



Collaborating on student support: e-learning for HE staff to support disabled students

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Session outline

About Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY)

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E-learning pilot and launch

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About Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY)

GHWY: 13 Higher Education (HE) providers that collaborate to reduce inequalities in access to and success in HE

Focus: West Yorkshire

Priorities for our work:

- Under-represented groups
- Supporting informed choices
- Collaboration to develop our practice
- Evaluative and evidence-based practice

Context of disabled students in HE

- Growth in disabled students in recent years
- Lower satisfaction and sense of belonging
- Educational outcomes continue to be poorer than for non-disabled students
- GHWY commissioned a report by Advance HE that looked into disabled learners' HE transitions and student experiences. One of barriers it identified was the administrative burden of getting support put into place at HE



Background to the e-learning

- Agreed output from GHWY's Disabled Students Network – proactive support and inclusivity
- E-learning is a 'follow on' from collaborative Disabled Learners Transition Pack for HE
- Recognised need to educate HE staff and so underpinned by inclusive curriculum theory
- E-learning builds on success of GHWY's course for HE staff to support care-experienced and estranged students

Good practice: partnership working



- Used economies of scale - no individual provider had the capacity to produce the training alone
- Example of good practice - encourages staff to collaborate with disability teams to overcome the barriers disabled students can face in HE
- Greater reach as training can be jointly communicated by 13 HE providers
- Adopted a co-creation approach
- Fills a gap in knowledge - disability training tends not be included in mandatory training for HE staff



Design and content of e-learning

- Decided at an early stage that the course should cover disability in general
- Conscious of making content applicable to as many disabilities as possible, rather than focusing on specific conditions
- Course modules were all approved by Disability Network Members
 - Network Members also given regular updates during course design

Course content overview

- Course has eight modules:
 - Introduction to course
 - What do we mean by disability
 - Transition from FE to HE
 - Impact of disability on access and success
 - Support from HE providers
 - How you as a HE staff member can help
 - Further information
 - About GHWY and references



Course design

- Course takes approximately 45 minutes to complete
 - Does not have to be finished in one sitting
 - Does not have to be finished in linear order
- Use of student voice throughout with videos and quotes
 - All videos captioned for accessibility
- Active learning encouraged with quizzes and scenarios
- Embedded course within GHWY website to keep costs down when working within limited budget

Accessible design

- Input received from Disability Services, University of Leeds
- Lessons learned from e-learning for HE staff to support care-experienced and estranged students:
 - Designed with accessibility in mind
 - Reduced number of mouse clicks needed to progress through course
 - Off-white background used throughout
 - Full course, including images, can be accessed by a screen reader

E-learning pilot

- August 2024: E-learning piloted with staff based in our 13 HE providers
- Feedback mostly positive:
 - Tone of voice correct
 - Contains useful information
 - A beneficial resource for staff
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - More interactive elements
 - Information about specific disabilities
 - Update images
- September 2024: Reviewed and implemented pilot feedback, where appropriate

Example of student voice

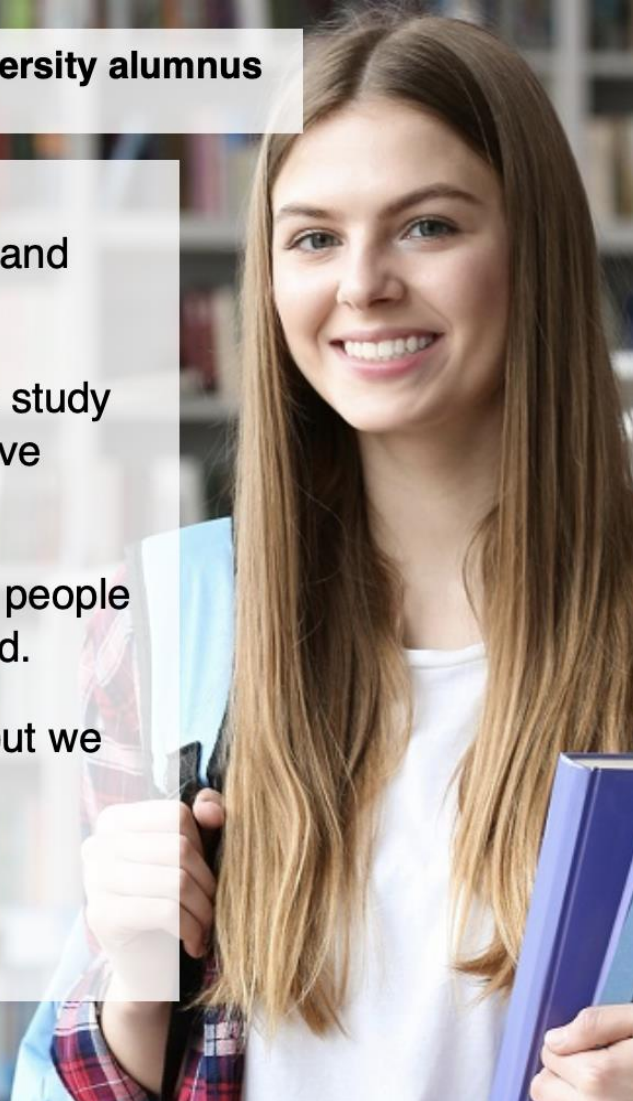
Learner voice: Hannah Buckle, Leeds Beckett University alumnus

“I am categorised as a disabled learner and received support for my dyslexia, dyspraxia and anxiety whilst at university.

“Support during university took the form of a study skills mentor, a specialist mentor and assistive technology.

“How the same disability can affect different people means tailoring support is not straightforward.

“My brother and myself are both dyspraxic but we have very different ‘symptoms’ of it.”



Example of interactive element

Test your knowledge

E-learning for HE staff to understand and support disabled students > Test your knowledge

IN PROGRESS

The Equality Act recognises disability as a legal, protected characteristic. What year did it come into force?

2012

2010

2008

Check





E-learning soft launch

- Given soft launch on 24 October 2024 following the pilot
- Shared via internal communication channels, via our 13 HE providers, and key stakeholders
- Blog featured on UCAS website
- Blog featured on NEON website
- Promoting at national conferences

Disabled e-learning: early analytics

- Course free but participants need to enroll to access it
 - This allows us to gather data for evaluation purposes
- Pre- and post-course evaluation survey (non-mandatory)
- Following the official launch, over 100 people have enrolled on the course (as of 6 October 2025)
 - More than half have completed the course
- On average taking around 36.5 minutes to complete
 - 6 people completed the course over a couple of days

Disabled e-learning: qualitative feedback

- "This was really helpful in understanding how to let the learner guide me when offering support."
- "Very comprehensive and clear. Learned about several options that I can now bring into my work being an initial point of contact for students who may have additional needs."
- "Excellent course. It was easy to follow and did not overwhelm me with complex information. I really liked the knowledge checks throughout."
- "It is easy to schedule in your own time."

I have good understanding of the experiences of disabled students in HE

2. I have a good understanding of the experiences of disabled students in HE



2. I have a good understanding of the experiences of disabled students in HE



I feel confident that I can effectively support disabled students studying in HE

6. I feel confident that I can effectively support disabled students studying in HE



6. I feel confident that I can effectively support disabled students studying in HE



Next steps

For GHWY:

- Continue to disseminate the e-learning and ongoing evaluation
- Annual review of the e-learning to ensure it remains up to date
- Keep our 13 HE providers updated on developments
 - Encourage members to continue promoting the e-learning

For the audience:

- [Complete the e-learning](#) including evaluation and share widely
- Look into our other resources to help support disabled students ([Transition Pack](#) and the [One in Five podcast](#))

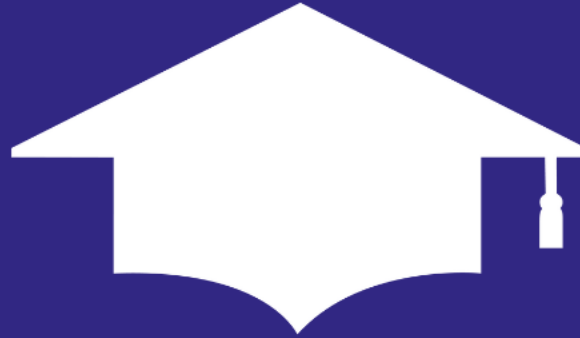


Thank you! Any questions?

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West Yorkshire

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University of
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Inspiring global professionals

