



ACCESS INSIGHTS

Tap into the insights of your disabled students

The last five years have seen a sharp [increase in the number of disabled students](#) in Higher Education (HE) in the UK, with 19% of home students now declaring a disability. The same period has also seen an increase in [reports of HE inaccessibility](#) in the UK. As a result institutions are increasingly faced with questions of how to meet their students' needs and reduce the legal and reputational risk associated with inaccessibility. Unfortunately, progress is held back by a lack of data on how to improve disabled students' experience, as highlighted by the [2023 TASO report](#).

The solution

Disabled Students UK's Access Insights project will close the information gap regarding accessibility in HE to enable evidence-based improvements. For 10 years DSUK will run the [Annual Disabled Student Survey](#), gathering disabled students' experience of accessibility in Higher Education.

In its first year, the survey gathered the experiences of more than 1300 disabled students from over 100 UK universities, allowing us to paint a comprehensive picture of accessibility in the sector.

Three types of results from the Annual Disabled Student Survey are made publicly available on our [Access Insights website](#) and in the annual Access Insights Report:

- [The current disabled student experience compared to sector goals for 2033](#)
- [Positive policies shown to have an impact on the disabled student experience](#)
- [Snapshot university comparisons](#)

Membership

To enable HE Providers to gain insight into accessibility at their institution and effectively implement solutions, DSUK offers Access Insights Membership. The Disabled Students' Commission has called upon HEPs *"to pursue opportunities that provide insight into the experience of their disabled students, such as of membership of Disabled Students UK's Access Insights Project."*

Access Insights Members make a financial contribution to the project to receive the following assets:

Membership offers

Gold (£2,500):

- Monthly Brief with news from the sector and videos from lived experience experts
- Data dives from the Annual Disabled Student Survey
- 25% discount on DSUK event tickets
- Membership badge

Platinum (£6,400):

Everything in Gold plus:

- Annual report with university-specific statistics from the Annual Disabled Student Survey
- 50% discount on DSUK event tickets
- 20% discount on bespoke consulting, training and speaking

Diamond (£9,700):

Everything in Platinum plus:

- Annual premium report into the disabled student experience at the university, including student quotes and DSUK policy recommendations.
- 15h of bespoke consulting
- Free access to DSUK events
- Co-created video on university's work to support disabled students

* Memberships billed annually, institutions with less than 15,000 students are entitled to a 10% discount and institutions with under 8,000 students are entitled to a 20% discount.

Advantages of membership

Access Insights uses an evidence-based approach to evaluate disabled students' experiences within their institution, providing valuable information about each institution's strengths and challenges. By comparing the accessibility approach of different institutions, Access Insights helps institutions understand which accessibility policies are associated with successful outcomes. Having information about structural accessibility issues and solutions allows universities to address accessibility proactively and strategically rather than as an add-on.

Prioritising accessibility in HE is crucial to challenge the status quo of disabled students not having the same educational, self-development, and career opportunities. Better accessibility also benefits HEPs in many ways. It allows the institution to gain academic contributions from an underutilised population, avoid reputational and financial damages from complaints, and rise on university rankings as the experience and performance of nearly one in five students improve.

DSUK embodies a new model of disabled students as experts and creators of change rather than recipients of charity. Disabled students have invaluable knowledge about what works and does not work when it comes to accessibility. We see this every day in our work, and we want the whole HE sector to benefit from this insight through the Access Insights Project.

DSUK's 2022 [report](#) found that the second most common lesson disabled students want universities to learn from the pandemic was to consult them more. Students who had been proactively consulted about accessibility during the pandemic were 3 times more likely to have the support they needed and more than 3 times less likely to consider leaving.

Access Insight membership allows the HEP to address inaccessibility more effectively. The authentic advice and evidence-based recommendations we offer lead to more cost-effective interventions. This will also improve staff morale and productivity, as they can be more confident and proactive in their accessibility measures rather than having to rectify issues in an ad-hoc manner.

Members can proudly display the Access Insights membership logo on their website, sending a clear message to current and prospective their disabled students that they value their voice and are investing in their access.

Membership details

To learn more and sign up, contact us at accessinsights@disabledstudents.co.uk.

About DSUK

DSUK has quickly become the largest disabled student-led organisation in the UK and has been recognised thrice by [Disability Power 100](#) as one of Britain's most influential disabled-led organisations, winning the category in 2023. Made up of over 500 current and former disabled students from 70 different Higher Education Providers, the organisation empowers students to share their insight into accessibility to inform policy.

DSUK has built a reputation with its evidence-based approach. Our [2020 report](#), which warned the sector about the impact of the pandemic on disabled students, was mentioned in parliament. [Our 2022 report](#) presents key accessibility lessons from the pandemic. The report was [featured](#) in *The Independent*, and hailed as “*a potential game changer in its review of UK HE inclusive provision*”. The launch was attended by over 100 university staff members, with 92% reporting that they found the contents helpful for improving the situation for disabled students in HE.

DSUK has a collaborative approach to change and regularly provides consulting and training services to researchers, access consultants, decision makers and institutions such as the UCL and the National Union of Students. Our mission is to achieve a truly accessible HE experience, ensuring disabled people equal access to education and the societal and self-development opportunities associated with this.

Read more about us and our work here: disabledstudents.co.uk

Find us across the web: linktr.ee/DisabledStudentsUK