

**[Post-school transitions of young people with additional support need:
Developing a new research agenda](#)**

Speaker biographies

[Professor Sheila Riddell](#)

Centre for Research in Education Inclusion & Diversity (CREID), University of Edinburgh

Sheila Riddell is Director of the Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Edinburgh and was previously Director of the Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research at the University of Glasgow. She is also a Visiting professor at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Sheila's research interests focus on issues of social justice and equality in the fields of education, training, employment and social care.

[Iain Nisbet](#)

Govan Law Centre

Iain Nisbet is head of Education Law at Govan Law Centre. He is the principal author of "A-Z of Scots Education Law - A guide for parents". Chambers UK 2014 notes that "his work is impeccable" and that "he has an encyclopaedic knowledge of education law".

[Scott Read](#)

Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland

Scott has over 19 years' experience of working in the voluntary and statutory sectors. He is a registered social worker, and holds a Master's degree in social work. He also worked as a researcher for the Scottish Recovery Network and as health psychologist. In the voluntary sector, Scott has run transition services for children and young people with learning disabilities and additional support needs. In 2012 he joined ARC Scotland. His work focuses on the principles of personalisation and joint professional working in transitions from child to adult services. He also has a deep interest in the difference empowerment can make in terms of right-based services and how this can be achieved in a person-centred and holistic way.

[Dr. Mariela Fordyce](#)

Centre for Research in Education Inclusion & Diversity (CREID), University of Edinburgh

Mariela completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the field of Additional Support for Learning and has worked with children with various disabilities. After gaining a PhD in Special Education from Hiroshima University, in Japan, Mariela joined CREID at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests lie mainly in the post-school outcomes of children and young people who additional support needs. She has published on issues related to deaf literacy and the role of social class in the education and employment outcomes of young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Laura Murdanaigum

Laura is a postgraduate student in professional legal practice at the University of Edinburgh. Laura is hard-of-hearing and was educated orally in mainstream schools. Since leaving school Laura has gained several higher education degrees and is aiming to become a lawyer. Laura was also a member of the steering group of the NDCS-funded project and has given us invaluable feedback drawing on her experience of higher education.

Heather Gray

National Deaf Children's Society

Heather trained as an Occupational Therapist and has worked with adults and children with complex needs in hospital and community settings for 25 years. Heather has worked in Health, Local Authority and the third sector. She has held various leadership roles in the third sector joining NDCS Scotland last year from her previous role at the Princes' Trust in Scotland where she was Country Director. Previous to this, Heather was Chief Executive at Who Cares Scotland for five years and prior to this, Area Manager with Cornerstone. She has a keen interest in children's rights.

Professor Emer Smyth

Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Dublin

Emer Smyth is a Research Professor and Head of the Social Research Division at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Her main research interests centre on education, school to work transitions, gender and comparative methodology. She has conducted a number of studies on the effects of schooling contexts on student outcomes. She led the Post-Primary Longitudinal Study (PPLS), which followed a cohort of young people from the first year of second-level education onwards. This study was the first of its kind in the Irish context, and has yielded insights into important processes such as the factors influencing examination performance, the impact of ability grouping, and differentiation in educational outcomes. A report on the post-school pathways of these young people has just been published (www.esri.ie).

Emer Smyth is on the management team of the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) study, a large-scale longitudinal study of infants and children. She has a strong interest in comparative research on education issues and is currently involved in the AQMeN network. In the past, she has worked with a number of staff members at the University of Edinburgh on comparative studies of education and school to work transitions.