



An ABC of 2011

Dear colleagues

I thought I'd reflect on the year alphabetically, though it's not very festive I'm afraid - with one exception!

Apprenticeships

NAO (and **N**atspec of course)

Bursaries

Ofsted survey

Consultations

Pathfinders

DfE & **D**ata

Q&**A**s; **Q**uality

ELS & **E**mployment

Return of **R**ARPA!

Foundation learning

Specialism

Green paper

Technology

Healthy FE

UK Skills

ILP, **I**LR, **I**LS

VfM

Job coaching

Wolf review

Key issues

Xcellence

Localism & **L**earner voice

YPLA - but not for much longer

Merry Christmas

Zip files

Wishing you all a very peaceful Christmas break and all good wishes for 2012

Alison



Natspec annual conference May 15th and 16th 2012

Just a reminder that the annual conference will be in Birmingham on May 15th and 16th next year, with the theme of **Planning for Excellence and Sustainability**. As ever, there will be a packed programme of keynote speakers, workshops and networking opportunities. This year there will be an early bird booking option. The booking site goes live early in January and further details will be available in the New Year.

Innovative technology use in ISCs

A new report from JISC TechDis demonstrates the positive impact of small grants to support innovative use of technology. The report is available via the link below. The report concludes that: 'Relatively modest amounts of funding, carefully disbursed and with appropriate support in place, can result in disproportionately effective outcomes and developments - in this case in the use of technology to drive forward the embedding of inclusive practice in higher education institutions and Independent Specialist Colleges'.

<http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/userneeds/eiprrp/changingteachingpractice/smallfocusedprojects>

The government has announced its first **Transgender Equality Action Plan**, see:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/news/transgender-action-plan>

The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) applauds the Plan. It contains a welcome range of commitments from major government departments to improve the lives of trans people. The plan is built upon a wide ranging consultation, during which the trans community developed a statement of need that has informed the government's work, see:

http://gires.org.uk/tranzwiki/index.php/Trans_Community_Statement_of_Need

Implementing the government's first plan will deliver some significant benefits for trans people, for instance in (a) developing a new NHS Commissioning System for gender identity services that will ensure increased patient choice and more cost effective treatment plans and (b) aggravate sentences for any offence motivated by hostility towards the victim on grounds of being transgender. Trans people recognise that there is much more to do and will continue their productive relationship with the Government Equalities Office, not only to assess how well the plan is working but also to identify fresh initiatives for the government to consider.

info@gires.org.uk
www.gires.org.uk

New Research on Employment Supports for Disabled People

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) have been granted funding from the National Institute for Health Research's School of Social Care Research (SSCR) to carry out a two year study into the cost effectiveness of different models of employment support for disabled people, including those with mental health problems.

A recent review carried out by NDTi shows that evidence around employment support is currently very patchy, especially looking across different client groups. Through addressing this research gap we hope to enable people who commission employment support to make more informed choices and decisions.

NDTi Chief Executive Rob Greig said: "Whilst there is good evidence that some types of employment support such as IPS and supported employment are more effective than others,

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evidence on value for money and likely outcomes from investment in different approaches is limited and certainly not shared and applied across client groups. This research aims to help fill those gaps and so enable commissioners to better understand how to get best value from the money they spend on employment services"

The study will focus on the following questions:

1. What is the 'value for money' impact of current employment supports, in terms of people consequently achieving paid work?
2. How does that 'value for money' impact vary between different models of employment support? Do they result in different outcomes?
3. How is the 'value for money' impact affected by different approaches to implementing local employment strategies?

As part of this we will also look at the influence of (and links between) various factors, such as types of work, hours worked, type of disability, age/ different life stages of people needing support etc.

The research will involve national scale data collection as well as in-depth research and analysis with a sample of around 12 local authorities. The findings will generate a wide range of evidence-based materials that will help local authorities plan, buy and deliver more effective employment support for disabled people. It will conclude with an action learning programme to help authorities implement the findings.

For more details please visit the following website:

<http://www.ndti.org.uk/major-projects/employment-support-for-disabled-people/>

or contact Anita Wilkins at NDTi on 01202 471 423 / anita.wilkins@ndti.org.uk

Supporting people with learning disabilities who are affected by a relative or friend with cancer

<http://www.ldhealthnetwork.org.uk/docs/canc.pdf>

A research study commissioned by Macmillan Cancer Support

The Autism Act 2009: developing specialist skills in autism practice

<http://mentalhealthpractice.rcnpublishing.co.uk/supplements/booklets-and-guides/autism/>

This guide will explore how services might anticipate the needs of people with autism. Its aims are to:

Explore an understanding of autism in adulthood (or transition to adulthood) that helps practitioners to provide a positive experience for people with autism seeking to access services in health and social care.

Review how this knowledge might help to identify and plan to meet the needs of adults with autism, while making 'reasonable adjustments' to the services to enable this to occur.

Provide a clear pathway for the development of leaders in the field of autism in health and social care who will 'champion' the implementation of the Autism Act 2009.

Literacy & Numeracy Conference Defining and Tackling the Challenge

Wednesday 21st March 2012, Birmingham City Centre
< 25% Off for All Bookings Before 13 January >

Keeping abreast of requirements and developments in teaching literacy, numeracy and related functional skills

The government's review of literacy and numeracy provision has stressed the need for a more rigorous approach to the teaching of basic skills to students leaving school and entering the workforce. This review is the result of the BIS "New Challenges, New Chances" consultation, and other recent reports such as Alison Wolf's "Review of vocational education"; "A world-class mathematics education for all our young people" led by Carole Vorderman and Tim Boswell's inquiry on adult literacy "Work, Society and Lifelong Literacy"

The government has indicated that Functional skills will replace Key Skills in August/September 2012, a policy which will place significant pressure on all learning providers to ensure that their staff are adequately trained to respond to this change. The government has recently announced that apprenticeship frameworks must include Maths and English achievement equivalent to a level 2 GCSE in English and Mathematics. Where this has not been achieved at school, the burden will fall on the wider FE sector. Meanwhile LSIS with awarding organisations are developing the new L3 subject specific "bridging qualifications" to develop the personal skills of teaching and training staff who will be delivering functional skills.

"Although there are excellent providers delivering high-quality literacy and numeracy provision, evidence indicates that the quality of provision across the sector is mixed. This must be addressed." (BIS New challenges, New chances review)

This one-day conference will focus on the current challenges facing teachers of literacy, numeracy, Functional English and Functional Maths and will give providers an opportunity to share ideas and practice in order to respond to this challenge. The conference will set the scene with input from respected professionals in this field, focused on policy, delivery and research findings. There will be a choice of four workshops in the morning. The afternoon will feature two further addresses, followed by a repeat of the workshop suite giving delegates a further opportunity to benefit from others' experiences.

[< View Conference Programme >](#)

Speakers

- **Conference Chair**

Professor Lorna Unwin

Chair in Vocational Education and Deputy Director of the ESRC-funded Research Centre, LLAKES, Institute of Education at the University of London

Welcome and Opening Remarks on: 'Building a secure platform: the role of literacy and numeracy in vocational education and training'

- **Helen Casey**
Executive Director, NRDC at the Institute of Education

'The continuing challenge on supporting literacy & numeracy in the wider FE Sector'
- **Paul Hambley**
Senior Policy Advisor, UK Qualifications and Skills Team, Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

'New and updated Teacher, Tutor and Trainer qualifications for the further education and skills sector'
- **Karen Adriaanse**
HMI National Adviser for Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and employability, Ofsted

'Latest Ofsted views on Adult literacy & numeracy'

[< View Full Speaker Information >](#)

Workshops

- **Organisational models for delivering functional skills**
- **How technology can play a greater role in supporting literacy and numeracy learning**
- **Good practice in teaching functional maths**
- **Good practice in teaching functional English**

[< View Full Workshop Information >](#)

Attendance

Practitioners and curriculum managers from:

- FE Colleges
- Skills learning providers
- Adult Education
- Awarding Bodies
- Universities - ITT, ITE and related staff
- Union representatives
- Other relevant Government Departments and Agencies

Attendance at this conference will provide an excellent opportunity to network and share best practice.

Fees, Discounts & Booking

Super Early Bird Fee - 25% Discount on Standard Fees

Book before 3.00pm on 13/01/2012:

£216 + VAT for a first delegate

£187 + VAT per head for second or subsequent delegates from the same organisation

£187 + VAT for small charities (turnover less than £1m)

Standard Fees

£289 + VAT for a first delegate

£249 + VAT per head for second delegates & subsequent from the same organisation

£249 + VAT for small charities (turnover less than £1m)

Group booking discounts are available for companies booking four or more delegates places. For group booking enquiries please contact conferences@national-training.co.uk

< Book Online Here > <http://www.national-training.com/events/bkg2/book.php?e=5392>

We accept card payments online as well as payment by account (invoice)

Structured assessment framework improves adherence to requirements of mental capacity act

The Mental Capacity Act has created a legal framework for those supporting people with learning disabilities making decisions about the way they live their lives. The Act provides safeguards for those people who may be unable to make decisions for themselves and sets out guidance for supporters.

The authors of this paper carried out an audit to assess the quality, thoroughness and completeness of making decisions for people with learning disabilities who lacked capacity in making specific decisions for themselves. The results of this first audit suggested that the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act were not always being followed appropriately.

The audit was then carried out a second time to using a checklist developed to reflect the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act.

The results showed that using the checklist enabled those involved to hold a clearly structured discussion regarding the decision-making process and also ensured that the documentation recording this process was complete. The authors suggest that the use of the checklist facilitated adherence to the Act and helped to establish better standards of clinical practice.

[Evaluation of a structured assessment framework to enable adherence to the requirements of Mental Capacity Act 2005](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2011.00675.x/full), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2011.00675.x/full>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2011.00675.x/pdf>

Ramasubramanian, L., et al., in, British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 39: 314–320.

This item from the LSIS website describes an initiative in which 3 ISCs have been engaged:

Turning up the volume on the learner voice: our groundbreaking d/Deaf training is in demand

LSIS's pioneering approach to raising greater awareness of the challenges facing d/Deaf* learners has attracted top-level interest. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Office for Disability Issues have all seized the opportunity to benefit from training sessions devised and delivered by d/Deaf learners themselves.

The workshops provide fresh perspectives on how to improve equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for this group of students. They are all the more powerful because they give a real demonstration of best practice in creating accessible and inclusive learning and working environments in which d/Deaf learners can participate fully. This innovative approach to training

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emerged from a hugely successful LSIS project, funded by the SFA, to develop a deeper understanding of the learning and skills needs of d/Deaf students.

One strand of the programme involved the delivery of an entirely learner-led bilingual conference. The aim of this learner voice event was to showcase effective solutions, to help the learners influence those with the power to take action, and to make a difference for all d/Deaf learners in future.

A group of eight d/Deaf students from colleges in Exeter, Doncaster and Margate - supported by their tutors, trained interpreters, and LSIS and SFA facilitators - worked on devising the conference. All the messages came entirely from the learners, echoing their concerns, thoughts and wishes. Held earlier this year and attended by around 100 managers and practitioners from across the country, the event included a performance which illustrated some of the isolation and frustration which d/Deaf students can face as they try to progress their education.

The response to the conference was so positive - and the sessions led by the learners were so engaging - that the SFA allocated extra funding to develop the approach further. As a result, LSIS has continued working with the students to develop and pilot training sessions which are learner – led, bi-lingual and interactive and provide a profound insight into the language and culture of British Sign Language users. The sessions take the key messages to a wider audience. Workshops have already been held for staff at the Office for Disability Issues and the SFA, with another planned for LSIS staff in December.

The BIS training will take place on January 27 2012. One session is for managers with a relevant policy overview and with line management responsibilities, while another session is for 'front-of-house' staff such as receptionists and security officers. The training so far has been well received, with many delegates saying they now have a dramatically different perspective on the way their policies, services and job roles impact on d/Deaf individuals.

The learners themselves have grown in confidence, developed crucial employability skills and engaged with practitioners and fellow students from across the country. They all receive certificates and records of achievement to recognise their contributions and the experience is especially valuable for those who would like to pursue a career in teaching or training.

LSIS now hopes to develop a core team of around a dozen d/Deaf learners to deliver the training which will be made available to FE and skills providers in the future. The possibility of extending the initiative into a sustainable social enterprise is also being explored.

**Natspec endorsements -
events, consultants or programmes 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.

Natspec website

Please remember to make full use of the information available on the Natspec website. In the presentations section, you will find a wide range of presentations and supporting information from recent Natspec events, and there are recent publications in that section too.

Situations Vacant

If you wish to advertise posts on the Natspec sits vac web page, please send them to Andrew Harris - andrew.harris@derwen.ac.uk , the cost is a mere £25.00 to cover admin. This service is only available to Natspec members.

Any problems accessing the Principal's forum contact Julian: webmaster@jewelion.com
Please let us have any news, events or job vacancies that you want placing on the website.

Natspec Directory

All member colleges/organisations should have received 25 copies of the Natspec Directory – if you have not yet received your copies please contact Dawn Williams at Derwen College – contact details below.

To request a Natspec directory please contact:

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0121 428 5050

allformats@qac.ac.uk

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Andrew Harris December 2011

