**Issue 14 – May 2016**

Congratulations on almost completing another successful year and I'm sure most of you are looking forward to a well-earned break.

This will be the last newsletter in this format but don't worry there will be a new version for next session. Thank you to everyone who has found the time to be regular contributors and I hope you will continue to do so. If you have anything you would like to say or features you would like to be included, please contact sandy.maclean@cdn.ac.uk who will be delighted to hear from you.

Please share this e-zine with colleagues who would find it of interest.

## CDN Events

**Collaborative Working in Sensory Support: strengthening the quality and consistency of support throughout the learner journey.**

Eighty practitioners from schools, colleges, universities and the voluntary sector got together at College Development Network (CDN) on Monday 25 April to consider improving provision for all learners who have a sensory impairment.

It was a day of intensive, high quality learning featuring leading researchers and professionals from diverse backgrounds. Everyone made the most of the day and the atmosphere was one of real enthusiasm with delegates discussing key issues right up to the end.

We opened with a fascinating presentation by Dr Nadia Northway who clearly explained the condition of visual stress, explaining why it is often confused with dyslexia and requires specific intervention to facilitate reading.

Next, educational audiologist, Joe O'Donnell, talked about creating optimal conditions for hearing in class and the impact of poor listening conditions on learning.

Throughout the day delegates enjoyed a varied 'inclusion marketplace' where they could meet key service providers and network.

The afternoon was packed with a choice of workshops including:

- Producing STEM resources for British Sign Language users
- Providing access to education and training for learners who have a severe dual sensory loss
- Looking to the future: ensuring blind and partially sighted young people are prepared for life after school
- New developments in Electronic Note Taking – an inclusive communication solution
- CPD for educators from the Royal Blind Learning Hub
- Spotlight on Visual Inclusion

The event also saw the launch of Inclusive Practitioner, a new initiative from CDN that awards recognition for professional learning activities related to inclusiveness. Participation in the event was worth four Inclusive Practitioner credits, so a great way for everyone to get their accounts off to a good start.

As there was such a large waiting list for the event, we livestreamed some of the presentations and workshops. Recordings of the livestreams are available to everyone on the CDN website.

## Upcoming Events

**Developing the Young Workforce through SQA National 2 Employment Skills units**
Monday 13 June 2016 (1000–1230)

 'Diversity in the workplace, reflecting the diversity of our communities, will make a tangible contribution to addressing wider inequality issue in society.' The Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy.

There is wide spread recognition in the college sector of the importance of work skills for both young people and adults with additional learning needs. To help support this aspiration SQA have produced a suite of Employability Skills units at SQA National 2 which provides accreditation for skills gained in both preparing for employment and the development of job specific skills across a range of vocational areas. To support delivery of these units CDN has produced a toolkit of resources. These materials will be added to the CDN Professional Learning Platform (CDN LearnOnline) over the next few weeks.

Following consultation it was clear that learning activities should be as diverse and flexible as possible so they have been developed as both teaching activities which can be used with whole class or small group and interactive learner activities which can be accessed online.

Gathering photo and video evidence of achievement is a well-established practice with this group of learners but it can be time consuming to organise this evidence and then link it to appropriate outcomes. The resource also includes a demonstration of how 2build a profile, a software application for iPad, iPad touch and android tablets, which can be used to record naturally occurring photo and video evidence and link it to relevant outcomes.

At the CDN event on Monday 13 June participants will have an opportunity to view and try these materials and hear an example of how evidence of practical skills can be recorded.

Further information about the event can be found here.

**Promoting inclusion to support student success: Review of Extended Learning Support**
Friday 24 June 2016 (1000–1600)

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has just completed a full review of the use of Extended Learning Support (ELS) funding in the college sector. This included college Principals, staff and students and stakeholders. A full report on the outcomes of the review can be found [here](here).

The SFC were very impressed by the professionalism of the staff involved in helping students with additional needs and in their progressive efforts to embrace diversity and build inclusive learning environments which benefit all students. The recommendations of the review seek to further support and evidence the positive impact of the support and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

The key recommendations from the review are that the fund should be renamed as the Access and Inclusion Fund and that the purpose of this fund should be to supplement core funding to support an inclusive college. To capture the impact of this fund at a national and regional level it is proposed that the Outcome Agreement guidance from AY 2017–18 requires colleges to develop an Access and Inclusion Strategy demonstrating their inclusive practices, investment in their staff and college resources and outcomes for students.

Partnership working was a key theme from the review and it is clear to the SFC that this is now a significant and increasing part in how colleges meet their students' needs. It is suggested that the proposed approach would complement that and would enable the college to demonstrate their contribution within the region.

A key conclusion from our engagement with students is that this support is crucial to their achievement at college. This is also supported through an examination of FES data in relation to ELS. When asked what would happen if the supports were not in place the students, without exception, stated they would fail or leave. The students were also very well informed of their support package and were highly complimentary about the individual staff members assigned to assist them. It was the human element of the support package that appeared to be significantly more important and impactful for students than any equipment allocated to them. Some students did identify situations where staff were particularly busy and could not assist them immediately but in these cases this was not detrimental to the long term achievement of the student. It was clear from speaking with college staff and management that although all the students we met would have had a Personal Support for Learning Plan not all of the support they were given was funded through ELS more it was a combination of the totality of funds at the disposal of the college.

During the period of the review we identified excellent practice and encountered a staff cohort, without exception, who exemplified inclusive practices and support. Staff merely wanted the best for students and would go to incredible lengths to ensure that they had support in place to enable them to fully participate in the college experience and achieve to the highest level possible. This was confirmed by students in the student focus groups.
If you would like more details on the ELS review please contact Fiona Burns at the SFC on [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](fburns@sfc.ac.uk) or 0131 313 6517.

During the review college staff outlined a desire to understand different current approaches across the sector. We have therefore asked CDN to help and they have agreed to hold an event. Details are listed below.

**Transition from ELS Funding to an 'Access and Inclusion Strategy'**
Friday 24 June 2016 (1000–1400)

Delegates will hear from the SFC and see the access related elements in the forthcoming draft Guidance for Outcome Agreements for AY17–18. There will be an interactive session to provide delegates with the opportunity to feedback to the SFC and to share practice with colleagues from the sector.

As part of the session, CDN will work with colleagues to identify ways in which we can support colleges to develop their Access and Inclusion Strategy for inclusion in their draft Outcome Agreements for AY 2017–18.

For further information and to book on line follow this link.

**CALL Scotland: Free seminar on Speech Recognition**
Thursday 2 June 2016 (1330–1630)

A free half day seminar will be held at Moray House to bring together participants in the Talking in Exams project to share their experience of using Dragon Naturally Speaking software in school. At this event you will be able to hear how this software has been used to support learners who cannot demonstrate their true potential because of difficulties with handwriting or word processing, particularly in assessment situations. There will also be a demonstration of alternative speech recognition software including some which is readily available and free (e.g. Siri, Google Voice typing).

A representative from SQA will discuss assessment arrangements and the use of ICT for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, focusing specifically on the use of speech recognition software and how that would work in an exam setting.
Sign up for the seminar here.

For more information on speech recognition software, go to the Information Page on the CALL Scotland website.

# Exciting New CPD Opportunity

**Inclusive Practitioner Programme**

CDN has created a new way for you to get recognition for participating in professional development activities related to inclusive practice.

Completion of relevant activities generates Inclusive Practitioner credits. Accumulate 20 Inclusive Practitioner credits to be awarded a certificate and Open Badge. This can be used to evidence your status as an Inclusive Practitioner.

Listed here are some examples of activities in the Inclusive Practitioner Programme. More are in development. Opening an Inclusive Practitioner account is optional – you can also undertake all these activities as standalone learning experiences. All are fully funded, so there are no fees to pay.

- **Needs Assessor Update Series Webinars.** Participation in one Needs Assessor Update webinar generates one credit. To obtain the credit complete the evaluation emailed to you after the webinar.
- **Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Classroom Online course.** Successful completion of the Knowledge Check generates six credits and a CPD certificate or Open Badge in Promoting Positive Behaviour in the Classroom.
- **Understanding the Role of the Support Worker Online course.** Successful completion of the reflective activities and Knowledge Check generates four credits and a CPD certificate or Open Badge in Understanding the Role of the Support

Look out for the Inclusive Practitioner logo on workshops and events. Choose different combinations of activities depending on your role and interests.

# Care Experienced Students

## Corporate Parenting

As you will be very aware the new role colleges have as corporate parents coupled with the National Ambition set by the SFC 'for there to be no difference in the outcomes of care experienced learners comparative to their peers' by 2021, means there is a great deal going on in this area.

In March CDN held a very successful event where CDN's Guidelines for Writing a Corporate Parenting Plan were launched and colleges had an opportunity to share practice. We are planning a further event on Wednesday 28 September to look at the review and revise the process for corporate parenting plans as well as providing a further opportunity to share practice.

## Care Experienced Students

In June we will launch a new Care Experienced Students section of the Professional Learning Platform (CDN LearnOnline). The section will include the new Guidelines mentioned above, links to reports and projects and a sharing practice section. Please let us know if you would like anything else included or you have any practice you think it would be useful to share with colleagues. We are looking for examples of questions on application forms, information specific to care experienced students on websites, social media, leaflets, etc. In addition we would be very keen to receive examples of specific processes you've developed that support care experienced students.

One of the debates that is taking place in this area at the moment is the possible tension between the roles and boundaries of a professional relationship versus that of a 'parent.' This debate has been prompted by care experienced students and organisations like Who Cares? Scotland and is one that we will raise at the September event. Meanwhile you may want to look at the two links below which both touch on this issue.

- Who Cares? Scotland's '1000 Voice Manifesto – our ambition to create the most caring nation in the world' can be found here.
- The story of the Relationships Matter project which ran from April 2014 to April 2016, facilitated by Iriss and led by the Relationships Matter Collective, a group of inspirational practitioners and young people. You can access this here.

## Care Leavers, Care Experienced and Carers Forum

West of Scotland Care Leavers Forum and Care Experienced and Carers East Forum (CECEF) are holding a joint event facilitated by CELCIS on Thursday 2 June 2016 1300– 600 at University of Stirling. To reserve a place, colleges in the west should contact Dan Keenan at Glasgow University Daniel.Keenan@glasgow.ac.uk and for colleges in the east contact Pat Reid at Heriot Watt university p.reid@hw.ac.uk.

Don't hesitate to be in touch if we can be of any help with your work with care experienced students.

Contact: andree.carruthers@cdn.ac.uk or sandy.maclean@cdn.ac.uk

### Enabling Student Carers

Although the Government funding for this CDN project has now ended supporting colleges to enable carers will remain a key part of CDN's work. In addition the passing of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the fact that the SFC is talking to carer organisations means this agenda will remain a priority for colleges.

Thanks to the generosity of colleagues we have recently added another section to the Enabling Student Carers resources on CDN's Professional Learning Platform (CDN LearnOnline). The new section is called Sharing Practice, can be found here.
and includes examples of:

• Application forms, pre and post application processes Discretionary Fund Application
• Leaflets and Posters
• Webpages
• Guidance Resources
• Protocols with local carer organisations.

Please be in touch if you have any examples that you are happy to share with colleagues and we'll post them up.

As always if we can be of support to you with any of this work please contact us.
Contact: andree.carruthers@cdn.ac.uk sandy.maclean@cdn.ac.uk

## LEAD Scotland

**Are We There Yet? Improving life long and life wide learning journeys for disabled people.**

Lead will be holding their fifth National Conference at Perth College UHI on Thursday 9 June.

Dame Anne Begg, Member of Parliament between 1997 and 2015 for Aberdeen South and the first full-time wheelchair user in the House of Commons since 1880, will chair the event. One of the confirmed speakers is Keith Smyth, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of the Highlands and Islands, an expert in inclusive online learning and technology. The full workshops list can be accessed here.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite with tickets costing £80 for the full day or £45 for a half day.

# Supporting Learning

**SQA National 1 and 2 update**

The latest update from SQA on activity at National 1 and 2 can be accessed here.

Just a reminder that National 2 Units and Courses set at SCQF level 2 will replace the existing Access 2 Units and Courses that are being withdrawn at the end of session 2015/2016.

A summary of all National 2 Units and Courses can be found on SQA National 1 and National 2 page

**The Autism Toolbox: a Resource for Staff in Schools and Colleges**

An excellent thirty minute webinar was delivered for CDN by Moira Park of Scottish Autism. Moira provides a guide to using the wealth of resources available in the Autism Toolbox. This is such an extensive resource you will find her tour of the site a great help in identifying areas of particular interest and relevance to your practice.

The website supports understanding of autism and provides strategies for working with learners with autism at all stages of their development. Though currently it does not refer specifically to the college setting, you will find the sections on post 16 learners and the management of effective transitions particularly useful.

The webinar recording can be accessed here.

**Good News Story**

We are all aware of the challenges faced by learners with autistic spectrum disorders so it was lovely to hear about this innovative move by a national supermarket. An Asda store in Manchester decided to schedule its first ever 'quiet hour' to help autistic and disabled shoppers. Escalators, in-store music and display TVs were all turned off and customers were given a map of the store featuring pictures instead of words and now EIGHT other shops at Manchester Fort are set to do the same.

Read the full story here.

# ICT

**Connect More with Jisc in Scotland: Make the most of the power of digital**

Building on the success of last year's Connect More events, Jisc is again heading out and about across the UK, with a Scottish event being held on 16 June 2016 at Forth Valley College.

The event will offer you the opportunity to:

- Connect with your peers, learn more about their good practice and how, through Jisc, they are making most of digital
- Hear from Jisc and sector experts, and leave with ideas, inspiration and insight so you can make the most of the power of digital
- Find out more about how you can make the most of Jisc advice and practical assistance, sector deals and shared services.

DigiLab will also be an integral part of the event, and you'll have the chance to explore a wide range of tools, gadgets and machines, and consider how the technology that is on the horizon is being tried and tested in education and research.

[Discover what to expect in the Digi Lab this year.](#)

**Who should attend?**

Those of you who are – or want to be – using and working with digital technology in higher education, further education, or in skills, work-based or employer-led learning, on a day-to-day basis.

That includes anyone:

- With a teaching, academic, lecturing, assessing, learning support or training role
- Who specialises in the use of learning technologies. For example, as an advanced practitioner, blended learning adviser, e-learning officer or learning technologist
- Who is a learning resources assistant, library assistant, subject librarian, or subject specialist.

The event is free, though booking is required. You can book at the [Jisc website](#).

## The Summer of Student Innovation 2016

The Summer of Student Innovation is a Jisc co-design project developed with strategic partners across higher education, further education and skills. The competition is now in its fourth year where successful entrants to the competitions receive a grant and support from Jisc to develop their education technology ideas, with the aim of improving students' creative design, research, entrepreneurial, and project management skills.

One of last year's winners, VoiceIT is an accessible, symbolised app developed by and for students with additional learning needs to anonymously report issues, such as cyberbullying, inappropriate websites, issues at school, college or home, worries about relationships, drugs or alcohol, etc. to the Safeguarding Manager.

This year Jisc will be running two competitions and both are open for entries until Monday 23 May 16.

For the Student ideas competition Jisc are seeking ideas for using technology that could improve research, learning or student life and have the potential for wide use across higher and further education. Your idea might be a small tweak to how things work or a big solution for a whole college, university or other learning provider – but you will be required to show that it could have benefits beyond your own context. The successful teams each gain an initial £2,000 plus mentoring through a design sprint, and a further £3,000 if we select their idea to be developed as a product. The student ideas competition is open to anyone working or studying in UK HE, FE and skills. The teams who apply should be student-led but may involve staff. To be successful you don't need to be a programmer or designer as we will help you to develop your idea.

The Supporting technology start-up projects competition is for small teams who would like to pilot their existing product within colleges, universities or skills providers. Our £20,000 start-up grants will enable five successful teams to turn their working beta into a functioning product. Your product should be at least a working beta; we don't expect that you will have an existing customer base but some evidence of pilots with learners would be beneficial.

To enter: enter the competitions by uploading a short video and text about your idea to Elevator site. You'll need to reach a minimum voting threshold to be considered for funding. Your entry could be the spark of an idea, or it could be ready to pilot with institutions – but whatever stage it's at, it will need to have the potential for widespread use across higher and further education and skills. Following the competition, Jisc will develop a selection of the successful projects into products. In the past, Jisc has funded a platform for research participants, a student feedback tool, apps to help apprentices and tools to support accessibility and inclusion.

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# The Assistive Technology Forum

This network was launched with a face to face meeting in December 2015 at CDN. Members discussed what they would like the network to deliver and answers included: a place to share best practice and learn about new technology as well as the potential opportunity to develop practice through webinars and face to face meetings.

Since then the Assistive Technology Forum has been steadily growing over the session – we now have 160 members in total from across a wide range of institutions in the UK and beyond. Members are drawn from both Universities and Colleges across the UK – nearly every college in Scotland is now represented on the forum (only two to join!) as well as 24 Universities from across the UK. Supporting organisations such as Jisc and CDN, as well as DSA assessors and training providers are also signed up. Please continue posting all questions 'on and around' the topic of assistive technology – we have an ever willing, expert base on which to draw.

In conjunction with others, the forum is helping to organise and promote two events in coming months.

In association with CALL Scotland and City of Glasgow College, Sight and Sound Technology have created a new Getting AT Ready event to be held in Glasgow on Friday 24 June at the new Riverside Campus of City of Glasgow College.

This first inaugural event brings together Assistive Technology experts, disability professionals and manufacturers to provide a holistic package to meet your AT needs. Whether it's proven solutions, or new and innovative uses of AT you are looking for, the day will provide an opportunity to hear from a broad range of professionals and engage in meaningful activities to develop your provision. Experts will be on hand throughout the day, ready with their technical expertise and knowledge, to help shape solutions to meet your student and institutional needs. We look to provide a workshop style morning session with an exhibition running alongside, punctuated with a tasty breakfast and lunch. We would be delighted if you could attend.

The Assistive Technology Network is also hoping to host a webinar session by SensusAccess over the next few months, either before the end of this academic year or at the beginning of the next session.

You may have heard about RoboBraille which is freely available for individuals to convert information into accessible formats. There are some interesting examples where learners have used this to create their own alternative formats. Robobraille belongs to the wider range of services from the Danish based SensusAccess service. Where RoboBraille focuses on individual use, SensusAccess is the institutional facing service offering the provision for staff and students in colleges and universities to easily convert content into preferred formats. It is available in over 25 languages and allows students, faculty, staff, and alumni to automatically convert documents into a range of alternate media including audio books (MP3 and DAISY), e-books (EPUB, EPUB3 and Mobi) and digital Braille. The service can also be used to convert inaccessible documents such as image-only PDF files, JPG pictures and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations into more accessible and less tricky formats. This is being trialled and used by a number of institutions in the UK internationally.

Keep an eye on the ASSISTIVE-TECHNOLOGY@JISCMAIL.AC.UK mail list for more information on both events. To sign up to the Assistive Technology Forum please email claire.guthrie@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk with your details.

## Free Stuff

Skills workshop is the long established home of free adult literacy and numeracy resources. You can view the website here. New materials are added regularly and there are now more than 2000 free Functional Skills and Skills for Life resources.  To get a quick overview of the types of resource available have a look at the Tag Clouds page.

## Quick Links

Past CDN Additional and Complex Needs Newsletters

CDN Professional Learning Platform