



# THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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# WELCOME TO THE IEP YEARBOOK 2023

30 stories from Employability Professionals charting their achievements and learning journeys since the IEP was founded in 2012.

The Employability sector is a great place to work and we are honoured to be able to share the experiences of the wonderful people who work in it and showcase the difference our profession makes, not just for the people it serves every day, but also for the people that work within it.



# 2023 in Review

**Scott Parkin FIEP  
Group CEO, IEP**

As we dive into 2024, I am both honoured and delighted to reflect on our achievements and the milestones we have reached over the past year. This progress has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I couldn't be prouder of what we have accomplished as a team and as an Institute on behalf of our members.

## **International Growth and Developments**

Over the past year, the IEP has undergone a period of significant growth, marking a defining chapter in our organisation's history. Our Fellowship community has expanded again, and we have seen more partners joining our vibrant community. It is a testament to the impact, reputation and professionalisation of our sector that we are engaging and attracting wider networks from all over the world who wish to be involved in what we do, and who share our vision to help employability practitioners everywhere be the best they can be. One of our proudest achievements has been the expansion of our international partnerships. We have established new connections and networks in countries such as Australia, Sweden, The Netherlands, and Canada.

These partnerships have not only broadened our global reach but have also enriched the expertise and knowledge within the Institute and we are excited to be able to gain and share knowledge from our global partners to support service development in the UK.

Our global expansion was further solidified with the opening of an official office in Stockholm and welcoming Annette Holmblad MIEP as the Partnership Manager for IEP Sweden. We initiated, and have now completed, a pilot learning programme in Canada, bringing IEP Learning to Canadian employability practitioners and taking our first steps to establishing IEP Canada. We have further grown our presence in Australia, with both verbal and written submissions to the Select Committee on Workforce Australia and we held our first IEP Summit in Melbourne with support from our partners at Nous Group, Parkhouse Bell and Bounce Global.

## **Centre for Employability Excellence**

We are making real strides in the development of the Centre for Employability Excellence which we launched in 2023. Together with our Advisory Board, made up of academics, researchers, policy makers and employability stakeholders from all over the world including Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, we are creating a global platform for research and good practice in employability, fostering collaboration and discussion.

Whilst I am immensely proud of the impact we've made on the global stage; I want to emphasise that our international engagements and partnerships are not separate endeavours but intricately woven into the fabric of our commitment to excellence in the UK. The success we have achieved in bringing IEP to other parts of the world is a recognition of the synergies in global issues and the importance of employability on a broader scale. Through the formation of IEP Sweden and IEP Australia we are both building relationships and building our reputation with governments and public servants by fostering partnerships, embedding our learning and sharing good practice with organisations worldwide, we not only contribute to the betterment of our own community but also champion a collective effort to elevate practice and service delivery internationally.

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## **Establishing a Quality Improvement Framework**

Another significant milestone during 2023 is the further development of a Quality Improvement Framework with and for the sector. We have collaborated with organisations large and small to develop and build the QIF with special thanks to Mesma, The Good Employability Company, Fedcap, Ingeus, Serco, Education Development Trust, and the Growth Company who have worked with us on this initiative to drive a culture of progress and positive change in our sector. The QIF is an extremely important development for the sector, and we look forward to continuing discussions with DWP and all stakeholders throughout this year to further conversations around continuous improvement and meeting established standards and benchmarks. The QIF will provide a roadmap for the sector to systematically identify, address, and learn from areas of improvement, fostering a culture of ongoing excellence and is a hugely exciting development, not just for the IEP but for the whole employability sector in the UK and overseas.

## **IEP Learning**

The IEP has expanded its accredited learning to establish a comprehensive professional learning and career pathway. Our professional qualifications are designed to cater to learners at every stage of their careers and to attract new talent to join the employability sector. All IEP Learning Academy courses are specially designed to equip employability practitioners with the essential competencies they need to empower participants with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to enhance their employability prospects, guiding them towards good work and sustainable employment. Additionally, it enables practitioners to evidence their professional practice with a recognised qualification that will enhance their own career prospects.

Since the introduction of our accredited learning programmes the IEP has supported more than 12,000 learners across our programmes and there are now more qualified employability professionals than at any other time in the sector's history.

We are thrilled to have launched several new learning programmes and qualifications in the last 12 months. After the launch of our Award in Employer Solutions, developed in partnership with Deakin University and Ingeus at the end of 2022 we have launched further qualifications for sector professionals. The IEP Award in Mentoring for Employability, in association with The Mentoring School, aims to provide guidance and support to empower the next generation of professionals in our field. Next was the IEP Award in Mental Health in Employability co-authored with Kevin Moore FIEP from mental health experts BDLD CIC. This unique programme provides frontline practitioners with the knowledge and understanding of a range of mental health conditions and the tools and resources they need to effectively support participants with both diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues in their journey to employment.

We launched our exciting new Award in AI for Employability which enables practitioners to harness the potential of AI and provides ways to maximise its uses within the employability sector. Learners gain an understanding of the key AI concepts, tools, and ethical considerations and receive practical guidance for applying AI in real-world scenarios, spanning from CV crafting to interview preparation. Most recently we launched our IEP Award in Supporting Participants with Complex Needs that focuses on the causes behind behaviour when facing those with complex needs rather than visible barriers to work. This exciting new programme is designed for frontline practitioners, first-line managers, and anyone who supports individuals in overcoming their barriers to finding, competing for, and sustaining employment.

We also launched the IEP Podcast in collaboration with Assemble You to enable us to reach a broader audience of busy professionals. These podcasts are created from existing research alongside subject matter-experts who turn complex topics into easy-to-understand lessons, enabling learning content to be consumed 'on the go'. Once members are enrolled, they can access the podcasts from any private podcast app or web browser making it accessible for everyone.

## **IEP Basecamp**

Whilst it was a year of lots of successes and achievements, the stand-out highlight of the year was IEP Basecamp. IEP Basecamp marked a pioneering moment in the sector and was the culmination of extensive planning and preparation, aimed at delivering an experience for frontline practitioners and first-line managers that was both engaging and genuinely exciting.

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What set it apart was its emphasis on providing practical takeaways that could be immediately applied to our members' work. The day was a memorable journey, filled with enriching learning experiences and valuable insights. We extend our deepest gratitude to Ingeus (headline sponsor), Cognissoft and Serco for their sponsorship of the event. Their support and alignment with the event's ethos underscored the significance and importance of bringing this type of impactful day directly to the people who deliver on the frontline. IEP Basecamp not only exceeded expectations but also set a new standard, offering frontline practitioners an unprecedented opportunity for professional development and practical application in their daily practice.

Basecamp served as the fitting venue for the inaugural IEP Learning Awards. This event provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the invaluable support received from Fellows and Members over the past 12 months. Beyond that, it was a moment to shine a spotlight on our dedicated learners and to recognise those who have made a substantial impact. The awards ceremony was a celebration of the collective efforts and achievements within the IEP community, highlighting the commitment and contributions that have supported the employability sector this year. It was not just an occasion to honour individual accomplishments but to foster a sense of shared pride and appreciation for our collective journey of learning and growth.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all our members, partners, and supporters for being a valuable part of this journey. Your commitment and collaboration have been instrumental in making these achievements possible. Together, we are empowering employability professionals to shape the future. Here's to a bright and promising future for IEP and the employability sector as a whole.



Scott Parkin FIEP  
Group CEO  
IEP

# THE CENTRE FOR EMPLOYABILITY EXCELLENCE

WHERE RESEARCH MEETS PRACTICE FOR OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES

## CENTRE FOR EMPLOYABILITY EXCELLENCE

**Our vision is to be at the forefront of the best research, policy, and practice, serving as a conduit between research findings, policy and exceptional employability provision.**

We aim to link the work of academics and researchers, policy makers and employability services internationally, enabling them to make use of evidence-based research findings, programme reviews and insights to drive the Quality Improvement agenda, empowering providers everywhere to deliver their employability services to the highest standards possible.

And through the IEP Learning Academy, we will utilise this resource of research and practice to develop practitioners and ensure the highest levels of excellence in service delivery.

**If you want to stay informed, please contact [CfEE@iemployability.org](mailto:CfEE@iemployability.org)**

# Stories from the IEP Team



## Amy Lucas MIEP

Networking and Events Consultant, IEP

### What were you doing 12 years ago?

12 years ago, I was in Year 11 studying for my GCSE's.

### What are you doing now?

I am now working as Networking and Events Consultant for the IEP, having previously worked as Member Services Coordinator for the company until early 2023. It is great to work as part of such a fantastic team and with our wonderful network of Members and Corporate Affiliate Partners.

### What have you learned along the way?

I have learned lots of things along the way over the past 12 years, from moving out of school, into higher education and subsequently into work. My three key takeaways are: 1) Always have a positive mindset 2) Embrace and don't fear change 3) Learn from your mistakes.



## Tracy Jory MIEP

Employability Assessor, IEP Learning Academy

### What were you doing 12 years ago?

I was working for the Cornwall Adult Education Service. In my role as Administrative Officer, it was my responsibility to ensure that everything within the Centre ran smoothly on a day-to-day basis. I completed the AET and worked in the classroom as a Learning Support Assistant and also as an adult education tutor teaching my subject specialism in Administration. After many years of service, I decided it was time for a change.

### What are you doing now?

After successful completion of the CAVA qualification, I am now Employability Assessor at the IEP Learning Academy – which I really enjoy. I have great satisfaction working with our learners on the Certificate in Employability Practice and seeing the work they produce and how it impacts on their day-to-day working practice. It is amazing to see their engagement in our social and collaborative sessions with their valuable contributions and input.

### What have you learned along the way?

Wow, what a learning journey this has been for me since I started with the IEP Learning Academy in March 2022. I will continue to embrace all opportunities on offer and I'm excited to see what opportunities lay ahead in 2024. I am extremely lucky to be able to say, 'I work with an amazing group of people and I absolutely love my job!'



## Heather Ette MIEP

Head of Marketing, Communications and Brand, IEP

### What were you doing 12 years ago?

I was working for an IT company called Empowering Communities that had an ethical purpose, to join-up public services such as the police, social services and supporting agencies to enable them to share information so they can provide multi-agency support to help vulnerable people. It was a purpose that was close to my heart and enabled me to feel I was making a difference. With two young children I felt very lucky to have the freedom to work from home and not have to rely on childcare and I loved being able to speak to people such as police officers and safeguarding specialists who were striving to provide more holistic services that wrapped support around people. It was inspiring to hear their stories and to understand how much time, effort and care those working on the frontline gave to those they were working with.

### What are you doing now?

I am the Head of Marketing, Communications and Brand for the IEP. I joined the IEP in 2015 and over the years it's been exciting to see the organisation grow and expand its offering and its operations to multiple countries overseas and to be part of that. My job offers me the freedom to be creative, is challenging and varied. No two days are the same and there is never a dull moment. I am privileged to work with a wonderful and talented group of people, my fellow IEPers who are a supportive and dedicated team that constantly strive to be the best they can be. I also work with Belina GRoW, an incredible team that specialises in supporting women, especially mothers, in their journey towards education, training, and employment. When I speak to GRoW's participants I am always blown away by their stories and their gratitude for the support they've received from the team. Almost all of them say that it's their confidence and motivation that they need help with before they can start their journey and that it's specialist support from people who truly understand and listen that makes the difference. I am grateful to be working in this great sector and with such inspiring organisations and people who work tirelessly to help improve the lives of others.

### What have you learned along the way?

That people who work on the frontline have a challenging job, and to be truly effective, one must put the person they are helping at the centre of all interventions. This requires active listening and understanding of their issues, concerns, and challenges, building a relationship based on trust. It takes a special person with empathy, resilience, skills and knowledge to do this work well. The employability sector is an excellent example of people who possess these skills and do this work day in and day out. I was introduced to this sector, and specifically the IEP, by my old friend and mentor, Paul Wolstencroft. He worked with the IEP at its inception and developed our CRM and website. Paul sadly passed away in 2023, but I will always remember him as someone who listened and was kind, calm, funny and so knowledgeable and skilled. He gave me my first job in marketing when I was 18. Paul believed in me, encouraged me, and showed me how to do things when I didn't know. It was this one-to-one support built on trust that made all the difference in helping me achieve my goals. I've achieved so many of them and I have Paul to thank for setting me on this career path and being a constant in my life for over 30 years.

# THE AWARD-WINNING IEP LEARNING ACADEMY

## RAISING STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONALISING THE SECTOR



The Institute of Employability Professionals (IEP) Learning Academy has been honoured with the Silver Award at the prestigious Association Excellence Awards 2023. The AEA Awards are recognised as the most respected awards that highlight best practice and excellence amongst industry bodies, professional membership organisations, and trade unions in the UK, Europe and other parts of the world.



# From the Sector



**Jessica Veitch AIEP**  
Business Manager, Ingeus

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

12 years ago I was studying Travel and Tourism at college whilst working at M&S.

**What are you doing now?**

In the last year I have been promoted to Business Manager and now manage our Wigan Restart office.

**What have you learned along the way?**

I have learned to just go for what you want; any knock backs build your resilience and look at it positively as an opportunity for feedback. You never know if you don't try.



**Jemma Beatty AIEP**  
Coordinator, Employability Division, Maximus

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Professional ballerina living in Italy.

**What are you doing now?**

Coordinator, employability division.

**What have you learned along the way?**

Many admin, communication and data collection/input skills.



**Monique Smith FIEP**  
Operations Manager, Standguide Group

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was a National Careers Service Contract Manager for the Glos LEP based in Gloucestershire. I really enjoyed the role and built some really strong relationships and a great team.

**What are you doing now?**

I am currently an Operations Manager for Standguide working on the National Careers Service in Southwest and Northwest of England.

**What have you learned along the way?**

I have learned that I am very resilient when it comes to change, especially working on a payment by results contract. I have also reflected and have noted how I can be really hard on myself when I should be more focused on what has been achieved. It has been a very challenging 12 months, and I am now trying to reflect more on the positives that have happened. I also need to keep a good work-life balance, which sometimes I do not. I have learned that, even if you're unsure, it is better to speak up and let people know how you feel – especially if you are struggling as I just tend to keep going even when I shouldn't. All in all, I am pleased with the direction I am going and hope for greater things in 2024 and will be taking much better care of myself and meet some personal goals.



### **Andy Milton FIEP**

Senior Adviser – Partnerships and Growth, IEP

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

12 years ago I had only just started my own consultancy business – a long held ambition. Having held a range of roles in the public, private and third sectors plus with Working Links – a successful PPP – I felt I had the breadth of experience needed to make a real go of consultancy.

#### **What are you doing now?**

12 years on I am still a consultant and have clocked up 42 years working in the employability sector. Over that time, I have worked with a host of organisations covering a wide range of assignments. My current consultancy portfolio includes working as a senior Adviser for the IEP, a Board Adviser for Business2Business and an NED with Get Set UK. Big consultancy achievements include supporting Serco with their successful Restart bids and developing and implementing, for the very first time, new disability employment programmes for KSA. In addition, I added exec recruitment search to my offer in 2020 and now support a number of primes and others with filling management, Head of and Director level roles utilising my huge network and knowledge of sector roles. I also added acquisition search and match to my support offer and now work with a number of sector buyers to match their requirements with the right potential sellers.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

Employment without question really can transform lives for the better so what the sector does matters and makes a huge social and economic difference. There is also no such thing as an unemployable person – the right support delivered in the right way can and does unlock the employment potential of any individual however disadvantaged. Perhaps the biggest thing I have learned is just how key the frontline advisor role is. The very best build individual relationships and deliver the tailored support, advice, positive challenge and motivation needed to enable even the most disadvantaged person to gain the right employment for them and to then thrive in work going forward. Providing the skills, support, career development, delivery tools and right programme constructs is essential for enabling employability support to be delivered as effectively as possible – skimp at your peril!



### **Karina Burley AIEP**

Employment Advisor, Maximus UK

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was in High School!

#### **What are you doing now?**

I am an Employment Advisor at Maximus UK. I work on the Work and Health programme. We focus on giving people the opportunity to develop and helping people into work, whether they have a disability, health condition, criminal record, or have just been out of work for a while.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

Everyone deserves a chance. Some people just need the right opportunity to show you the amazing things they can do. The main thing I try to do is take the time to pay forward the kindness I've been shown by the incredible people in my life, even if sometimes it isn't easy or straight-forward.



### **Michael Colclough FIEP**

Head of Skills, Foundation of Light

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Foundation of Light were based in the Stadium of Light and having established Employability and Skills provision in Sunderland we were growing Outreach Hubs throughout Country Durham and South Tyneside, to replicate the provision in Sunderland, which was seeing around 200 unemployed people want to be shortlisted onto a short employability programme. The vision was to engage those furthest away from the labour market to move them closer towards employment through the power of football.

#### **What are you doing now?**

We now have a £20million home next to the Stadium of Light, named the Beacon of Light where we have a dedicated World of Work Zone, which our Patron, the Duchess of Edinburgh officially opened in 2019. I now Head this provision which covers Employment and Skills provision for Sunderland, South Tyneside, and Country Durham. We currently deliver on some AEB contracts, Youth/NEET Study Programmes, and UKSPF Employability People and Skills. The future is mobilising for NEMCA, Commercial Masterclasses, and progressing in Apprenticeships.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

The power football and sporting organisations have for employability is endless and I am now on a mission to support and encourage other clubs to replicate and make brave ambitious moves to deliver employability and skills programmes. I have also seen that good, inspiring people are more important than people with higher qualifications – and ideally you would have both. I have seen the balance between commercial-driven provision and value-led provision, and again a balance is needed, ensuring income balances expenditure, and that delivery is both meaningful and impactful. I have learned that partnerships and relationships are vital to success, and to always have a growth mindset and visionary outlook.



### **James Clark-Allan FIEP**

Strategy & Solutions Director, PeoplePlus Ltd

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was a Regional Partnership Manager at A4e Ltd. I had ten great years with A4e where I cut my teeth in operational Welfare to Work roles before moving on not long before the takeover by PeoplePlus.

#### **What are you doing now?**

I have come full circle, having joined PeoplePlus in March 2023 as Strategy and Solution Director. Working within Central Business Development across Justice, Employability, Communities and Skills. My role has responsibility for the Strategy and Solutions Team, shaping and developing the strategic planning and end-to-end customer journey and operating model solution designs for our high value/strategically important bidding opportunities. We work closely with the Bid Team, Operations and Finance to create winning propositions.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

I have learned so much about myself and about the sector, having worked in operations across New Deal, Flexible New Deal, and the Work Programme before moving into Business Development in a variety of small and large organisations. Embrace change and new technology to allow innovation. Covid fast tracked this in our sector beyond all expectation. The importance of continually challenging yourself to learn and develop, and maintaining good relationships and networks with those who share your own values is also key. Collaboration across the sector is so important and it is so positive to see this happening more and more for the greater good of our industry.



### **Libby Duo FIEP**

Health & Wellbeing Strategic Partnership Manager, Conwy County Borough Council

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Twelve years ago I was approaching the end of a very enjoyable two-year secondment with the Welsh Government as part of the delivery team for the North Wales Coast Regeneration Programme. My area of responsibility was health and wellbeing, something I am still incredibly proud of and passionate about today. I feel very privileged to have been part of a small team of innovators who kickstarted some fantastic projects across Conwy and Denbighshire.

#### **What are you doing now?**

I was promoted into my current role with Conwy Council back in 2021. I'm now the Strategic Lead for Skills and Employability and also oversee a number of grant funded projects. I'm incredibly proud of my team who are dedicated to supporting and upskilling unemployed people into work. They never cease to amaze me with their creativity, passion and commitment; many of whom are positive role models in their own right having overcome many challenges themselves.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

Effective leadership hinges on recognising the value of building and maintaining a cohesive team. Transparent, open and honest communication is vital, especially during times of complex changes. As a leader, being vulnerable, consistently engaging with staff and actively involving them in decisions fosters team growth, trust and collaboration.



### **Rich Gillett AIEP**

Business Manager Restart Wolverhampton & Solihull, Standguide Ltd

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

12 years ago I was working as an Employability Trainer for a company in Cheshire, delivering all aspects of employability training to participants with a view to getting them back to the workplace.

#### **What are you doing now?**

Successfully overseeing the implementation and progress of the Restart Scheme in Wolverhampton and Solihull with an incredible team of 26 behind me that are changing people's lives for the better, one day at a time.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

A LOT!! the importance of teamwork, the importance of having a flexible approach to the role of a Business Manager. I have learned that I can still impact participants' lives whilst not being on the front line, I have learned to become more resilient, take ownership for mistakes but learn from them as they will happen, be confident in my abilities, empower my team and give them the tools to do their job to the best of their abilities. And most of all, treat every day as a learning day.

# PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR EVERY STAGE OF YOUR CAREER



Accredited  
Learning  
Level 2



## EMPLOYABILITY ESSENTIALS

Employability Essentials is aimed at those new to the employability sector and those that either need a refresher or who have never undertaken a sector induction before and wish to gain accreditation. All learning takes place online through our LMS and the average time taken is 17 hours. Each module is 'bite-size', taking approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Available free of charge to all IEP Members.



## UNDERSTANDING NEURODIVERSITY EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT TRAINING

Built in conjunction with Genius Within to introduce the concept of neurodiversity to practitioners and other participant-facing staff to help them understand how they can help neurodiverse programme participants on their journey towards employment. Available free of charge to all IEP Members.



## IEP AWARD IN MENTAL HEALTH FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Developed in partnership with mental health specialists Big Dog Little Dog, this new accredited training is for frontline practitioners to support jobseekers with mental health conditions in their journey to sustainable employment. This is a new and much-needed dimension to practitioners' knowledge and skills, as mental health can significantly impact job search and workplace performance. The programme covers a wide range of mental health issues from an employability perspective, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicide. Available free of charge to all IEP Members. To access this programme contact

[learning@iemployability.org](mailto:learning@iemployability.org)



## OVER 50'S EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

IEP Accredited Programme in association with Centre for Ageing Better for employability practitioners on supporting over-50s jobseekers. Covering issues from health conditions to caring responsibilities this programme provides employability practitioners with a strong understanding of the barriers that people over the age of 50 can face in getting into work, and the tools available to help individuals overcome them. Available free of charge to all IEP Members.



## IEP AWARD IN AI FOR EMPLOYABILITY

This exciting accredited learning programme provides a transformative exploration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the employability sector. It empowers frontline practitioners with the knowledge and skills needed to harness AI's potential and enhance employability outcomes. Informed by sector research, it provides a deep understanding of AI's relevance in employability, enabling practitioners to make informed decisions and apply AI effectively to support participants on their path to sustainable employment. With its tiered approach (Bronze, Silver, Gold levels), the course empowers practitioners to progressively build AI proficiency and acquire practical skills, from crafting tailored CVs to conducting skills gap analyses, empowering them to unlock the potential of AI to enhance employability support.



IEP's suite of Accredited Learning and Qualifications are designed to help to progress employability professionals through our career pathway.



## Accredited Learning Level 3



### IEP CERTIFICATE IN EMPLOYABILITY PRACTICE

The Cert EP is aimed at frontline practitioners and supports learning progression from the Level 2 qualification. It comprises of 4 Units of blended learning that take the learner on a journey from basic operational and coaching functions to advocacy and employer engagement. It is ideal for all practitioners and takes 10-12 months to complete.



### IEP AWARD IN EMPLOYER SOLUTIONS

The IEP Accredited Award in Employer Solutions is developed in partnership with Ingeus and Deakin University. This 6-month program is recommended for Employer Solutions Consultants and Business Development Advisers to build essential skills to deliver successful outcomes for jobseekers, especially those who are most disadvantaged. The program uses a blended learning approach with eLearning, work-based activity, and peer discussion to develop knowledge, skills, and capabilities.



### IEP AWARD IN MENTORING FOR EMPLOYABILITY

The IEP Award in Mentoring for Employability is a certified mentor programme designed specifically for the employability sector and brought to you in association with the specialists at The Mentoring School.

It offers a specialist pathway to address the lack of mentoring training available to professionals working in the sector. The programme covers the theories and frameworks of mentoring, structuring mentoring conversations, recognising the balance between listening and offering advice, and the differences between coaching and mentoring techniques and when to use each.

The programme also focuses on understanding the individuality of mentees to unlock their potential to help them achieve



### IEP AWARD IN SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Supporting participants with complex needs is an ever-increasing daily part of frontline practice. Be it mental health, physical or learning disabilities, addiction, lone parents, neurodiversity, or age, sexuality or cultural loneliness, the IEP Award in Supporting Participants with Complex Needs looks at how to focus on the causes behind behaviour when facing those complex needs rather than those visible barriers to work.



### COACHING FOR EMPLOYABILITY

The IEP Award in Coaching for Employability includes learning developed by Bounce Australia - The PEARLS System for Outstanding Job Coaching and Bounce Job Coach Certification. Specially designed to give employability professionals world-class coaching skills tailored specifically to working with job seekers - particularly those that are highly disengaged and disadvantaged. The Award in Coaching for Employability programme gives frontline advisers practical and powerful wellbeing and work-readiness strategies to support, influence, and nudge job seekers towards positive employment outcomes.



## Accredited Learning Level 4



### EMPLOYABILITY PRACTITIONER APPRENTICESHIP STANDARD

The Employability Apprenticeship Standard is Levy funded in England. The learning progresses a learner from the Level 3 into specialist practice and service design and development, including data analysis and project management.

This qualification takes up to 24 months to complete and is ideal for those practitioners working on IPES or the Work and Health Programme or those in a team leader or junior management role.



### **Vikki Mullard AIEP**

Employment Advisor, Seetec Pluss

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Deputy Store Manager, Beales Department Store.

#### **What are you doing now?**

As an Employment Advisor, I help participants on the Restart Programme to overcome barriers to re-enter the workforce.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

The employability sector gives me huge job satisfaction and I wish I had changed careers years ago. Every day I encourage and support people to become empowered and feel confident to gain sustainable employment. Witnessing the way that people view themselves in a more positive way, growing in confidence and challenging themselves brings so much joy.



### **Rachel MacGowan MIEP**

Employment Development Officer, West Lothian Council

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was a Work Choice Advisor at Shaw Trust in Edinburgh. I loved this job and the idea of supporting people who were further away from the job market.

#### **What are you doing now?**

I am an Employment Development Officer in the Supported Employment Team at my local council. I am currently supporting parents with health conditions looking to return to work. This can be challenging for my participants, adding a job to caring responsibilities while also managing their health.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

I started my working life in HR and stumbled into employability when I returned to work 20 years ago after having my children – and I am so glad I did as it's been very rewarding. I am proud of everyone I have supported. I am retiring later this year, and what I have learned along the way: when you enjoy the work you do time flies by! I still feel as committed today as I did starting my first employability role.



### **Alex Howley FIEP**

Director of Operations, The Growth Company

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

In 2012, I was Head of Youth Initiatives, working in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority team. My role at that time was to design and commission employability programmes for young people. I also led the Youth Employment Strategy, the Apprenticeship Strategy and worked on behalf of Greater Manchester to secure funding from central government. I enjoyed the policy and programme design side of the role, but was keen to get closer to delivery and get stuck into the operational delivery side of our sector.

#### **What are you doing now?**

After initially coming over to the Growth Company (GC) on secondment from my GMCA role, I realised that I enjoyed operations so much that I decided to stay with GC and not look back! I still work for the Growth Company, and I am responsible for a multi-million pound portfolio of employability provision. In my time at GC, this has included National Careers Service, National Citizen Service, Refugee Employability Programme and a number of other prime contracts. I love the variety of the sector and the fact that I have had the opportunity to lead a wide range of different programmes including, more recently, health-related contracts such as Individual Placement and Support. I still get involved in service design and business development, but my operational role means that I can also see contracts through to the end and really see the difference the employability sector can make to people's lives. There is always something new to learn, which I find very motivating, and I have worked with so many great colleagues and partner organisations over the years. People in this sector don't just turn up for work; they really care about doing a good job and making a difference. I feel that this really sets us apart from other sectors.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

There are great opportunities across the sector to get involved in different kinds of employment support. I've worked in the sector since starting as a recruitment consultant back in 1999 so I have seen many different programmes and different government policies come and go. One thing is constant, however ... if you really care about making a difference and empowering people through good work, then this sector is a very rewarding place to be! I would say that if you are keen to move on, move up or move sideways in your career, then don't be afraid to talk to people. Volunteering to get involved in new work alongside your current role can be challenging, but in my experience, it has always been worth it, as it can open doors to new opportunities. Maybe I am still that girl who always put her hand up in class (annoying I know!), but, hey, the sector offers so many different opportunities, why wouldn't you want to stick your hand up and get involved?



### **Liz Cotterill AIEP**

Inclusion Coordinator, Rochdale AFC Community Trust

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Working in the retail sector, moving into the people team, recruitment and community engagement.

#### **What are you doing now?**

Working for a football club's community trust – Rochdale AFC Community Trust – as their Inclusion Coordinator. I have organised events, done presentations on cost-of-living IAG and been working on a larger contract for the EFL in delivering sessions on smart meters. It's been an exciting time of learning new things about the sector as well as making the information accessible to our multicultural community. This has included organising sessions in several languages and formats for example online seminars as well as face-to-face. Having supported 4000 people to access this information as well as completing better off calculations for over 500.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

Every day is a learning day whoever you are, and no one is an expert in everything!



## Suneal Ram Kissun AIEP

Manager, Social Impact Partnerships, 2U

### What were you doing 12 years ago?

I was the head of membership and marketing for the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, a national trade membership body, representing independent learning providers/stakeholders involved in the delivery of apprenticeship and back-to-work programs, including vocational workplace learning. During this period, I had the privilege of collaborating with the late Janette Faherty FIEP, who entrusted me with the task of designing and establishing a fresh identity for a new professional membership body dedicated to back-to-work and employability professionals/practitioners – the IEP. My previous association with Janette dates back to the early 90s when she served as the CEO for an autonomous training organisation in North London, the Training Network Group (TNG) which became AVANTA and later acquired. TNG primarily collaborated with the Department of Works & Pension, providing back-to-work schemes, job clubs, and contributing to the New Deal program initiated by the Labour administration under PM Tony Blair. This collaboration expanded to form partnerships with the Department for Education, involving the national delivery of skills programs such as Traineeships and Apprenticeships. I assumed the role of Marketing Manager in 1994 until my departure in 2000 to lead the marketing department at an FE College in South London. While serving as the Membership Manager at AELP, Janette approached me in early 2012. She, along with other senior leaders from the sector, sought assistance in establishing the brand identity for an aspirant professional body. The vision was to provide recognised professional credentials for experienced practitioners, managers, and early-career talent – a noteworthy endeavour given the absence, at that time, of a formal process for acknowledging and recording prior learning and experience within the sector. The IEP was envisioned as the repository for documenting the activities of individuals operating in this domain. The brief provided by Janette and others emphasised the need for the IEP brand to be easily recognisable by practitioners and national stakeholders involved in workforce development and employability initiatives. The design and reproduction processes were to be uncomplicated, staying within the confines of a modest marketing budget allocated by Janette. After several collaborative iterations with the steering body, I conceptualised a two-coloured rounded icon featuring the organisation's name. This emblem would serve as the cornerstone of all marketing communications in the era preceding the prevalence of social media and digital marketing. Navigating the constraints of limited resources, I produced a series of printed IEP collateral including a distinctive members' pin, offering practitioners tangible recognition and a means of showcasing their affiliation. The new logo identity was unveiled by Janette approximately eight months later at an AELP national conference, successfully aligning with the budget and fulfilling the established brief.

### What are you doing now?

I am a social impact partnership manager for the UK region for 2U/edX, an American educational technology company that contracts with non-profit colleges and universities globally to build, deliver and support online degree and non-degree programmes. Plus, social impact workforce development initiatives to help under-skilled adults and unemployed adults to pivot into early careers roles in the digital tech sector in the US and the UK.

### What have you learned along the way?

It has been a rich and fulfilling journey in the vocational learning and skills landscape over the last two decades. There have been some key learning themes that stand out from my reflection in answering this question. Firstly, **Global collaboration**: my active involvement in vocational learning has provided opportunities to collaborate with professionals not only in the UK but also around the world. This global perspective likely brings diverse insights and approaches to the field. **Building relationships**: the emphasis on building long-lasting collaborations and friendships indicates the value I place on relationships within my professional network. These relationships can be instrumental in fostering a supportive and collaborative community. **Advocacy for skills and lifelong learning**: my commitment to promoting the value of skills and work-based learning suggests a dedication to the idea that continuous learning is essential throughout one's career. This aligns with the evolving nature of work and the need for adaptable skill sets. **Inclusion and diversity**: through my work highlighting the importance of inclusion and diversity in the workplace, creating pathways for individuals from underrepresented communities reflects my commitment to equality and providing opportunities for everyone. **Mentorship**: the act of mentoring young people and adults entering their career paths allows me to share my knowledge and experiences. Offering guidance and advice that can make a significant impact on their professional development. **Values of trust, integrity, and kindness**: I recognise the importance of trust, integrity, and kindness in forming collaborations and emphasises the significance of ethical and positive relationships. These values contribute to a healthy and supportive professional environment. **Transparency and commitment**: by demonstrating one's transparency and commitment is crucial in professional settings. It builds trust and credibility, enhancing my ability to lead and collaborate effectively. **Continuous learning**: to remain open and willing to be bewildered, reflects a growth mindset. This attitude I believe is valuable in an ever-changing landscape where adaptation and learning are ongoing processes and these experiences have shaped my perspective.

# EMPLOYABILITY GENERATION NEXT



A JOINT INITIATIVE BY THE  
INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYABILITY  
PROFESSIONALS AND  
BUSINESS 2 BUSINESS

- Empowering the Next Generation for the UK Employability Sector.
- Providing a comprehensive platform for networking, skills enhancement, and career advancement opportunities.
- Creating a vibrant community where ambitious individuals can connect, share knowledge and experiences, and build valuable networks that extend beyond organisational boundaries.

We are committed to inspiring organisations to invest in the training and development of young talent, recognising their potential as future leaders in the sector.

Together, the IEP in partnership with Business 2 Business is committed to establishing a solid foundation for the growth and success of young professionals in the UK employability sector, shaping a promising future for both individuals and the industry as a whole.



Institute of  
Employability  
Professionals





**Paul Diviny FIEP**

Founder & CEO, Prospert

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Providing independent consulting in financial services.

**What are you doing now?**

Managing a global training and consulting business which helps employment services providers to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

**What have you learned along the way?**

During 2023 in particular, I've learned that regardless of which market we operate in, people who work in this sector have very similar professional development needs.



**Reece Morgan AIEP**

Restart Advisor, Ingeus

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was in sales working in McDonalds.

**What are you doing now?**

Supporting people on their journey into work, identifying and overcoming barriers to enable better lives.

**What have you learned along the way?**

I have gained an outstanding amount of qualifications, gained experience and skills since my employment journey in 2021.



**Patrice Buddington AIEP**

LIFT Digital Hub Coordinator,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Working in Higher Education as a Widening Access Officer.

**What are you doing now?**

Working as a sector specific employment programme coordinator.

**What have you learned along the way?**

Understanding barriers to employment for under-represented groups, data is important, and creating accessible engaging resources helps.



**Liz Sewell FIEP**

Director, Belina Consulting Ltd

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I had set up a small programme to support women into work. I was working with one other person.

**What are you doing now?**

I am now Director of two organisations that support women – Belina Consulting and our new community interest company Belina GRoW CIC. Our amazing team of 14 women are working in London and now Leicester to deliver support in communities.

**What have you learned along the way?**

That to work in the community is all about collaboration – we have to work together to deliver the support people need.



**Karen Gourlay AIEP**

Personal Advisor, Fedcap Scotland

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Working as a Retail Store Manager.

**What are you doing now?**

Supporting participants with their employability skills, creating CVs, building their confidence and self-esteem.

**What have you learned along the way?**

How to coach, mentor, support and guide participants through the barriers they face to find and secure employment in their chosen sector. Helping people realise their own skills and abilities.



**Kevin Moore FIEP**

Co-Founder, BDL D CIC

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

Running two employability businesses whilst unknowingly heading for a heart attack.

**What are you doing now?**

Sitting in my shed, delivering mental health training far and wide!

**What have you learned along the way?**

That making a tiny dent in the universe is enough. Beyond that, live and love life!



**Aldwin Samuel AIEP**

Case Manager, Maximus REP

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

12 years ago I was working with families in crisis and looked after children who were living on the poverty line and without intervention would have ended up in the Criminal Justice System.

**What are you doing now?**

I am a Case Manager for Maximus, working with Refugees on an employment contract.

**What have you learned along the way?**

I have learned along the way that as humans we are very resilient in the face of diversity and will adapt to a situation when presented with the help of others. In life we must keep people informed. Keep people inspired. Keep people interested. Keep people involved. All these are KPIs I live by. The real challenge in life is to have balance and stability with continuous change because there is a direct flow between how we behave, how we speak and how we think.



**Michelle Fish AIEP**

Employment Coach, Northumberland County Council

**What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was a Deputy Daycare Manager.

**What are you doing now?**

I am an Employment Coach at Northumberland County Council.

**What have you learned along the way?**

That I am capable of change; it is scary and daunting BUT change is good!



### **Idris Dean MIEP**

Fair Work Officer (FWO), Employability & Skills Service (ESS), Dumfries & Galloway Council

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I had recently relocated from Yorkshire to Scotland leaving a counselling role in palliative care. I took up a role in Social Work Services developing and promoting a personalisation approach in preparation for the new Scottish Self-Directed Support bill.

#### **What are you doing now?**

As FWO for the last couple of years, I have been responsible for promoting the Scottish Government Fair Work First agenda, particularly with employers; overseeing our Employer Recruitment Incentive scheme; and the council's response to the local PACE partnership – a Scottish Government initiative to support individuals involved in redundancy situations. Prior to this role, I joined the ESS in April 2013 as an Employability Link Worker (ELW) providing employability support to individuals. In 2017 I became a Team Officer managing a number of ELWs and helping to develop the ESS.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

I have become much more aware of the barriers to gaining employment that many people face and also the wide range of support services available to people. I firmly believe that support services should be person-centred to have the most effective impact. In a constantly changing employability support landscape, it has become obvious that it is essential, for agencies providing employability support, to work closely in partnership.



### **William Britton FIEP**

CEO, AutonoMe

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was teaching young adults with neurodiversity and learning disabilities. I was also responsible for the Assistive Technology provision at the Further Education establishment.

#### **What are you doing now?**

I am the Founder and Chief Executive at AutonoMe, we help neurodiverse people and those with learning disabilities utilise the power of technology and an expert advocate to support them into sustainable employment.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

So so much!! To have an idea/vision and turn that into a sustainable business that delivers amazing outcomes to people whilst growing across the UK is simultaneously incredibly challenging and rewarding.



### **Md. Zahid Hossain AIEP**

Author at Amazon Author Central

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was at the end of my B.A. Honours course on English Literature.

#### **What are you doing now?**

Professionally I am a Software Engineer and I have a start-up company named Webapp Solutions. I am an author at Amazon Author Central, International Speaker, Ambassador at International School of Leadership Diplomacy and Global Ambassador at Mindset Mastery 360.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

I have attended many international conferences and spoke on information technology and sciences.



# NETWORKING AND EVENTS TO FURTHER YOUR CAREER

## WHAT'S ON IN 2024

### MARCH

- 6** LiveLearnLunch #174 with Belina Consulting
- 7** IEP Networking Event Manchester
- 7** Manchester Fellows Dinner
- 13** LiveLearnLunch #175 with 3SC
- 18** LiveLearnLunch #176 with Genius Within

### APRIL

- 7** LiveLearnLunch #177 with Apex Mindset
- 17** CfEE's Third Virtual Seminar
- 24** IEP Networking Event - Birmingham (TBC)

### MAY

- 2** IEP Networking Event - Wales - Sponsored by Case UK
- 16** Leicester Fellows Dinner sponsored by B2B

### JUNE

- 5** IEP Networking Event - Liverpool - sponsored by Trigon Recruitment
- 20** IEP Summit 2024 - London - Sponsored by NCFE
- 20** IEP Summit 2024 Networking Dinner - London - Sponsored by Get Set UK

### JULY

- 11** CfEE's Fourth Virtual Seminar

### SEPTEMBER

- 12** Birmingham Fellows Dinner - Sponsored by Serco
- 18** IEP Networking Event - London - Sponsored by Get Set UK

### OCTOBER

- 2** IEP Basecamp 2024 - Birmingham
- 16** CfEE's Fifth Virtual Seminar

AND MORE...



### **Pam Rayment AIEP**

Employment & Development Co-ordinator, Salvation Army

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I was working for a construction company as the Customer Service Team Leader in Birmingham. I was at the forefront of dealing with enquiries from the customers whose properties we were working in, resolving issues and also doing good news case studies. I was also part of the tendering interview team and would go out to different interviews with a team.

#### **What are you doing now?**

Now I am working across Birmingham as an Employment Development Co-ordinator supporting clients with a range of different kinds of support from employability support such as CV writing and applications, to helping people with PIP forms. It is a varied and rewarding role.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

I have learned that learning never ends; every day I learn something new about people and what I can add to my delivery of the service we provide. Doing the IEP course was invaluable to me. The support and guidance were amazing, and I definitely have grown in knowledge for doing it.



### **Frankie Mutanda AIEP**

Employment Advisor, Reed In Partnership

#### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

12 years ago I was in high school and just finishing off my stint as a member of the Bradford Boys youth choir.

#### **What are you doing now?**

I am an Employment Advisor. Having entered the company as an Administrator initially, my managers felt that my skill set was far too good to just remain in that role and elected to promote me to this current role within two weeks of working for the company. I am also a musician in the form of singing and rapping and have done shows with some notable celebrities in the past. I remain passionate about this as my uncle was a relatively famous musician in Zimbabwe in the nineties.

#### **What have you learned along the way?**

Hard work pays off and you have to see it within yourself to believe it. You are only going to rise as high as you allow yourself to think.



## **Roksana Anning MIEP**

Founder and Director, Apex Mindset Ltd.

### **What were you doing 12 years ago?**

I had just begun a secondment as a Learning and Development Trainer within Shaw Trust. Prior to that I spent three years working in various roles, first as an Employment Advisor and Trainer before moving on to be Senior EA and Volunteer Coordinator. As a L&D trainer I was responsible for the design, delivery, facilitation and evaluation of a range of bespoke learning and development solutions supporting the delivery of the business' needs and objectives. I enjoyed the role of Trainer immensely as I love learning and facilitating learning in others. I've always been fascinated by human potential, behaviour and motivation, learning more about how we as people are all unique and how we behave and communicate differently. All these and more learning experiences led me to where I am today.

### **What are you doing now?**

In 2019, I took a leap of faith and started my own business, so I now run my own learning and development company, Apex Mindset Ltd. It was just before Covid hit, so the beginning was a bit turbulent, but I am glad to say that Apex Mindset is going from strength to strength. The employability sector is very close to my heart, so I continue working within the sector, delivering coaching and training to the staff of major providers as well as councils, small companies and individuals too. I like contributing and sharing knowledge where I can, so I run free webinars and publish short videos giving tips within the motivational interviewing approach to help advisors overcome challenges such as lack of engagement, motivation or confidence and resistance to change from their clients. I was honoured to be one of the speakers at IEP Basecamp 2023, sharing and demonstrating how the motivational interviewing approach can help build trust, ignite motivation and encourage hope in participants. Although I work extensively within the employability sector, I also operate in other sectors, delivering not only motivational interviewing and managing change, but also in areas including personality profiling, growth mindset, emotional intelligence, coaching skills and leadership development programmes. The overarching theme running through all the various training programmes I offer, is the importance and facilitation of effective communication and the understanding of others to help each other fulfil our full potential. Apex Mindset's aim is to empower people and ignite their success and this is something I am very passionate about.

### **What have you learned along the way?**

The list is long, but I'd like to share the two main lessons from my journey that keep coming to the fore. I try to surround myself with people who fill me up rather than drain me. Since starting my business I have had many moments of doubt, I've questioned myself and been my own worst critic. I've learned how to run a business from scratch, making many mistakes and I'm sure I will make many more. But the passion and belief in what I do always helps me push through those moments of doubt, and I've learned that having a strong support network is crucial. Having positive people around me who I can bounce ideas off without fear of judgement, who mentor and challenge me to keep growing, yet believe in what I'm trying to achieve, or sometimes just cheer me on when I need it most. These relationships are invaluable, and they help me build my resilience and keep me motivated. I've also learned that change is often unforeseen but is inevitable and navigating that can often require taking a risk or making sacrifices. Sometimes saying yes to an opportunity, even if it feels scary and overwhelming, can lead to other amazing opportunities, and even if things don't work out in the way you may have envisioned can provide you with precious lessons that will help you avoid making the same mistakes in the future, building the resilience and confidence to adapt to new challenges and keep moving forward.

# SEE YOU AT THE SUMMIT

## IEP SUMMIT 2024

20 June  
RSA House  
London



**BOOK YOUR TICKET NOW**

**FOR DETAILS SEE [WWW.MYIEP.UK/PAGE/IEPSUMMIT2024](http://WWW.MYIEP.UK/PAGE/IEPSUMMIT2024)**

# THE IEP WISHES YOU A WONDERFUL 2024

A big thank you to all who submitted their inspiring stories from across the sector and globe.

We are excited for what 2024 holds and look forward to working with you throughout the year.



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