

Consultant interview video

Interviews with **Dr Helen Goodyear** – Head of School of Paediatrics and Associate Postgraduate Dean for LTFT training, Careers and Professional Support, HEWM.

Dr Alex Bailey - Consultant Psychiatrist for Westminster Community Mental Health Team and **Dr Hannah Skene** – Consultant in Acute Internal Medicine for Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Dr Helen Goodyear: Having a consultant interview is very different. There could be fifteen people sitting there ...that's quite formidable. It makes you nervous. You don't want to be like a rabbit in front of the headlights. This is a panel interview and the average length is forty-five minutes. You have got to be scoring marks the whole time and you can't afford to score a zero in any question. They will have read your application form and CV if one has been provided. So they do know your background details and your general experience. They are looking for you to bring out desirable skills; what extra have you got to offer the department?

Dr Hannah Skene: My advice to trainees is to get involved in committee work as a trainee. Invite yourself to the meetings where service development is being discussed, where performance is being discussed, where finance is being discussed and how to get a service up and running. That's very valuable experience and you'll certainly find when applying for consultant jobs you'll have far better insight into the type of answer and the experience needed for the job.

Dr Helen Goodyear: They are looking at your communications skills. It's acknowledged that interviews are stressful situations. So how do you communicate under stress? The best candidates will ensure that everybody on the panel feels that you're talking to them because it's the entire panel that is scoring you. You can't finish your training and expect to walk into a job; you have to have started that preparation at least a couple of years beforehand.

Dr Alex Bailey: I don't think you can underestimate how much preparation you need to do for that interview. Make sure you go and meet all of the people that are involved in the job because that stands you in fantastic stead. I met with our chief executive, medical director, all of the service directors - that's really important. And I think have an understanding of your job, and more than just the clinical aspects of it.

Dr Helen Goodyear: You need to be reading, particularly over the last year, all of the documents that come out about the NHS and particularly about your specialty. You shouldn't walk into a consultant interview without having practiced your interview skills. Get practice with consultants in your department. If you can do a good interview with a consultant you know then walking into the interview room it will seem much easier. A successful candidate will stand out because they have been able to succinctly tell you about their experience and the skills they've got. They've highlighted those desirable skills, they are knowledgeable, they've got maturity of thought and they are really able to communicate well.

If you have done your preparation then you are going to feel a lot more confident. Focus on the questions in the knowledge that you have prepared, you've thought about it - in order to perform at your best.