

## Speaker Biographies

**Richard Waller** is Associate Professor of the Sociology of Education at UWE Bristol. He has taught and researched into further and higher education for some 25 years. His interests primarily focus on education and social inequality. Richard started his career as an NUS sabbatical officer before joining the civil service and then re-training as a college lecturer. He had a number of lecturing roles in further and higher education, joining UWE's Faculty of Education in 2003. He was promoted to Director of Lifelong Learning in 2009 before being appointed as Associate Professor in 2012. Richard co-convened UWE's Education Research Network (ERNie) for four years and is now on the Advisory Group of UWE's Higher Education Pedagogies, Policy and Practice Research Network (HEPPP). He is also on the editorial board of four journals and both a Trustee and a Public Engagement Director of the British Sociological Association.

**Karen Kufuor** is Principal Lecturer in the School of Organisations, Economy and Society at the University of Westminster. Before that, she was the Chief Economist at the Association of Coffee Producing Countries and also spent five years with the Economist Intelligence Unit as Commodities Editor. Karen is Academic Lead and Editor of [TRIBE](#), an online news curation resource which aims to make the teaching and learning of business and economics more relevant to young people by bridging the gap between classroom learning, business theories and real world applications. She is a member of the Higher Education Academy and has published articles in Times Higher Education and other publications on employability.

**Liz Thomas** is Professor of Higher Education at Edge Hill University and an independent higher education researcher and consultant. She has a PhD in evaluation and more than twenty years' experience of undertaking and managing research about widening participation, student engagement, belonging, retention and success. Liz is committed to applying her research to improve student experiences and outcomes, and is currently supporting a number of higher education institutions to develop their approach, and staff capacity, to evaluate widening access, success and progression and to develop their work, both as part of their Access and Participation Plans and more generally.

**Yasmina Mallam-Hassam** is Head of Employability Services at St Mary's University Twickenham. She has 19 years of experience in Higher Education Careers services working across six institutions in two countries. In her current role, Yasmina's primary strategic focus is embedding employability within the student experience and operational responsibility for the Careers Service and Centre for Workplace Learning. Her passions are social mobility and diversity and inclusion.

**Georgina Binnie** is a Recruitment and Training Officer at the [Manchester Cancer Research Centre](#) and Cancer Research UK Manchester Centre managing the recruitment and retention of postgraduate researchers to cancer-focused clinical, non-clinical and Allied Health Professional training programmes. She was previously an Impact and Research Fellow ([Writing Back Project](#)) at the School of English, University of Leeds, where she established an intergenerational letter writing project matching undergraduate and international postgraduate students as pen pals with older Yorkshire residents, with a focus on impacting loneliness and wellbeing.