

THE FIFTH NATIONAL CAREER LEADERS CONFERENCE



NICKI MOORE PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THIS YEAR'S EVENT

Our first in-person event since the pandemic! The fifth National Careers Leaders Conference (NCLC) took place on June 30th 2022 and was an enormous success. The event was held at a new venue within the University of Derby and attracted over 120 individuals from across the country. Whilst the majority of these were Career Leaders, there were large numbers of Careers Advisers and organizational managers who came along. The event has previously been organised through a collaboration between the CDI and iCeGS at the University but this year we were joined by a new partner, Optimus Education who organise the National Careers Shows and who helped with the events exhibition. The event was sponsored by Xello.

History of this event

The landscape of support for Career Leaders is busy and includes local, regional and national opportunities through online forum, resources and events. This was not always the case. During previous models of delivering support to schools and colleges, local 'curriculum' managers were appointed for each Connexions area. These individuals met at an event in York coordinated by David Andrews. Many of these managers also ran

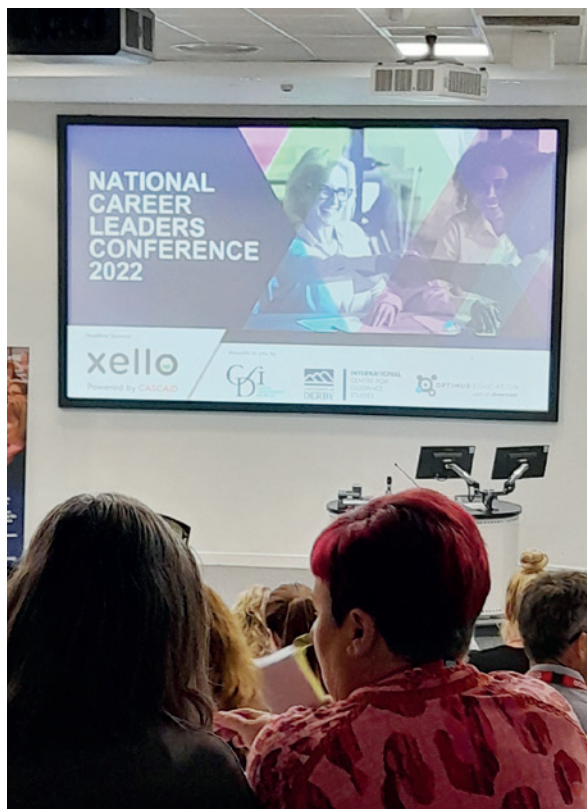
local events. As the delivery model became more complex post-Connexions, it was realised that a more inclusive response was required which involved all those delivering and supporting schools and colleges in their career development activities. This was an England focused event due to the delivery model and legislative requirements which are a devolved responsibility. A decision was taken by the CDI and iCeGS to work in collaboration to review and develop the national event and to offer it as a new 'National Career Leaders Conference'. During the pandemic, this was offered as an online event using the conference platform, Hopin. This year however, we were back to an in-person event. This year's event exemplified the need to open this not just to Career Leaders but also Enterprise Co-Ordinators, Careers Advisers, senior school and college leaders and guidance organisations' managers.

What the event covered

The programme included two nationally known speakers who provided a focus on the cycle of effective career leadership. Nicola Hall, Director of Education for the Careers and Enterprise Company emphasized the CEC vision of quality in careers work in schools and colleges. She explained the consequences of developing the programme including improving confidence in the careers system, creating a culture of continual improvement and ensuring consistency for all.

Ryan Gibson is from the Academies Enterprise Trust and is responsible for the quality of careers education for 32000 young people in 57 schools. In 2017 Ryan was recognised as 'UK Career Educator of the Year' by the Career Development Institute. Ryan focused on the issues associated with strategic career leadership across a large multi-academy trust. He noted the importance of a school vision and in his experience, it was about helping each young person to find 'their remarkable'. He described his approach around the 'three I's'. These were Intent (establishing clear aims and objectives), Implementation (ensuring the delivery through clarity and ensuring delivery staff have the correct knowledge and skills) and Impact (ensuring a strong programme of evaluation is in place).

The programme was organised around three themes: developing the workforce; developing the culture; and developing practical approaches. Our workshop and speaker panel used these themes to develop their activities and the conference delegates benefitted from eighteen workshops and three panelists. Members of the panel represented both mainstream and special schools and a sixth form college and gave insights into





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their provision and approaches. Workshops included stimulating topics such as ‘Breaking and building career capital’ and ‘Practical approaches to embedding careers into the curriculum’. We were particularly pleased to see workshops which posed questions and provided some answers on engaging with a wide range of stakeholders including parents, employers and alumni.

All of the sessions were recorded so that delegates could access these afterwards. This was a good job as the main criticism we received was that people were finding it hard to choose which ones to attend as there were so many great options! The programme was well received and provides optimism as we begin thinking about next year’s speaker programme.

The exhibition had 16 stalls. The feedback on the new format was largely positive with plenty of suggestions for improvement such as including some smaller providers, employers and sectoral representation.

What have we learned for next year’s event?

The organisers had been concerned that holding the event in Derby might limit the geographical location of the delegates, particularly given the very high attendance at our virtual events. In practice the event was attended

by individuals from across England and we are confident that next year’s event in June 2023 in Derby will attract plenty of interest from all over the country. We will be considering whether to extend the event to have UK-wide coverage and possibly international interest.

Our evaluation activity asked delegates three questions about their ambitions for the event. People wanted to network, and this was the most frequently expressed goal. People hoped to be inspired, to learn from each other and to develop their practice amongst other things. The majority indicated that they had reached their goals and what’s more, when we asked a question about the impact of the conference, we were pleased to see a close alignment between the original aims and the way people perceived their overall gains from attending the event.

We will soon begin organizing next year’s event and will be making decisions about the structure of the programme, the balance between keynote presentations and workshops and the exhibition. If you have any suggestions or further comments to make which will help us to develop next year’s event, please contact Paul Challacombe at p.challacombe2@derby.ac.uk or David Morgan at david.morgan@thecdi.net.

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