

Letter from various organisations to the QCA raising concerns about reasonable adjustments and the DDA

Dear Mr Boston

The National Deaf Children's Society is writing on behalf of the representatives from the organisations listed below to ask for a meeting with you regarding the access arrangements as set out in the '*Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in examinations*' published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

As you will be aware, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) will cover general qualifications from 2007. The timescale for the implementation of the new DDA duties obviously means that there will be students taking examination courses in 2006 and 2007 before the new duties come into force. We understand that a draft Code of Practice will be released for consultation later this year.

However, there have already been significant changes to the guidance on access arrangements. For example, the provision of oral communicators has been removed and certificate indications will not be available beyond Summer 2006. We believe that a number of students may be disadvantaged by the fact that these changes have been introduced before they are eligible for protection under the forthcoming DDA legislation.

In addition to the above concerns, we are also keen to seek clarification of the timescale and process by which QCA plans to review the assessment criteria of all its courses to ensure that they comply with the new DDA duties.

We believe it would be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work together to address these issues.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely

Susan Daniels, Chief Executive

Rory Cobb, RNIB; Kathleen Grehan, RNID; Kate Goddard, SKILL; Carol Youngs, BDA; Paul Simpson, BATOD; Nick Papas, NASS/Mary Hare School; Steve Haines, DRC