



Dear colleagues

We ended the year on a 'good news' bulletin and I'm going to start the New Year by attempting to stay on the same track. This is to reflect the fact that in spite of the challenges we face, ISCs are getting on with delivering a quality experience to their learners. Furthermore, member colleges are constantly seeking to improve performance, to find innovative solutions and to look for new opportunities for learners. There is plenty of evidence for this in these bulletins, which always contain success stories. In this bulletin, we have Linkage College as the 300th technology exemplar on the Excellence Gateway, and three ISCs, Doncaster, Exeter Royal Academy and Westgate all involved in work around the Equality Act and its impact on their learners. And many congratulations to Beaumont College and Ruskin Mill College, who have both been awarded LSIS Beacon Status.

Last month, I listed the ISCs in receipt of LSIS Flexibility and Innovation Funding. In fact ESPA is involved in the CETT work on learner voice, so another ISC joins that list. I have invited colleagues who have undertaken projects through this funding to showcase their work at the Natspec conference – 17th & 18th May in Birmingham – so that everyone will get a chance to benefit from their findings. Booking information for the annual conference will be circulated shortly, but please get the dates in your diary.

The other big piece of work that many of you are contributing to is the Enhancement of Learning Support project, which is reaching its final stages. The second round of regional events is underway, followed by two national dissemination conferences on March 8th in London and March 15th in Warrington. Please do go to the Natspec website <http://www.natspec.org.uk/enhancement-of-learning-support/> for further details of all the project activities. There are also lots of resources on the website and a blog for your input and ideas. We are especially keen to find examples of ways in which aspects of the project have begun to impact on practice, so if it's your thing, please blog away!

Finally, I'm delighted to tell you that Helen Sexton, Natspec's chair for the last few years and recently principal at National Star, was awarded the OBE in the New Year's honours. This is in recognition of her many years of commitment to innovative practice in the interests of learners with LDD, but I know Helen will agree that it is also an acknowledgement of the value of ISCs in the FE sector. (See article later in this bulletin.)

It will be a tough year, but keep up the good work – your learners need YOU!

Alison

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### Lifelong Learning UK news

#### SVUK 'How to...' events

There are a limited number of places at a brand-new series of hands-on, practical half-day events that will be tailored to delegates' specific needs. A number of ISCs have been involved in the development of the Equality Framework and have found it very valuable.

#### Use the Equality Framework

Min Rodriguez, Equality & Diversity Manager, LLUK  
24 February 2011 London  
15 March 2011 Leeds

#### Event fees:

£95 + VAT (£114)

#### Sign up now!

[Follow this link to sign up or get more information.](#)

*Association of National Specialist Colleges (NATSPEC), a company limited by guarantee.*

*Registered in England number 5908897.*

*Registered office: Derwen College, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 3JA*

**Many congratulations to Helen Sexton, former National Star College principal and chair of Natspec, who was awarded the OBE in the New Year's honours list**



**Local press article**

A teacher who educated disabled adults and children for three decades has been awarded the OBE in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Helen Sexton's inspirational leadership of the National Star College, near Cheltenham, resulted in the award for service to special needs education.

Tewkesbury MP Laurence Robertson last night paid tribute to the work of Helen, who stepped down from her post in the autumn. He said: "It's tremendous she has been recognised. Her work is so important to

people who are vulnerable and struggling.

"For someone to have campaigned and achieved so much is marvellous."

Last year Helen helped the college to launch the 'Be a Star for Star' campaign, supported by the Echo. The fundraising drive followed the shock withdrawal of £6 million from the Learning and Skills Council to pay for vital new facilities.

The campaign won the backing of celebrities, including Professor Stephen Hawking, and more than 5,000 people signed petitions lobbied for the decision to be reversed.

Speaking as she stepped down after 30 years at the college, Helen said: "'Star' will shine in my heart for ever and I will be a lifelong supporter. In all of the roles I've fulfilled, I've kept students at the forefront of my thinking and the best part of my job has been the time I've spent with them. The new buildings will transform the college, taking it into a new era where disabled young people and adults continue to flourish."

Cheltenham MP Martin Horwood praised her service to the college. He said: "She has seen National Star through extraordinary change and development with her calm and confident leadership."

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**Launching practical advice on using technology for learning!**

Lifelong Learning UK has published the results of an investigation into how technology is changing teaching and learning. Based on conversations with practitioners and academic research, the investigation has created a comprehensive picture of ICT use across the wider further education sector. The findings of this work include some practical advice for sector employers who can use it to support their staff to develop skills in using technology for learning.

You can access the findings in four ways via the Lifelong Learning UK website:

1. [A two-minute video](#)
2. [A ten-minute presentation \(which includes recommendations\)](#)
3. [A presentation summarising the literature review in 30 quotations](#)
4. [The full literature review.](#)

The research outlines the barriers professionals face in using technology in teaching and learning, evidences their need for support and training and demonstrates the value of informal conversations to support peer learning. Employers can help their staff use technology more effectively for learning by giving them a regular opportunity to talk with colleagues about the technologies they are using and what works and doesn't work - peer to peer support is shown in the research to be far more effective than formal training.

As a result of this research Lifelong Learning UK are working with the Association for Learning Technology to produce a website resource that will point teachers, tutors and trainers to 'tried and tested' technologies for use in learning. This resource will be a one-stop-shop for anyone who wants to get up to speed with technologies that have a genuine impact on learning and will be available from March 2011.

## JISC Techdis

### SBRI Assistive Technology Competitions

JISC Techdis is running two competitions on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, designed to promote independent learning. The JISC TechDis website provides links to information and documentation for organisations that may be interested in applying. Please go to this link to find out more <http://www.jiscstechdis.ac.uk/sbricompetitions> .

#### Competition 1

Making Waves - Gesture Communication System

Communication is very important; for most people effective communication is a learned skill, but communication is also a basic human right. This SBRI competition aims to develop technologies which will ensure that learners with communication difficulties can function effectively and independently.

#### Competition 2

Plain Sailing – Easy Navigable and Personalisable Digital Info

Digitisation has opened up access to a mass of information, but despite legislation, accessibility standards and guidelines, equality of access is still denied to millions of people. This SBRI competition aims to ensure that users can produce and access digital information independently in an effective and user friendly way.

The deadline for both competitions is: Noon 15th March 2011.

If you have any queries about the competitions please go to the website and submit via the form provided.

### JISC TechDis CMALT Independent Specialist Colleges' Initiative – some places still available!

The JISC TechDis Service sees it as a priority to build on previous LSC funding initiatives for ISCs. As part of our strategy the Service is keen to consolidate previous initiatives and support the development of staff in terms of their impact on learners. For this reason we are delighted to offer technicians and those working closely with In-Folio in ISCs the opportunity to engage in a new CMALT initiative. We have a good cohort (around 20) already so come along and join us!

CMALT is Certified Membership of the Association for Learning Technology, a national, cross-sector certification scheme run by ALT since 2005. Registering for CMALT involves the creation and peer assessment of a portfolio of evidence against a set of core and specialist options defined as central to the role of someone with learning technology as part of their professional role. Further Information on the initiative can be found at [http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/cmalt\\_prospectus\\_v5\\_2010.pdf](http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/cmalt_prospectus_v5_2010.pdf)

As part of the initiative eligible candidates are entitled to register for CMALT on payment of Certification Fee of £25 only, reduced from its usual £95.00. JISC Techdis will contribute the remainder.

The registration form is downloadable from [www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt.html](http://www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt.html)

For further information please contact [admin@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:admin@techdis.ac.uk)

### In-folio Special Interest Group

JISC TechDis is currently driving forward In-Folio (the multi-media accessible e-portfolio) following the installation of the servers. To aid this a Special Interest Group (SIG) has been set up. We thought it would be useful for you to know about the aims and objectives of the group.

#### Overview

The Specialist Interest Group is proposed as a sub group to the Specialist Advisory Group for the Independent Specialist Colleges

#### Membership

To be drawn from the Sector (Independent Specialist Colleges) and in particular those four colleges who were instigators with JISC TechDis with the Innovation Funding provided through the LSC e-learning Funded Programme. Together with appropriate representation of technical contractors and importantly the Rix Centre

#### Aims and Objectives

Principles of In-Folio development and dissemination.

In-Folio has been designed to be freely available; it is the intention to be licensed as open source software and will continue to be an Open Source Development. It has been designed for the use of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

#### The Special Interest Group

The In-Folio Special Interest Group will provide advice and support for the Support Programme of In-Folio – to include development, installation and management of the In-Folio accessible e-portfolio system across the Independent Specialist College sector.

The Group will also provide guidance for the formation and support of a community of practice to support In-Folio is to be developed by users and technical staff which will report to the group on a regular basis.

The Group will provide expertise on matters such as

- On-going refinement and development of the product
- Development of supporting documentation such as user guides.
- Opportunities for long term funding opportunities
- Dissemination of best practice exemplars
- Development of current and long term partnerships
- Demonstrable benefits of In-Folio to assist JISC TechDis in its negotiations with inspectorate and improvement agencies.
- Current developments in e-portfolio systems.

This group will be complemented in terms of evidence and information about practice via the JISC TechDis CMALT initiative – see other article.

If you have any queries about In-Folio please email [lisa@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:lisa@techdis.ac.uk)

### **Significant Progress at Inspection – the role of technology**

A Programme of workshops via Instant Presenter

JISC TechDis and Natspec are delighted to be running a programme of events which are held remotely via Instant Presenter. The programme consists of the workshop presentations featured at the Natspec/JISC TechDis conference on November 8th 2010 - Significant Progress at Inspection - the role of technology. The programme in this format enables extended sessions so there will be new information and opportunities for discussion. In other words if you were at the original presentations you are more than welcome to attend these as well!

In general the sessions are suitable for a wide audience. We really hope that this programme will enable participants who cannot easily attend a f2f meeting to engage with and share in all the good practice that is going on and was very well evidenced at the November 8th conference.

We have already run three sessions with two left to go which are:-

Friday 4th February 2011 – 3 to 4.30 pm. e-Safety (Dawn Green, Landmarks College; Julia Taylor, RSC SW; Sally Warr, Linkage College).

Friday 4th March 2011 - 3 to 4.30 pm. Transition (In-Folio – Matt Harrison, Portland College and Andy Minnion, Rix Centre).

Accessing Instant Presenter – the session will be open 15 minutes before the start of the workshop. Please test your sound when you enter the session.

To enter the meeting you will need to open the following URL in your web browser

<http://tinyurl.com/368wqqu>

The minimum requirements to attend fully interactive meetings using Instant Presenter is: -

Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari or Chrome. JavaScript and cookies enabled in the browser  
Broadband connection Webcam and microphone for Presenters and computer speakers for Attendees. Input from attendees will normally be limited to the chat pane due to bandwidth issues. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you require any further information or support please contact [admin@techdis.ac.uk](mailto:admin@techdis.ac.uk)

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### **Healthy FE**

Ian Booth, who represents Natspec on the healthy FE group, recommends this guidance from Bradford College – but suggests you don't print all 92 pages!

See link to pdf :

You can find out more about Bradford's work here:

<http://www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk/news-1/national-guide-to-a-clean-bill-of-health-for-education> . If

you are interested in pursuing Healthy FE recognition, all the information you need is on the Excellence Gateway here: <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=302142> , but note that applications must be submitted by March 31<sup>st</sup>.



Healthy\_College\_Boo  
k.pdf

## NIACE Training Courses

Find out more information about all NIACE courses and book your place on a public workshop by clicking on a course title from the schedule below.

For 20% discounts on group bookings (when booking groups of 5 people on to the same course), book and pay for 4 people on-line, and e-mail or fax the 5th application to the NIACE Events Team to claim your free place.

All NIACE courses:  
are developed using the latest research in the field;  
are delivered by trainers with at least 10 years' experience in the education and skills sector;  
provide excellent value for money and NIACE does not charge VAT on courses; and  
give you what you need to keep your CPD record up to date. All course participants receive a certificate of attendance with prompts for reflection.

[Demonstrating Impact for Quality using the five-stage process \(RARPA\) and the revised Common Inspection Framework \(CIF\)](#): Demonstrating quality improvement using RARPA  
Tuesday 15 February 2011, London

[Active Citizenship](#): Active Communities  
Thursday 17 February 2011, Manchester

[Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness](#): a one day Train the Trainer Course  
Thursday 24 February 2011, Leicester

[Active Citizenship](#): Active Communities  
Wednesday 2 March 2011, London

[Mental Health First Aid](#): a 2 day course  
Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 March 2011, Leicester

[Integrating employment, learning and skills for people who have experience of a mental health condition](#)  
Tuesday 22 March 2011, Leicester

For a full list of all NIACE courses please go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/services/training>

NIACE Events Team  
Tel: 0116 285 9661  
Fax: 0116 285 9670  
E-mail: [events@niace.org.uk](mailto:events@niace.org.uk)

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### Learner led Deaf Equality Event

The Skills Funding Agency and YPLA are supporting an event for colleges and providers which will be led by learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Doncaster College for the Deaf, Westgate College for Deaf People and Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education have all been involved in this work.

The event is organised by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and will take place on 17 March 2011 at Prospero House, London. It will explore how the rights of learners who are Deaf or hard of hearing under the new Equality Act can be translated into meaningful action to improve access and achievement.

The event is open to staff from across the sector and to learners themselves – there are 20 free learner places available. For further information or to book, please visit:

<http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Events//Pages/SignposttolearningAnequalchanceforDeaflearners.aspx>



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### 'Getting a Life' - the Transition Information Network's policy and practice e-bulletin

#### 'Don't limit mobility' report launched by charities

Twenty-seven organisations, including Mencap, Mind, RNIB and Leonard Cheshire have launched the report **Don't Limit Mobility** on the impact of the removal of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance from adults and children living in state-funded residential care.

#### Human rights and equality for children and young people - new resources for young people

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) has launched a series of **resources on human rights and equality law for children and young people**. The resources give general information about the rights of children and young people in relation to:

- The new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Children's rights when their parents split up
- How lawyers can help children and young people and how to find one.

The guides include information on how to make human rights complaints and list useful organisations that young people can go to for help and advice.

#### New communication guide launched

A guide to communicating with people with the most complex needs, including people with PMLD, has been written by Professor Juliet Goldbart. It was commissioned by Mencap, in partnership with the Department of Health, and forms part of the Valuing People Now work to make sure that people with the most complex needs are included. Download '**Communication and people with the most complex needs: what works and why this is essential**'.

#### Person Centred Approaches in Transition Planning

This new leaflet from the National Transition Support Team looks at what a person centred approach might look like for a disabled young person during the transition to adulthood. It sets out what personalisation and person centred approaches are, looks at practice development and sets out guidance which supports this way of working. It is available to download from the **Transition Support Programme website**.

#### Oska Bright Film Festival Open for Entries

The 5th international festival of short films made by people with learning disabilities invites submissions for the 2011 festival. The deadline for entries is Tuesday 30 April 2011 and the Festival takes place over 3 days in November 2011, in Brighton. The website **www.oskabright.co.uk** has full information on how to enter and an accessible on-line guide to film-making. Or you can call on 01273 234 734 or email **oskabright@carousel.org.uk** for an information pack.

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#### [View this as an Easy-Video-Page in easy read, with pictures and video](#)

There are a lot of new links to websites including a whole new section about History on [Dobson's Choice](#). We found that there are many short videos about History which would be interesting to people with learning disabilities, including many News Reels from the early 20th Century. Several people with learning disabilities have told us that they are interested in History. Go on [Dobson's Choice](#) and click on Interests and then History to see what is available.

We have created links to videos about History from several Video Information websites, as well as links to websites about Historical Places that people can visit and webpages about History on Educational and Media websites.

Let us know what you think. Are there any other good websites out there that are good for people who have difficulty with reading that we should include? Email us on [dobson@dobsonschoice.co.uk](mailto:dobson@dobsonschoice.co.uk)

Dobson's Choice is designed for people who can't read and it will help them to find local information, local news, local services, and lots of other interesting information from around Britain and the world. Watch Terry using Dobson's Choice. Terry has learning disabilities and has been nervous of using computers in the past. [Click here to see Terry using Dobson's Choice and listen to him talking about it \(3 minutes Video\)](#).

Phone Martin Dobson on 0845 094 6051 or Catherine Titherington on 01772 601853 to find out more.

## **LSIS news - Three hundred show technological prowess - FE at the leading edge**

Today the 300th case study of good e-practice is published on the Excellence Gateway – The Learning and Skills Improvement Service's online service for everyone who works in the further education and skills sector in England.

The case studies aim to stimulate and support innovation and improvement in learning and skills and are produced by the JISC Regional Support Centres (RSCs) on behalf of the Excellence Gateway.

The 300th case study looks at Linkage College's eco-friendly, touchscreen PCs, which have improved access to communication for learners while delivering cost benefits. It joins a bank of case studies which show how learning providers across England are making the most of new technologies to help curriculum design, management and delivery, as well as improve organisational quality, planning and performance. The case studies of good e-practice represent an invaluable pool of knowledge from within the FE and skills sector. Available exclusively on the Excellence Gateway, the case studies explore good e-practice by FE, Sixth Form and specialist colleges, adult and community learning providers and work-based learning providers.

Over the past year alone, the good e-practice case studies section received 130,204 views, averaging approximately 10,000 views per month.

Visitors can browse the case studies to find those relevant to their area of interest or to the type of technology they wish to explore. Key topics covered to date include:

- virtual learning environments;
- Web 2.0 technologies;
- social networking;
- continuing professional development;
- successful models of staff development;
- collaboration between learning providers and employers; and
- accessibility and inclusion for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

One of the most popular case studies of 2010 features Croydon Adult Learning and Training, which made use of its Moodle virtual learning platform to work collaboratively with a range of organisations to provide new learning opportunities and to meet the needs of specific groups of learners.

Another case study features Abingdon and Witney College which used a social network to deliver part of its Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTTLS) teacher training qualification. Not only did this provide ITT students with first-hand experience of remote online collaboration, it also allowed them to evaluate the relevance and value of such teaching methods for eventual use with their own students.

Wendy Beckett is an IT Trainer and Developer at North Warwickshire & Hinckley College. Her role is to look at how technology can be incorporated into teaching and learning effectively. She says:  
"I find the Excellence Gateway a valuable source of inspiration for teaching and learning. In particular, I found the information on the 'busbi' cameras very useful and was able to incorporate some of the innovative ideas when presenting to trainee teachers and existing practitioners. I have had one case study published on the Excellence Gateway and fully intend to complete another one to help others by sharing my exciting experiences."

Rob Wye, LSIS chief executive, says:

"The good e-practice case studies section consistently appears in the top 10 most accessed content on the Excellence Gateway and we receive feedback from users on how useful they are for inspiring improvements in their day-to-day work. What is important is that most of the case studies offer supporting files and advice from the featured providers themselves, which will help anyone wishing to replicate the good practice."

Angela Harvey, JISC RSC Services Co-ordinator, adds:

"Reading, hearing or seeing how a colleague in another learning provider has used technology to good effect in their work, or how a learning provider has used technology on a wider scale to improve its effectiveness, can be enlightening.

"One of the roles of the RSCs is to help share the good practice around the country and these case studies are an excellent way to do that."

## The future of Valuing People Now

Please see below a letter from Rob Greig at the National Development Team about concerns over the future of Valuing People Now

Dear Colleague,

NDTi's work across England has been hearing a growing concern over the last few months about what will happen to the Valuing People Now policy and its delivery in the coming months and years. There is a real concern that the potential (likely?) ending of the DH funded national and regional Valuing People support structures, along with the impact of public sector spending cuts, may lead to a loss of focus on the Valuing People policy - and learning disabilities in general.

NDTi thinks it is really important that there is an open public debate about this. To help this happen, we are doing three, linked things:

1. Until around mid-February, we are hosting a debate about 'Valuing People – What Now?'. This is happening on the discussion board on our newly created Facebook page. Can I encourage you to join in that discussion. Our Facebook page can be found at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/NDTi/129080333809394>

2. To help that debate, I have written a discussion paper on the same subject. You can access the papers through the NDTi website: <http://www.ndti.org.uk/>

3. On March 31st, NDTi along with Helen Sanderson Associates, Inclusion North, Dimensions and Centrevents are hosting a conference to explore Valuing People – What Now. Details of this can be found at <http://www.centrevents.co.uk/ldevent.html>

I hope you will want to join in this discussion. Can I also please encourage you to forward this email to as many people as possible that you work with in order to help involve as many people as possible in the discussion. I apologise if you have also received this information from elsewhere – we are 'covering all bases' and sending it out as widely as we can!

All the best for 2011.

PS. This Facebook discussion is the first of what will be a rolling programme of NDTi hosted debates – the next one will probably be about the 'Big Society' and then after that a debate about how Britain has negative attitudes towards older people and their place in society.

Rob Greig  
Chief Executive  
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## Welcome to the latest update from the National Transition Support Team (NTST) for the AHDC Transition Support Programme

### (1) New resource: Person Centred Approaches in Transition Planning

This new leaflet from NTST looks at what a person centred approach might look like for a disabled young person during the transition to adulthood. It sets out what personalisation and person centred approaches are, looks at practice development and sets out guidance which supports this way of working. It is available to download from the [Transition Support Programme website](#).

### (2) Event: Implementing the Autism Act (2009) - Putting strategy into practice

**Date: 29 March 2011**

**Location: ORT House Conference Centre, London**

The Autism Act (2009) included a strategy which set out the actions that the Government needs to take to ensure that adults with autism get the support that they need. This conference, run by Pavilion, will examine how the implementation of this strategy will work in practice. Discussions will be focused on how adults with autism can best be supported in practical areas such as housing, education, training and employment so that they can enjoy a fulfilled and happy life.

Lucia Winters from the National Transition Support Team will be talking about how the implementation of the strategy will support planning and preparation for the provision of services to people with autism as they move from being children to adults.

Visit [Pavilion's website](#) for programme and booking details.

### (4) News: Government announces £800 million funding for short breaks

On the 11th December Sarah Teather MP, Children's Minister announced that the government will be providing local authorities with £800 million over the next four years to fund short breaks for families with disabled children. Funding provided for short breaks will be delivered to local authorities through the Early Intervention Grant. More information can be found on the Department for Education's [press release](#).

Victoria Wright  
Information and Communications Assistant  
National Transition Support Team  
[tsp@ncb.org.uk](mailto:tsp@ncb.org.uk)

## LSIS E&D Network

Happy New Year and hope you are all keeping well. Our detailed Network Brief for January 2011 will be coming out very shortly. In the meantime some quick updates for you. If you have any queries or comments do come back to me – [Margaret.adjaye@lsis.org.uk](mailto:Margaret.adjaye@lsis.org.uk)

### 1 Network Meetings January and February 2011

Network Meeting taking place on 20<sup>th</sup> of January at the UCU. The meeting will be led by two network colleagues, Carolyn Brownsea from Warwick Education and Training Consultancy and Asfa Sohail from Havering College. Topics to be covered include **Recording and Monitoring diversity in Work Based Learning** and **whole organisation approach to E&D with a focus on narrowing the success rate gaps**. Tintisha who are developing the E&D and Sustainable Communities Resource will also share and discuss two of the modules from the [resource](#). Please share widely with colleagues. To enroll at this meeting contact [Sarika.dewitt@lsis.org.uk](mailto:Sarika.dewitt@lsis.org.uk)

Would you like to lead on a discussion at our Manchester meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> of January and at our Coventry meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February? If so, do contact [Margaret.adjaye@lsis.org.uk](mailto:Margaret.adjaye@lsis.org.uk)

### 2 Research into the experiences of LGBT learners (Adult Learning (19+))

The Skills Funding Agency has commissioned research into the experiences of learners in adult learning (19+) who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual /or transgender. To access and complete the survey please click [here](#)

### 3 Exciting New Qualification

**Leading in the Community leadership PILOT programme – FREE!**

This very topical 4 day programme is aimed at middle managers and people with responsibility for community engagement in their organisation. You will have opportunity to achieve an ILM level 5 award in Leadership and Management. To enrol for the **London programme** click [here](#). For the Manchester programme enrol [here](#)

#### **4 Equality Act – Development Seminars – March 2011**

Seminars supported by the Young People's Learning Agency and in partnership with sector partners/agencies. Seminars will be tailored specifically for ACL, WBL providers and for colleges. Two further sessions will be run by the Grimsby Institute and Equality North East. Please look out for further information about these exciting events on our website.

#### **5 Equality and Diversity - Mainstreaming into the curriculum**

Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum is a one day workshop for those who wish to develop the confidence and skills to address the need for equality and diversity issues to be embedded in the design and delivery of the curriculum. Sessions tailored WBL providers in London on 25<sup>th</sup> January in London and for ACL, colleges and sixth form providers on 25 January. To enroll click [here](#)

#### **Sign post to learning. An equal chance for D/deaf learners**

A genuinely learner-led event highlighting what D/deaf learners want and need from the learning and skills sector in order for them to achieve alongside their hearing peers. This exciting event will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 in London. To enrol click [here](#)

#### **CMI Level 6 qualification**

This four-day programme, running on 23 - 24 February (days 1 and 2) and 15 -16 March (days 3 and 4), is designed to help participants evaluate their organisation's commitment and application to equality and diversity, and to identify organisational and personal responsibilities and liabilities under equality legislation and/or codes of practice. Find out [more](#)

Thank you and all the best  
Margaret

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### **Overseas students**

You may be aware that there is currently a consultation underway with regard to the criteria for overseas students studying in the UK. It takes little account of the needs of disabled learners and I will be responding on behalf of Natspec to raise these concerns. In the meantime, I am grateful to Claire Wilkins for the information below about the English test requirement and possible adaptations for disabled learners, which we hope will remain in place. Claire's contact details are below if you have further queries.

Alison Boulton

#### **English tests for overseas students**

A requirement for Tier 4 (General) students is that they must prove an acceptable level of English Language Ability. The rules have changed quite a bit on this during the last year or so, and therefore the rules are different depending on when the student made the application for a visa. It is for the education provider (i.e. the sponsor) to assess the students' English language ability. There are various exceptions, but for most students applying after August 2010 to study below degree level, the education provider must ensure that the student:

- is from a majority English-speaking country; or
- has completed a previous course of at least 6 months in the UK as a Tier 4 (child) in the last 2 years; or
- has passed an English Language Test of at least CEFR level B1, in all four components (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

There is an exemption for those with disabilities, in relation to passing the English Language Test. The UKBA do not offer any specific guidance on this. The UKBA state that the exemptions will be made by the test providers. The various test providers can be found here:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/approvedenglishtestst4.pdf>

The test providers each have their own approach to exemptions for those with disabilities. Many of the test providers have pretty good systems in place to make special arrangements for those with disabilities, i.e. sign language interpreters, Braille, technical accommodations and some will omit the speaking and listening sections and give longer times etc. If a student has a disability and needs to pass an English Language Test they will need to contact their local test provider from the UKBA's list and ask what special arrangements can be made in relation to their specific needs. If the test provider is happy that the student has passed the test,

with various exemptions, allowances and accommodations in place due to the student's disability, then this will be sufficient for the UKBA.

As an example, one of the test providers, ETS, has a lot of information on their website about 'accommodations for test takers with disabilities and health-related needs':

<http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/disabilities/>

I will be happy to see if I can help any colleges who are having problems with the UKBA and visas; I advise schools and colleges on immigration matters on a daily basis so can often share solutions already found.

My contact details - email: [cwilkins@vww.co.uk](mailto:cwilkins@vww.co.uk) Tel: 0117 314 5274

**Claire Wilkins, Veale Wasbrough Vizards, Solicitors**

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### **Reed Further Education**

Reed Further Education provides a wealth of specialised experience to Further Education (FE) colleges across the UK. A leading supplier of education professionals, Reed FE is part of Reed Specialist Recruitment one of the UK's largest, family owned providers of recruitment solutions

With offices nationwide and utilising a range of expertise gained throughout our 50 year heritage Reed FE have provided multi-discipline support to over 350 Colleges and is well positioned to provide a truly bespoke recruitment solution.

Reed FE offer provisions ranging from full recruitment outsourcing including complete workforce management to modular solutions such as payroll and assessor support. Whether you are looking to rationalise your supply base, manage your spend or plan for forthcoming changes in legislation our service is centred on an ethical approach to our clients requirements with a dedication to attracting and supporting the best candidates across both teaching and non teaching professionals

Throughout 2010 Reed FE have been able save our FE clients up to 20% of their recruitment spend whilst also offering a number of additional cost savings such as VAT Mitigation, AWR workforce analysis, free advertising, client micro-sites and retrospective rebates

For a no obligation, informal discussion/meeting on how we can support your FE objectives contact Ian Shaw, Strategic Development Manager, Education, 07534 907 223 or via email on [ian.shaw@reedglobal.com](mailto:ian.shaw@reedglobal.com)

Further information on our solutions can be found at our website on [www.reedglobal.com](http://www.reedglobal.com)

NB Reed FE will be exhibiting at the Natspec Conference in May

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### **10 new Quick Reads and new partner announced**

[Ten new Quick Reads](#) will be published on World Book Day, 3 March 2011, and GALAXY®, sponsors of the GALAXY® National Book Awards 2010, have announced that they are teaming up with Quick Reads to promote the books to millions of households.

[Register now for your free Quick Reads resource pack](#)

Now in their sixth year, Quick Reads have introduced hundreds of thousands of people to the joys of reading by providing short, accessible, beautifully written books by bestselling writers and celebrities.

This year the new titles will include:

- *Bloody Valentine* by James Patterson
- *Clouded Vision* by Linwood Barclay
- *Follow Me* by Sheila O'Flanagan
- *Men at Work* by Mike Gayle
- *Trouble on the Heath* by Terry Jones
- *Jack and Jill* by Lucy Cavendish
- *Strangers on the 1602* by Priya Basil
- *My Dad's a Policeman* by Cathy Glass
- *Kung Fu Trip* by Benjamin Zephaniah
- *Tackling Life* by Charlie Oatway

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## 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:

Queen Alexandra College  
0121 428 5050

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[chair@natspec.org.uk](mailto:chair@natspec.org.uk)

### Contacts

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*Andrew Harris*

*January 2011*

*Kung Hei Fat Choy*

*Chinese New Year February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011*

