Shaping a Brighter Future  
National Sensory Conference, 14 June 2013

Workshop Facilitators

Employment opportunities and assistance

Zsuzsi Hybel

Employment Coordinator- Action for blind people

I give specialist support and advice to help blind and partially sighted people find employment, retain their employment if they are losing their sight and facing difficulties or start their own business.

I cover the Essex and Hertfordshire area and have good working links with local disability employment advisors and Job centre staff. We are a subcontractor on the Work Choice and work programme supporting blind and partially sighted clients on behalf of the Shaw Trust and Ingeus.

Paul Lennon

Caseworker – Royal Association for Deaf People

Born and raised in North Wales to deaf parents, I attended the local PHU school. As is the norm for Deaf people I faced the usually barriers in the way of “Deaf can’t do”. This affected my development, in a way, that instead of following me dream I did something else. I went on to Derby College for the Deaf and studied catering, obtaining NVQ Level 1 & 2. From this I went on to work in the catering industry and made it to the top position of Head Chef in a bistro bar in North London. I then took some time out from the catering industry and went back to college to re do my English G.C.S.E and did a basic computer course. While this was happening I started doing some voluntary work for RAD legal service department and became enthralled In the area of law. This leads me back to my dream where I was younger, being able to stand up for the rights of the people who are some way oppressed. After a short time of voluntary work I became a caseworker for the Legal department. This spurred me on to start my Law degree to which I studied part time and currently due to complete this in 18 months times. While at RAD I have had the opportunity to work in many areas such as advice, legal work & employment areas. I have recently established the Essex Deaf Job Club with the help of Essex Libraries, Essex Adult learning and the deaf community as well.
My aim is to become a qualified solicitor. This is a sector where there is very few deaf people work, the sector itself is lacking in deaf awareness. My vision which is coupled in with RAD Deaf Law Centre is to create an accessible legal services for Deaf people.

Paschal Kane

Paschal Kane is a Director at ecdp, a charity that is run by and for disabled people and based in Chelmsford. Specifically, he is responsible for developing and delivering a range of products and services including an employment programme, Essex Unite, designed to offer unemployed disabled people the opportunity to participate in meaningful work placements and improve their confidence and well-being as a concrete pathway to permanent employment. He has many years experience working in the public and private sectors most recently working as a policy advisor at the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions). He is a qualified PRINCE2 Practitioner and is passionate about delivering effective and efficient services to enhance the lives of disabled people in Essex and beyond.

Support and information for employers

Mike King

Mike is Currently working in the Essex District office as the Senior Partnership and Provision Manager. He has been in the department for 34 years and has experience of many different job roles. More recently Mike has been the Manager of several jobcentres including Waltham Cross, Stevenage, Hertford, Hatfield, Chelmsford and Southend.

Mike has worked on significant projects including the Introduction of Universal Credit and other reforms to simplify the welfare system and to ensure that the system always incentivises work and that work always pays. The overall reform package will help to make the welfare system affordable in the longer term Implement and manage the Work Programme, an integrated package of personalised support to get people into work - from jobseekers who have been out of work for some time, to those who may have been receiving incapacity benefits for many years Develop a welfare system that recognises work as the primary route out of poverty and reduces the number of children in workless households. Develop and implement the
Social Justice Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy, focused on improving social justice and on eradicating child poverty by 2020

Karen Sullivan

External Relations Advisor – Access to Work

Karen has worked for DWP and its forerunners since 1991 during this time she has undertaken a number of roles, working in local Jobcentres and working at National Tier.

In 1997 Karen moved to the field of Disability Service work and during this time has managed adviser teams supporting disabled jobseekers and has worked as an Access to Work Adviser for a number of years in a job she embraced. In May last year she joined the Access to Work External Relations Team and works with external organisations, employers and internally with DWP colleagues to raise awareness of the Access to Work programme.

In her spare time Karen enjoys spending time with family and friends and is a Company Secretary for a small business.

How can volunteering lead to new opportunities?

Shaun Basham

Engagement Manager – Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

Shaun Basham has worked for Guide Dogs since 1995 and has experience of directly delivering sensory services across the South East Region working closely with both statuary and voluntary organisations. This included experience of working in partnership with Action for Hearing Loss in the London Borough of Redbridge providing a joined up service for sensory loss residents.

Shaun is a qualified Rehabilitation Worker as well as the Engagement Manager for Guide Dogs covering the South East Region. As Engagement Manager Shaun actively challenges all forms of discrimination which create barriers to fair access and inclusion.

He also promotes Guide Dog services, campaigns locally and seeks collaborative opportunities to further develop and improve sensory services for both children and adults.
Phil Lee

Co Chair – Vision Impaired Planning Group

Phil has had a vision impairment since birth and his mother was told at 3 months old that he was blind and would never see.

He has gained experience of disability equality through being involved in the equality committee of the CPSA while working for British Telecom and being the regional Chair of the CPSA at HM Customs and Excise.

He was the Disability Officer for Unison at the NHS as well as having worked for Ask Vera as a training coordinator producing training on disability from the programme to carrying out the training. While at Ask Vera (Ling Trust) he passed train the trainer course.

Phil was the first Chairman of Fair Access to Colchester FA2C getting involved in many local access issues. Phil is currently Chair of ECC Vision Impairment Planning Group. In December 2011 I passed his (Pre-Teacher Training in Lifelong Support) Ptlls qualification.

Phil currently do voluntary work with the RNIB as a Voluntary Campaign Co-ordinator (Essex) and I also work with Guidedogs for the Blind Association as a Campaign Ambassador. As a campaigner Phil has been involved in many campaigns: (Personal Independence Payment, RNIB Bus Campaign and Guidedogs Talking buses.

Julie Ratcliffe

Team Leader – Royal Association for Deaf People

My name is Julie Ratcliffe, I am a child of Deaf adults. CODA.

I began life in London and realised from a young age that I needed to support my parents with communication, I quickly adapted to life as a young carer although at the time I wasn't aware that I was a ‘carer’.

Eventually, I moved to north Essex, and had children of my own. When it was time to actively look for work I realised that i could use my Sign Language ability to start my career.

I began volunteering for the Royal Association for Deaf People based in Colchester, my experience and knowledge of Deaf issues and barriers grew. Eventually I managed to successfully gain paid employment at RAD.
After many roles within the Children and Families service, Advocacy, Employment and Youth Work I have now become the Teamleader of the Services Directorate, overseeing frontline staff, working with Deaf people in the community to better develop accessible services for the future.

Work is very busy at the moment which is fantastic, but it is nice to return home to my children and three dogs !!!

Emily Papaleo

Emily Papaleo is the Regional Campaigns Officer for RNIB, covering the East of England. She leads RNIB’s campaigns at a regional level and works to increase the involvement of blind and partially sighted people in campaigning. As part of this Emily manages a team of volunteer Campaign Coordinators, all of whom are themselves blind or partially sighted and are committed to making a difference in their local area.

Emily has previously worked for Norfolk County Council advising on teenage pregnancy strategy, for the Cabinet Office looking at government policy around third sector delivery of public services and in Ministerial Private Office at the Home Office. Emily has also worked for smaller local charities in London and the South East, focusing on organisational strategy and fundraising as well as providing support and advice for groups including refugees and asylum seekers, families experiencing homelessness and adults with learning disabilities.

Accessible equipment and technology for deaf and hard of hearing people – morning only

Heather Stewart

Heather has been the manager of Hearing Help Essex, a charity established in Chelmsford 25 years ago, for 18 months. The charity run sessions across Mid-Essex to help hard of hearing people with the maintenance and cleaning of their NHS hearing aid. These sessions are run by volunteers, of which half are hearing aid wearers themselves.
In the Resource Centre based in Chelmsford they hold an array of assistive equipment for the hard of hearing which can be borrowed on loan to try before you buy. Prior to joining Hearing Help Essex, Heather worked in Children’s Services and maintains a link with that sector as she is Chair of Governing Body at her local junior school.

Sean Page
Digital Inclusion Officer – Deafblind UK

Sean has recently joined Deafblind UK and is heading up their Digital Inclusion Project. The project aims raise the awareness of members in relation to off the shelf technology that is available to them. Sean has face to face experience in using technology with members of DBUK with a dual sensory loss, this experience leads to an understanding of the accessibility requirements of an off the shelf device when being used with either a sight or hearing loss. Sean has knowledge of many of the off the shelf device on the market today, but in particular focuses on using tablets such as Apples IPad or Andriod based devices. Sean will be available to offer opinions on suitability of off the shelf technology solutions for reducing isolations and accessing information.

Susan Marsh
Advocacy and Family Service Manager, Royal Association for Deaf People

Susan has worked for the Royal Association for Deaf people (RAD) for the past 10 years in a variety of roles. These include working within the older Deaf community by organising lunch clubs, working as an advocate and recently taking on the role of Advocacy and Families Service Manager.

Profoundly Deaf herself, Susan is an active member of the Deaf community and, both personally and through her work, fights to ensure equality of access to information and services for Deaf people around Essex.

In her spare time, Susan enjoys visiting friends, walking her dog Olly and curling up on the sofa with a glass of wine and a good book.
Accessible equipment and technology for vision impaired people – afternoon only

Paul Nugent

Assistive Technology Adviser- Action for blind people

Paul’s role enables him to help blind and visually impaired people to make the most of technology.

He provides training, support and practical advice on all areas of technology to enable access to information, develop their skills and become more independent. Paul supports and demonstrates products and software to clients, which can empower in vital areas of technology, such as using email to stay in touch with friends and family, shopping on the internet, accessing services, and reading printed information.

Paul can offer support and advice on low cost and no cost technology solutions. Support can be given to all ages and all levels of experience or skills in using technology.

Paul covers the Norfolk and Suffolk area and meets with clients in their home or at suitable venues.

Training and education for work, what’s out there?

Simon Burwood

Curriculum Manager- Adult Community Learning, Essex County Council

I have been working with adults in a learning environment for 16 years in a range of areas. I started as a trainer for the Metropolitan Police Service, teaching officers and civilian staff the use of our bespoke Command and Control IT systems.

I have worked in private industry and in 2007 joined Essex County Council’s Adult Community Learning team, managing a team of tutors delivering IT and Business courses. My role has grown to work with private business, charities, organisations and ECC departments to provide them with the best possible training opportunities to meet the needs of the staff and their clients. I get to meet new people every day and help them with their personal development. It is a role I enjoy and find very rewarding.
Carmen Griffiths

Curriculum Manager, Modern Foreign Languages – Adult Community Learning, Essex County Council

My name is Carmen Griffith. I am Spanish but I have lived in Essex for 25 years. I started working as a translator and after furthering my studies in Education at Greenwich University, I worked as a tutor at my local ACL centre.

A few years later I started my role as a Curriculum Manager for Modern Foreign Languages and Communication. Within this role I manage courses such as Lip Reading, British Sign Language, Inclusive Communication and Makaton among others.

During my career with ACL I have had the opportunity to be involved in several projects related to these areas of communication, especially Lip Reading.

I have also had the privilege to meet some of the students and to hear how their involvement with education has changed their lives. I am passionate about my work and I hope to continue working to provide a service for the people of Essex.

Natalie Creevy

Deaf Achieve Project Manager – Royal Association for Deaf People

Natalie Creevy has been working for the Royal Association for Deaf People for five years, providing administration support to a variety of projects including “Welcome Hear”, funded by the London Development Agency, the BMER (Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) Advocacy service, funded by London Councils and the “Deaf Achieve” project which has received funding from the Big Lottery.

Natalie became the Project Manager for Deaf Achieve in January 2013 and will continue to develop the project’s community groups based in London and Essex, supporting them to become self-sustaining in the future. The project has achieved many successful outcomes since the start in 2010 through the delivery of workshops and training opportunities, bridging the gap into employment.

Natalie is hearing and has completed her pre level 3 BSL course, she is looking forward to starting the level 3 course and developing her signing and communication skills. In her spare time, Natalie enjoys dancing, running and spending time with friends and family.