



# Guidance for clinical placements on reasonable adjustments and Health Passports

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide clear instructions for the implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled students while on clinical placement through the use of Health Passports.

Medical professions are becoming more inclusive and diverse. Colleagues are increasingly likely to encounter students with a range of physical, neurodevelopment and mental health conditions. These are disabilities under the Equality Act 2010, and students have a right to support and reasonable adjustments.

As a University we also have a commitment to belonging and inclusion that goes above and beyond our legal duties. There are training resources available to all colleagues on disability in general, as well as specific conditions and impairments.

Please see the [‘Working with disabled students’ SharePoint](#) and [Supporting disabled staff in the workplace | NHS Employers](#) for more guidance and advice.

## What are reasonable adjustments?

People who are disabled are entitled to reasonable adjustments, in order to reduce the barriers they face in work and study. Someone [is considered disabled](#) if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term detrimental effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. Reasonable adjustments to placements are changes a placement provider makes to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. [For example](#):

- finding a different way to do something
- making changes to the workplace
- changing someone's working arrangements
- providing equipment, services or support

There can also be attitudinal barriers such as not understanding the impact of a workplace practice on a disabled person, or low assumptions about what disabled people can achieve.

The NHS is committed to improving access and inclusion for disabled people, and to reducing or removing barriers to learning faced by disabled students.

Reasonable adjustments should support students to acquire and demonstrate their skills and meet the competences required for their training. Competency standards themselves cannot be adjusted, but how they are taught and assessed can be.

When determining the kinds of support and adjustments that might be reasonable, you may wish to take advice from:

- The student themselves, who will know their own needs and, in most cases, the types of adjustments that will be most effective
- The university (via the Student Support Team, in collaboration with Disability Services and Occupational Health)
- Local Health and Safety teams

## **Information sharing**

### **Difficulties with information sharing**

It can be difficult to ensure everyone who meets a student on placement has information about a student's disability and adjustments, which is why we encourage staff and students to engage in a discussion about support.

We aim to empower students to share their own health/disability information with placements, to model what they may need to do when they are working in the NHS.

### **Information shared with placements**

The Medicine Placements Team ([medicineplacements@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:medicineplacements@leeds.ac.uk)) share information on students who have a 'placements adjustments' recommendation on a student's record on SPARC.

The Disability Team at the University of Leeds does not mandate what these adjustments will be, as they vary in different clinical settings and contexts. They only ask that the School discuss placements with students and agree adjustments. These adjustments are then communicated to placements via a Health Passport.

Information about what adjustments a student may require will be contained on their Health Passport. Adjustments that have been recommended by Occupational Health will be highlighted.

### **What is a Health Passport?**

A [Health Passport](#) is an editable health passport has been designed for individuals working in the NHS with a disability, long term health condition, mental health issue or learning disability/difficulty.

It allows individuals to easily record information about their condition, any reasonable adjustments they may benefit from and any difficulties they face.

When we are informed that a student may require placement adjustments by Disability Services, students are encouraged to complete a Health Passport in collaboration with a Student Support Officer, with references to their disability support summary sheet and/or occupational health report.

Students are encouraged to contact their placement to discuss what adjustments may be possible within the clinical setting.

Students are informed that some adjustments may not be possible depending on the placement setting and/or requirements of the placement. If a requested adjustment is not possible, you

should consider what else can be done instead to reduce barriers experienced by the student and support them to fully access all aspect of the placement.

Students are told to share this with their placement prior to their arrival on placement. Some students may also carry it with them to share with staff they meet.

### **What to do when you are told a student has placement adjustments**

When you receive notification that a student has a recommendation for placement adjustments via SPARC, a conversation should be initiated with the student about what adjustments they may require. This may involve asking for a student to share their Health Passport with you.

Ideally, this would occur prior to the student starting on placement. This could be in the form of an email:

‘Dear student,

We look forward to welcoming you on placement.

We have been informed that you may require placement adjustments. I’d be grateful if you could let me know what adjustments you may require and/or share your Health Passport. If it would be helpful to have a conversation about this placement, any accessibility issues, and how we can best support you within this setting, please let me know.’

It is also a good idea to let students know who they can talk to about their adjustments whilst on placement. Reasonable adjustments by nature can involve trial and error, to see if they do reduce barriers for the student. Changes may be needed during the course of the placement.

Do bear in mind that students may need support to navigate placements as a disabled person. They are likely to encounter new challenges in new environments, and may not always know what adjustments will work. We encourage a spirit of collaboration and learning, so students develop their confidence and understanding of disability support in the workplace, and to promote inclusion and access for all.

Students may reach out to you prior to you contacting them.

### **Who can see a student’s Health Passport?**

The student should be informed which staff members will see their Health Passport. Some students may request their Health Passport to be shared with staff involved in their teaching, but they are told they will likely encounter staff who have not seen it. They are encouraged to carry a copy of it so that they can share themselves.

### **Dealing with declarations**

Students may inform you of support needs that the School is not aware of.

If this happens, please encourage students to share this information with the School and/or Disability Services. You can get permission from the student to share this on their behalf – if so, please email us at [medicinstudentssupport@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:medicinstudentssupport@leeds.ac.uk) and copy the student in.

However, a student not being formally registered with Disability Services or not having informed the School about a support need should not prevent them from receiving placement adjustments.

If you are unsure on how to handle a declaration or what to do next, please contact [medicinstudentsupport@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:medicinstudentsupport@leeds.ac.uk) and speak to one of our Student Support Officers for advice.

### **Examples of reasonable adjustments**

Some examples you may wish to discuss with the student are:

- Flexible working arrangements, within the requirements of the placement
- Time off for assessment, treatment, or counselling
- Adjustments to premises to enhance access
- Acquiring or modifying equipment
- Providing additional training, supervision, or mentoring
- Allowing extra breaks

**Please note this is not an exhaustive list.** The person who knows best what adjustments will be suitable for them is likely to be the student.

Clinicians and placement teams can provide information about what is reasonable for the setting. We recognise that the clinical environment is complex and there may be times when it is not possible to offer certain adjustments or support to a student based on certain competencies they need to meet, or the limits of the environment that they are in.

For example, we understand and acknowledge that it is not possible to always offer flexible start times to students who may have a condition that is worse in the mornings, due to things like ward rounds, handovers, and surgery lists. However, if there are things that can be done to alleviate pressure on these student in the mornings, or temporarily whilst they adjust their medication or treatment, then you should do them.

**The purpose of adjustments is to reduce barriers to learning**, and to enable students to complete the full remit of their course.

A collaborative approach to adjustments will allow the student to be supported.

### **Additional support**

Some students will not require additional support once they are familiar with a placement, following support in the early days to build up familiarity and confidence

However, there will always be some students who need additional guidance. As a university, we must provide additional guidance when needed to reduce barriers, case-by-case.

**We encourage you to get in touch with the Student Support Team ([medicinstudentsupport@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:medicinstudentsupport@leeds.ac.uk)) to discuss any student if you are unsure on how to support them.**