



NHS AIREDALE BRADFORD AND LEEDS

# EVERY BODY MATTERS POSITIVE ACTION FOR DISABLED NHS JOB APPLICANTS

### SUMMARY

In 2009 NHS Bradford and Airedale, in conjunction with Arthritis Care, developed a one-day positive action course aimed at disabled people who wanted to work in the National Health Service (NHS).

The project was funded as part of the Department of Health's Pacesetters project.

The trust recognised that national levels of unemployment for disabled people are extremely high.

*"Disabled people are far less likely to be in employment. Although there have been significant improvements in the employment rates of disabled people in the last decade, the employment rates of disabled people are around 48 per cent, compared with around 78 per cent of non-disabled people."*

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/disability-facts-and-figures.php#imp>

Information and experiences had been gathered from many local disabled peoples' organisations. The trust identified a need to:

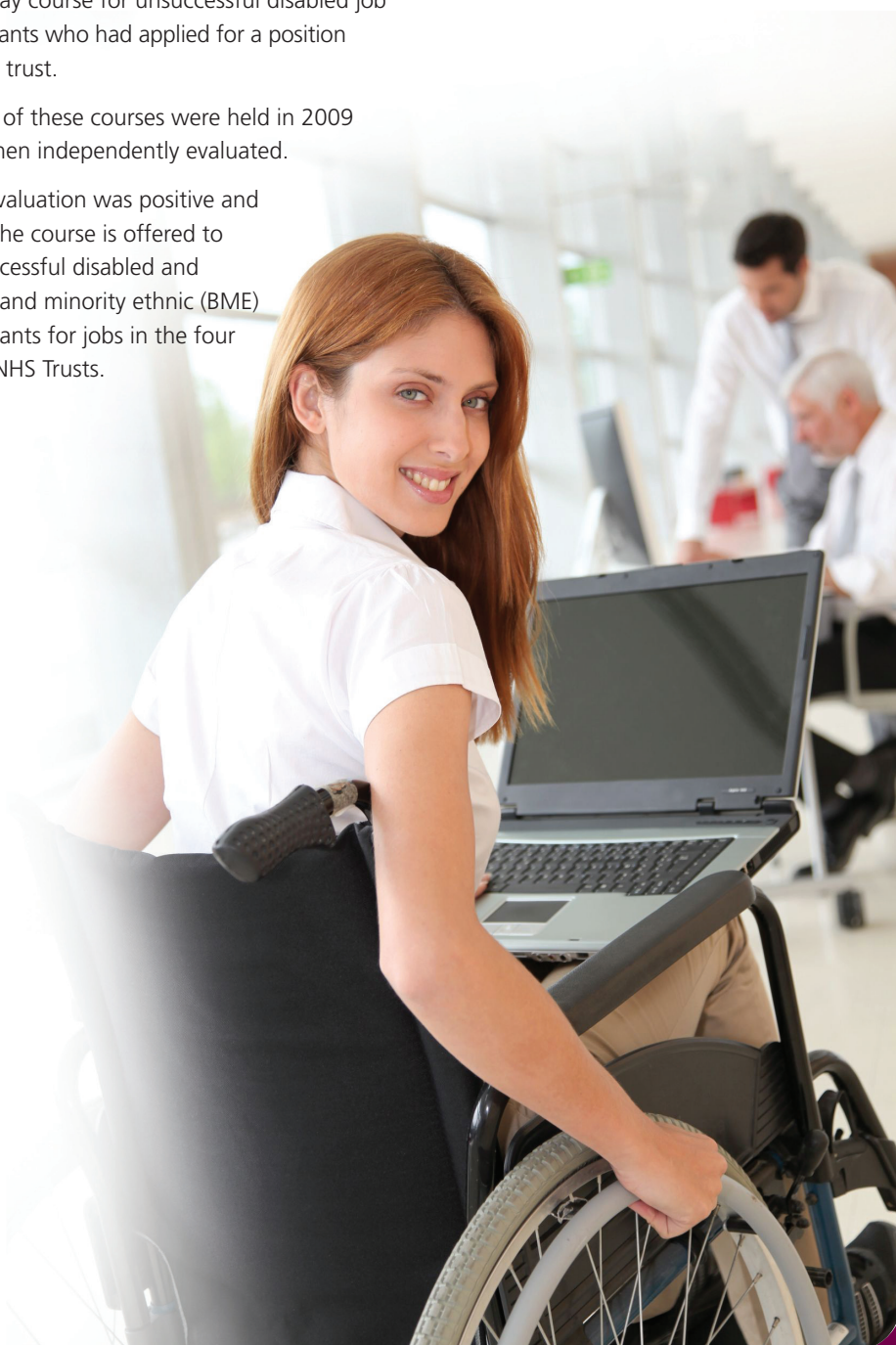
- employ more disabled people
- provide more training for frontline staff
- improve access to services and premises
- make information more accessible

This project is the way we responded to employ more disabled people.

The Every Body Matters project at NHS Bradford and Airedale provided a free one-day course for unsuccessful disabled job applicants who had applied for a position at the trust.

Three of these courses were held in 2009 and then independently evaluated.

The evaluation was positive and now the course is offered to unsuccessful disabled and black and minority ethnic (BME) applicants for jobs in the four local NHS Trusts.





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## BACKGROUND

At present, NHS Bradford and Airedale is the local leader of health across the district. As a Primary Care Trust (PCT) the organisation is responsible for all the health services delivered to the local community it serves.

Over 500,000 people use NHS services across Bradford and Airedale. It is the trust's aim to address local health inequalities that exist between their most poor and wealthy areas, prevent illness by helping people take care of themselves and improve the quality of their services.

Bradford is one of the few metropolitan districts in the country to be experiencing population growth; this is expected to continue over the coming decades. It is likely that this growth will lead to more people in poor health. The population has been growing steadily since 2001, reaching an estimated 507,000 in 2009. It has increased at both ends of the age range. Young people make up a larger proportion of the population than the country as a whole, with nearly a quarter of all residents less than 16 years of age.

The PCT serves a diverse population. Black and minority ethnic communities make up 24% of the population, predominantly groups of Pakistani and other South Asian descent. The proportion of minority ethnic groups is forecast to increase to 38% by 2030. There are some emerging issues including a new migrant population.

The geographical area the PCT covers has relatively high levels of deprivation and low levels of economic activity. The economic downturn looks set to impact most on young families, with job losses and reduced earnings affecting the mental health and lifestyle behaviours of many in this age group.

## WHAT DID WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

- Offer disabled people who want to work for NHS Bradford and Airedale the opportunity to develop their skills then evaluate whether or not the process has helped them to gain employment.
  - Increase the number of disabled people the trust can shortlist for interview.
- Despite the fact the trust operates the Positive about Disabled People Guaranteed Interview Scheme it had often not been possible to shortlist disabled applicants as they had not adequately demonstrated they met the essential criteria in the person specification.
- Increase the number of disabled people employed by NHS Bradford and Airedale.

The trust recognised their workforce was not as representative of the people it served as it should be and therefore wanted to use this project to identify a focussed intervention that would help them employ more disabled people.

## WHAT DID WE DO?

We identified people who had recently applied for jobs with us, had disclosed they were disabled and had not been appointed. We invited them back to take part in a one-day programme that would focus on:

- how to complete the NHS application form
- interview skills
- opportunities in the NHS
- individual action planning of next steps

The course content was developed utilising ideas from all steering group participants and included activities to develop application and interview skills. The course content covered

the process of completing an application form including what it is important to include, at what stage, and incorporated taking participants through the short-listing process to enable them to understand what a recruiting manager is looking for. Techniques such as STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) were also used to help participants construct possible answers to likely interview questions.

Where it was feasible to do so disabled people's experiences in finding work were included in the course content. This was made possible using links with the trust's relatively new but growing Staff Disability Network.

Three courses, held in August and September 2009 attracted 27 participants. All attendees were people who had applied but been unsuccessful for posts at NHS Bradford and Airedale and had ticked the disabled box on their application form. In addition two disabled people who worked for a local disabled people's organisation attended to participate and provide the trust with feedback even though they did not want to work in the NHS. A member of the Staff Disability Network participated as a co-facilitator in each session and shared with participants the details of the reasonable adjustments the trust had made and the benefits of the network.

Participants were also provided with information on different local NHS organisations, on volunteering, training and casual work opportunities.

In December 2009 the trust commissioned two local external consultants, who had undertaken a lot of work in the area of disability equality and employment, to carry out an independent evaluation of the project. The full independent report is available at:

<http://www.bradford.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Every-Body-Matters-Evaluation-Report-March-2010-Arial-14.pdf>







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## WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS?

- An independent evaluation of the Every Body Matters project was very positive. It concluded that the training course was well worth further development and that it had achieved its objective of increasing the proportion of disabled people in the trust's workforce.
- The evaluators interviewed course participants who had been seeking work; 38% had gained employment within the following 6 month period.
- Evidence provided by a number of participants demonstrated that they had subsequently improved their performance or had taken steps that helped them move closer to gaining employment.
- The project evaluation also refined the course participants' feedback into recommendations for the trust; implementation of these will contribute to the trust's efforts to achieve a more representative workforce. Recommendations currently being addressed include the need to:
  - specify either in the person specification, by further documentation, or by contacting the recruiting manager exactly what "or equivalent" means for that particular job;
  - ensure recruiting managers provide clear and more helpful feedback to unsuccessful candidates, particularly those who reach the interview stage.
- The design and delivery of the project was a real team effort and has had tangible outcomes in the 'mainstreaming' of disability equality work within the trust. In particular, the member of the human resources (HR) team who was involved with the project has become a disability equality champion and has participated wholeheartedly in subsequent initiatives. For example, the provision of a detailed guide to reasonable adjustments on the HR section of the trust's intranet site. The guide, written by the Employers Forum on Disability, provides guidance to help managers decide if an adjustment is reasonable and gives advice on where to access further help and assistance. A licence required to use the guide was purchased by the trust.
- An unexpected outcome was the very helpful and detailed feedback from course participants on the trust's recruitment and selection process and on NHS Jobs. Following the workshops the trust's Head of Equality and Diversity (E&D) contacted the team redesigning NHS Jobs to highlight concerns, identified from course participant's feedback, about how NHS Jobs works. The NHS Jobs team stated that comments related to the following areas would be taken into consideration:
  - make the guidance on how to complete the application form easier to find;
  - rename the additional information section so that it is clear to applicants that this is not for any extra information they can think of but is where they should demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the person specification.
- Many participants stated they were impressed that the NHS had 'made the effort' to set up and run the courses; the trust feel the project has enhanced their reputation as "an employer of choice".
- The project won the Equality and Diversity award at the 2010 Yorkshire and the Humber Social Partnerships Forum.



Left to right: John Cafferty, Regional Head of Health Unison and Joint Chair of the Regional Social Partnership Forum, Lynne Carter, Head of Equality and Diversity, Gill Bowskill, Strategic Disability Partnership Board, Tim Gilpin, Director of Workforce and Education and Joint Chair of the Regional Social Partnership Forum

## WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW?

The independent evaluators concluded that it would be useful to offer this programme to other underrepresented groups.

NHS Airedale Bradford and Leeds is now offering this programme jointly with the local NHS provider trusts.

NHS Bradford and Airedale's primary care interpreting services have recently become a social enterprise "Enable 2". Going forward Enable 2 will run the "Every Body Matters" workshop for all disabled and black and minority ethnic applicants who want to work for the NHS in Bradford and Airedale as part of their corporate social responsibility work.

## HOW CAN WE DO THIS?

- Download the session plan and session materials from our website: <http://www.bradford.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/everybody-matters/>. The session plan shows which materials need to be amended to meet local requirements.
- Use NHS jobs to gather contact details of job applicants you wish to invite.
- Agree a date and venue for the session.
- Invite the people identified to the session. You will need to invite a lot more people than you have places for as many will not respond.
- Identify trainers. Anyone with some training experience should be able to deliver this programme.
- **Do it – hold the course!**





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## SUPPORTING MATERIAL

The following resources that support this case study are available at <http://www.bradford.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/everybody-matters/>:

- Independent evaluation of the project
- Session plan
- Presentation
- Pacesetters Blob Tree
- Am I applying for the right jobs?
- Example job description
- Application form 1
- Application form 2

## Relevant Websites

<http://www.bradford.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/everybody-matters/>



ARTHRITIS CARE

*Empowering  
people with arthritis.*

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## Pacesetters

