

# STUDY HIGHER ANNUAL ACCESS CONFERENCE 2021



Working with further education  
colleges and adult learners

**FRIDAY 8TH OCTOBER**  
**10am-3.00pm**

# Welcome to the virtual *Study Higher* *Annual Access Conference 2021*

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# SCHEDULE

Time	Workshop	Speaker(s)
10.00	Welcome	<b>Professor Gavin Brooks</b> , Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Buckinghamshire New University
10.10	Keynote 1	<b>Chris Millward</b> , Director for Fair Access and Participation, Office for Students
10.40	Keynote 2	<b>Sally Dicketts</b> , <i>Chief Executive of Activate Learning</i>
11.00-11.15	Break	N/A
11.15-12.45	Workstream sessions 1-4	<b>See pages 8-11 for details</b>
12.45-13.45	Lunch	N/A
13.45	Keynote 3	<b>Andy Forbes</b> , <i>HE and FE Practitioner, former head of three colleges: Hertford Regional, College of North East London and City &amp; Islington College</i>
14.05	Adult learner panel	Chair: <b>Andy Forbes</b> Adult learners: <b>Rosie Wainwright, Sobia Afridi, Diana Omokore</b>
14.50	Closing remarks	



# LINKS

Time	Workshop	Zoom Link
10.00	Welcome	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/89858728669">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/89858728669</a>
10.10	Keynote: Chris Millward	
10.40	Keynote: Sally Dicketts	
11.00-11.15	Break	N/A
11.15-12.00	Workstream 1: Uni Connect and FEC Collaboration	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/89962189308">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/89962189308</a>
11.15-12.00	Workstream 2: Adult learner insights and support	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/84988075927?pwd=MVhWaDdCb0tTUDBFTEZMUk12NzJaZz09">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/84988075927?pwd=MVhWaDdCb0tTUDBFTEZMUk12NzJaZz09</a>
12-12.45	Workstream 3: Supporting FE students with additional needs	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/86053700195">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/86053700195</a>
12-12.45	Workstream 4: Supporting adult learners in community and FECs	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/81915243558">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/81915243558</a>
12.25-13.45	Lunch	N/A
13.45	Keynote: Andy Forbes	<a href="https://brookes.zoom.us/j/86063554780">https://brookes.zoom.us/j/86063554780</a>
14.05	Adult learner panel	
14.50	Closing remarks	

# CHAIRPERSON



**Professor Gavin Brooks, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Buckinghamshire New University**

Professor Brooks graduated with a first-class honours degree in Pharmacy (1984) and obtained a PhD in the areas of organic chemistry and pharmacology (1988) from the School of Pharmacy, University of London. He registered as a Pharmacist with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1985 and has remained an active member since that date. In 1988, he joined the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Laboratories in London as a post-doctoral research fellow before being recruited (1992) as a Group Leader to the 5\*-rated Department of Cardiovascular Research, The Rayne Institute, St Thomas' Hospital, London, where he began focusing on the mechanisms that control physiological and pathophysiological cardiovascular cell growth. In 1997, he joined Prolifix Ltd. as Head of its cardiovascular programme and in 1999 he returned to academia as a Lecturer at the University of Reading, becoming Professor of Cardiovascular Research in 2002. In 2001, he was elected a Fellow of the American Heart Association and, in January 2004, he became founding Head of the new Reading School of Pharmacy. In 2008, he was a founding member of the highly successful Institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research (ICMR) that is based at the University of Reading. Also at the University of Reading, he served as Head of the School of Biological Sciences from 2008-10, he was elected Dean of Science in August 2010, and was appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning in 2011 and as Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2018.

In January 2020 Gavin Brooks joined Buckinghamshire New University as Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Amongst a range of responsibilities, he has executive oversight of the Academic Schools, and the Directorates for Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment and Research and Enterprise. He is a member of the University Executive Team (UET) and he deputises for the Vice-Chancellor on a number of occasions.

He was awarded Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA) in 2015. Amongst a number of current external appointments, Professor Brooks is: Chair of the Buckinghamshire Skills Advisory Panel; a Member of the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Chair of the Study Higher UniConnect Board; and a Visiting Professor at the University of Reading.



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Chris Millward** is the first Director for Fair Access and Participation in the Office for Students (OfS). His role is to help students and communities throughout England by ensuring that universities and colleges are doing all they can to support underrepresented groups to access and succeed in higher education, and to progress into successful careers. Chris is also an executive member of the OfS board. Chris started his career at the universities of Warwick, Edinburgh and Durham, then joined the Arts and Humanities Research Council as Head of Research Programmes. Prior to the establishment of the Office for Students in 2018, Chris was Director of Policy at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).



**Sally Dicketts** has held senior posts in both secondary schools and further education. She became Principal at Milton Keynes College in 1996, and in 2003 became the first Principal of Oxford & Cherwell Valley College. She now leads Activate Learning which brings together, in one group across Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey, seven FE Colleges, four UTC's, two 11-18 secondary schools and a training provider delivering apprenticeships.

Sally is a tireless campaigner and advocate for the learning and skills sector, is a president of the AoC and a board member of ETF and AoC. Sally chairs a range of national and regional committees all related to education and learning. Sally was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Honours list in July 2013.

Her main areas of interest are how people learn, mindfulness and how to develop more entrepreneurial innovative individuals. She enjoys travel, cycling, exercise and spending time with her partner and daughter.



**Andy Forbes** did his teacher training at Manchester University and began his career as a secondary school English teacher, before making the transition to further education by joining Manchester College. He has previously served as Principal of four colleges: Hertford Regional College, the College of Haringey Enfield and North East London, City & Islington College, and most recently City of Bristol College. He is a UCAS Trustee and Chair of the Board of UCAS Media Limited. Andy has a degree in English from Cambridge University, and a PGCE and Diploma in Management Sciences from the University of Manchester.

# ADULT LEARNER PANEL

**Chair: Andy Forbes** (as above)



**Rosie Wainwright** has shown great tenacity after a tumultuous start in life. After growing up in care and struggling through school, it has been through learning about how to help others that Rosie has learnt how to help herself. Rosie has progressed onto a degree in law and now works as a Regional Manager for a UK-Wide Social Mobility Charity & co-runs a bespoke programme supporting young people in care. Rosie received the 'Outstanding Individual Award' from the Festival of Learning in 2021.



**Sobia Afridi** did not do very well at school for many reasons, mainly due to being bullied a lot. However she did manage to do 10 GCSEs and she started working at Oxford Brookes University in 1995. She loved listening to students talking about education and, after a few years, she looked into 'Access courses'. Initially very scared, she started an 'Access to Humanities' course and just loved it. Although it was difficult working part time and doing a full time 'Access course' with 2 children. Sobia then applied to Oxford Brookes University to study International Relations and Sociology. She studied part time and worked full time. She graduated in 2015 and it was an extremely proud moment for her and her family. "I am very proud of what I have achieved, I cannot say it was easy for me but I loved learning".

**Diana Omokore** is the third member of the adult learner panel. Living in care, Diana experienced a difficult start in life, and has had to overcome significant barriers on her learning journey into higher education. However she is now studying a BSc (Hons) medical science at De Montfort University with the ambition to become a doctor. Diana received the 'Outstanding Individual Award' at the Festival of Learning in 2019.

# WORKTEAM 1

## Uni Connect and FEC collaboration

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### *"Collaboration with FE colleges" - Go Higher West Yorkshire*

Speakers: Bill Robb- Team Manager and Kirsty Sanderson-Outreach Officer, Go Higher West Yorkshire

At GWHY we have staff based in all of our partners who promote the full range of routes into and through higher education and deliver activity based on the needs of learners. Our practitioner members have created their own working group which focuses on promoting University Centres and FE Colleges to learners. They have created a suite of films which highlights the unique selling points of studying HE in a college based setting, and are developing a dedicated web page of resources for learners to learn about FE Colleges.

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### *"Case study of how Cirencester College have worked with Uni Connect and what has been most effective" - Cirencester College*



Speakers: Dr Jane Fern – Strategic Development Manager, and Mike Cadman- Head of Pastoral, Cirencester College



Cirencester College educates an increasingly diverse profile of students from a broad geographical area. We have high aspirations and no HE progression gap; the same proportion of learners progress to university across all Polar 4 quintiles. Cirencester College works with two Uni Connect consortia, both as a deliverer of pre-16 work and as a receiver of support for our own students. We will emphasise the importance of involving colleges in pre-16 outreach work, cover how college support requirements differ from schools and evaluate the effectiveness of what types of support work for our students.





# WORKTEAM 2

## Adult learner insights and support

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*"What does an analysis of the Uni Connect Annual Survey 2020 tell us about the future plans and attitudes towards higher education of adult learners in East Anglia?" - NEACO*

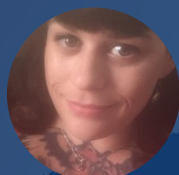


Speaker: Rebecca Middleton – Data and Evaluation Analyst, Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) - University of Cambridge

Given the increased focus on widening participation for mature learners and on further education (FE) colleges during Uni Connect Phase 3, this session seeks to explore the future plans and attitudes towards higher education of adult and mature learners studying FE level courses in East Anglia, using data from neaco's 2020 Annual Survey of 60 schools and 10 FE colleges in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

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*"FEC access partnerships to support adults into HE" - UEA*



Speaker: Gemma Standen – Widening Participation Officer for mature students, UEA

This presentation explores our partnership approach to supporting Access to Higher Education providers in the local area, and the impact on admissions and confidence in learners progressing onto UEA courses. There will be insight into how our lifecycle approach is providing a wider synergy in our mature student community, including increased confidence in exceeding entry tariff and overall success in the university.



# WORKSTREAM 3

## Supporting FE students with additional needs

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### *"Supporting ESOL students at FE colleges" - **Aspire Higher***



Speaker: Emma Semi – Aspire Higher Project Officer, University of Bedfordshire

"The pandemic has not only disrupted students' education in schools, but many young people who have moved to the UK to learn English and some of which are young refugees".

This presentation looks at the opportunities of supporting ESOL learners at FE Colleges and virtual schools through online delivery by university student associates. It also looks at the future developments of EAL in a local provision through a blended approach; working closely with local authorities, TEFL students and academics at the University of Bedfordshire.

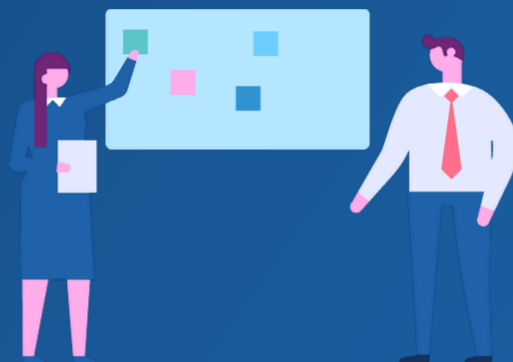
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### *"Transitioning students effectively: a student-led approach to mental health support" - **University of Lincoln***



Speaker: Zoe Mills – Project Manager, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute, University of Lincoln

Unprepared, university life can impact adversely with the changes it brings to new students. Navigating new campuses, changes to routine and academic learning alongside new social interactions can prove large steps to take. This webinar shares 'best practice' from a major mental health project currently being undertaken at the University of Lincoln. It discusses work produced, key findings and adaptations, whilst also considering challenges faced by FEC leavers to enable practitioners to utilise elements within their own practice.



# WORKSTREAM 4

## Supporting adult learners in community and FECs

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*"Realising opportunities; sustainable approaches to supporting adult progression"*  
- **University of Leeds**



Speaker: Olivia Garvey – Development Officer, Lifelong Learning Centre, University of Leeds

The 'Realise' programme to support adult progression is based on sustained partnerships between the Lifelong Learning Centre at the University of Leeds and local Colleges. Working with adults studying GCSE and other level 2 and 3 courses in community-based FE, the programme aims to support attainment and raise awareness of and aspirations to HE. This presentation will examine the challenges of engaging these learners during the pandemic, share lessons learned from online activity and explore mutually beneficial partnership work and a well-established model of engagement.

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*"The Jumpstart taster course, an example of university supporting adult learners."*  
- **University of Leeds**

Speaker: Fiona Chapel – Development Officer, Lifelong Learning Centre, University of Leeds

The University of Leeds' Lifelong Learning Centre runs a taster course called Jumpstart, for any adult wanting to try higher education. This presentation will explore how Jumpstart supports adult learners to make a realistic choice about higher education. It will look at how the course builds participants' confidence in their learning and a sense of belonging to the group, creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment. During the academic year 2020 to 2021 Jumpstart ran online. The course sustained its recruitment of adults from local communities and there were some unexpected benefits of online provision which we will incorporate into future work.





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