

NATSPEC Annual Residential Conference

Speaker Biographies



Nick Bailey
LLDD Manager, Skills Funding Agency

Nick is the LLDD Manager for the Skills Funding Agency. Previously he has been a Senior Policy Manager at the National LSC, a LSC Quality Improvement Manager, taught and managed in FE and sixth form colleges, 11-18 schools and worked for educational partnerships since qualifying as a teacher after a first career in Personnel and Management Services in industry.

Mark Bayley
Quality Assurance Manager, Cheshire East Council

My current role of Quality Assurance Manager within Cheshire East Local Authority includes overseeing the 14-25 agenda and, in particular, future commissioning arrangements with the demise of the LSC. The key principles upon which the 14-25 agenda is being established across the new LA is through collaboration and transparency. This includes the full engagement of all stakeholders particularly those who support the more vulnerable learners.

I have worked for the Local Authority for six years having previously held the post of Deputy Headteacher in North Yorkshire as well as having other senior management experience within schools in Northamptonshire.

John Beasley
Director of Employer Engagement, Access to Work, Job Centre Plus

John is the National External Engagement Manager for the delivery of Access to Work. He has worked for Jobcentre plus in the field of disability for the past 15 years in a variety of different roles. His current position is to work with national organisations to raise awareness of how AtW can support disabled employees and support the recruitment of disabled employees.

Sue Beresford
Programme Manager for Performing Arts, Beaumont College

Sue trained at the Royal College of Art, and developed the Creative Arts Curriculum at Beaumont College along with Diane Sammons and Graeme Pyle. Her current role as Programme Manager for Visual Arts includes teaching learners with complex needs to access self expression through a range of interactive art forms and communication techniques. Sue's latest project is to explore possibilities for continuous learning through the creative arts within the learners' home area.

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Viv Berkeley
Programme Director, NIACE

Viv was appointed in September 2004 and together with her development and research work currently leads for NIACE on Foundation Learning, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and the Machinery of Government Changes and how they will impact on learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Viv's current development and research work includes:

- Two LSC funded projects on identifying effective practice in the delivery and co ordination of learning and skills for disabled adult learners.
- A LLUK funded project which aims to identify the accredited professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers, tutors and learning support practitioners who focus on learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. (This builds on previous work Viv has undertaken for LLUK)
- A BIS funded project which will produce the 2nd edition of "*Safer practice, safer learning: a whole organisational approach to safeguarding vulnerable adults for the learning and skills sector*".

Prior to working at NIACE Viv worked for a local authority as an Inclusive Learning Manager managing their Supported Learning provision. Using her training as a Person Centred Facilitator she focused on how service could work collaboratively with other organisations and agencies using person centred approaches. She has also worked in two large FE colleges managing provision and teaching learners with a wide range of abilities, from teenagers to adults. She has been a visiting lecturer at De Montfort University responsible for the Action Research module on the Cert Ed/PGCE and has delivered a course for the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University on teaching learners with learning difficulties.

Dr Beverley Burgess
Head of Specialist Policy, Young People's Learning Agency

Following five years working for the Further Education Funding Council and two years working at Birmingham University, Beverley joined the LSC in November 2001 to lead on provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Whilst in this post, Beverley led for the LSC on the independent review of its funding and planning of provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which lead to the report *Through Inclusion to Excellence*. Subsequently, she led for the LSC in the development of its first ever strategy for this area of work – *Learning for Living and Work* which was published in October 2006.

For the last few years, Beverley has worked on the implementation of the government's 14-19 reform agenda leading for the LSC on increasing young people's participation in learning and, in particular, on reducing the number of young people who are NEET.

Beverley's new role in the Young People's Learning Agency as Head of Specialist Policy brings together her work on learners with LDD with that on young offenders and other vulnerable groups such as care leavers, teenage parents etc in enabling their participation in education and training as we approach the raising of the participation age in 2013/15.

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Barbara Calvert
Functional Skills, Functional Skills Support Programme

Since becoming a freelance trainer and consultant Barbara has worked in a variety of capacities to support providers in all educational sectors and on the 14-19 Reform Agenda.

Barbara has worked at a strategic level in supporting senior managers to implement policies and procedures and is also a Leadership consultant with LSIS/NCSL on the 14-19 Reform programme.

Barbara has had a regional role with Key Skills Support Programme, SfLIP and the National Teaching and Learning Change Programme. She is currently NW Regional Facilitator for Functional Skills and has delivered Functional Skills briefings and national launches as a member of the National Core Team with National Strategies. She is the 14-19 lead for functional skills for a local authority in the NW and works closely with 14-19 partnership officers to implement functional skills in all four frameworks of the 14-19 Reform agenda. She is a member of the NW strategic workforce support partnership with DCSF and Government office and has a key role in the delivery of the government reforms in the NW.

Barbara is an Ofsted inspector and a lead adviser with the Improvement Adviser Service.

Barbara is very passionate about skills development for all age groups and sees functional skills as the way forward.

Jean Carter
Children's Service Project Development Leader, Henshaws College

Jean Carter is Henshaws' Children's Service Project Development Leader tasked with developing business and other opportunities around short breaks for a variety of client groups using Henshaws College and Henshaws Arts and Crafts Centre facilities. Jean has wide experience within the educational field having recently retired as a Headteacher specialising in Special Educational Needs.

Sal Cooke
Director, JISC TechDis

Sal Cooke has become a regular at the Natspec Conference since becoming Director of the JISC TechDis Service in late 2004. Sal had the privilege of teaching in Schools, Colleges and Universities before being seconded to work for Becta, JISC the DfES (as was), and as such has been involved in the e-learning (ILT) funded programmes since their inception and is passionate about ensuring Specialist Colleges are visible to all concerned.

Victor Dejean
Programme Lead for the Leadership Toolkits, LSIS

Victor is an associate with LSIS, managing the Online Leadership Toolkits, having previously written some, and edited many, of the modules for the WBL Toolkit (winner of the 'BETT Award 2009 for Leadership and Management Solutions Category'), and the Leading Change for Digital Dividends programme. Linked to this, he delivers on LSIS's change management programmes on eLeadership.

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Christine Dempster

Principal, Thornbeck College- North East Autism Society

Nicola Brown

Vice Principal, Thornbeck College- North East Autism Society

Christine and Nicola have worked with individuals with Autism Spectrum Condition for over 20 years. With their team they have developed a diverse range of post 19 provision to meet diverse range of needs. These include:

- Thornbeck College
- Residential Services
- Supported Living Scheme
- Outreach Domiciliary
- Open/Supported employment scheme

The above has been achieved through learners having access to personalised programmes and working in collaboration with a wide and varied range of partners. Christine firmly believes that no stand alone provider can fully meet the holistic needs of individual learners. Thornbeck College was inspected in September 2009 and was judged to be 'Outstanding'. In March 2010 the College was awarded Beacon Status.

John Gush

Consultant and LSIS Associate, LSIS

John is a freelance consultant and project manager working primarily with quality improvement in the specialist LDD further education sector and offender learning.

John is also currently studying for his MSc in International Development at Bath University, where his main focus is on the impact of poverty on childhood well-being and human development.

Sue Harrison

Managing Director, xué

Sue Harrison has a background in education, local government, management, inspection and psychology. She has been a successful leader within the public and private sectors and has recently established a Social Enterprise to support parents/carers of young people with LDD. She has extensive experience in individual and team development, organisational analysis, change management, executive recruitment, and quality development. Over the last 10 years, as a highly sought after consultant and coach, she has focused on supporting organisations and individuals in managing change positively and proactively. This has included working with organisations as a 'critical friend', helping them to analyse their effectiveness and to develop their systems and processes, as well as working with individuals and teams as a coach, mentor or mediator. Sue is the founder and Managing Director of xué – "we support individuals, teams and organisations to make the unachievable achievable".

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Elisabeth Johnson
Assistant Principal, Ruskin Mill College

Elisabeth has worked at Ruskin Mill College in Gloucestershire for over 10 years. After completing a Masters of Science degree in Sustainable Systems, Elisabeth became involved with the college because of its strong ethos of practical skills and environmental consciousness. Elisabeth started her work at Ruskin Mill College as manager and tutor of the college's organic fish farm. However, because of her phobia of fish, Elisabeth resigned from this position after 5 years. She continued to work for the college in an educational administrative role progressing to Educational Coordinator and then to her current position as Assistant Principal and Head of Resource and Administration.

Some of the key projects that Elisabeth has worked on for Ruskin Mill College and the other two colleges in the Ruskin Mill Educational Trust include;

- designing a framework to record non accredited progress and achievement
- designing baseline assessments and skills assessments
- developing quality assurance frameworks
- staff training and development
- RARPA champion for the Trust

Elisabeth is currently leading Ruskin Mill's participation in a Peer Review and Development Group and the Foundation Learning Tier pilot programme.

Peter Little, OBE
Independent Chair, DCSF LLDD Advisory Group

Peter Little retired from full-time employment on 2004 after a career spanning nearly 40 years. A qualified teacher, he became Head Teacher of a comprehensive secondary school. Thereafter, he worked in senior positions in the voluntary sector, specialising in developing training and employment opportunities in the post-16 context for people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In 2004, he was appointed as independent Chair of the Learning and Skills Council's National Strategic Review of all its provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Review's Final Report, entitled "Through inclusion to excellence" was fully endorsed by LSC's National Council and he publicly launched the Report in November, 2005. He is now acting as a consultant and adviser to LSC, including implementation of the 2006/2010 Strategy for these learners, entitled "Learning for living and work". This has included work on Skills and Employability issues. From 2007-09, he was a member of the Advisory Group for the development of the Foundation Learning Tier. Most recently, he became Independent Chair of the DCSF External Advisory Group for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

He was an appointed Board Member of the Learning and Skills Development Agency 2001-04 and is Chair of Skill, National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. In 1999, he was appointed OBE "for services to training, employment and young people".

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Kathy Melling

National Employment Lead – Valuing People Now, Department of Health

Kathy joined the Valuing People Now Team on the 30th November as the National Employment Lead and she is working with the cross-government Valuing Employment Now Team. She comes from a background of supported employment with her first experiences in the sector in the late 1970's in the United States. She has worked in the UK since the 1980's and developed a local service in Kent called Kent Supported Employment that has successfully supported hundreds of disabled people into employment, including people with moderate to severe learning disabilities. She has also been involved in the establishment of the British Association for Supported Employment, and until recently has been an active member of the National Executive Committee.

Ruth Perry

Educational Consultant, Freelance

Ruth Perry worked for QCA as Strategic Manager for Foundation Learning up until 2006. During her time at QCA, she was responsible for the introduction of Entry level qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework and for shaping the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT) reform. Since 2006, Ruth has worked as an independent educational consultant, specialising in issues relating to inclusion and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Since 2007 Ruth has been an associate consultant with LSN working on the LSIS Foundation Learning Support Programme as the lead on SEN and LLDD. She has also worked for LSC national office, NATSPEC, QCDA, Remploy, and a range of local authorities, sector skills councils and awarding organisations.

Anne Price

Director of Education and Lifeskills, David Lewis

My current role of Director of Education and Lifeskills at David Lewis has evolved in response to the changes in the external environment. It brings together under one umbrella the organisation's school, college and adult education provision. The organisation is based in the local authority area of Cheshire East, whilst drawing its learners from over 60 LAs across the UK.

In line with the key principles upon which the 14-25 agenda is being established across the new LA, through collaboration and transparency, David Lewis is actively involved in the many activities aimed at engaging all stakeholders in Cheshire East, particularly those who support the more vulnerable learners.

Prior to working at David Lewis I have been Principal of Mencap Pengwern College and have worked in GFE for 25 years.

Diane Sammons

Programme Manager for Performing Arts, Beaumont College

Diane Sammons has worked at Beaumont College for 21 years in a range of roles in the education department and latterly in the role of Programme manager for Performing Arts. Teacher trained at St. Martin's College Lancaster and with a BEd Hons degree and an Advanced Diploma in Special Needs Education. Her current role includes teaching performance to a range of learners with complex needs and supporting the development of the Performing Arts curriculum offer. Diane continues to have a professional commitment to challenge the mindset about capacity and potential of the 'unordinary'.

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Caroline Smale
Principal/CEO, Henshaws College

Caroline Smale is Principal/CEO for Henshaws College, a residential specialist College for young people with visual impairments and a range of complex needs. Caroline is also responsible for Henshaws Arts & Crafts Centre, a social enterprise provision and thriving arts facility; 15 community houses (providing permanent homes); a children's service; a rehabilitation service and local volunteers service.

Charlotte von Bülow
Director, Crossfields Institute

Charlotte von Bülow is the founder and Director of Crossfields Institute - a new licensed awarding body for holistic integrative further education and research. Crossfields Institute works in collaboration with Edexcel and has 65 affiliated organisations internationally. Charlotte has worked within the UK education sector since 2002 specialising in accreditation and quality assurance. Her professional background includes Higher Education in Psychotherapy, Counselling, Philosophy and Education as well as professional consultancy in Universities and FE Colleges internationally. Charlotte is currently engaged in a MEd research programme focusing on the development of social, moral and cognitive skills through Foundation Learning. Crossfields Institute works in close collaboration with Ruskin Mill Educational Trust.