

Case Study: SEND Event

7th July 2021 4:30 – 6:30pm



Background

Working alongside our partner institutions, Shaping Futures identified the need in our area to provide specialist outreach support for professionals working with learners who have additional needs. During our research we spoke with teachers and SENCo's to identify gaps in their knowledge, plus current university students with disabilities who shared their own experiences of transitioning to university, and the support they wished they had. From this, it was clear to us that there were many misconceptions around the support available. As a result of this research we decided to host our own virtual CPD events to upskill practitioners, providing them with the information they need to empower their learners. During December 2020 we ran the first of these events, 'Supporting Inclusive Transitions' which was well attended and included an overview of the transitions process including applying to Disabled Students Allowance. The feedback from this event was positive and suggested that practitioners would benefit more specific information about the support available for various additional needs. As this was clearly a cold-spot for our region we decided to focus our efforts on putting together an event which would provide an in-depth look at university support services and what is on offer for particular special educational needs and disabilities.

Summary of Activity

In July 2021 we were able to host a virtual event which brought together experts from University Outreach Teams, Support Services and Student Finance England to share their knowledge on specialist support available in higher education. This event covered 5 key support needs: Mental Health, Physical Health, Specific Learning Differences, Autism Spectrum Disorders and Hearing/Visual loss or impairment. In each session specialists discussed the processes of accessing support, assessments, the kind of resources available (i.e. mentoring, physical support, assistive technology) and case studies of those who had benefited from the services. Alongside this, a representative from Student Finance England explained the Disabled Students Allowance funding and application. To round off the event, current university students shared their own experiences of accessing university support services. This was an insightful part of the day which included real world success stories of students who had been positively impacted by the support they had accessed during their studies. You can watch the introduction to our event and the student Q&A [here](#).

Outcome

Of the feedback submitted 100% of attendees found this event useful and had an improved understanding of the services discussed. All attendees felt more prepared to support learners with additional needs into higher education. Written feedback shared included that the event was 'informative and interesting'. We hope to be able to offer further support to learners with additional needs in the future. Please contact our [Strategic Outreach HEPA](#) to find out more about this.