



INTEGRATING WORK AND LEARNING

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**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference**  
**6-8<sup>th</sup> September, University of York**



**Ron Cooke Hub, University of York, Campus East**

**Day 2: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September**  
**12:15 – 13:15**

## **Q&A Experts Panel**

ASET brings together a range of expert colleagues from across the sector who will be able to share their experience and expertise of supporting students, in the context of their identity or protected characteristics, to become employable graduates. The session will give an opportunity for the Panel to answer questions submitted anonymously throughout conference via <http://tinyurl.com/ASET2016Panel> and to take further questions from the floor.

Following the Panel, delegates will have the opportunity to join a thematic discussion which will be facilitated by an ASET Trustee and a member of the Q&A Panel. These discussions will aim to share current practice, the challenges, what we would like to do and what we think the sector needs to do to improve the support for students. Each group will focus on a single theme, and the themes will be: disability, socio-economic background, gender and sexual identity, international status and race. The aim of these discussions is to highlight areas for development, both within delegates' own institutions and for ASET, on behalf of the sector.

The panel participants are:

**Sharon Didrichson, Manager, Specialisterne Northern Ireland** [www.specialisterneni.com](http://www.specialisterneni.com)

Sharon has a background in recruitment consultancy, managing campaigns for companies for over 11 years, with 6 years in Autism consultancy. She has studied Autism Spectrum Disorders to Masters level and has managed programmes for people with social communication difference and their employers in Ireland (North and South) over a 3 year period. She currently delivers on the Adult Module of the MSc Autistic Spectrum Disorders at Queens University Belfast.

Specialisterne NI is a specialist recruitment consultancy and social enterprise that works to help people on the Autistic Spectrum prepare for, secure, and sustain graduate job roles. It is part of the Specialisterne Foundation, which has worked since 2004 in over 13 countries towards its mission of securing 1 million jobs for people who are on the Autistic Spectrum.

**Vicky Duckworth, Senior Lecturer, Further Education Research Lead, Edgehill University and Helena Kennedy Foundation trustee**

Vicky will join the panel and follow on from her earlier keynote, to answer your questions on challenging inequality, widening participation, inclusion and community action drawing on her research base on the impact of violence and trauma on learning, possibilities, resistance and transformation and its link to class, gender, ethnicity and literacy.

**Julie Forbes, Women's Engineering Society, (Ordinary Council Member)** [www.wes.org.uk](http://www.wes.org.uk)

Julie is currently a Certification Engineer with Zodiac Aerospace, having graduated with a Masters in Advanced Aerospace Engineering from the Queen's University Belfast in 2015. As an undergraduate Julie completed a placement year in Austria and was awarded Highly Commended in the ASET Student Competition for her account of her experiences. She has since joined the Council of the Women's Engineering Society and joins us on our panel with her early career insights.

**Jo Holliday, International Student Adviser, University of Sheffield and Chair of Association of International Student Advisers** [www.aisa.org.uk](http://www.aisa.org.uk)

Jo Holliday has worked as an International Student Adviser at Sheffield Students' Union since 1991 and has become a well-regarded national expert in work and relationship immigration in relation to students. She is valued for her ability to identify and clearly communicate solutions for both students and employers navigating the immigration maze. One colleague stated: "Jo manages to make the complexities of applying for work visas clear, comprehensive and even entertaining." She is currently chair of the Association of International Student Advisers (AISA) which provides a professional network for staff working with international students.

**Naivasha Mwanji, University Network Coordinator, Elevation Networks** [www.elevationnetworks.org](http://www.elevationnetworks.org)

Naivasha has experience in the third sector both nationally and internationally, working on projects impacting communities in Europe, Asia and Africa. She is also experienced in the design and delivery of events and was an elected committee member during her time at University for the African Caribbean Society. She makes regular contributions to conversations on gender, culture and identity and is passionate about changing the status quo of black British women.

Naivasha currently coordinates event delivery for the diversity team at Elevation Networks. Through this she has worked with organisations including The Civil Service, The Financial Conduct Authority and the Investment banks Barclays, Morgan Stanley and Deutsche Bank, to help attract more BAME and female candidates into their organisations.

**Sean Russell**, *Sean Russell Consulting* [www.seanrussellconsulting.co.uk](http://www.seanrussellconsulting.co.uk)

Sean Russell was Director of the Careers Services at the University of Birmingham and Director of Student Development at Warwick University and during that time he also worked on employability projects for LGBT students and Stonewall. In 2011 he set up and now co-runs a careers mentoring scheme for LGBT students at the University of Birmingham. He is also a freelance executive coach specialising in HE.

**Dr Mike Wray**, *Learning Support Team Manager, York St John University and Board member at the National Association for Disability Practitioners (NADP)* [www.nadp-uk.org](http://www.nadp-uk.org)

Mike oversees the work of the three teams within Learning Support at York St John: the Disability Advice Team, the Study Development Team and the Specialist Tutor Team. He previously worked with the National Disability Team (NDT) and, in the context of widening participation with Action on Access. At NDT he coordinated 23 HEFCE-funded projects in HEIs developing disability services and teaching and learning quality enhancement resources within HE. **NADP** is a professional association for staff in the tertiary education sector involved in the management or delivery of services for disabled students. They are committed to improving the professional development and status of disability practitioners in FE and HE by promoting excellence in the quality and consistency of support services provided for disabled students and staff through peer support, education, communication and leadership.