ONYX SUPPORT

University
Partnership Pack

Because Every Student Deserves Onyx Support

www.onyxstudents.com

Working Together to Support Student Wellbeing and Success

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ONYX SUPPORT

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Onyx Student Support is a specialist NMH provider delivering high-quality, fully compliant support to students across the UK, including Northern Ireland. We offer flexible delivery in person and remotely, with nationwide reach so students can access consistent, needs-led support wherever they study or live, including distance learners.

Our service runs year-round across term time and university holidays, preventing gaps in provision. We deliver all Band 1–4 NMH roles and support a wide range of needs.

Our workforce includes qualified Specialist Mentors, SpLD Tutors, Mental Health Practitioners, Assistive Technology Trainers, Communication Support Workers, and sensory-impairment specialists. This breadth enables timely matching and reliable, high-quality support across diverse student requirements.
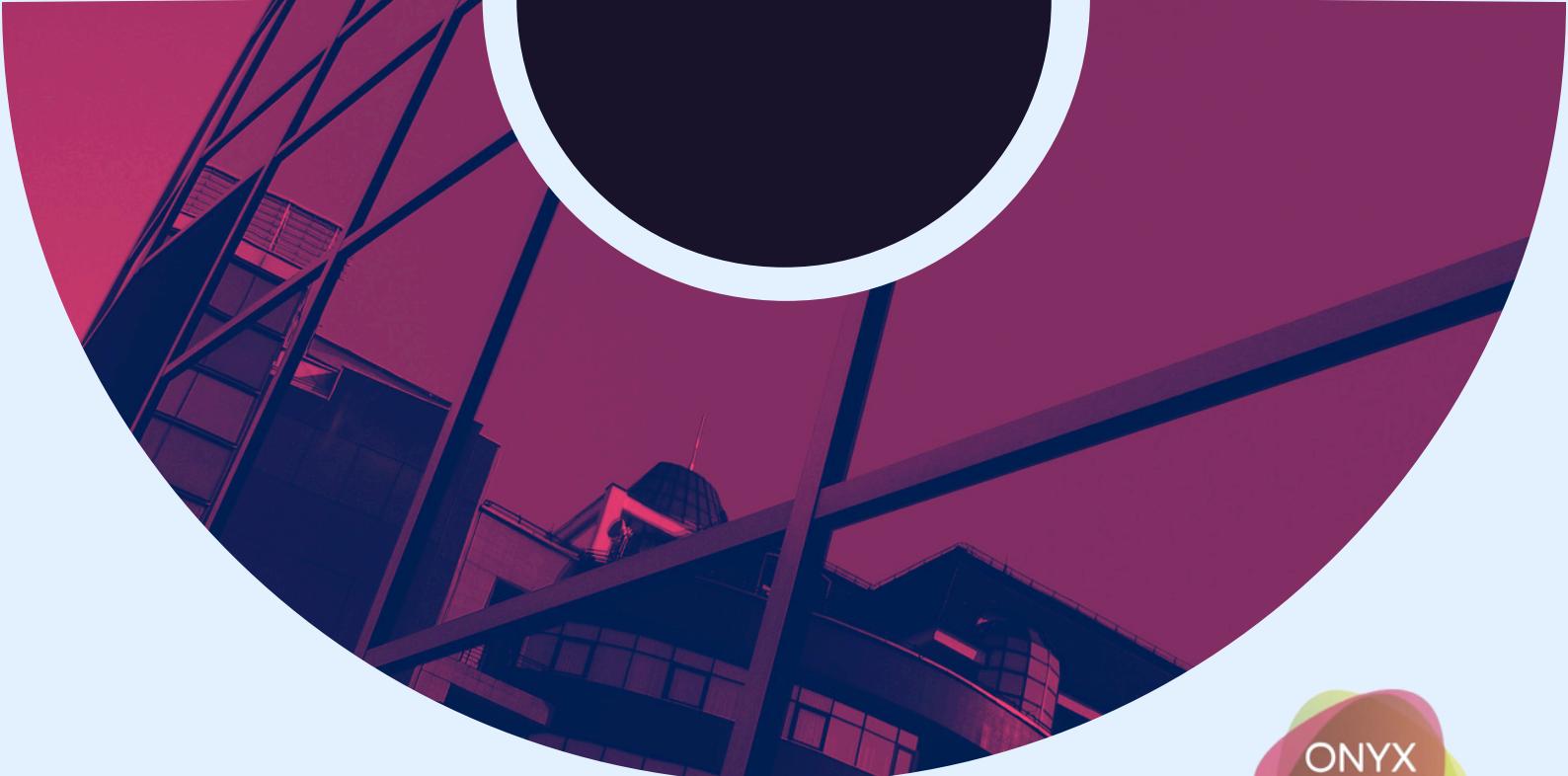
ONYX
SUPPORT

Onyx's
Vision and Mission

Onyx Student Support exists to set the standard for excellence in Non-Medical Help provision through collaboration, reliability, and evidence-based practice.

We empower students with disabilities, mental health conditions, and learning differences to flourish in higher education by delivering personalised, high-quality NMH. Working closely with universities, we remove barriers to learning, provide skilled specialist practitioners, uphold rigorous safeguarding and compliance, and promote student independence, confidence, and achievement.

Everything we do is rooted in inclusive, outcomes-focused support that is compassionate and accessible, while consistently effective.

Why Universities
Partner With Us

Partnering with Onyx helps universities relieve capacity pressures, close specialist-skill gaps, reduce waiting times, and strengthen student engagement and outcomes.

We are a registered NMH provider aligned to the DSA-QAG Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). Our service is audit-ready, GDPR-compliant, and underpinned by robust safeguarding and quality assurance processes supported by regular CPD and professional supervision.

This makes Onyx a trusted, responsive partner that supports continuation, wellbeing, and academic progress, while reducing operational load on internal teams.

Delivery, Scale and
Specialisms

Onyx Student Support has delivered NMH services for six years, supported by over 30 years of experience across higher education and disability support. During this time, we have supported thousands of students, with sustained engagement and consistently strong feedback reflecting the impact of our support on participation and progression.

Our specialist strengths include neurodiversity support, backed by our DfE-approved Supporting ADHD and Autistic Students in Higher Education training. We also provide dedicated support for students with visual or hearing impairments and mental health conditions.

This specialist bench enables rapid matching, dependable delivery, and high-quality support for both routine and complex cases.

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Case
Studies

Student feedback consistently highlights the real-world impact of Onyx Support on confidence, access, and success at university. Recent examples include:

Access and academic progression

Students report improved ability to manage complex course demands when matched with specialist tutors and mentors. One postgraduate law student shared that our tutor helped make overwhelming materials manageable and accessible, describing the support as "highly effective" and central to staying on track with their LLM/LPC studies.

Mental health, confidence, and retention

Students supported through Specialist Mentoring describe strong, therapeutic-style rapport and practical strategies that improve wellbeing and academic participation. One student said their mentor "immediately made me feel comfortable," and that sessions exceeded expectations, leading to stronger coping skills and sustained engagement.

Safeguarding and rapid response

Students highlight the speed and care of our safeguarding processes. One student noted that their mentor promptly advocated for them and additional support was put in place quickly, describing Onyx as "efficient and compassionate" and praising the rapid set-up of mentoring.

Reduced anxiety and improved participation

Students who began support experiencing social anxiety and avoidance of teaching report clear improvements in attendance and confidence. A student shared that mentoring helped them develop coping strategies that reduced anxiety and enabled them to return to classes and group work with confidence.

Partnership
Model

Partnering with Onyx Student Support means working with a reliable, specialist NMH provider that integrates smoothly into existing disability and wellbeing pathways to deliver responsive, high-quality DSA support.

We acknowledge new referrals and queries within 24 hours and provide regular progress updates, so disability teams have confidence in pace of delivery and student engagement.

Our joint-working approach is collaborative and consent-led at every stage. We align support plans with university adjustment frameworks, contribute to review processes where appropriate, and notify relevant contacts quickly if concerns arise.

Delivery is flexible to meet institutional and student needs. Support can be provided on campus, through home visits, or remotely nationwide, enabling continuity for commuting, placement, or distance-learning students.

If a student is at risk, disengaging, or dissatisfied, we activate a clear escalation pathway: immediate safeguarding/risk review via our qualified social-work safeguarding lead, rapid communication with the university's designated contact (within consent boundaries), and a structured resolution plan. This may include a review meeting, practitioner re-match, or revised support goals. The result is safe practice, responsive delivery, and a consistently positive student experience.

Team
Overview

Our multidisciplinary team includes doctors, psychologists, social workers, teachers, counsellors, specialist SEND tutors, and nurses, bringing deep clinical, educational, and lived-experience insight into NMH delivery.

Operational delivery is supported by experienced coordinators who ensure timely allocations and continuity of support. Qualified social workers oversee safeguarding and risk escalation, while dedicated data governance specialists maintain robust GDPR-aligned information handling and reporting.

This structure provides universities and students with a responsive service underpinned by professional standards, supervision, and accountability.
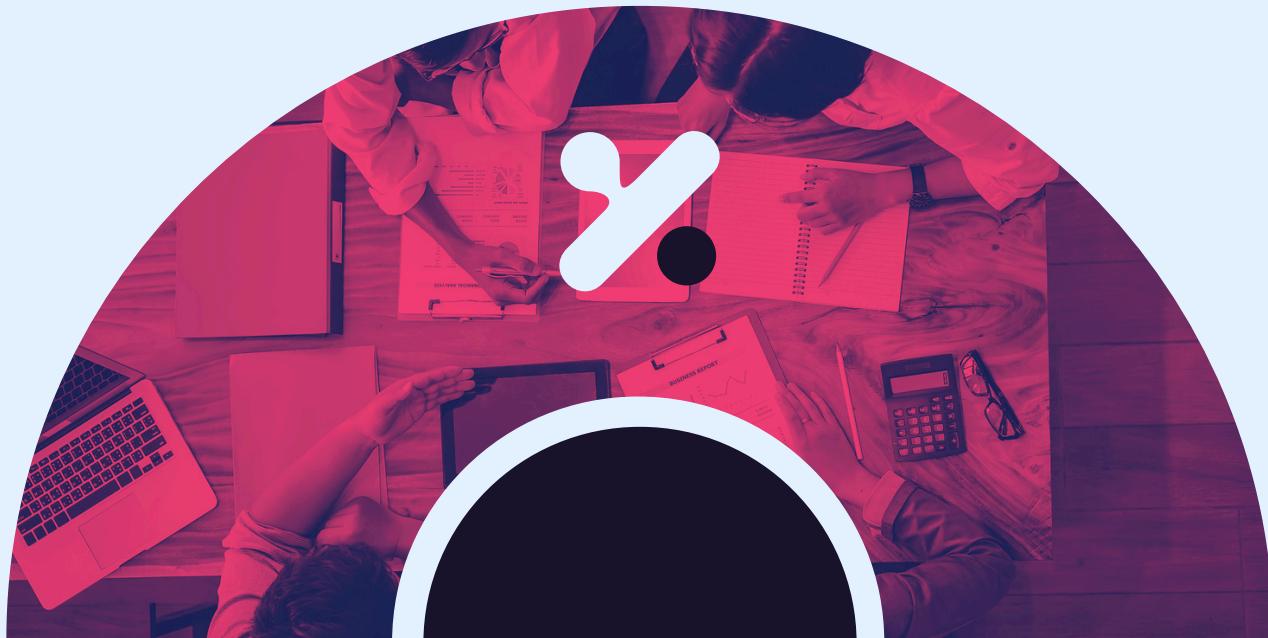
Quality Assurance, Compliance and
Practitioner Standards

Onyx Student Support places quality assurance and compliance at the core of NMH delivery, aligning fully with the **DSA-QAG QAF and university expectations** for external providers. **We are a Living Wage Provider, ICO-registered, Cyber Essentials Plus certified, and a Disability Confident Employer,** demonstrating our commitment to ethical practice, data security, and inclusive employment.

Our framework is designed to be audit-ready at any time, with robust systems covering recruitment, training, supervision, delivery monitoring, and continuous improvement. We maintain QAF-mapped role standards through:

- **rigorous practitioner selection and onboarding**
- **clear delivery protocols and role boundaries**
- **structured professional supervision**
- **mandatory CPD**
- **regular review of student outcomes and satisfaction**

Quality Assurance, Compliance and **Practitioner Standards**

We also meet Student Loans Company NMH Provider Register standards, demonstrating sector-wide requirements for governance, safeguarding, data protection, practitioner competence, and service reliability. We cooperate fully with SLC processes and external audits, maintaining clear evidence trails for delivery, training, supervision, and invoicing.

To support university due diligence, Onyx maintains an up-to-date policy register (available on request), including:

- Safeguarding and Prevent
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- GDPR, Data Protection & Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Lone Working
- Disability Awareness
- Complaints and Appeals
- Incident Reporting and Risk Management
- Professional Boundaries
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Business Continuity
- Recruitment and Vetting (DBS/PVG, references, right-to-work checks)
- Cancellation Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Supervision and CPD

Policies are reviewed regularly, version-controlled, and embedded into daily practice.

Delivery Standards and
Student Experience

Onyx Student Support provides a consistent, preference-led NMH experience from first contact through to completion. Students are matched through a structured allocation process that considers assessed needs, preferred support style, and practical requirements. Wherever possible, we align matches with student preferences such as gender, practitioner experience, communication approach, and availability, so students feel comfortable and supported from the outset.

Once matched, students receive an onboarding session to build rapport, clarify boundaries, and set meaningful goals. Practitioners are given clear guidance to ensure first sessions are welcoming, purposeful, and student-directed.

To promote consistency, Onyx provides robust delivery resources including support-plan templates, session-structure guides, and safeguarding tools. Support is delivered against agreed goals and reviewed regularly to remain relevant and outcomes-focused.

Attendance expectations and cancellation procedures are communicated clearly to prevent misunderstanding and encourage steady engagement. Where non-attendance occurs, our approach is proactive and welfare-led: we check in on wellbeing, confirm whether circumstances have changed, and offer flexible options to re-engage. If a student pauses support, we maintain light-touch check-ins and keep the route back open, allowing quick restarts when they are ready.

This model ensures students feel supported and in control, while universities benefit from consistent delivery, safeguarding awareness, and reliable engagement practices.

Communication and Feedback
With The University

Onyx Student Support prioritises clear, timely, consent-led communication to ensure delivery is transparent and coordinated. Upon referral, we acknowledge and respond within 24 working hours, confirming receipt and outlining next steps. Once a student is allocated, we notify the university promptly so teams can track start dates against DSA recommendations. Information sharing follows a consent-based flow at every stage.

We provide termly summary reports detailing engagement, progress against goals, and emerging themes relevant to adjustment planning. Where concerns arise, including wellbeing issues, safeguarding matters, non-attendance patterns, or risk flags, we notify the university immediately through agreed channels, within consent and safeguarding boundaries. At completion, we provide an end-of-support report summarising delivery, outcomes achieved, and any recommended next steps.

Universities can contact Onyx via admin@onyxstudents.com for referrals and service queries, accounts@onyxstudents.com for funding or invoicing, our website, or telephone (01604 713103). We use secure, GDPR-compliant channels, including encrypted email or agreed university portals.

Data Protection
and Records

Onyx Student Support manages student information in line with GDPR and sector expectations for DSA-funded provision. We process data lawfully and transparently, using student consent for delivery and information sharing, alongside appropriate contractual and public-task bases required within the DSA framework.

Records are stored securely using GDPR-compliant systems with controlled access, encryption, and role-based permissions. We follow clear retention and deletion schedules, keeping records only as long as necessary for delivery, audit, and safeguarding, after which data is securely deleted or anonymised.

Session notes are factual, objective, minimal, and student-appropriate, focused on support provided, progress against goals, and relevant actions. In the event of a suspected or confirmed data breach, we follow a robust procedure covering immediate containment, escalation to our data governance lead, risk assessment, and timely notification to relevant parties or regulators where required.

Funding, Pricing
and Invoicing

Invoicing and evidence

We invoice in line with approved DSA funding and university-agreed processes, supplying clear evidence of delivery (session logs/attendance records and role/band confirmation). Invoices are issued on a regular cycle (monthly or termly, depending on preference) and are fully itemised against funded entitlement.

Unused hours and extensions

Where funded hours are not used, we provide visibility through termly reporting and end-of-support summaries. If a student requires additional hours, we provide evidence and rationale to support extension requests through the standard DSA route.

Payment routes

Onyx works with provider-paid arrangements or student direct payments, depending on the funding letter and university workflow. This keeps start-ups timely, continuation smooth, and administrative burden minimal.

Outcomes, KPI Reporting and
Impact

Universities are increasingly expected to evidence how funded support improves engagement, wellbeing, and student success. We provide termly KPI reporting alongside concise impact narratives grounded in student feedback and support journeys.

Termly KPI reporting

- **Uptake / engagement rate:** percentage of referred students who start within agreed timescales and remain active through term.
- **Attendance & continuity:** attendance rates, cancellation/no-show trends, and successful re-engagement indicators.
- **Student satisfaction:** overall satisfaction score plus outcome prompts on usefulness, confidence-building, and match quality.
- **Progress against goals:** measured progress toward onboarding goals (met / partially met / revised), with themes across cohorts.
- **Continuation influence (where measurable):** evidence of reduced withdrawal risk, improved participation, and return-to-study after crisis.
- **Time-to-start:** average time from referral to allocation and first session, with tracking for specialist/complex cases.

Impact evidence

KPI data is supported by short qualitative snapshots showing how NMH changes day-to-day university experience. Students report improved access to learning through specialist tutoring, increased confidence and participation through mentoring, and rapid safeguarding responses that prevent escalation. Many describe tangible outcomes such as returning to classes after anxiety-related avoidance, building practical coping and organisation strategies, and remaining on programme due to timely, consistent specialist support.

Safeguarding and Crisis
Response

Onyx Student Support operates robust safeguarding and crisis-response procedures to ensure student safety and effective partnership working. A safeguarding concern includes any situation where a student may be at risk of harm to themselves or others, including disclosures or indicators of self-harm, suicidal ideation, abuse or neglect, exploitation, severe mental health deterioration, threats of violence, harassment, hate incidents, or any circumstance raising significant welfare concerns. All staff are trained to recognise indicators, understand boundaries, and report concerns immediately through Onyx's internal safeguarding pathway, regardless of delivery setting.

Concerns are escalated without delay to our safeguarding lead (qualified social-work oversight), who completes an immediate risk assessment and determines next steps. With student consent wherever possible, and always within legal safeguarding duties, we notify the university's designated escalation contacts promptly via secure channels with clear, factual context.

In urgent situations where there is immediate risk to life or serious harm, staff call emergency services (999) first, then notify Onyx safeguarding and the university as soon as safe to do so. For serious non-emergency concerns, staff follow internal escalation with rapid referral to university wellbeing/disability services and other external routes where appropriate.

After any incident, staff are offered structured debriefing, reflective supervision, and wellbeing support. This maintains safe, consistent safeguarding practice for students and a professionally supported environment for practitioners.

Complaints, Compliments &
Service Improvement

Onyx Student Support welcomes feedback as a core part of maintaining high-quality NMH and ensuring students feel heard and supported. We provide a clear student complaints route, explained during onboarding and available in multiple formats. Students can raise concerns with their practitioner, through our admin team, or via a confidential written route, and are reassured that complaints will not affect access to support.

University partners can raise concerns via admin@onyxstudents.com or their designated partnership contact. Complaints are acknowledged promptly, investigated fairly, and handled within agreed timescales. Where appropriate, remedies may include action plans, extra check-ins, practitioner re-match, revised goals, or formal review meetings (with consent). Outcomes are communicated clearly to restore confidence and improve experience.

All complaints and compliments feed directly into our continuous improvement cycle. Themes are reviewed by senior leads, logged within our QA framework, and used to shape practitioner CPD, supervision focus, policy updates, and delivery refinements.

Referral Routes

For partnership enquiries, referrals, and coordination, universities have clear named contacts to ensure fast communication. Partnership managers Nyomi Rosa and Holly Botterill oversee onboarding, service set-up, and relationship management. Referrals and allocations are handled through admin@onyxstudents.com to ensure swift matching and start confirmation.

Welfare or risk concerns are escalated immediately to the Safeguarding Lead through the same secure route. Funding or billing queries can be directed to accounts@onyxstudents.com.

To begin a partnership, universities are invited to book a call with Nyomi or Holly to confirm service needs, referral pathways, and escalation contacts. Following agreement, onboarding can be completed quickly, with allocations starting as soon as referrals are received.

Testimonials

My mentor, Christopher Nardolilli, was absolutely fantastic. We built such a good rapport, and he immediately made me feel comfortable and able to discuss my difficulties with him. He had a brilliant way of combining university support with mental health guidance, using a therapeutic style to explore problems. I've benefited so much from working with him, and I wanted to pass on some good words, I would recommend him to anyone.
— Student

Honestly, my sessions were brilliant, and I got so much more out of them than I expected. — Student

I had Linda as my mentor, and I can't thank her enough for her amazing support. She really advocated for me regarding my mental health concerns and was very prompt and efficient in safeguarding me. Any extra support I needed was put in place quickly, and I was very impressed by the speed and efficiency with which Linda managed this. Linda is gentle and understanding. She offered multiple solutions, and we discussed different action plans that best suited my needs. She is caring and compassionate, and she made me feel safe and comfortable. I was able to build a trusting bond with her, which helped me speak openly about the concerns and struggles I was facing. I can't thank Linda enough for being such a great listener and supporter.
— Student

Onyx Support has been a lifeline for me throughout my journey. The guidance from my mentor, Ashley, has not only helped me stay on top of assignments but has also given me the tools to manage stress, anxiety, and my overall mental health. The encouragement and practical strategies she provided made a huge difference to my confidence and resilience. Without her and Onyx Support, I truly don't believe I would have come this far. I'm deeply grateful for the patience, understanding, and dedication they've shown me, and I would wholeheartedly recommend Onyx Support to anyone who needs both academic and emotional support.
— Student

Inclusive NMH Provision

Onyx Student Support is committed to advancing inclusive practice, accessibility, and a genuine sense of belonging for disabled students and those with learning differences or mental health needs. Our NMH provision aligns with universities' EDI strategies and Access & Participation Plans by removing barriers to learning, enabling equitable participation, and supporting continuation and success.

We deliver culturally responsive, preference-led support that recognises the intersection of disability with race, gender, faith, socioeconomic background, and identity. Wherever possible, we match students with practitioners who respect their preferences, lived experience, and communication needs.

Through specialist expertise, flexible delivery (campus, home-visit, and remote), and consistent outcomes reporting, Onyx helps institutions create learning environments where students feel understood, supported, and empowered to thrive independently.

ONYX SUPPORT

Thank You!

Our Contact:

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