

# Changing public services – changing professional practices

Policy seminar three – 13 July 2010



## Innovation, efficiency and effectiveness – promoting change through new forms of engagement

### Seminar Report

#### Introduction

1. This report summarises the presentations and discussion at the third in a four-part seminar series on the leadership and management of change in public services. The series overall aims to learn from leading thinking and practice across public services to ensure that the learning and skills sector is as well-informed as possible to develop its leadership and professional practices to face the very significant challenges now and in the future.
2. This third seminar, entitled *Innovation, efficiency and effectiveness – promoting change through new forms of engagement* aimed to:
  - hear diverse perspectives on increasing accountability to citizens and customers;
  - consider the potential of technology to promote innovation, efficiency and effectiveness; and
  - discuss the potential applications and lessons for leadership and professional practice in the learning and skills sector.
3. Polly Toynbee welcomed participants to the '*terrific, interesting and informative*' seminar series. She repeated her concern that the learning and skills sector has gone under-reported, though she felt that this was improving and that the sector was now gaining better recognition than it had in the past.
4. David Collins described the LSIS policy seminars as an opportunity to bring outside perspectives to bear on the learning and skills sector, and for the sector to get ideas from elsewhere. With the coalition government emphasising the themes of social enterprise, innovation and technology, this seminar offered an opportunity for the sector to challenge its own response to, and engagement with, emerging priority issues. The perspectives and thinking that are shared and developed through the policy seminars also inform LSIS's programmes and research.
5. Caroline Mager reprised salient themes and questions raised from earlier seminars in the series of particular relevance to this discussion. At each of the seminars in this series, more has been known about the coalition government's priorities. Three themes have emerged consistently: public sector cuts; efficiency through improved multi agency working; and deregulation.

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6. At the second seminar, the increasingly vivid accounts of public sector cuts dominated the discussions, prompting a re-appraisal of what should be funded at public expense and what should be delivered by the state and what in the *'Big Society'* should be delivered by citizens for citizens in a voluntary capacity. Rob Whiteman, the new Chief Executive of IDeA described the volunteer-led RNLI and National Trust, challenging participants to consider the implications of the *'seriously shrinking state'* for the role of the professional public servant and how volunteers and professionals might work together in different ways in future.
7. Efficiency has been a theme throughout the series. In particular we discussed how to secure greater efficiency and effectiveness through public service coalitions taking a whole service, multi-agency approach. It appears the coalition government has an appetite to continue with this approach, but with the scale of cuts on the horizon, there is a danger of leaders retrenching into silos to protect budgets, rather than developing shared strategies and re-orienting accountability towards the public.
8. Where public money is so scarce, the stakes are raised in terms of investing where impact is greatest – do we have the skills and evidence needed? Vince Cable's oft quoted assertion that *'spending on health doesn't necessarily improve health'* based on his mother's experience of recovery through adult education raises substantial challenges. Are the incentives in place to encourage efficiency where investment in one area creates savings in another department or service? Moreover, do we as a sector have the evidence to step into and shape debates about the wider economic and social contributions that learning can make?
9. The devolution of power – as witnessed by the stripping out of intermediary, guidance, regulatory and advisory bodies and the granting of freedoms and flexibilities in funding and from audit and inspection – has been an immediate feature of the new government. Devolving power to the front line offers greater autonomy and more headroom for public services to innovate – a shift the sector has called for – but this is being done against a backdrop of much less public funding. As the state and its agencies shrinks, greater decision-making and responsibility is devolved to the frontline, including greater responsibility to determine how cuts are made – what one participant described as *'devolving the axe'*.
10. This could present a new challenge for public service leaders. At the last seminar we heard about the use of panels to engage citizens in identifying savings that could be made – conducting a deliberative process to reach agreement on what to de-commission as well as what to prioritise for public expenditure. Do we, as a sector, have the skills and technology to lead such deliberative approaches effectively with the public? How, in the words of the late Lord Dearing do we *'avoid getting caught between the dog and the lamp post'*? Moreover, how do we manage the process of cuts without further disadvantaging the already disadvantaged?
11. These were among the challenges and questions we brought forward into the seminar from our earlier debates and which informed the ensuing discussion.

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## Keynote presentations

### Tom Steinberg, founder and director of [mySociety](#)

12. Tom started by stressing the necessary step before his work – *Race Online* – the project led by Martha Lane Fox to extend digital participation to the 10 million people without access to the internet. He then described some of the key principles underpinning his work at mySociety before drawing out lessons from his approaches of relevance for the learning and skills sector.
13. **FixMyStreet** is a website that enables local people to alert their councils about problems in their neighbourhoods. 50% of the problems reported via the website get sorted. The website acts as a single front end for all council services countrywide, and its success, argued Tom, illustrates that it is possible to take '*fractured public entities*' and simplify access to them by adding a front end without reform of the services themselves being a pre-requisite. Permissions were not sought before the website was established – to do so from every local authority would have taken ages – but the website is now established and used.
14. The service offered is aimed at '*not the usual suspects*', ie not those people who normally contact local authorities via private correspondence. By opening up reporting to public services to wider scrutiny (where it is appropriate to do so), transparency and accountability improve. There's even a follow up survey to ask the public if their problem got fixed. If not, the website directs people to their local councillor or MP.
15. **TheyWorkForYou** is mySociety's Parliamentary transparency website. According to Tom, 50% of people can name the MP, but far fewer know the names of their local councillors. One in two of the people who use the service to contact their elected members say they have never before written to politicians. The service aims to break down barriers between public services ('*done to people every day*') and democracy ('*on TV once every 5 years*').
16. Another service – **WhatDoTheyKnow** – helps people search through FOI requests. It means that replies to FOI requests become publicly transparent, avoiding the need for the same request to be made again. The service operates across all public services, enabling anyone – leaders of organisations for example – to find out what people want to know about a particular organisation or service.
17. Tom identified three lessons that could transfer to the learning and skills context:
  - Single entry points to public services don't need to be expensive. FixMyStreet cost £6,000 to build.
  - Web-based front ends can hide the fractured nature of public services. FixMyStreet covers the whole country – wherever you live there is one entry point which reports your problem direct to your local council. It's an adaptation of the idea of Google as your home page.

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- Ask forgiveness not permission. If the products you deliver are good enough and success results, people who might have refused you permission come asking for help. In this way, innovations can shape new norms for the future.

## Hilary Cottam, principal partner, Participle and commissioner, Public Service 2020 Commission

18. Hilary introduced Participle as an organisation committed to designing new public services with and for the public. Their approach is based on a critique of the 1942 welfare system, and Beveridge's own later life reflections that he had built a system that '*missed out communities and people*' – a system that had led people to define themselves only in terms of the problems the welfare state was there to solve. They believe it is time for a '*new social and financial settlement*'. Public services do not connect well with people's lives - they can grip people in times of crisis, and prevent them from falling deeper, but they are not transforming lives, not helping people to find new paths. Participle's work is about systems change – policy, funding and scale; not projects. Their approach is to work across silos, looking at the range of issues facing, for example, older people, younger people, or families.
19. Participle has defined five lenses for thinking differently about how to support people:
  - moving from a system focused on *needs* to one more concerned with *capabilities*;
  - moving from services that are *targeted* to ones that are *open to all*;
  - moving away from a *financially* focused system to one focused on *resources*;
  - avoiding *centralised* institutions in favour of more effective *distributed* networks;
  - relaxing the absolute focus on the *individual* including more of a focus on *social networks*.
20. Their concern with '*deep participation*' and securing contributions to communities in different ways has highlighted the importance of learning and work in people's lives. The people they work with want opportunities to shape their capabilities. Their work with families in crisis in Swindon revealed that of the £1/4 million spent by the state per family, not a penny touches the families themselves. Families are caught up in a public service framework of '*state interventions*' – care orders, eviction orders, asbos and many more. Yet in communities where families developed their own plan, with support from Participle, every child was in school, every adult in work, learning, or setting up their own enterprise. The message to public servants was clear: '*ask how to improve lives, not how to improve public services*'.
21. In a project with elders in Southwark, Participle's first conversations with people who thought they were from the council were all about maintaining services. But later, when they got to know the Participle workers, older people started to talk about what they really wanted: help with the little things like changing a light bulb; social connections; and opportunities to work and learn.

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22. Helping adult children think about how to provide support for parents at a distance, the '*Circle initiative*' has a membership of 50-90 year olds from a range of socio-economic groups and is staffed by paid helpers and volunteers – mums, older people, people outside the labour market. It enables reciprocal support to be offered and accepted and works because: it doesn't mention age; it works organically to help people make friends; it joins the informal with the formal; is entirely demand-led; and involves a mixed economy of paid and volunteer helpers – which is crucial to the sustainability of the work.
23. '*Loops*' universal youth service invests in building intergenerational relationships which international research shows to be the critical factor in securing young people's resilience. Working with young people *Loops* has discovered that young people have internalised the '*get a job*' message to such an extent that the more marginalised a young person is, the more closed they are to new ways of gaining skills and developing networks.
24. Participle is now looking to explore the role of learning and work in people's 21<sup>st</sup> century lives in more detail. They are keen to investigate the idea of a 21<sup>st</sup> century trade union – one based on using social, friendship groups positively, almost looking back to pre-welfare state models of support. In this context Hilary raised some key questions for our sector: what would low cost informal networks for skills look like? What would a genuinely demand-led model of learning look like? And what would the technology to support such a model look like? – technology that supported both efficiency but innovation. More broadly, what would new public servants look like in a public service system that was breaking down the barriers between producers and consumers? And how can we work together to form a creative community that can shape the landscape into which public services go?

## Jane Williams, executive director for further education and 14-19, BECTA

25. Jane Williams discussed how a strategic approach to learning technology could make a huge contribution to social and economic policy and to further education in particular. The argument, she stated, is based on three working assumptions.
26. First, where used effectively, technology means better experience, outcomes and progression for learners of all ages. Evidence from across the world, and from colleges and training organisations shows that whole curriculum areas have been able to raise their standards through ICT investment and professional development. Second, despite some risks, the internet is now a tool for '*large scale participation in society, for global collaboration*' and therefore a powerful force for enriching both society and the economy. Third, '*the shrinking of the state*' means that there will be more ICT opportunities for citizens and professionals on the ground so that systems feel '*invented here*', by us and for us.
27. Jane noted that the UK generally seems to be doing well at harnessing this potential of digital technology. 80 per cent of young college students are pretty confident in using technology. However, there are still 10 million adults who have never used the internet and four million of these individuals are socially disadvantaged. The potential savings to national and local government of people switching their transactions on line of £900 million per year by some estimates. Indeed, a recent report estimates that getting everyone on line might be worth as much as £22 billion to the UK economy.

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28. Jane referenced Andrew Foster's contribution to the first seminar where he identified worklessness as a '*long-term, intractable issue*'. The Home Access programme has now brought laptops and connectivity to over 200,000 low income families, plus assistive technology for around 12,000 families. Local partnerships might be able to build on this kind of initiative working so that while the majority takes increasing advantage of the efficiencies and financial savings available online, multiple disadvantage is not reinforced.
29. Many local areas are turning to digital solutions to sustain local services. Barnsley, for example, is exploring a number of challenges including infrastructure, bandwidth and training support. Jane wondered to what extent 'self service' might become the norm, with local people delivering services, often online, for themselves. Jane referenced Becta's work with the School of Everything which prompted the questions '*will we see the college of the future?*', and '*will colleges play a fundamental role in enabling local communities to thrive in a digital environment?*' Whilst Martha Lane-Fox's manifesto '*for a networked nation*' sets out the importance of UK online centres, colleges, adult education and local training providers will also have a '*crucial*' role to play.
30. Business and large public sector organisations are responding to the opportunities of the internet in training and developing their staff. Over 70 per cent of CIPD employers currently use e-learning in the workplace. The national police training agency delivers 40,000 online training activities a month, saving them over £10 million a year. Tesco is introducing an online academy for its whole workforce. Plymouth City Council estimates that instead of £85 per delegate for a half day course, it now spends £3 for the online equivalent. Productivity, motivation, time and quality all improve too and much of this delivery happens without LSC or Skills Funding Agency funding.
31. Turning to the FE sector specifically, Jane quoted examples of where the sector improved its use of technology over the last few years:
  - Around 40 per cent of colleges and work-based learning providers are mature in their use of, and investment in, technology;
  - 77 per cent of providers now say that they have sufficient ICT capacity to meet the demand of their students;
  - 98 per cent of colleges now operate a Virtual Learning Environment; and
  - Generator, the self improvement tool designed by sector experts, is now in use in over 600 providers, helping them to diagnose their priorities for further investment and improvement.
32. Jane felt, however, that despite progress, too much of the sector still resembles the FE world before the internet and all its opportunities:
  - Only 45 per cent of colleges allow their learners to connect their devices to college networks and many learners talk about their frustrations with incompatible software and slow broad band; and



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- Around one third of IfL members say that they don't feel confident in using ICT in teaching and learning, despite their wanting to know more.

33. Looking to the future, Jane identified a number of questions:

*on our infrastructure:*

- How will we invest in a resilient infrastructure to allow all our learners to study wherever and whenever they can? What about value for money, future-proofing and next generation ICT like cloud-based services? How will we ensure that your ICT managers are not seduced by the next bunch of snake oil sales reps?

*on our staff:*

- How will we enable all our staff to learn the skills and find the creativity to make the most of the technology? This challenge is about much more than basic ICT skills, it requires a fresh look at pedagogy.

*on our system:*

- How will we work together to develop a curriculum and an assessment and accreditation system which is fit for purpose in today's world - on demand, 24/7, customer friendly and good value for money?
- How will we create a learning environment which is no longer based on the Victorian age? An environment – and an audit and funding model - which no longer insist on a number of people sitting in a fixed place at a fixed time every week, but which instead offers a personalised, content-rich experience capable of meeting the needs of all?

34. We might agree on at least part of the answer - no single college or provider will want or be able to construct their solutions alone. We should be looking for the new kinds of cross-sector and cross-public sector organisations and alliances that have started to emerge in the total place pilots and elsewhere.

35. As Becta leaves the stage next March, it has estimated that education and skills collectively could save around one third of a billion each year through much smarter use of ICT. There is the potential to go much further through a '*strategic, collaborative approach*' to the development of e-learning. A strategic approach to technology will be a necessity for the sector in the forthcoming period - not sufficient in itself, but as an essential element in the future success of the sector.

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## Matt Atkinson, Principal and Chief Executive, City of Bath College

36. Matt Atkinson introduced his *'response from the sector'* by drawing on Matthew Taylor's<sup>1</sup> presentation at his college earlier this year. *'Innovation is as much about new ways of being as it is about new ways of doing. There is a gap between the kind of people we are now and the kind of people we will need to be to flourish in the future.'*
37. In response to Tom's presentation, Matt wondered how the sector would respond to a 'Fixmycollege' website? Would they find this scary? Tom's work on transparency was designed to avoid *'things failing without anyone seeing'*. There was a danger this could be seen as rather a *'self-serving'* model of accountability - we should be exploring what other purposes technology could be used for. Matt reflected on what colleges can do to help communities get a stronger sense that college assets belong to the community. How can colleges give the community some say over what those assets are used for? He wondered whether FE tends to work *'for the public rather than with the public?'*
38. Hilary's presentation had prompted him to think about how to focus on what services look like, rather than the cuts, but he recognised the difficulty of creating an appetite for risk with such big questions hanging over providers' financial positions. Reflecting on his own college's community work, Matt described how he had formed a network of students from Whiteway, an area of high deprivation hidden by the Georgian architecture of Bath, in order to develop a deeper understanding of what that community needed. The responses had challenged the college's thinking about the services it provides and have impacted on service design for next year.
39. Of course, all colleges are involved in learner voice work, but Matt encouraged the sector to think about how it could extend this, so that it could be labelled as the kind of *'deep participation'* Hilary described.
40. As colleges build their understanding of what different community groups need and develop approaches to working with them, there will increasingly be a need to re-shape the landscape in which that work happens, rather than trying to *'shove existing structures into new ways of working'*.
41. In response to Jane, Matt asked *'how can technology strategies be transformational, rather than transactional?'* The sector has been slower than the private sector to adapt in its use of technology and could do more to exploit the potential of e-learning, for both efficiencies and commercial benefit. Leadership of technology, to develop new strategic approaches, will be a key issue for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Executive of the RSA



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42. There are other significant challenges for leadership. Matt highlighted the importance of leaders have the *'courage to innovate and be wholly transparent'*; the need to develop stronger and more meaningful commitment to collaboration, based on *'fellowship'* more than *'partnership'*; and encouraged the sector to think creatively and innovatively about how to design services. Micro-management of the sector in recent years has reduced our capacity to do this, but finding ways to release creativity again will be increasingly necessary as we move forward.

## Discussion

### The Big Society, Spain's footballing success, and the role of FE

43. Have we seen the 'Big Society' before? Post-war Britain was characterised not only by 'big government', but also by big, active, collective movements. By comparison today, the focus seems to be on individualising services and as a result we risk missing out on the *'sensuousness of shared experience'*. Is the 'Big Society' simply a mask for individualised enterprise, in which 'freedom' stands out, to be balanced in some way by 'fairness' and 'responsibility'? And if that is the case, what role should further education play to avoid becoming *'an agent of an atomised society'*.
44. In the wake of the World Cup final in which the Spanish were lauded for playing as a team while the Netherlands performance was described as 'thuggish', perhaps there is something to learn from contrasting the approaches to place shaping, between Amsterdam's grand homes built on a model of individual capitalism, and Madrid's shared community spaces. Those Spanish public spaces are special in that they bring generations together. Compare that with Britain where public spaces are generationally defined and we begin to see how we have come to lack a collective narrative and purpose in our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives. That in turn has reduced people's courage to take a share of collective responsibility for, for example, supporting chaotic families with difficult intergenerational relationships.
45. If strong intergenerational relationships are the key to securing young people's resilience, as Hilary Cottam suggested, there are key challenges and opportunities for the learning and skills sector. Colleges and other further education providers can offer spaces for communities to reconnect. They can be a *'unifying element in a place'*, though a key question is how this role gets valued and recognised. For all that has been said about how technology may individualise learning, we still want opportunities to learn with others, as well as opportunities to learn online – both individually and as part of social networks. Moreover, part of the attraction of the *'write to your MP'* service offered by Tom Steinberg is that it enables people to become part of a mass movement, rather than a lone voice.
46. This discussion was welcomed as an *'exciting, interesting and timely debate'* by one sector leader who wanted to explore *'how we can shape the future?'* In what could be a depressing time overshadowed by cuts and efficiency drives, there are opportunities to take advantage of greater freedoms and to look at how to improve quality with some relief from the burdens of inspection.

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47. The question of to whom sector providers are accountable is a key part of the debate. Sector leaders face challenges now to use the new flexibilities in order to respond to local learning demand from citizens, while balancing their responses with clear-sighted judgements about fundability and the impact on an institution's reputation of saying 'yes' or 'no' to particular needs. How can further education providers use the pressure to cut public funding to make a greater impact on people's lives? How do we make sure that we don't create the *'bureaucracy of tomorrow'* but use the opportunity to make connections locally in order to put learners at the heart of designing new ways to offer learning?
48. There are opportunities to reframe the debate towards how public services can shape the context in which people are enabled to develop their individual and collective capabilities, rather than simply providing transactional services to meet needs. Rather than starting with how to improve public services, it means thinking first about how to change lives. Colleges and other further education providers have a potentially key role as strategic partners in shaping new contexts in their localities. They understand and can articulate the part learning can play in transforming lives and are ready to step up to be community leaders.

## Leading and managing change

49. Such a radical approach to change requires thoughtful consideration about how to *'manage mindsets'*, within institutions and with government. One college, for example, had asked students to state the contribution they would make to college life. Some of the responses they gave caused some staff difficulty, taking them beyond what they thought people wanted them to be doing. There is a key challenge for leaders of institutions to develop a culture that can support tutors and lecturers to be less anxious about what people will say about them doing new and different things – such as offering clubs rather than classes for some adult learners - and help them re-connect with their creativity and dedication to teaching. This kind of culture change also requires a different context – one which places less emphasis on institutional targeting and personalisation of resources, and devolves greater responsibility for decision making to the front line.
50. Leading and managing change with existing staff in times of significant external change is one of the most challenging things to do. After a period away from local government, colleges and other providers were encouraged to *'get up the learning curve of how local authorities and communities work'* and to ensure that this learning is embedded in *'more junior levels of colleges'*.
51. Loss of staff in times of cuts can be threatening, but if handled through an open process can give people a degree of ownership over decisions about whether they want to stay which tends to leave less scars in the organisation. This comment was reminiscent of the advice to leaders at the end of the first seminar in mid-May: *'leaders across the public sector should be considering their own levels of energy and resilience in preparation for 5-10 difficult years ahead. Some may want to ask themselves if they think they are fit to lead through the changes to come. If not, the honest thing would be to step away, perhaps to support leaders who do have the skills, energy and resilience to tackle the challenges ahead. "What organisations don't need at this time is therapy - they need leadership"'*.

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## What systems changes are needed?

52. As in previous seminars, discussion was poised between what sector leaders might do to change their professional practice, and what systems changes would help to change public services. Hilary Cottam's presentation challenged us to think about how we start from people's visions of how they want their lives to be and then find ways to free-up the system to respond and deliver. The seminar explored what needs to change so that learners can more easily combine formal and informal learning, public service provision and self-help support, and learn from professionals and volunteers, friends or family.
53. Technology offers all sorts of opportunities to access learning and accreditation in ways that are not predicated on the traditional relationship between a provider and a student. The Move On Skills for Life website was used as an example of how restricting it can be for learners to have just two choices for securing qualifications: either enrol on a course, or pay separately for accreditation. We heard that '*drawing hard lines between the provider and the learner punishes the individual*'.
54. On the other hand, is there still a need, alongside a demand-led model, for government to take a role in looking to the future ahead of the market, for example to develop an approach to building the skills required for a low carbon future? It was suggested that the design of the future further education funding system might reflect some of these issues – a consultation document would be issued over the summer<sup>2</sup>.

## The benefits and challenges of engaging the public

55. Engaging the public in looking at area-based grant expenditure has been a salutary experience for providers and the public in one local authority area. The arrangements for the grant used to be very bureaucratic and difficult to understand, with activities seemingly funded 3 or 4 times, and some items included that should not have been. Opening up the grant to public review has resulted in its various elements being aggregated up and mapped against the community's priorities. The process has improved transparency and led to innovation. Finding new and clearer ways to present public service information offers opportunities to improve the processes of governing as well as managing, and also gives the public a better way of reviewing whether spending decisions taken with and for them were any good.
56. There are, however, risks in opening up access to public services and public servants in the way Tom Steinberg outlined. Whilst it gives greater opportunities for people to express their views, there is a danger that it will be those who are accustomed to doing so who will dominate the debate at the expense of the less articulate or confident. Where pockets of disadvantage exist within broadly middle class areas, for example, this can create problems in meeting minority needs.

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<sup>2</sup> A *Simplified Further Education and Skills Funding System and Methodology* was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> July for response by 14<sup>th</sup> October, and is available here <http://www.bis.gov.uk/FE-funding-consultation>

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57. But, it's important to distinguish between '*direct democracy*' (which is not what Tom's services are designed to achieve), and enabling elected members to *represent* the public more effectively. Imbalances already exist in whose voices get heard and changing this is going to be difficult. However, this reinforced concerns from earlier seminars about our capacity to conduct such deliberative discussions in an effective manner.
58. However, single front-end entry points for public services are attractive and have encouraged new people to get involved. In South America, for example, the public has been involved in participatory budgeting through the use of mobile technology. Voting opportunities are carefully structured so that people have to weigh up the options – say between having the pot holes in their roads filled or sorting out the plumbing at the local school – and give people the chance to choose the altruistic rather than the selfish option.

## Sustaining grass-roots activity

59. Developing the kinds of transformational, needs-led community-based work described by Hilary Cottam can be difficult to sustain and/or scale. Volunteers do not go on forever, and the importance of a mixed economy model of paid and unpaid workers is, therefore, crucial to the longevity of the work. Technology is playing a key role in making it possible to extend ideas that, whilst not necessarily new, might have struggled to get beyond the margins in the 1970s without the mass communication potential offered today by the internet, mobile technology and social networking sites.

## Leading in risky times

60. Risk was a recurrent and implicit theme throughout the discussions. The imperative to account for finance and quality have dominated public sector thinking for over a decade. In parallel, society has become significantly risk averse with the result that it's much more difficult now for people to do their own thing. Hilary acknowledged this, describing how Participle's approach has been to security check everyone initially, but to develop a quick way to do this, and to '*let people go*' once they are friends. Everyone working on youth service projects is, of course, CRB checked. Online risk is also a key issue. There is more to do to think through the role of educational institutions in building learners' resilience and capacity to handle risk.
61. We were referred to Clay Shirky's work on '*cognitive surplus*' which argues that we should learn to cope with as much chaos as we can. This presents challenges for leaders to develop organisations that can embrace chaos and risk. It requires transparency, and a '*culture of candour*' where people can '*talk to power*'. Leaders can set a good example by welcoming unsettling and unwelcome information.

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62. The seminar prompted participants to start thinking beyond the immediate challenge of efficiency – there are limited gains to be made from that now. Although it might seem early to do so, there was a sense that now is the time to start thinking about new approaches to growth, based on understanding how to develop people’s individual and collective capability in creative and innovative ways. We recognised that funders find it hard to reconcile this kind of approach with the need for accountability, but perhaps there are opportunities now to create change using the spaces offered by increased flexibility and autonomy. The need for junior managers to learn how to lead through ambiguity was stressed, and overall the sector should begin to think about how it works *with*, rather than just *for*, citizens.
63. The next seminar will focus on deregulation, risk and ethical decision-making, taking forward the discussion again in the context of the latest information about the coalition’s plans for the autumn.

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## Seminar Participants

### Seminar Chair:

**Polly Toynbee**, Independent Chair & Journalist

### Keynote Speakers:

**Matt Atkinson**, Principal & CEO, City of Bath College

**Dr David Collins CBE**, Chief Executive, LSIS

**Hilary Cottam**, Principle Partner, Participle & Member of Public Service, 2020 Commission

**Caroline Mager**, Executive Director – Policy, Research & Communications, LSIS

**Tom Steinberg**, Founder & Director, mySociety

**Jane Williams**, Executive Director for FE, Skills & Regeneration, Becta

Name	Title	Organisation
Jim Austin	Head of Adult Education	Gloucestershire County Council & LSIS Council Member
Faith Boardman	Development Director	The Public Management and Policy Association
Nick Brown OBE	Principal	Oldham Sixth Form College
Richard Chambers	Principal	Lambeth College
Siobhan Coughlan	Programme Manager, Service Transformation	The Improvement & Development Agency
Stuart Edwards	Deputy Director, Further Education Directorate	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Ray Faulkner	Chair of Governors	South Staffordshire College
Lorna Fitzjohn	Divisional Manager, Learning and Skills	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
Robin Gadd	Head of Information and Systems Development	Brockenhurst College
Steve Goodman	Director 14-19 (Interim)	Becta
John Grafik	Business Development Manager	West Kent College
Melanie Hunt	Director - Development, Learning and Skills	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills



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<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Gary Jones	Deputy Principal	Highlands College
Dr Jean Kelly	Director of Professional Development	Institute for Learning
Frank McLoughlin CBE	Principal	City and Islington College
Adam Micklethwaite	Director of Adult Advancement and Support	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Kanwal Pattar	Vice Principal Skills for Life & Community Cohesion	Working Men's College
Martin Penny	Chief Executive & Principal	Stratford-upon-Avon College
Bob Powell	Chief Officer	HOLEX
Sue Rimmer	Principal	South Thames College
Ann Robinson OBE	Associate Director for Sixth Form Colleges & Sixth Form Issues	Association of Colleges & LSIS Board Member
Nick Rousseau	Team Leader , Further Education Policy	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
David Russell	Strategic Director Finance, Funding & Corporate Services	Young People's Learning Agency
Stephen Sheedy	Principal	Queen Mary's College
Dame Ruth Silver DBE	Chair	LSIS Board
Mike Smith	Managing Director	Nucleus Training Limited & LSIS Council Member
Ann Thunhurst	Manager JISC RSC Southeast	JISC Regional Support Centre
Professor Alan Tuckett OBE	Director	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
Jon Vincent	Principal & Chief Executive	Tyne Metropolitan College