

## **B5: Developing inclusive practice for people with disabilities**

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The aim of this paper is to share the story of valuing disability as an asset

### **Background**

Barts Health, a group of five hospitals is one of the largest Trust's in the country. It has a workforce of over 15,000 and recognises the need to improve the experience of staff and patients with disabilities.

NHS Staff Survey reports show that colleagues with a disability consistently report higher rates of discrimination, work-related stress and less satisfaction with career development opportunities. It also highlights that staff with a disability are often reluctant to declare their disability (according to our ESR records, less than 3% of staff have a disability but in the national Survey, it is 17%).

These are issues common to NHS organisations and Barts Health is leading the way in beginning to address identified local challenges. One of the Trust Equalities Objective's is:

'To investigate and actively seek to address the low numbers of staff with disability status recorded on ESR, as well as their negative experience in the workplace compared to others as shown by staff survey results'.

This renewed focus on disability is a key component of the Trust's commitment to delivering **Safe and Compassionate care** and developing a progressive, person-centred work environment where all are valued, empowered and supported to reach their potential.

### **Aims**

**#BartsAbility** is a staff led initiative which aims to improve the experiences of employees with a disability. At the centre of the initiative is the Staff Diversity Network-Disability Subgroup which aims to promote a culture where disability is seen as an asset, staff are open about their disability and work to ensure that everyone is able to bring their authentic self to work.

### **Methods**

Using the Listening into Action (LiA) approach to empower staff to identify and lead improvement. Conducting a series of four LiA 'Big Conversations' across the sites and sponsored by Director Workforce Development. This provided an opportunity to identify issues which affect people with a disability and enabled staff to share experiences, highlight areas for improvement and suggest solutions.

### **Results**

Three improvement workstreams have evolved so far:

- I. **Barts Health Disability Passport** - Tool to facilitate supportive and constructive conversations about *reasonable adjustments* between employee and manager

## **II. 'Access all Areas'**

- a. Ensuring room booking systems offer comprehensive and consistent access information at point of booking
- b. Campaign to encourage positive behaviours/habits around room/event booking practice, linked to Trust values

## **III. The Dyslexia Staff group**

Establishment of support and advocacy group for staff living with Dyslexia

### **Other results**

- Site-management teams driving improvements locally
- Refreshed relationship with *DisabledGo* to re-audit access of sites/services.
- team members undertaking a variety of professional/ personal development opportunities with some sitting on national disability strategy groups
- Corporate and community recognition

### **Opportunities and challenges**

- Sustainability by embedding practices/processes/behaviours
- Maintaining momentum and engagement and scaling up to reach new audiences

### **Conclusion**

This case study shows the potential of staff-led initiatives to drive change and improvement. It also demonstrates how embracing diversity can directly impact organisational performance

### **Bibliography**

- Barts Health NHS Trust website <http://www.bartshealth.nhs.uk>