



# **Annual Conference 2019**

Enhancing the Student  
Experience: the Whole Lifecycle

Breakout Group Selection Pack

Chesford Grange Hotel & Conference Centre, Kenilworth, CV8 2LD:  
Tuesday 25th June 2019 – Wednesday 26th June 2019

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## Programme

<b>Tuesday 25th June</b>	
<i>Delegates arriving on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June should first register for the conference. The Registration Desk will be open from 8.30am.</i>	
09.30 – 10.00	Welcome and Introduction:
10.00 – 11.00	Keynote: A new approach to access and participation. Alex Lewis, Office for Students
11.00 – 11.30	Refreshment break and Exhibitors
11.30 -13.00  Session 1: Parallel Workshops (90 minutes)	Lego ® Serious Play ®: an innovative and creative tool for supporting disability identity. Jackie Hatfield, Tina Horseman, Loughborough University
	Whose exam is it anyway? Exploring inclusive assessment and accessible exam paper design. Harriet Cannon & Jenny Brady
	Supporting students with vision-impairment in Higher Education. Rachel Hewett & Prof Mike McLinden University of Birmingham
	Working outside the box. Tina Sharpe & Jemma Day
	A fresh approach to communicating reasonable adjustments: our new App. for academic and support colleagues, applicants, and students. Helen Shaw & Beverley Martin, Loughborough University
13:00 – 14.00	Lunch and Exhibitors
14:00 – 15.00	Whole Conference Presentation: Accessible Publishing theme. Digital Dynamism – ebooks have changed. Are you keeping up? Richard Orme <i>et al.</i>
15:00 - 15:15	Refreshment break and exhibitors
15.15 – 16.00  Session 2: Parallel Lectures (45 minutes)	Development of the Leicestershire specialist mentoring network: a model of collaborative working. Sharron Sturgess, Preetie Jagdev and Leanne Herbert
	Implementation of a transition event for offer holders with autism spectrum conditions. Georgina Heywood
	Note-taking accommodations & their effectiveness. Katherine Hamilton, Sonocent
	Publishing theme: No scanner required – accessible books from publishers. Richard Orme & Stacy Scott
	Building resilience in first year undergraduate disabled students to achieve long-term success. Joel Staley +1
16.00 – 16:30	AGM
16:30 – 17:15	NADP Accreditation Scheme:

Our special anniversary celebration gala dinner will take place at 20:00 – meet in the bar from 19:00.

## Wednesday 26th June

*Registration from 8.30am (for those delegates attending for just Wednesday).*

09.00 – 09:15	Welcome back:
09:15 – 10.15	Keynote: Leveraging the OIA good practice framework: Enhancing the disabled student experience at key transition points. Jennifer Harley, University of Law
10.20 – 11:05 Session 3: Parallel Lectures (45 minutes)	Autistic students' experience of group work – development of good practice principles for academic departments, Sharron Sturgess, University of Leicester
	My future in my hands - Empowering students to play an active role in identifying their needs and accessing support at University and beyond. Adam Tweed & Amy Low, AbilityNet
	Inclusive practice initiatives: case studies from a number of different HEIs with a specific focus on 'inclusive learning technologies'. Adam Hyland, Diversity & Ability.
	In pursuit of being part of the solution. Claire Flegg and Martin Hall
	Publishing theme: World map of opportunities – making the inaccessible more accessible. Alastair McNaught & Abi James
11:05 – 11.30	Refreshment Break and Exhibitors
11.30 – 13:00	Whole Conference Presentation and Discussion: More than just teaching and assessment – dialogues on disability. Lorraine Ishmael-Byers and Stephanie Baum, Kings College with students from Kings College
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch and Exhibitors
14.00 -15.30 Session 4: Parallel Workshops (90 minutes)	Motive, means and opportunity: difficulties and opportunities in operationalising inclusive technology. Ivan Newman & Leanne Herbert
	Interactive Session on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – a SHRE-funded Project. Professor Nicola Martin, Dr Mike Wray, Dr Abi James and EA Draffan
	Publishing theme: Creating an inclusive, digital accessibility culture in your organisation. Abi James & Alastair McNaught
	Publishing theme: Accessible publications, books, journals and university-generated materials. The practicalities of “what”, “how” and more. Richard Orme & Adi Latif
	Increasing the employment prospects for disabled students: enabling students to get the most out of university. Helen Cooke, My Plus Computing
15.30 -16:30	Refreshments, networking and close

## **Breakout Session 1: 90 Minute Workshops: Tues 25<sup>th</sup> June 11:30**

Please select from the following:

### **1. Lego ® Serious Play ®: an innovative and creative tool for supporting disability identity. Jackie Hatfield, Tina Horseman, Loughborough University**

The session will explore how using Lego Serious Play (LSP) as a multi-sensory medium can allow students to unpack complex problems and challenges relating to themselves, their neurodiversity and/or disability, as well as having applications for their academic work. LSP allows students to investigate, manipulate and represent their ideas physically before creating a verbal and then textual response.

Our research findings recognise that, as specialist 1:1 study support tutors, we use a range of tools and strategies which produce positive outcomes. Adding LSP into this tool kit we have found a multi-sensory and multi-dimensional tool that produces quicker outcomes in a playful, non-threatening and non-judgemental way. It allows students to quickly prototype the whole picture before creating a verbal and then textual response. It also helps us to see and support their thinking.

Lego is clearly multisensory, through the use of the hands and eyes, which encourages the student to explore their thinking and promotes reflection and connections. The 3D model allows students to begin the journey of unpacking and processing complex ideas from a chaotic muddle to a concrete structured relevant outcome. The verbal exploration of the model is effective in deepening reflection and hence promotes metacognition and develops academic and personal independence. At the end of this process the students have a concrete visual representation of their identity, essay structure or revision topic to take away with them. Then from this the 3D model can, if appropriate, be used again to manipulate and interrogate, in more depth, smaller chunks of the whole.

The methodology is based on extensive research and its core theoretical elements are:

- Constructivism (Piaget: 1951)
- Constructionism (Charel and Papert: 1991)
- Complex Adaptive Systems' Theory (Holland; 1995)
- Autopoietic Organisational Epistemology (Von Krogh and Roos: 1994, 1995, Weick: 2000)
- Flow (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: 1993)

This methodology (Lego, 2002) enables participants to:

- To simplify what is complex.

- Facilitate changes.
- Create an overview of the chaotic and the complex.
- Identify possible solutions to challenges.
- Explore consequences of possible future actions.
- Be a catalyst to dialogue.
- Develop shared understanding, overview and acceptance.
- Collect information and knowledge in a concrete way.
- Implement and anchoring concepts and plans.
- Create shared goals and direction – culture and identity.

The workshop will begin with an over view of the Lego Serious Play methodology and its origins. This will be followed by hands-on LSP activities that will provide a taster experience of the methodology. Then the session will be rounded off by presenting case study examples of LSP being used to support neurodiverse students in HE. By the end of the session attendees will be able to consider the application of LSP within their settings.

## **2. Whose exam is it anyway? Exploring inclusive assessment and accessible exam paper design. Harriet Cannon & Jenny Brady, University of Leeds**

In this session we will explore what makes an inclusive exam paper, and examine themes related to inclusive assessment practices. Set in the context of a rapidly diversifying student body, we'll discuss the interplay of academic integrity and genuinely equitable assessment methods, describe the difference between inclusive assessment and modified assessment, and explore how assessment language can inadvertently contribute to discrimination, as well as poor student outcomes and experience.

Collaboration between Disability Services, the Exams Office and Faculty Assessment Leads at the University of Leeds resulted in the creation of innovative cross-institution guidance and templates for exam papers that are 'born' accessible and made available to all students. Using these resources, this interactive session will enable participants to work together to create inclusive exam papers, using real-life examples, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss this important topic.

### **3. Supporting students with vision-impairment in Higher Education. Rachel Hewett, Professor Mike McLinden and Professor Graeme Douglas, University of Birmingham**

#### Background to research

The workshop will centre around research findings from a longitudinal study, which has been tracking the transition experiences of a group of 80 young people with vision impairment from compulsory education through to adulthood. Higher education has been a significant pathway for this cohort, with over half the participants studying a range of courses at institutions across the UK. The research has highlighted significant barriers faced by young people with vision impairment in higher education, which impact upon their initial transition, attainment, future employment prospects, and overall experience.

A key finding of the research has been the importance of preparation of both student and institution, emphasising the need for anticipatory adjustments and partnerships between staff and learner. These findings led to the development of Department for Education funded guidance material for students and staff, to aid preparation and improve the transition experiences of these students.

#### Overview of workshop

The proposed interactive workshop will consist of: a short presentation; several focused tasks to encourage the active participation and learning of the attendees; and short videos to promote discussion. Participants will be encouraged to take part in small group discussions, as well as participate in whole group discussion. The format will be as follows:

- a. Indicators of successful access, progress and success. The session will commence with participants working in discussion groups to draw upon their professional practice to identify indicators of successful 'access', 'progress' and 'success' for a student with vision impairment, as well as identifying the key barriers which students with vision impairment face.
- b. Presentation of research findings. Drawing upon this initial discussion, the presenters will outline some of the key findings from the longitudinal study. This short presentation will focus on the full lifecycle of the student, from initial application through to life after university. A conceptual model will also be presented which has been developed from the research findings. The model proposes what we argue to be a balanced model of support, taking into account the institutions responsibility to ensure a balanced approach to support. It recognises the need for a balance between anticipatory adjustments provided through 'inclusive practice' alongside adjustments to meet individual



needs. Significantly, in addition, it acknowledges the role of the learner in facilitating successful outcomes by drawing upon his or her personal agency. The framework recognises the progressive nature of this support in the form of progressive mutual accommodations between institution and learner.

- c. Applying a conceptual model to real-life scenarios. Working in small groups, the participants will be posed with real-life scenarios taken from the longitudinal study and asked to apply the conceptual model to identify support strategies, which take into account the institutions responsibilities and allows the student to draw on their personal agency.
- d. Expanding the model. Finally, the participants will return to their discussion groups to consider together how this model can be applied more generally to learners with special educational needs and disabilities.

#### **4. Working outside the box. Tina Sharpe & Jemma Day**

##### **Why?**

In the Summer of 2017 a project aimed at raising awareness of Disabled Students Allowances amongst applicants to the university who had declared a disability or those with mental health issues was commenced.

A series of proposals about how to engage with applicants were considered and a plan to develop animated modules and an app were decided upon.

It started with the co-creation of a series of six interactive on line modules which could be sent to applicants once they had accepted a place at the University. The aim of these modules was to develop the applicant's resilience and preparation for student life, prior to the start of their University life. The other aim was to create an app which would could be used on various devices.

The modules were co - created by DMU Graduates and the Disability Advice and Support Team at DMU working to ensure that we highlighted the issues students wanted addressing.

##### **How?**

It was decided to use animation to tell the stories and scripts were written which addressed the issues which students had stated they needed – loneliness, DSA, fresher's, getting organised –finance and academic, mature students. Voices and captioning were added to enrich the experience

Scripts for the animation were created by the teams and voice overs by staff and students at the University.

Once everything was complete- this took about a year from the first module – re DSA this was shared with the disabled applicants.

However after the app was completed the decision was made to share it via the University induction to all applicants. This also meant that we took a whole University approach rather than separating out the 'disabled applicant'.

This workshop will explore the creation of these resources and how they may assist you to support your students.

### **5. A fresh approach to communicating reasonable adjustments: our new App. for academic and support colleagues, applicants, and students. Helen Shaw & Beverley Martin, Loughborough University**

This workshop will offer disability practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their current practices for communicating reasonable adjustments to colleagues and students. Time will be spent exploring participants current processes whilst discussing and considering those used by other HEIs. The workshop will then move on to introduce, demonstrate and discuss the fresh approach that Loughborough University took to this task with the new App. The session will involve individual reflection, small group discussions, whole workshop discussion, presentations and demonstrations with plenty of time for questions and answers throughout.

#### Overview

Academics, support staff, disability practitioners and senior management at Loughborough University recognised inconsistent practise surrounding the communication, receiving, sharing and enactment of reasonable adjustments across campus. The numbers of disabled students have risen annually, and original systems and processes were also straining. A University-wide process change project was therefore endorsed which included consultation and collaboration with disabled students, administration staff, disability practitioners, academic departments, IT services and the Centre for Academic Practice along with the Learning and Teaching Committee. There were four main objectives aimed at enhancing the student experience:

- A list of universal standardised reasonable adjustments were ratified by the Teaching and Learning Committee for all schools, departments and services across campus to comply with. These are split into "off the shelf" adjustments (which would be provided without question following a disability assessment), and a set of

“bespoke” adjustments (where a need was identified but further discussion was necessary regarding the logistics). The adjustments cover all aspects of student life including lectures, exams, accommodation and car parking.

- A new App; the Disability and Health Portal, was designed and built to guide applicants through a series of bespoke questions pertinent to their disability. It allows applicants to share support requirements in a single, secure and corporate web-based system. All applicants, regardless of whether they coded for a disability upon application, are directed to the App to share their disability information and anticipated requirements. The progress of support discussions and adjustments is also tracked here through their applicant journey.
- The Loughborough University Student Information (LUSI) system was overhauled to ensure reasonable adjustments are transferred seamlessly from the App. upon A level results day (result dependant). This ensures schools and services are aware of students’ requirements at the earliest opportunity allowing preparation to start for their arrival.
- Communication is automated from the App and pushed out to appropriate colleagues informing them of a student’s requirements. This information is accessible in real time and eliminates information being held in multiple departmental systems and various local spreadsheets. Students also receive this automated communication, allowing them to independently view their approved adjustments. This transparency helps ensure the student has greater control over their support and can review it at various stages of their study journey.

## **Breakout Session 2: 45 Minute Lectures: Tues 25<sup>th</sup> June 15:15**

Please select from the following:

### **1. Development of the Leicestershire specialist mentoring network: a model of collaborative working. Sharron Sturgess, Preetie Jagdev and Leanne Herbert**

Three local universities, a further education college delivering HE courses, and a NMH provider have come together to develop a specialist mentoring network to provide free CPD for staff working with autistic students in Leicester and Leicestershire. We meet twice a year to provide training to staff on the issues that are important to them. Recent sessions have covered supporting students to transition out, a research symposium, and gender dysphoria and sexuality issues in autism. This CPD provides a variety of learning experiences in a safe space, with staff able to engage in a range of activities and discussion, using learning strategies such as group work and case studies. These sessions not only harness the expertise of local autism specialists but also provide opportunities for staff across institutions and providers to meet together, share best practice and learn from one another.

The training which is delivered is free for staff to attend, contributes towards CPD under DSA QAF guidelines for specialist mentors, and is based on what staff themselves determine they need.

This group session will examine the conception and development of the network, the benefits of collaborative working, and practical issues in developing relationships between service providers.

We further hope to share our experience of developing a model of collaborative working across not only local HEIs but also FE colleges and NMH service providers which puts the needs of students at the heart of a funding process which we feel does not always do that.

Finally, it is hoped that others will take away ideas for establishing their own informal networks which might one day lead towards the establishment of a national network of autism practitioners working in HE.

## **2. Implementation of a transition event for offer holders with autism spectrum conditions. Georgina Heywood, University of Oxford**

The presentation will cover the process undertaken to research and implement a new induction initiative, which took place in September this year at the University of Oxford, to support offer holders with an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) in their transition to University. The presentation will include an overview of research and implementation processes (outlined further below) and will focus on additional benefits which have since stemmed from the initial event. Discussion will be actively encouraged and it is hoped the session would be of interest to others looking to set up transitional support programmes, as well as those already delivering similar programmes, to share learning and good practice.

### **Abstract:**

Students on the autism spectrum at the University of Oxford have a wide range of support available to access whilst on course which can enable the development of good coping strategies. However, transition into the University can often pose significant challenges for some students with ASCs, with historically little support available to offer holders. To address this gap, a feasibility study was conducted, seeking feedback from current Oxford students with an ASC, a range of staff across the collegiate University and taking into account findings and models of best practice from other UK universities delivering similar transitional support.

The findings of the feasibility study indicated that an induction event to support offer holders with ASCs transitioning to the University of Oxford would be feasible and had potential to enhance students' experience of Oxford in both an academic and non-academic context.

Following on from the feasibility Study, the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) piloted a two-day transition event for incoming undergraduate students with an autistic spectrum condition in September 2018. The event was designed to provide an opportunity for new students to move into their college accommodation early, become familiar with the collegiate University and to connect with other new students attending the event, thus facilitating a smoother transition to university and enhancing the university experience for a group who might otherwise face particular challenges in this respect.

The programme included visits to the Bodleian Libraries, students' departments, tours of Oxford City, a two-course evening meal and an overnight stay in the student's own college. Support workers were

recruited for the event as well as Specialist ASC Mentors and Disability Advisors. There were several opportunities for students to meet and speak with the DAS team, ask questions and seek support throughout the event.

Overall, the event was a success with positive feedback received and the DAS has secured funding to roll this event out as part of its annual offering to new students with an ASC.

Additionally, students who attended the pilot were invited to join a regular ASC peer support group, organised and set up by the DAS. This will also be opened up to other students with an ASC (diagnosed or suspected) at all levels of study in the near future.

The outcome of the research and the successful implementation of the pilot event has enabled development of support provision and has helped to justify additional resource for students on the autism spectrum at the University of Oxford.

### **3. Note-taking accommodations & their effectiveness. Lee Chambers, Sonocent**

When a student takes a seat in a lecture theatre, seminar, library, or laboratory, they are there to absorb and then engage with information. Indeed, in the last few decades our access to information has grown exponentially, it is practically limitless. In daily life — especially in the workplace — we read, listen, and watch all manner of sources with ease.

However, how we capture that information remains largely unchanged: we take notes.

Note-taking is used by every student to capture, annotate, review and engage with information. They then translate and transform it into further research, essays and exams — and continue to take notes long after they leave the academic world. To struggle with note-taking therefore limits the student's potential. While note-taking support is readily given by the DSA or an institution to students with learning difficulties or disabilities, struggling with note-taking is not limited to those with additional learning needs. For those who do receive support, it more often than not comes in the form of professional note takers who write individualised notes in classroom settings. Yet if our aim as education professionals is to encourage lifelong learning then surely we are limiting students' note-taking independence — and, potentially, their future success. Indeed, in a survey of 929 students only 39% felt confident to take notes independently without help from others.

As such, there is now a whole host of note-taking technology that can empower students with disabilities without depending on note takers. Though, if note-taking is so crucial for learning, why not look for a tool that supports every student in every learning setting while also meeting any additional needs?

This session answers just that. Together we will explore Sonocent's research with students and staff into how note-taking tools can be effectively used to create inclusive learning environments, finishing with an open discussion with peers on how note-taking skills can and have improved the overall student experience.

Split into two parts, the session will first review how note-taking can improve all students' skills, especially to improve student engagement with intense course content and, as such, overall academic attainment. We will then look at how improved note-taking skills can specifically support those with certain learning difficulties or disabilities, including dyslexia, autism and Asperger's, anxiety and depression, hearing or physical impairment - to name but a few.

Secondly, we will then review the findings of a series of surveys completed by students and universities using traditional assistive technology as broader inclusive tools. In doing so, we ask how using note-taking tools can help structure and enhance the overall learning experience at Higher Education.

Sonocent speak here not about their suite of products, but instead as innovators and researchers into note-taking technology, student engagement and inclusive practice. While attendees can learn more about Audio Notetaker at our exhibit, this session is solely an opportunity for peers interested in improving students' note-taking skills to take part in open discussion with industry experts.

#### **4. Publishing theme: No scanner required – accessible books from publishers. Richard Orme, DAISY Consortium & Stacy Scott, RNIB Bookshare**

All too often universities will request PDF or Word files and laboriously remediate them for print disabled students. But the good news is that education publishers have made strides in recent years to make their textbooks and other educational resources accessible. Increasingly they provide digital versions that have image descriptions, excellent navigation, and well-structured tables. Furthermore, many publishers collaborate with RNIB Bookshare to make it simple and efficient to provide students with accessible digital versions.

The aim of this session is to demonstrate how access to publications is changing very fast for a broad range of learners with specific needs and explain how this will continue to improve.

### **5. Building resilience in first year undergraduate disabled students to achieve long-term success. Joel Staley *et al.***

Supporting students as they transition into University life & study can be challenging for disability services, including the increasing numbers of disclosures, complexity of needs, and the impact this has on available resources.

More broadly, our strategic thinking also needs to link to the national context, for example responding to emerging long-term targets for meeting OfS outcomes around eliminating the attainment gap for disabled students, as well as the ever-shifting funding & policy landscape, particularly around DSA provision.

In reviewing our offer at Bath, we have introduced a number of opportunities for early & ongoing engagement throughout the first year.

In doing so, we've teamed up with colleagues across the wider Student Services team (eg Wellbeing, Counselling & Mental Health) & partnered with other University departments (eg Careers, Widening Participation, Assistive Technology, Library & Academic Skills), to broaden & enrich our offer.

Opportunities are also opening up to influence course design as part of an institutional 'Curriculum Transformation' programme, as well as the development of a 'Mental Health Strategy' – both of which have the potential to dramatically change the culture & direction of the University, particularly towards a far more inclusive approach in learning & teaching practices.

This interactive session will explore some of the opportunities & challenges relating to the initial period of transition into University for first year disabled students. It will discuss practical strategies for engagement & support, and how this can help to build greater long-term resilience & success for students throughout their course. It will also ask if & how this offer could be adapted for the benefit of other disadvantaged student cohorts.



## **Breakout Session 3: 45 Minute Lectures: Wed 26<sup>th</sup> June 10:20**

Please select from the following:

### **1. Autistic students' experience of group work – development of good practice principles for academic departments, Sharron Sturgess, University of Leicester**

The rise in the number of autistic students studying in higher education in the UK has led to an increased research interest in their experience of university.

This study was a two phase, mixed methods, practitioner action research project which examined the experience autistic undergraduate students on a physics degree have of undertaking group work. Its aims were to research whether autistic students liked to work with others or not, hypothesising that contrary to popular belief they did but that group work could be better organised and administered to take account of their needs. If this were the case the project then aimed to discover what factors might affect autistic learner's experience of group work in order to develop best practice principles.

Phase One involved a review of existing best practice guidance for the sector in supporting disabled students with group work, and from this, themes emerged which were then developed into an on-line questionnaire around the experience of group work which was completed by a group of autistic physics students studying in the 2017-18 academic year.

A set of 10 best practice principles were then formulated, and, in the spirit of emancipatory research, in Phase Two a smaller sample of the autistic students were invited to feedback on these principles before they were finalised for dissemination to the department.

The project concludes by reiterating the principle of Universal Design for Learning, advocating that if put in place the best practice principles which would benefit autistic learners they would actually benefit all students autistic or not.

This group presentation will outline the design and undertaking of the project, its findings and resulting 10 best practice principles. The group will then be invited to discuss the principle of emancipatory research and how we involve disabled learners in the development of policies, practices and procedures which affect them, and how the development of UDL is beginning to shape the higher education landscape.

## **2. My future in my hands - Empowering students to play an active role in identifying their needs and accessing support at University and beyond. Adam Tweed & Amy Low, AbilityNet**

Universities are responsible for ensuring they take an anticipatory approach to ensuring students can access quality and relevant support for their specific needs. In order to build resilience and agency in the student body however, it is crucial that they are provided with the means to play an active part in this process and can consequently acquire the skills and confidence to take this approach throughout their studies and beyond as they leave University to pursue life and career goals.

In our talk we will share findings from round table discussions held with disability support staff about the biggest challenges that staff and students face in this space.

We will explain how we have used these findings to build a digital platform containing information for students to equip them with all they need to be successful at University and also containing information, tools and best practice advice for University staff across support services, academic and faculty.

The session will provide a summary of areas that you may wish to consider in your Institution and some ideas, tips and tools that you can build into the services provided at your home Institution.

## **3. Inclusive Practice Initiatives - Adam Hyland & Atif Choudhury**

Diversity and Ability (DnA) is a disabled-led social enterprise that specialises in agile educational and well-being technologies. DnA has been collaborating on inclusive practice initiatives, with a specific focus on 'inclusive learning technologies', with a number of different HEIs.

In this session, you will get an insight into the various initiatives that have been running at different institutions, via case studies and the positive impact that they have made in terms of inclusion, retention, attainment and widening participation. This session will also look at how these initiatives have been successful in enabling international students and those who have not disclosed a disability through conventional channels, to access support. Participants will see how mainstreaming inclusive learning technologies breaks down the 'us and them' disability narrative and can be used to benefit all staff and students.

Participants will find out about the following initiatives:

- Exam time assistive technology support - to ensure the smooth running of exams for disabled students using assistive technology and

making sure students are familiar with packages that are available on exam machines

- Transition days - promoting the availability and productivity of assistive technology to prospective and new students
- Group workshops - promoted to the whole student body as study tools workshops, changing the narrative around assistive technology and increasing involvement from students who wouldn't necessarily receive support through conventional channels. Led by end users!
- Staff workshops- To embed the use of assistive technology across the university- staff are then able to signpost students to available tools, develop their inclusive teaching practice and learn how to use them in the context of their own role.
- Freshers fair inductions - embedding the use of assistive technology within freshers week programme to create a culture where all students learn about and access effective study tools.

Whilst exploring these initiatives, participants will explore the positive impact of disabled led, end user approaches in order to provide authentic shared wellbeing across the student body.

#### **4. In pursuit of being part of the solution - Claire Flegg and Martin Hall, University of Leeds**

How do we ensure the services and provisions we deliver meet the needs and aspirations of our disabled students and researchers? How do we ensure we are part of the solution and not part of the problem? To answer either of these questions requires providers of disability services and support to engage with and empower their users.

In the spirit of 'nothing about us without us' 2018 has seen the launch of a 'Disability Services Panel' at the University of Leeds. A collaborative panel of staff and disabled students and researchers it offers the chance for the latter to influence the development of services and provisions and a voice in cross-institutional inclusion and equality initiatives. Drawing on the University of Leeds 'Partnership' commitment this panel is a pilot for a more open and transparent approach to planning and delivering support and services for disabled students and researchers.

Beyond the practical benefits of engaging disabled students in understanding their needs, this new initiative intends to increase the accountability of Disability Services and to recognise and enhance the representation, visibility and influence of disabled students and researchers. By elevating their position within our Service we seek to ultimately contribute to tackling the attitudinal barriers they may face in our institution, the HE sector and wider society. This Panel positions disabled students and researchers as partners in enhancing equality and inclusion.

Gaining internal funding, resources and support for this initiative required a strong evidence base and a coherent and wide-reaching engagement programme prior to its launch. To support the effective functioning of the Panel we designed a training and development package for the student and researcher participants; offering them the chance to develop new skills alongside helping us improve our Service.

In the spirit of this initiative you will hear from both staff and student members of the Disability Services Panel; we will look to share our experiences and identify the critical success factors for launching similar engagement activities. From the initial theoretical research to the design of the training package we will outline some of the steps that were taken to plan and launch this initiative. We will share the highlights and lessons learnt from the first pilot year and our plans for year two. We will offer a framework that might be followed by other institutions and we will invite the audience to consider what more they could do locally to enhance the position and influence of disabled students and researchers.

#### **5. Accessible Publishing theme: World map of opportunities - making the inaccessible more accessible. Alistair McNaught, JISC & Abi James**

Text books and reading materials in digital format are core to the teaching and learning experience in Further and Higher education. Digital text can provide accessibility benefits but it can also provide barriers. Even when digital text has sub optimal accessibility, or the accessibility is constrained by digital rights management, all is not lost. This session explores the big picture, the 'world map' of opportunities to make print impaired learners more agile and independent in squeezing accessibility out of unpromising reading lists and digital texts. This session will consider

- Alternative sources of reference materials, both mainstream and disability specialist,
- Format shifting services
- DIY tricks with OneNote, GoogleDrive, Browser plugins and Microsoft Word.

The session will provide practical tips to try yourself or take back to students as well as a useful 'world map' flow diagram to help identify the best options in different circumstances.

## **Breakout Session 4: 90 Minute Workshops: Wed 26<sup>th</sup> June 14:00**

Please select from the following:

### **1. Motive, means and opportunity: difficulties and opportunities in operationalising inclusive technology. Ivan Newman & Leanne Herbert**

Session Aim:

The aim of the session is to provide participants with practical ideas which could help their HE providers operationalise inclusive teaching.

Summary:

Fresh research conducted in 2018 by one of the presenters, using Freedom of Information requests to over 130 English HE providers, shows that very few providers have operationalised inclusive teaching by incorporating teaching adaptations into the mainstream curriculum.

This presentation and workshop presents that research, looking at the motivation, means and opportunities academics have to practice inclusive teaching. It also offers ideas for potential teaching adaptations for academics to use to support a significant group of disabled students [which group TBC] and allows delegates to develop ideas for teaching adaptations by addressing a disability of their choice using a framework developed by the presenters.

The session meets the conferences aims of 'Enhancing the Student Experience - the Full Lifecycle' by looking at a core purpose of Higher Education, that of teaching.

Further information:

At NADP's summer 2018 conference Prof Sue Rigby, V-C Bath University, talked about the difficulty HE providers have in operationalising inclusive practice. The research reported in this presentation tested that statement as regards inclusive teaching and found it a valid observation across the sector.

The research, conducted across all English HEPs using Freedom of Information requests, investigated the idea of operationalising inclusive teaching in mainstream pedagogy, identifying issues of definition, training content, training volume and specificity regarding the nature of inclusion. Additionally, it identified how English HE providers validate modules/courses against inclusivity criteria.

An important finding of the research is that HE providers may not know how to teach inclusively for any specific group and therefore they are

unable to 'grasp the nettle' of teaching adaptations when they talk about implementing inclusive teaching. Therefore, this session also presents an approach to making teaching adaptations with one group of disabled students by looking at patterns of difficulty, rather than labels, and gives participants the opportunity to work on potential teaching adaptations to benefit a disabled group of their choice.

## **2. Interactive Session on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – a SHRE-funded Project. Professor Nicola Martin, Dr Mike Wray, Dr Abi James and EA Draffan**

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) SRHE Funded Project builds on a response to Layer which appeared in JIPFHE. (Draffan, E.A., James, A. and Martin, N. (2017). Inclusive Teaching and Learning: What's Next? *Journal of Inclusive Practice in Further and Higher Education* 9 (1) pp 23-34).

Four universities and NADP members have been involved in focus groups which looked at the question of how universities are going about embedding UDL into the curriculum and wider student experience.

Students and staff have contributed. Findings have been thematically analysed by institution and also in a joined-up way which considers the bigger picture.

This workshop looks at data so far and asks what we can learn from it for our own institutions in terms of practical application.

## **3. Accessible Publishing theme: Creating an inclusive, digital accessibility culture in your organisation. Dr Abi James and Alistair McNaught, JISC**

As disability professionals we can understand how technology can be enabler and obstacle for disabled students. But embedding accessibility throughout an organisation is a challenge. The recent Public Sector Web Accessibility Regulations may provide a technical framework for the accessibility requirements for organisations. However, embedding these within roles of all staff who create, manage or purchase digital content is a challenge.

Universities and colleges procure, design and create digital content in vast quantities. While many recognise the need to make adjustments for individual students and encourage inclusive teaching and learning practice, this is often hampered by the lack of digital accessibility skills and accessible systems within the organisations. Drivers for improving digital accessibility can come through organisational leadership or from practical "can do" guidance for staff.

This session will provide participants the opportunity to discuss digital accessibility requirements and how it fits in the digital culture of further and higher education institutions. Participants will learn about the fundamentals of digital accessibility requirements and models to embed these approaches within organisations. They will have the opportunity to shape and contribute to resources for use across the sector.

**4. Accessible Publishing theme: Accessible publications, books, journals and university generated materials: the practicalities of “what”, “how” and more. Richard Orme, DAISY Consortium & Adi Latif, AbilityNet**

Learners with print disabilities have widely varying needs, but many can be addressed by suitable digital versions and relevant skills. In fact, students are increasingly able to be independent and self-reliant, using accessible versions without having to use campus support services. Professionals can support them with correct signposting and knowing the limitations of current solutions.

This fact packed workshop will take you on a journey from key concepts to tools for success. With plenty of demonstrations and q&a sessions, we will cover:

- Why this is an important topic for disability professionals
- How students are accessing digital reading in 2019
- What the accessibility benefits are for learners
- When things go wrong, who can help
- When is this practically achievable?

**5. Increasing the employment prospects for disabled students: enabling students to get the most out of university – Helen Cooke & Emma Knox, MyPlus**

The fact that disabled graduates at all qualification levels are less likely to have obtained full-time employment than non-disabled graduates\* combined with research findings that 92% of disabled students sought careers advice from their disability adviser / co-ordinator compared to 22% seeking advice from their careers adviser \*\* firmly puts employability on the agenda of University Disability Services.

Key reasons that students go to university are that they either wish to pursue a particular career or to help them to get a better job than they would have done if they hadn't gone. The same will be true for disabled students yet it remains considerably harder for them to find employment upon graduating than for their non-disabled counterparts.

A key contributor to this is that this group of students often lack the confidence to apply to employers, believing that their disability will rule them out of the running for graduate-level jobs. In addition, some disabled students have not immersed themselves in student life instead believing that academic achievement alone will make them employable; they therefore lack the employability skills that employers demand. Employers look for much more than just good academics. They want rounded individuals; those who have immersed themselves in university life and taken positions of responsibility, developed leadership skills, shown initiative, etc. And this will involve students joining clubs and societies, volunteering, gaining work experience and developing the skills required to successfully navigate recruitment processes.

However, if you lack confidence, combined with the added challenge of managing your disability, getting involved can seem impossible and it will take advice, encouragement and support from stakeholders from across the university to work together to address this.

During this session, delegates will build their knowledge and understanding of the resources available to disabled students that will:

- Show them what is possible
- Enable them to get the most out of their time at university
- Provide them with tailored careers advice
- Connect them with relevant organisations
- Help them to build their network.
- Challenge their assumptions of what is possible

It will particularly draw on the resources of the [MyPlus Students' Club](#) which is a website providing specialist advice and guidance to disabled students to enable them to get the most out of their time at university and maximise their career opportunities. Graduate and student success stories, career blogs and application advice from an incredible community of disability confident students, recruiters and career advisers show what is possible and raise aspirations.

In addition, ebooks, fact sheets, podcasts, webinars and a whole host of other resources provide useful and practical advice and guidance that is easy to access and use.

The session will also provide information about organisations which provide specialist careers advice, guaranteed interview schemes, the governments' Disability Confidence Scheme and work experience opportunities specifically for students with a disability.

Whilst the provision of careers advice remains the responsibility of the careers service, there is a collective responsibility to raise their aspirations and build the confidence of the disabled student population in order that they can maximise their chances of successful employment



outcomes. By the end of this session, delegates will be able to sign post students to the information and organisations that can best help them to achieve this.

\*AGCAS: What happens Next? – a report on the first destinations of disabled graduates

\*\*MyPlus research into: 'Understanding how disabled graduates search for jobs'