



Dear colleagues

We are finally nearing the end of a very tough term, full of speculation and uncertainty and finished off with a bout of extreme weather; I am quite sure you are all ready for some rest, relaxation and repast. In keeping with the festive season, we have tried to make this a 'good news' bulletin – nothing like a challenge at the end of the year!

This story was first blogged, then recounted in the Guardian weekend; the author, Gareth Edwards, describes himself as a 'big stocky bloke with a shaven head'. It takes place during a tube strike at a busy bus-stop. A well-dressed business man cuts into the queue *behind* Edwards, and ignores all protestations. Edwards turns to the elderly woman behind the queue jumper and asks if she would like to go ahead of him. She accepts and he asks the person behind her the same question, and the next and the next, until the whole queue has moved ahead of him and the now seething queue jumper. As the bus pulls up, there is a shout from the front of the queue – the elderly woman calling, 'Young man, do you want to go in front of me?'

I like this story, because it shows that we can all take a stand and make a difference, however small. I am sure many of us feel that influencing the big picture is a real challenge, but it is important to remember that every day, specialist college staff make a difference to the lives of learners and their families. Whilst it is crucial to be aware of national developments, initiatives and strategies, it is equally vital to keep on doing the day job and doing it really well. Hopefully that way our learners will be at the front of the queue when it comes to making the best of the opportunities that are available.

I hope you are all able to indulge a little in whatever takes your fancy over the holiday, be it long walks, good food, lie-ins, late nights or just not doing much at all!

Season's greetings and a peaceful new year

Best wishes

Alison

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## **Projects that have received LSIS flexibility and Innovation funding in round 4, October 2010**

### **Learning difficulties and disabilities**

#### **CETT for Inclusive Learning (Northumbria University) - Enabling organisations to develop the learner voice**

A Quality Assured CPD programme for teachers/learner support assistants of learners with LDD, to help them to: capture the learner voice through creating learning profiles; enhance quality improvement through flip video; and use 'Theatre for Change' as an educational tool.

#### **Doncaster College for the Deaf (DCD) - Mi-Sign: Mobile Info - Signs Images Glossary Network - the searchable, sign language dictionary with a difference!**

We will design and create an application (an app) that identifies common vocational British Sign Language (BSL) signs. In addition to acting as a learning and teaching tool, the app will assist BSL users to communicate in both an educational and vocational environment.

#### **Linkage College - To improve e-safety for all learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities**

This is a collaborative project that aims to ensure that e-safety is embedded in organisations working within the LLDD sector. It will produce training for staff, guidance for parents and involve learners in the production of support and guidance materials that they will feel comfortable accessing.

#### **National Star College - Gloucestershire Accessibility Support Service (GASS)**

To improve autonomy for people with disabilities (and consequently improve work, living and learning outcomes) through a sustainable assistive and enabling technology support service in Gloucestershire.

#### **Orchard Hill College - Microsoft Surface PMLD Learner Journey and E-Portfolio Project**

To use revolutionary multi-user interactive technology to enable our learners to access and create a digital learner journey and e-portfolio. Using real world actions, virtually no keyboard or mouse interaction will be needed. Improved access to the Curriculum will promote enhanced equality of opportunity throughout the College.

### **E-learning**

#### **West Berkshire Training Consortium - Flexible and Adaptable Safeguarding e-Learning Resources for Work Place Learners**

The health, on-line safety and economic and social well-being of young and vulnerable adults is a local and national strategic priority. This project takes a collaborative approach to creating a bank of fully editable safeguarding e-learning modules, with a specific emphasis on supporting learners in the workplace.

### **Learner support and progression**

#### **Derby College - Derby College Virtual Progression to Employment Service**

The Derby College Virtual Progression to Employment Service will use technology to create an on-line service providing disabled students with all the tools, skills, advice and support they need to gain sustained employment.

Full list of projects here: <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=308225>

### **Other ISC projects in previous funding rounds**

#### **Round 3 projects July 2010**

##### **Beaumont College - Replicating the Assistive Technologist**

Disseminating a role and service profile and case studies of innovative and low cost solutions and supporting their replication by other providers

#### **Round 2 projects March 2010**

##### **Freeman College - assessment of 14-19 year old learners with complex learning difficulties**

Develop and implement innovative assessment of 14-19 year old learners with very complex and challenging learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are vulnerable and/or at risk, through using Practical Skills Therapeutic approaches that informs and remodels assessment practices in Sheffield LA leading to appropriate local provision being developed and commissioned.

### **Hereward College - emotional, social and cognitive resiliency in post-16 SEN population**

Hereward have developed social, emotional development resources which support the emotional literacy and functioning of learners. This project would formalise current practice by developing a curriculum around emotional, social and cognitive resiliency with an associated staff training programme that can be made available to 16-25 providers for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Round 1 projects December 2009**

#### **The Royal National College for the Blind - "The Library" – You Tube Studio**

Development of a YouTube TV studio to record live vision and sound to provide a work based learning environment for music and media technology students as well as providing a facility for performing arts students and the wider community. The project will also provide opportunities for work placements and the development of e-portfolios of performance skills and web based material.

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### **RSA Animate - Changing Education Paradigms**

Thanks to Alexis at Henshaws for passing me this link below to a very interesting and relevant video – well worth a look.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcdGpL4U>

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### **The Role of Special Schools within 'Inclusive' Education**

This half day seminar will discuss the role of Special Schools within the new political agenda and how they fit within the education landscape for 2011. It will also discuss new and innovative ways in which a special school can work with schools and local authorities to support students in a mainstream setting, providing creative and flexible solutions to meet the needs of an individual learner and breaking down the barriers between 'inclusive' and 'special' provision.

#### **Keynote Speaker:**

Gary O'Donoghue – BBC Political Correspondent

**When & Where:** Thursday 17th February 2011

10:00am-1:15pm - Seminar

1:15pm-2:00pm - Lunch

2:00pm - Optional tour of the college (approx 45 minutes)

**Who Should Attend:** Local Authorities, Connexions Services, Schools, Colleges, Teachers and Teaching Assistants. Parents of visually impaired students may also find it useful.

**Cost:** £20.00 per delegate. Free of charge for parents of visually impaired students.

#### **How to Book:**

Book on-line at [www.newcollegeworcester.co.uk](http://www.newcollegeworcester.co.uk)

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### **The Matrix Standard**

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is in the process of procuring the services of an organisation to manage and develop the Matrix Standard. They aim to have a new provider in place by January 2011. The new provider will start to deliver the assessment and accreditation service from January but will need to address the backlog of accreditations as well as dealing with new requests for assessment. The new provider will also be responsible for trialling the revised Matrix standard. Following the trials they will agree a transition plan for implementing the revised standard with both BIS and the Skills Funding Agency.

The Skills Funding Agency has a contractual requirement that Information Advice and Guidance must be delivered to the Matrix Standard and it is incumbent on contractors to either hold the

Matrix Standard, be working towards achieving it or at the very least commit to start the accreditation process within six months of any contract being signed. Therefore whilst BIS's procurement process is ongoing and until the new provider is operational the Skills Funding Agency has made the following decisions:

- Any organisation whose Matrix Standard accreditation is due for renewal will have this timeline extended until 1 June 2011.
- Any organisation which was in the process of undergoing assessment for accreditation will have this timeline extended until 1 June 2011.
- Any organisation which had committed to start the accreditation process within six months of contracts being signed will have this timeline extended until 1 June 2011.
- Any organisation which had not committed to start but was due to commit will have this timeline extended until 1 June 2011.

This allows time for BIS to appoint a new service provider and for them then to be in a position to be fully operational.

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### **Theresa May announces scrapping of the socio-economic duty**

Home secretary and minister for women and equality, Theresa May, has announced that the socio-economic duty, which was created as part of the 2010 Equality Act, will be scrapped. The duty stated that central departments and key public services must *'when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage'*.

The announcement came as the Home Secretary outlined a *'new approach to equalities'* that *'rejects'* political correctness and social engineering. The home secretary announced plans to tackle inequality *'by treating people as individuals rather than labelling them in groups'*, and ending the top-down approach that saw Whitehall trying to impose equality from above.

The speech also included an announcement that that a measure in the Freedom Bill will allow people who were prosecuted for having consensual gay sex at a time when this was illegal to apply to have their convictions deleted from criminal records.

Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equality Theresa May said *'look at the socio-economic duty. In reality, it would have been just another bureaucratic box to be ticked. It would have meant more time filling in forms and less time focusing on policies that will make a real difference to people's life chances. We need to move away from this old approach and make equalities work for everyone. We need equalities policy to work with the grain of human nature, not against it. Legislation on its own is not enough. Government will no longer dictate how people should behave. Instead we will put in place an architecture to support business and wider society to do the right thing.'*

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### **Some early Christmas Cracker jokes**

The teacher called on Johnny to go to the map and point out where America is.

Johnny looked the map over, found America, and proudly said, "Here it is, right here!"

"Very good, Johnny," the teacher said. "Now, class, can you tell me who discovered America?"

"Johnny!" the students shouted.

Johnny's English teacher was a perfectionist and demanded the very best of his pupils. So it was to be expected that he would get furious when Johnny handed in a poor paper.

"This is the worst essay it has ever been my misfortune to read," ranted the teacher. "It has too many mistakes. I can't understand how one person would have made all these mistakes."

"One person didn't," replied Little Johnny defensively - "My father helped me."

Johnny was late getting to school.

"Johnny, you're late," scolded the teacher.

"It's not my fault, Miss Jones," Johnny replied. "It's because of the sign."

"What sign?" the teacher asked.

"The one that says, 'School Ahead, Go Slow'. That's what I did," said Johnny.

Johnny comes home from his first day at school.

His Mother asks, "Well, what did you learn today?"

Johnny replies, "Not enough. They want me to go back tomorrow."

## Natspec endorsements

Events or consultants advertised in this bulletin are not necessarily endorsed by Natspec. Individual colleges or staff who are asked to present on behalf of Natspec, please check with a member of the Board of Directors before committing yourself to an event.

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## Natspec website

Any problems accessing the Principal's forum contact Julian: [webmaster@jewelion.com](mailto:webmaster@jewelion.com)

Please let us have any news, events or job vacancies that you want placing on the website.

[www.natspec.org.uk](http://www.natspec.org.uk)

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## Natspec Directory

To request a Natspec directory please contact:

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*Andrew Harris*

*December 2010*

*As this the last Natspec bulletin for 2010 can I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a relaxing New Year. Enjoy the break, I am sure you deserve it.*

