologists in its pool. This has reduced student waiting time for assessment and has proved effective in responding to the increase in the number of students requiring a diagnostic assessment. The DRC has also increased the number of diagnostic assessment appointments that are available in Cambridge at the DRC. However, some students will still be required to travel to see an Educational Psychologist.

Specialist 1:1 Support

Specialist 1:1 Support (also known as study skills) is provided at the Disability Resource Centre. The DRC has increased the number of 1:1 specialist study skills tutors in the pool by 150% from 2 to 5. This reflects the increase in referrals for this service and enables the DRC to match students with 1:1 specialist tutors more effectively. Specialist 1:1 support is funded either by DSA or from other sources of funds. It is not funded from the DRC budget.

Evaluation of Service

Following the annual student survey of all students using the pool of Educational Psychologists, satisfaction with the service was reported as either 'excellent' or 'good'. The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) has identified the SpLD provision as an exemplar of best practice within the HE sector.

Data on the DRC service for students with Specific Learning Difficulties, including detail of student appointments, is available in Appendix 2.

4. Other Disabilities

Support for all disabilities (other than SpLD) ranges from initial enquiries from prospective students and/or their parents, detailed investigation of support requirements and the establishment of support for offer holders, through to casework with current students who develop a disability after admission. It also includes pre-admissions visits for some disabled students.

Service Demands

The total number of current students who disclosed a disability other than a specific learning difficulty as of June 2011 was **738**, a **27% increase** on the previous year when the total stood at 581.

The most pressing issues for the Disability Advisers of students with other disabilities are in relation to the increase in volume of current students requiring support, the increasing volume of enquires, the growing number of cases which require significant advisory time and resources, and increasing demand on advisory services in general. A comparison of 'open' case files (student cases requiring action from Disability Advisers) between 2009/10 and 2010/11 showed a 49% increase in activity, from 1303 in 2009/10 cases to 1937 in 2010/11.

Service Development

The DRC Advisory team with support from the Asperger Syndrome Project Officer have made a number of improvements in the support for students with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and have developed a Transitional Support Event which will be held each year for offer holders with AS and their families/guardians.

Specialist 1:1 Support

Disabled students often benefit from the provision of non-medical assistance, and this support is often recommended within students specialist evidence, including independent assessments of need. Disability Advisers work with the Disability Support Co-ordinator to ensure that disabled students are matched effectively with support workers with the appropriate skills, experience and subject knowledge (for example, note-takers and mentors).

Evaluation of Service

Service evaluations are held every two years, with the next student and staff review due in 2012.

A breakdown of current students by HESA disability category is included in Appendix 3.

5. Non-Medical Assistance (NMA) Scheme

The Non-Medical Assistance Scheme provides coordinated support for disabled students who require assistance in order to access their studies effectively. These recommendations are usually detailed in the Needs Assessment Reports for students, within specialist evidence, or as a result of assessment by a specialist Adviser. The recruitment, training, and matching of NMAs to students is the responsibility of the Disability Support Co-ordinator.

The DRC provides some NMA support in anticipation of DSA to students who apply for Disabled Student's Allowances, as this grant can take some time to process fully. The DRC does not have any budget allocation to cover the costs of this support.

Service Demands

The most significant increases in NMA provision during the 2010/11 academic year were in relation to mentoring and specialist 1:1 support (also known as study skills). From the previous year, students in receipt of mentoring support rose from 30 to 59 (100% increase), and those in receipt of 1-1 specialist support rose from 118 to 137 (16% increase).

Data on hours of NMA support administered by the DRC can be found in Appendix 4.

Service Development

Significant developments have been made during the period to NMA processes for recruitment, training and support of Non-Medical Assistants, particularly with regard to the provision of mentoring support. The NMA section of the DRC website has also been expanded and updated. The Disability Support Coordinator has also been involved in national consultations with both professional bodies (NADP) and funding bodies (SLC) to develop consistent NMA provision and quality assurance mechanisms across the sector.

Evaluation of Service

The NMA scheme is evaluated annually to provide information which allows the DRC both to improve its service and also to plan anticipated support for the next academic year. 69 students completed the evaluation for this period with a 96% satisfaction rate.

Disabled Students' Bursary Fund

This Fund was established in recognition of the additional expenses incurred by disabled students and to contribute to the costs of acquiring essential services or equipment. The Guardians of the Fund consider applications throughout the year. This Bursary Fund is supported by donations (see Appendix 5 for data). In 2010/11, 20 awards were made to fund specialist equipment, non-medical assistance, and living expenses. These totalled £7971.69. We thank the donors for their generosity.

Donations

The Disability Resource Centre is extremely grateful for continued support from a number of donors who help support disabled students at the University of Cambridge. These funds have assisted many disabled students in accessing their learning over the last year. Some donations also support the purchase of equipment for the DRC Loan Pool, which enables staff and students of the University to borrow a range of specialist equipment. Donors include the following:

Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, Blatchington Court Trust, Bridget's Trust, City & University of Cambridge Masonic Charitable Trust, The Coutts & Co Charitable Trust, The Elizabeth Frankland Moore and Star Foundation, Eastern Counties Educational Trust Limited, Mr Rodney Buckton, The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund, The Boston Foundation, The Charlie Bayne Travel Trust, The Constance Green Foundation, The Frank Litchfield Charitable Trust, The Platinum Trust, and The Varrier-Jones Foundation.

Charlie Bayne Travel Trust

This Trust was set up in the memory of Charlie Bayne (1965–90) who spent four years as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1985–89. The Trust offers travel grants to disabled undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge and at Anglia Ruskin University. In 2011, 9 awards were made helping students to travel both within and outside of the UK. Destinations included the Edinburgh Festival; a windsurfing trip in Cornwall; visiting medieval churches in Norfolk; Krakow, Poland; Orlando Studios, Florida; Geneva; and Portugal. Our sincere thanks go to the Bayne family for their continued support of this valuable student trust.



Elina Jokisuu (Robinson, PhD) in Florida.



Nicola Sleap (Clare Hall, PhD) in Norfolk.

7. Training

The Disability Resource Centre offers interactive, responsive training in a range of formats across the University and Colleges through bespoke training courses developed in response to requests, in conjunction with Personal and Professional Development (PPD) and as part of the over-arching Equality and Diversity training programme.

The DRC delivers training in support of disabled students, staff and visitors. Sessions promote disability equality by enabling staff to meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) and working effectively and easily with disabled people.

Courses Delivered in conjunction with PPD

In 2010/11, 14 courses were delivered via PPD to 117 people, an increase of nearly 26% compared to last year. This increase relates to the introduction of a new mental health course 'Boundaries and Boomerangs' to the programme and the launch of 'Teaching Disabled Students'. 'Boundaries and Boomerangs' necessarily required a smaller audience and thus explains lower numbers overall. Ongoing courses included topics such as providing good customer care and an introduction to sign language. This year again saw an increase in numbers of those attending the 'Teaching Students With...' series of lunchtime briefings. Courses currently offered focus on dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties and Asperger Syndrome.

Bespoke training sessions

In 2010/11, there were 10 bespoke training sessions delivered. This reflected the incorporation of the bespoke events described above into the main PPD programme.

Work continued around the needs of new individual disabled students, and the DRC contributed two workshops to People Matter Week. Additionally, within the DRC, workshops for mentors in the NMA scheme continued.

Evaluation of Service

In 2010/11 the DRC continued to ask participants to evaluate how each course had met its objectives, the delivery of the course and its administration, ranking on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 was 'not at all' and 4 was 'fully'). Over 80% of respondents ranked the administration and delivery as 4, and over three quarters ranked success at meeting its objectives at 3 or 4.

For data of courses conducted in 2010/11 see Appendix 6.

8. Events and Communications

Events

The DRC supports, co-sponsors and contributes to a range of events, both within the wider Equality and Diversity programme and independently.

- The 2011 Annual Disability Lecture, hosted by the DRC and St John's College, was held on 24 March 2011. Dr Nicola Martin, Director of Wellbeing and Disability Services at the LSE and an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge, delivered the lecture entitled 'Disability Identity Disability Pride'. The DRC would like to thank St John's College and Ray Jobling for their continued support in hosting and co-sponsoring the event with the DRC and the Equality and Diversity team for their support and assistance in coordinating the event.
- The Asperger Syndrome Project Seminar was held at Trinity College on 5 May 2011. Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, Joanna Hastwell, and Dr Nicola Martin discussed autism research and diagnosis, the AS Project at the University of Cambridge and the national picture. Presentations were followed by a panel discussion and workshop.
- DRC staff attended the Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) Societies' Fair in October 2010 in order to publicise the DRC's services to new and returning students.
- The DRC offered information sessions and one-to-one guidance appointments for prospective students and their families as part of the University Open Days.

Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs)

A review of the DLO network took place during the 2009/10 academic year. A report detailing the findings of this review and recommendations for future operation of the network was presented to the Joint Committee on Disability in November 2010.

Networking

DRC staff continue to maintain strong links with and attend the meetings and conferences of national professional bodies, such as the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP), Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE), and Action on Access as well as the regional meetings for managers of Higher Education Institutions Disability Services.

The DRC team has also maintained its links with the Transkills project and the Learning Teaching and Support (LTS) team. DRC staff are also represented on the steering group of the Disabled Staff Network.

9. Asperger Syndrome Project

The Asperger Syndrome (AS) Project began in August 2009 and is funded by the Baily Thomas Charitable Trust. The main aims of the project are to track the student experience, review and evaluate the current service provision and develop a model of best practice for students with AS in Higher Education. The number of current students with AS at the University of Cambridge has increased by 152% in the last two years, from 27 to 68 in August 2011.

Key project achievements over the 2010/11 period

- 26 students have attended an AS screening at the DRC during this period and been referred on for a full assessment by the Cambridge Lifespan Asperger Syndrome Service (CLASS).
- The DRC and Autism Resource Centre (ARC) delivered a seminar on the initial findings of the University of Cambridge Asperger Syndrome Project in May 2011, hosted at Trinity College. It was attended by a wide range of delegates from across the Higher Education sector.
- The Project has contributed to the National HE STEM Programme. The HE STEM project is focusing on 'Placements and students with AS' in STEM subjects.
- The transfer of the AS Social Group to the Cambridge University Student Union (CUSU) has been successfully achieved in collaboration with the Welfare and Rights Officer, Rosie O'Neill. This will ensure the group is run by students for students and is sustained.
- A pilot AS Careers Transitions programme was developed and carried out during 2010/11 by the University Careers Service and the DRC. Catherine Alexander, Careers Adviser, will be running the programme for a second year in collaboration with the DRC.
- A pre-entry event for students with AS was held in August 2011. The event supported students in their transition to university and the event involved college staff, mentors and the CUSU/GU Student Advice Service.

Conferences

- Lancaster University Disability Studies Conference, Lancaster, September 2010
- Goldman Sachs Transition Conference, London, November 2010
- NAS and The Autism Centre, Sheffield Hallam University, AS PGCert course, Glasgow, November 2010
- Disability Identity Conference, London School Economics, March 2011
- Employer Forum on Disability Conference, April 2011
- SOAS Transition Conference, September 2011
- 3rd National Conference on Adolescence to Adulthood with Autism

Funding

Long term funding options are being discussed with the Cambridge University Development Office to sustain the work of the AS Project and build in advisory support. The long term focus is twofold:

- implementing the project recommendations
- developing the service provision to meet increased student demand

Appendix 1: Overall Student Data

All data accurate as on 27th June 2011.

Data is collected on disclosure and the support students are receiving. All communications sent or received regarding a student are recorded and attached to their student record within our bespoke case management database.

Category	No. of active student clients			
Undergraduate	897 (760) Increase of 15%			
Postgraduate	524 (441) Increase of 16%			
Total	1421 (1201) Increase of 15%			

Table 1.1 Total Active Student Clients 2010/11 (2009/10 in brackets)





Appendix 2: Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Data

Activity	MT 2010 Caseload	LT 2011 Caseload	ET 2011 Caseload	Total 2010/11 Caseload
Initial interviews: student with no previous diagnosis	48	56	18	122
Initial interviews: student with a previous diagnosis	0*	0*	0*	0*
Educational Psychologist diagnostic assessments	44	45	14	103
Support reviews	50	39	13	102
Report feedback sessions	26	42	14	82

Table 2.1 Breakdown of the SpLD service by activity in 2010/11

*The number of 'Initial interviews for students with a previous diagnosis' was 0 in 2010/11 due to change in procedures. To improve the efficiency of our service, and to respond to the extremely high demand for appointments with the SpLD Adviser, students with a previous diagnosis were not, as a rule, invited to a meeting before their new assessment. Feedback from students indicated that a meeting after the new assessment was of greater value to them, and these meetings have been categorised as 'Support reviews'.

Appendix 1: Overall Student Data



Graph 1.2 Disclosure of the cohort of students who were admitted in 2010/11, compared with 2009/10 data (This includes postgraduate and undergraduate students.)

Appendix 3: Other Disabilities Data



Graph 3.1 Disabled students (with a disability other than a SpLD) distributed according to HESA Disability Categories in 2010/11

Appendix 4: Non-Medical Assistance (NMA) Scheme Data

Category	2008 Cohort	2009 Cohort	2010 Cohort
Number of new students receiving NMA Support	17	24	41
Total number of students receiving NMA Support	29	55	97
Number of new NMAs recruited and inducted	36	24	25
Number of NMAs trained by the DRC	21	16	37
Total number of NMAs on the DRC database	83*	86*	49

Table 4.1 Active Non-Medical Assistants in 2010, 2009, and 2008. *2008 and 2009 figures include both active and inactive NMAs. The figure for 2010 is a more accurate reflection of the number of active NMAs on the DRC database.

Appendix 4: NMA Scheme Data continued

Task	2010/11 Number of Students	2010/11 NMA Hours	2009/10 Number of Students	2009/10 NMA Hours
Note-taking	24	2357	25	3349.25
Study Skills Support	137	583.5	118	529.75
Practical & Lab Support	0	0	3	471
Mentoring	59	823.75	30	372.5
Library Support	5	165	6	143
Orientation	1	28	1	0
Scanning, Reading, Taping	1	14.25	3	130.5
Proofreading	2	14.5	0	0
Amanuensis	6	142.75	4	58
Total Hours of Support	235	4128.75	190	5102

Table 4.1. Comparison of NMA hours by task and number of students supported: 2010/11 to 2009/10



Graph 4.1. Non-Medical Assistant hours for 2010/11 by task





Graph 5.1 Total approved Bursary Fund Awards by year



Graph 5.2 2010/11 Bursary awards by expense category

Appendix 5: Donations and Bursary Funds Data



Graph 5.3 2010/11 Loan Pool Purchases by expense category

Appendix 6: Training Data

Type of Course	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Participants on PPD supported courses	117	93	79
Courses delivered supported by PPD	14	10	10
Participants on DRC administered/bespoke courses	115	197	299
Courses administered by DRC/bespoke courses	10	16	18

Table 6.1 Courses conducted in the periods 2010/11, 2009/10, 2008/09

If you would like this report in an alternative format (such as Braille, large-font or an electronic version) please contact the Disability Resource Centre.

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