

Education and work: Addressing inequality through collaboration

10.00 Welcome and introductions

10.20 The challenge facing young people in the labour market. Is supply or demand the problem?

- **Professor Hugh Lauder, Professor of Education and Political Economy, University of Bath.**

Hugh will examine the fundamental problems confronting the education economy relationship in Britain and their impact on the life chances of young people.

11.00 Break (Padlet)

11.15 Panel presentations and discussion: supporting progression across sectors

- **Chair and introduction: Dr Andrea Laczik, Director of Research, Edge Foundation**
- **The Power of Partnership: Shaid Parveen, Associate Dean for Development and Engagement (LSS), Aston University.**

Shaid's talk will focus on the power of partnership when advancing employability initiatives for students. This will be illustrated by exploring cases studies where this has been done.

- **Pathways, Possibilities, Progression: Real NHS Careers Through Apprenticeships - Dr Vicky Cockerill, Head of Associate and Enhanced Healthcare Practice (with Navjot Kaur Virk, Head of Midwifery) University of Derby.**

Vicky's presentation will tell a powerful story of possibility, resilience, and transformation. It traces the journeys of apprenticeship learners who begin with no formal qualifications and progress into senior roles within the NHS. The session celebrates apprenticeships as examples of social mobility, confidence building, and leadership development, showcasing how talent flourishes when pathways are inclusive and practice focused. The session invites delegates to re-imagine workforce development, recognise untapped potential, and champion apprenticeships as a vital route to compassionate, skilled, and sustainable leadership across NHS services.

- **The Better Futures Social Mobility Initiative: Belinda Brown, Senior Community Specialist, Coventry Building Society.**

Belinda will give an overview of Coventry Building Society's multi-award-winning Better Futures social mobility initiative, sharing details of our place-based approach and the social impact we've created, including being awarded 'Leadership of the Year' in the 2025 Social Mobility Awards.

- **FE Colleges as Anchor Institutions: Regional Collaboration Supporting Progression to Employment - Claire Barton, Assistant Principal Higher Education, Nottingham College.** Further Education colleges bring together employers, local authorities, universities, and community organisations to support economic growth and social mobility through strong collaborative partnerships. They play a vital role in creating clear progression pathways into employment, while supporting workforce development and inclusive opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. Claire's presentation outlines how colleges work differently to maximise engagement, raise expectations, and enhance employment opportunities across the region.

12.35 Wrap up and next steps

12.45 Close