Why was the Positive about People with Disabilities Scheme introduced?

In 2009 the University of Leeds and Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust made the decision to introduce a new selection procedure in order to encourage more people with disabilities to apply to the D Clin Psychol course.

Why is that necessary?

There are three key reasons why we chose to take this step:

1. It is a legal requirement, under the Equality Act 2010 (which superseded the Disability Discrimination Act 2005), for universities and NHS trusts to address under-representation of people with disabilities in their student and staff populations.

2. The British Psychological Society’s “Accreditation Handbook for Clinical Psychology Programmes” states that “programmes should take active steps to widen access to entry to the profession of clinical psychology, aiming for diversity within trainee cohorts, and must produce documentary evidence of these strategies. Programmes must periodically review their entry requirements and the ways in which potential to achieve competence is assessed at selection, to ensure that these are consistent with the overall aim of widening access to the profession, and are not discriminatory”

3. Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust is accredited with the “Positive about Disabled People” Scheme. To maintain this right, the Trust has to meet five commitments, one of which is to offer an interview to all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for the post.

The current selection process and applicants who declare a disability

The selection process for the programme comprises three key stages:

Stage 1 – All applications are assessed against the minimum criteria (please see website for updated criteria):

Stage 2 - Eligible applicants were scored against the interview criteria, assessing both clinical and academic suitability (shortlisting).

Stage 3 – Applicants with the top 48 scores from stage 2 are interviewed by academic staff and service users. Those with the highest ratings at interview were offered places, with some of the remainder of the interviewees being held on a waiting list.
All applicants who do not meet the minimum criteria, irrespective of disability, are de-selected at stage 1. All remaining applicants, irrespective of disability, are scored against the interview criteria, and the applicants with the highest 48 scores are offered interview places as in previous years.

Stage 4 - In addition, up to 30 interview places have been ring-fenced for applicants with disabilities. At stage 4, therefore up to 30 further applicants with disabilities (in addition to any applicants with disabilities who have been shortlisted using our traditional criteria) will be identified and offered an interview.

What if there are fewer than 30 additional applicants with disabilities who are eligible for interview?

The additional interview places have been ring-fenced for applicants with disabilities. They will therefore not be made available for applicants who have not declared a disability.

What if there are more than 30 additional disabled applicants eligible for the ring-fenced places?

This situation has not arisen. If it did then we would make every effort to extend the capacity within our interviews.

Do these changes mean that there will be fewer interview places for applicants who have not declared a disability?

No. We have retained the same level of open interviewing capacity as previous years. We have added an additional ring-fenced 40 interview places to our previous capacity.

What is the definition of “disabled” in this context?

We use the same definition of disability as that provided within the Equality Act (2010) which defines disability as: “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

I’m not sure if that applies to me. How can I be sure?

If you want to talk in confidence about your own circumstances, please contact Emma Judge on 0113 2065218 (email: emma.judge@nhs.net). Emma is a recruitment specialist within Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust but she is not directly involved in the selection process for the clinical psychology programme. You will not be required to give your name if you choose not to.

What are the benefits of declaring a disability?
Declaring a disability is the gateway to inclusion at stage 4 of the interview process. The additional interview places will only be offered to applicants with disabilities. It also provides the applicant and the university and NHS teams with the opportunity to discuss potential workplace adjustment requirements in a timely fashion.

**If I have a disability, do I have to declare it?**

No. There is no requirement to declare a disability under the Equality Act 2010. However, if you do not declare your disability on the Clearing House application form, you will not be eligible for a ring-fenced interview place.

**If I choose not to declare my disability during the selection process, does that mean the university and the Trust won’t make the adjustments I need if I am offered a place on the programme?**

No. Both the Trust and the University are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments for you whilst on the programme. If you want to talk in confidence about your own circumstances, please contact Emma Judge on 0113 2065218 (email: emma.judge@nhs.net). Emma has extensive knowledge of available adjustments within the Trust. You can also contact Fiona Thorne, Clinical Tutor on the D.Clin Programme on 0113 343 8343 (f.m.thorne@leeds.ac.uk) to discuss details of adjustments available at the university.

**If I choose to declare a disability, how do I do it and who will see the information?**

Applicants who wish to declare a disability should do so on the Clearing House application form. This information will be used by the Course Director and our Admissions Tutor at the end of our short-listing process when we make our final decisions about which applicants will be offered interview places. No members of the short-listing panels will have access to this information. The same arrangement will hold for our interview panels. We will not inform any of our interviewers which candidates have disclosed a disability.

**What happens when I have declared a disability?**

If your application meets the minimum requirement for the programme at stage 1, your application will be scored during stage 2. Following stages 3 and 4, you will either be:

a) informed that you have been unsuccessful in your application (if your score is insufficient to meet both the stage 3 and 4 eligibility criteria);

b) invited for interview.

If you are invited to interview, we will ask you to let us know if you have any particular requirements in relation to it (e.g. sign-language interpreter, parking close to the interview rooms, a particular time slot etc). You will also be given the opportunity to talk through the requirements of the programme with university and
NHS specialists to ascertain whether you would need any workplace adjustments if you were offered a place on the programme.

**Will the interviewers know whether I am being interviewed as a result of stage 3 or stage 4?**

No. Interview schedules will ensure a mix of candidates and all interviews will follow the same structured format.

**Will I know whether I am being interviewed as a result of stage 3 or stage 4?**

No, your invitation to interview will not disclose this information.

**What if people falsely declare a disability to get to the interview stage?**

Research suggests that there is an under-declaration rather than an over-declaration regarding disability within employment. However, in the unlikely event that such a case should arise, it would be treated as falsification of the application in the same way as if false claims were made in relation to qualifications or publications. This would normally result in disqualification from the selection process or dismissal from the programme.

**Does declaring a disability provide any benefits at the final selection stage?**

No. Final selection is decided on the basis of performance at interview. Whilst declaring a disability will make you eligible for the additional ring-fenced interview places, and will ensure that we have the opportunity to make any adjustments you need for the interview, it would not be lawful for us to take disability into account when making final selection decisions.

*I’m still not sure whether or not I want to declare my disability. Is there anyone I can talk to?*

If you want to talk in confidence about your own circumstances, please contact Emma Judge on 0113 2065218 (email: emma.judge@nhs.net).