# NHS Interview Guidance

## Preparation

Conducting a good interview is important, and to do so you need to **prepare**. Preparation doesn't mean learning a script, but considering & reflecting in advance so you have less to do in the moment.

We suggest that you:

- Study the Trust **PROUD** Values.
- Study the Job Duties.
- Study the Person Specification.

If you've been shortlisted for an interview, you are probably a suitable candidate on paper. The interview is about giving them a chance to get to know you, envisage how you will fit into their team, understand how you work and how your experience & skills will help you in the job.

Just as you will have done in your application, it's important to **reflect on what makes you great for this job.**

Other ways to prepare could include:

1. **Consider potential questions** you might be asked – these could be generic (see our Generic Interview Questions guidance document for some examples), or more specific to your role.
2. Once you've thought about the questions you could be asked, **reflect on what answers you could give including examples**. It's wise to practice speaking these answers aloud too, and give yourself a chance to pull your mental notes into clear sentences.
3. **Research the organisation** and/or the specific department/team you'll be working in. What do you like about it? What motivated you to apply for the role?
4. **Research the industry**, e.g. Healthcare – what are the similarities/differences to other industries you've worked in? Why does it interest you?
5. **Anticipate any reservations** the interviewer may have about you; perhaps you don't have all the essential/desirable criteria from the person specification, or you may be aware of parts of the job role that would be challenging for you. This exercise should be a positive one – think about how you might reassure the interviewer by giving examples of why you *are* a good choice.
6. **Prepare any questions** you might have for the interviewer. Questions are good! They show that you are interested and have taken the process seriously. They demonstrate the research you've done and any subsequent knowledge you have or want to have. Check out our guide on Example Questions to Ask at Interview if you're unsure.
7. If you can, ask a friend, colleague, employment advisor or coach to **practice** with you. As a last resort, practicing aloud by yourself, and recording yourself too, can be an alternative exercise. It can be really useful to **verbalise answers and get feedback** before heading in for the 'real thing'.
8. If your interview is on MS Teams, then do a trial run with someone to make sure you have the right set up and can **avoid any technical difficulties**.
9. If it's in person, check you have appropriate **interview-wear** in advance!

Most of our interviews are designed to assess you in two ways:

- ➢ How do your personal values, beliefs and behaviours fit in with those of the hospital?
- ➢ How competent are you for the role?

We'll go into these areas in more details below.

## Values

Your Interviewer will likely ask you about your values, but also give hypothetical situations and ask you to explain how you might react. This helps them to understand how well you'd fit in with the values of the trust.

Reflect on each of the PROUD values, considering how you will demonstrate each in an interview for your chosen role:

- **Patients First** – even if you are not working directly with patients, how will your actions contribute towards better patient experience? When have you previously put customers/patients first / what example would highlight your personal affinity with this value?
- **Respectful** – why is this important to the job in question? Who would you endeavour to show respect to? When have you been respectful in the past? How could you show this without even speaking about respect?
- **Ownership** – we are looking for employees who can take responsibility for their actions, their work, even their mistakes. This might be about being transparent & honest, about demonstrating independence and an understanding of the importance of your work. Avoiding making excuses or passing blame. Ownership occurs in many ways beyond just in work; when have you taken responsibility for something that has happened or a task you were asked to do?
- **Unity** – to balance the idea of being independently responsible, we are also looking for individuals who can work well in a team or work towards a common goal. Even if the job you're applying for is quite independent, you will still be part of a team and a department, and so unity is about sharing your skills, learnings, successes and being a team player; stepping in to support the team at a time in need, for example.
- **Delivery** – in any role, its important that you can deliver upon the key duties & responsibilities, in an effective way. How can you instil confidence in your interviewer that you can and will deliver on what you say you will?

## Competencies

Just like when writing your application, you should consider your **strengths, skills & experiences**. These questions can help (if you've answered these in your application preparation, review your answers):

1) Reflect on a moment when you felt **proud** of yourself. What did you do to make you feel proud?
2) Consider a time when you **learned** something. What skills did you use to learn this?
3) Think about a time when you **helped, supported or taught** someone something. How did you work with this person effectively?
4) Recall a time when you received **positive feedback** about something. What personal attributes did you display to receive this praise?

**All your answers to these questions are your strengths. Perhaps you can now think about other strengths that you have.**

## What makes a good interview?

Think about the **content (what you say), verbal communication (how you say it), non-verbal communication (cues or signals conveyed through means other than talking) & physical presentation (how you appear)** in an interview. What qualities can you think of that you would like to demonstrate in your interview?

Fill in the table (overleaf) with some of your ideas or make a list in your own preparation notes.

| Content | Verbal Communication | Non-Verbal Communication | Presentation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Being polite** | **Confident tone** | **Smiling** | **Professionally dressed** |
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Highlight the factors you believe will be the most challenging for you. You may find it helpful to speak to someone about these, it could be a job coach/advisor or your current manager or an employability specialist. If in doubt, reach out to us at sth.employability@nhs.net and we will support you.

Our final **top tips** are:

1) **Review your application and all the information provided about the job.** You will likely have applied to the job at least 2 weeks before your interview, and it's understandable if it's no longer fresh in your mind, so read through everything again.
2) **Don't learn a script.** It's often obvious if someone isn't answering in their own words or in an organic way; there's a difference between preparing points you could mention and learning answers word for word. Especially as you can never guarantee what you'll be asked!
3) Be **confident** in the language you use. Try to avoid 'might' and 'could', instead use 'will' and 'can', for example. Even if there are a few areas you are less sure of than others, be assertive and stay positive. Avoid talking about what you can't do and focus instead on what you are good at.
4) Refer to the **Person Specification & Job Role** to emphasise how you meet the criteria and show your understanding of the role.
5) Remember to back up each point with a **specific example** that shows when you have demonstrated this or the relevant qualifications you have.

*As a Disability Confident employer, we can recommend additional support for those with a learning or physical disability or hands-on interview advice.*

**We are here to help. Contact us on sth.employability@nhs.net if you think you could benefit from some additional guidance or support.**