



Dear colleagues

Well, another conference has come and gone – rather like a meal that takes all day to cook and then is eaten in minutes, the lead up to conference takes months and then it seems to be over in the blink of an eye. Planning for 2012 is already underway, so please get the date into your diary now – **May 16th & 17th**, at Aston Birmingham again.

Anyway, it was great to see so many of you last week, and in spite of the many day-to-day and long term challenges we face, there was a very positive spirit. It was really a conference of two halves – day one was a chance to showcase and celebrate the many innovative activities being undertaken in member colleges through LSIS funding. Day two provided the opportunity to discuss some of the wider issues linked to the YPLA, Local Authorities and the Green Paper. I hope you found both days useful – it is crucial to consider the bigger picture, but if we are to share our expertise as suggested in the Green Paper, we need to appreciate the range and diversity of that expertise. We also need to test out our ideas and developments, and the showcase did just that, with the responses to the work on show being very positive. Many thanks to all our workshop leaders and speakers.

It was useful to hear from Ofsted about important work still to be undertaken in relation to equality and diversity, and around outcomes for learners. Natspec has events coming up that address both these issues. Please ensure that you book places on the E&D workshops on June 20th or 22nd, and the PRD event on outcomes on July 7th – information and booking forms have gone into all colleges.

Once again Natspec is very grateful to Sal Cooke and the team at JISC TechDis for their continuing support for annual conference, ensuring that we have an event which is professional yet informal and friendly. Thanks also to Karina Hunt and her team at Mustard Events for their efficient management, from the initial booking through to the smooth running of the event itself.

I hope those of you who attended conference were impressed with the new design of the directory – the publicity committee has done a great job. Directories will shortly be on their way to members, and to schools, connexions services, LAs and many others, a circulation of over 10,000. The re-designed website will also go live this week; thanks to our webmaster Julian for all his work on this.

Finally, thanks to retiring Directors Amanda Quincey and Maggie Thompson, and co-optees, Angela Gary and Paul Dolman; a list of the new Board will be on the website shortly, once co-options have been confirmed.

Best wishes
Alison

Natspec Board of Directors – May 2011

Under the Articles of Association - one third of the Directors are required to retire each year but may offer themselves for re-election if desired. The following Directors retired at the AGM:

Andrew Giles	Amanda Quincey	Maggie Thompson
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Andrew Giles stood for re-election and as there were no further nominations from the members – no election was required this year and Andrew rejoins the Board.

Forthcoming Board meetings:

- July 12th 2011, Hinwick Hall College, Hinwick, Nr Wellingborough
 - September 27th 2011, Livability Offices, London
 - November 23rd 2011, venue Birmingham tbc
 - January 25th 2012, venue London tbc
 - March 21st 2012, venue Birmingham tbc
 - May 15th/16th (tbc) Annual Conference
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Leadership programme

Please see attached flyer for a leadership programme being run at the Royal National College for the Blind by LeadershipWorks. It is an excellent course for any staff with line management responsibilities. Natspec members are eligible for the charitable rates where applicable.

[Download Flyer](#)

Adult social care excellence award

In April 2012, a new excellence award scheme will launch for adult social care services in England. We are seeking your views on our plans for this scheme to help us ensure it meets the needs of those people who will rely on the information it provides. Copies of the consultation (closing date August 1st) available here:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/yourviews/consultations/excellenceaward.cfm>

CQC changes

Here is a link to easy read information about changes to CQC and Health Watch:

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

Autism and Mental Health: Supporting Children and Adolescents

21 June 2011 - Novotel Birmingham Centre Hotel, Birmingham

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

Dealing with the complex issues surrounding children and young people with autism who develop mental health problems.

This conference has been developed to provide mental health practitioners with best practice examples of how children can be effectively supported.

Our keynote speech is from Professor Emily Simonoff, Kings College London, who will be presenting the results of her latest study.

For more information visit www.autism.org.uk/conferences/camhs2011

e-safety survey

This concerns the work that colleges are/or are not doing in response to the vulnerable learners within their organisation. It should only take about 10/15 minutes but will really help to inform the LSIS funded work being done by the consortium of colleges lead by Linkage College in Grimsby. The survey can be accessed here -

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/esafetyforvulnerablelearnersgoodpractice>

RARPA Poster

Research Development Fellows (RDFs) shared their project posters at the Research Conference last month. [View a copy of one created by David Finch and Fern Faux of National Star College](#). The poster triggered much discussion about their project, which investigated how to measure the progress of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

You can download the resources from the conference from the [Excellence Gateway](#).

Equality of opportunity for D/deaf students

D/deaf students led discussion and debate at an LSIS conference exploring improvement in equality of opportunity for this group of learners.

The students highlighted the barriers to learning for D/deaf people by performing a play, based on their own personal experience, which illustrated their feelings of isolation and frustration as they tried to progress their education.

From problems in recruitment processes, to inadequate communication between recruitment staff and lecturers about D/deaf learner needs, and issues related to funding for and provision of British Sign Language support workers, the play graphically illustrated ways in which providers could improve services to better support learning.

“I am now more confident standing in front of many people and acting,” said Habib, one of the students taking part.

And Brian Kokoruwe a D/deaf lecturer involved in the event said: “Generally, it was a life changing experience for all the learners. Everyone enjoyed themselves.”

Ali Westmoreland, from the Office of Disability Issues (ODI) gave the keynote address at the conference, outlining the ODI and Government’s work towards equality for D/deaf and disabled people.

She said the interim results of a new large-scale survey of disability in Great Britain had highlighted that adults with impairments were almost twice as likely to experience a barrier to learning.

People surveyed said they had faced barriers related to finance; not having enough time; difficulties with transport; lack of support or assistance; having difficulty getting on a course or being refused a place, and attitudes of other people.

These different barriers could interact to further limit access to learning she said.

“People talked about trying to find a balance between needing to work to fund training, having time to study – and balancing that with availability of public transport and time taken to travel,” she explained.

“So we can’t look at any of these issues in isolation. Access to transport, access to employment, and access to financial and practical support all play a role in people’s ability to access learning opportunities.”

Statement of Government Policy on Adult Safeguarding

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

Please find a link to the statement released recently which makes clear the Government’s continued commitment to safeguarding adults. Emphasising the need to empower individual’s to have choice and control, keeping them at the centre, the statement highlights that safeguarding adults is everyone’s business. It states that the government’s role in safeguarding is to provide vision and direction and ensure that the legal framework is clear. It sets out the 6 key principles: Empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionality, partnership and accountability suggesting how these can be used to lead to outcomes.

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Please see information below about a conference on June 9th, where Allie O’Brien will be talking about the ELS project. Please note reduced rates for Natspec members.

<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/jd249/jd249brochureWEB.pdf>

Health Transition for young people aged 14 - 25years with physical impairments or Long Term Conditions.

Much time is taken signposting youngsters to services that can help them in terms of health, education, social and leisure etc.

The aim of this site is to enable young people with impairments, to become independent in accessing web based information and guidance to support their transition into the adult world. This site is also useful for families and professionals to access information quickly and efficiently. Information should be available in no more than three clicks. The whole project was in consultation with a group of youngsters.

www.healthtransition-walsall.nhs.uk

Carrie James, Case Manager for Health Transition, Walsall

The UK Intensive Interaction Conference 2011: 'Using Intensive Interaction across a Lifespan'. Date: Tuesday 21st June 2011

This year's conference is being hosted by the Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust (Ridgeway Partnership) at The Oxford Centre, 333 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7PL.

The conference will include a range of practitioner accounts on how Intensive Interaction can be sustained across a person's lifespan, with ideas and examples of strategies used to keep the approach going in different services.

This year's keynote address 'Adventures in Positive Risk-Taking: Intensive Interaction and Creativity' will be given by Melanie Nind, Professor of Education at the University of Southampton. She will explore the practical application of some theoretical concepts associated with risk, thus encouraging people to think creatively about their work using Intensive Interaction.

www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk/conferences/

Transitions in Mental Health Care

A guide for health and social care professionals on the legal framework for the care, treatment and support of young people with emotional and psychological problems during their transition years.

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

Transitions through partnership: working together for technology-dependent children and young people

The Children's Trust, Tadworth is hosting a study day on Wednesday 22nd June to share ideas and knowledge about the way professionals can work together to co-ordinate services for children and young people who are technology-dependent (e.g. have a tracheostomy, require long-term ventilation, are fed via parenteral nutrition, need central line management, intravenous medication), aiming to develop a seamless discharge to the home setting.

The keynote presentation will be given by Dr Peter Carter OBE, MCIPD, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing.

The cost per delegate is £100 including lunch. Registration from 9.30am

www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk/studyday

NEW: Information for people with learning disability and their carers

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo/problems/learningdisabilities.aspx>

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Faculty of the Psychiatry of Learning Disability and the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust have produced a new series of very accessible information for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities. All these materials have been written and tested with people with learning disabilities and their carers.

These leaflets can be easily printed off from this page. The help and support section at the end of each leaflet can be completed by the person being given this information, to include contact details of their GP, Psychiatrist, Community Nurse or any other professional involved in their care.

Self-advocacy for people with autism spectrum disorders

The National Autistic Society has just published a self-advocacy booklet, developed by a group of adults with autism spectrum disorders. It is designed to help adults with autism tell people about their wishes and needs.

It is free, and can be downloaded from the NAS website at www.autism.org.uk/selfadvocacy

Hard copies may be ordered from the website at www.autism.org.uk/pubs or from the National Autistic Society publications department.

Helping students to be independent at GP appointments

Health appointment questions

<http://www.ldhealthnetwork.org.uk/docs/appqu.doc>

Health appointment answers

<http://www.ldhealthnetwork.org.uk/docs/appans.doc>

Health checks

<http://www.surreyhealthaction.org/assets/files/annual%20health%20check%20-%20easy%20read.pdf>

Employing people with autism: a brief guide for employers

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

This guide is an initiative of The National Autistic Society Northern Ireland in conjunction with the Department for Employment and Learning, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Employers for Disability Northern Ireland. As well as raising awareness of autism amongst employers, the guide alerts employers to their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and provides practical information on how to make the necessary adjustments when recruiting and employing someone with autism.

Easy read asthma

Our easy to read materials are specially designed for people with learning disabilities who have asthma. Produced in partnership with people with learning disabilities, these materials can be used to talk through the basics of asthma and asthma management.

http://www.asthma.org.uk/health_professionals/materials_to_help_you_your_patients/easy_to_read_materia.html

Emotional Well-Being & Mental Health

Children and young people with learning disabilities are six times more likely to have a mental health problem compared with their non-learning disabled peers. Yet it is only fairly recently that this issue has begun to be taken seriously.

<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/help-information/information-for-teachers/emotional-well-being-mental-health/>

Update from BASE (British Association for Supported Employment)

BASE will be hosting the employment resources from the Valuing People Now site later this summer. It will be open access so there will be no requirement to be a member to access this information. We are aiming to upload a variety of documents that will be useful to people with other disabilities or disadvantages as well. This would include information about self-employment, social enterprise, best practice etc.

We are also planning to redesign our web site with a range of content for jobseekers and their families, employers and commissioners so any help or advice on content that you could offer would be warmly welcomed.

It is our intention to make access to this sort of information easier for everyone by placing it in one place. Unfortunately, we will have to have some website content for members only as membership is the only way that we can continue to survive financially as an organisation. Rest assured though that these resource documents will be freely available to all.

Huw Davies, BASE: <http://base-uk.org>

Congratulations

Autism advisor, Sue Hatton, has been recognised for her innovative contribution to supporting people with autistic spectrum conditions at the 2011 Laing and Buisson Independent Specialist Care Awards. Sue, who is the Lead Autism Specialist for Craegmoor, won the Innovation category at a glittering ceremony at the Marriott Hotel, in London's Mayfair.

Craegmoor supports around 4,000 people across the UK, and they recruited Sue to enable them to deliver the very best support for people with autistic spectrum conditions.



Formerly Training Manager of Autism West Midlands, Sue Hatton joined Craegmoor in July 2009 as one of six Quality Development Advisors, each of whom is an expert in their respective fields.

Part of Sue's award-winning innovation work includes an assessment tool that enables support staff to develop a greater understanding of people with autistic spectrum conditions. Unlike other profiling tools, this one enables staff to understand not only the difficulties faced by each of the people they support but also to recognise their fantastic strengths and talents.

Since joining Craegmoor, Sue has also designed and helped to implement a training programme that provides every member of staff with a real understanding of autistic spectrum conditions, regardless of their previous experience.

The Awards were held at the Marriott Hotel in

Grosvenor Square in London and were attended by hundreds of professionals who make a difference to people's lives every day.

Although Sue was up against some fierce competition – including finalists from Castlebeck, Lifeways and Outward - the judges thought Sue's work really stood out.

Sue Hatton commented:

"I'm so pleased to have won this Award and to be able to celebrate it with my friends and colleagues at Craegmoor. I want to thank Craegmoor for giving me the opportunity to do something I love, and all the people with autism who have allowed me into their lives and enabled me to understand and get to know them."

Giving us a voice

"Giving us a Voice" was an 18 month England-wide project that involved people from minority ethnic communities with learning disabilities, their families, carers and professionals working with or for them. The National Charter for Inclusion is the result of information gathered at nine regional meetings held from November 2010 to February 2011 which involved all the above groups. We are asking Social Services departments, health authorities and service providers to sign up to the National Charter for Inclusion to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring their services are equally accessible to all, regardless of their disability, ethnicity or religion in line with the Equality Act. May 11

More information and how to sign up can be found on the Giving us a Voice website at: <http://givingusavoice.org.uk/charter-for-inclusion/>

Nine Regional Plans specific to each of the nine Valuing People regions were also produced and these can also be seen on the website.

National Charter for Inclusion <http://www.ldhealthnetwork.org.uk/docs/char.pdf>

SKILL

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, has announced its closure. Skills has been a great champion of further and higher education for students with disabilities for some 40 years, providing guidance and support and keeping a close watch on national policy. It has played a hugely important role in improving access to post-16 education. I have had links to Skill for many years, as an Honorary Regional Organiser, trustee and member of the executive, and in my role with Natspec have worked closely with a number of key members of staff on issues of shared concern.

We now wait to see how this huge gap might be filled – there was a stunned silence when the news was given at the DfE LLDD Advisory group today, but I am sure that many organisations will want to ensure that the work continues in some form. I am sure we would also want to send our best wishes to the 23 staff who have lost their jobs.

The announcement is below:

<http://www.skill.org.uk/index.aspx>

Skill Closes

It is with great sadness that Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities announces that it has ceased operating. Following a period of financial difficulty, Skill's Board of Trustees has decided that it is no longer viable to keep the charity open.

The Chair of Skills' Board of Trustees, Peter Little OBE said "This is sad day for all of us. We had recently appointed an outstanding new Chief Executive and agreed a clear strategy to reduce our costs and turn around our finances, but in the end time was against us".

Skill is the only pan disability charity that focuses on promoting equality for disabled people in education, training and employment. It is hoped that others may step in to fill the gap this has left in the support available.

All Skill's website resources and [information booklets](#) are still available

Safeguarding guidance

LSIS has published a guide for providers in the Learning and Skills sector on [Explaining Safeguarding to Learners with Learning Disabilities](#). A number of ISCs were involved in this important work.

NB – Contains some very useful resources which have been successfully used by staff at Derwen College.

Natspec JiscMail

One of the recurring themes of the conference last week was communication and the need to work collaboratively etc. One resource that I find invaluable in keeping in touch with other Student Services managers within NAMSS (National Association for Managers of Students Services) is JISCMAIL. JiscMail uses the world wide web and e-mail to enable groups of academics and support staff to talk to each other and to share information. Lisa from TechDis has offered to set this up for Natspec and provide support if there are sufficient numbers to make it worthwhile. We could have one service to encompass all issues within ISCs or have separate sections for the communication between care managers, heads of curriculum etc Please email me if you would be interested in having this service. andrew.harris@derwen.ac.uk

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

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 the 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

To request a Natspec directory please contact:

Queen Alexandra College
0121 428 5050

allformats@qac.ac.uk

Derwen College
01691 661234

dawn.williams@derwen.ac.uk

Contacts

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chiefexecutive@natspec.org.uk

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Andrew Harris

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