

## Speaker and chair biographies

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### Jane Ellison MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health



As Public Health Minister, Jane is responsible for Government policy on a wide range of issues, including cancer prevention, dementia, physical activity, tobacco control and health inequalities. She has made the health of young people a priority, bringing in important changes on how Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is recorded in hospitals and GPs' surgeries, and extending the Government's child immunisation programme to include Meningitis B. Her current priorities include childhood obesity and diabetes prevention. Jane has been the Member of Parliament for Battersea since 2010. She served on the Backbench Business Committee for three years and founded the All-Party Group on FGM. She was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health in October 2013, and was reappointed to the role following the 2015 General Election. Before entering Parliament, she worked for the John Lewis Partnership for over 20 years.

### Carey Oppenheim, Chief Executive, Early Intervention Foundation



Carey has been Chief Executive of the Early Intervention Foundation since 2013. Her previous roles include Co-director of the Institute of Public Policy Research, Special Advisor to Tony Blair in the Number 10 Policy Unit, specialising in employment, social security, childcare and poverty. Carey has also been a senior lecturer in social policy at the South Bank University, deputy director and head of research at the Child Poverty Action Group, chaired the London Child Poverty Commission and advised the Treasury on welfare reform, and the DfE on childcare and early years strategy. She lately trained to be a teacher and taught history and politics at an inner-city London

school.

Twitter: @EIFCOppenheim

### Donna Molloy, Director of Dissemination, Early Intervention Foundation



Donna Molloy has led on implementation for EIF since 2013. Prior to this she spent over 10 years in central government developing policy and leading implementation programmes to intervene more effectively with children and families. This included developing policy on family intervention and its expansion in the DCLG Troubled Families Team. Before that she spent 4 years in DfE developing policy on families at risk, Think Family and overseeing the roll out of family intervention and parenting programmes. She has also worked as a policy adviser in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and the Social Exclusion Unit. Donna started her career as a qualitative researcher and worked at the National Centre for social research.

Twitter: @donnamolloy

### **Professor Leon Feinstein, Director of Evidence, Early Intervention Foundation**



Leon joined the EIF from the Cabinet Office's Implementation Unit, where he was chief analyst. Leon has previously worked in the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit and the Performance and Reform Unit in HM Treasury, as Head of the Evidence and Analysis Unit in the Office for Criminal Justice Reform at the Ministry of Justice, and is also Visiting Professor at the LSE's Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion.

Twitter: @LeonFeinstein

### **Dr Daniel Acquah, Evidence Analyst, Early Intervention Foundation**



Daniel led EIF's review of 'What works to enhance inter-parental relationships and improve outcomes for children' and is involved in programme assessment, qualitative work and social research more broadly. Daniel joined the EIF from the Analysis and Insight Team at Cabinet Office. There he managed a range of research and evaluation projects in support of the Office for Civil Society and the Youth Policy teams. Before that, Daniel spent three years as a Research Associate at the Centre for Education Research and Practice at AQA Education where he published work on education policy as well as carrying out evaluations on assessment procedures. Previously, Daniel trained as a developmental psychologist completing an MSc in Psychological Research Methods and a PhD in developmental psychology at the University of Nottingham.

### **Dr Kirsten Asmussen, Evidence Analyst, Early Intervention Foundation**



Kirsten is a developmental psychologist with expertise in the parent/child relationship and author of the Evidence-Based Parenting Practitioner's Handbook (Routledge, 2011). Kirsten previously worked at the National Academy for Parenting Research at King's College London, where she managed the Commissioning Toolkit – a DfE funded project that assessed the quality of parenting interventions against standards of evidence and best practice. Kirsten's research experience also includes the evaluation of the NAPP training offer, the 2011 NSPCC study of abuse and neglect, the On Track initiative and the local evaluation of Sure Start Children's Centres in Northeast London.

### **Ben Lewing, Implementation Adviser, Early Intervention Foundation**



Ben joined the EIF having spent the previous decade working in local government on children's strategy and partnerships, most recently as a Strategic Commissioner in Solihull leading on early help in the early years, emotional wellbeing, speech and language therapy and domestic abuse. Although Ben qualified as a social worker and started his career working in children's homes in Birmingham, he has specialised in children's rights and participation, working for Save the Children UK and the Children and Young People's Unit.

Twitter: @Ben\_EIF

### **Mark Rogers, Chief Executive, Birmingham City Council**



Mark took up the role of Chief Executive at Birmingham City Council in March 2014, with a committed to making sustainable improvement in children's safeguarding services his number one priority and continues to do so. Early in his career Mark was a special needs school teacher across the East Midland and North West, and became head teacher in Tameside in 1994. Having developed an appetite for local government, Mark was appointed as Assistant Director, Children & Young People, for Stockport Council in 2003. In March 2006, Mark joined Solihull Council's Corporate Leadership Team as Director of Children's Services, where he developed the Children & Young People's Partnership. In 2007 he became joint DCS and Chief Executive, had the pleasure of guiding the Council successfully through a number of major inspections and by 2014 he had positioned Solihull as a national leader for

Lean Systems Thinking in local government. Finally, Mark still maintains his commitment to children's services on behalf of SOLACE as the President for the period 2013-2016. He was also the deputy chair of the Social Work Reform Board up to its demise in 2012; he continues to co-chair (with Jon Rouse) the Children's Health and Wellbeing Partnership; and he has jointly founded the Children's Improvement Board (2010-13) which set the agenda and framework for sector led improvement in children's services.

### **Alison Burton, National Lead for Maternity and Early Years, Public Health England**



Alison is the National Lead for Maternity and Early Years in Public Health England. Alison started her career as a nurse working in City of London and Hackney before moving to Oxfordshire. She went on to train as health visitor and then a school nurse. Alison has worked in clinical practice for over 20 years and moved into public health in 2004 as the lead for children and young people's public health programmes. In 2008 she was awarded a Masters degree in Child Public Health from the Institute of Child Health University College London. Before moving to her national role in PHE, Alison held a regional post in NHS England commissioning public health programmes including screening, immunisations, Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnerships for the Thames Valley,

### **Dr Nick Axford, Head of What Works, Dartington Social Research Unit**



and early intervention

Nick is a Senior Researcher and Head of What Works at the Dartington Social Research Unit. He leads a team that focuses on identifying effective interventions to improve child well-being through a combination of evidence reviews and evaluations (mostly randomised controlled trials). Nick is a member of the Early Intervention Foundation Evidence Panel and an Advisor to the Board of the European Society for Prevention Research, and was Co-Editor of the Journal of Children's Services from 2006 to 2015. He tweets on evidence-based prevention

Twitter: @nick\_axford

### **Professor Gordon Harold, Professor of Psychology, University of Sussex**



Gordon Harold is the Andrew and Virginia Rudd Chair and has held the position of Professor of Psychology in the School of Psychology at the University of Sussex since 2008. He has held appointments as Professor of Psychology at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and Professor of Quantitative Behaviour Genetics at the University of Leicester. He is an Associate Member of the MRC Social, Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry Centre, at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, and the MRC Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics at Cardiff University. His primary research interests focus on the role of the family as a context for understanding children's psychological development, the interplay between genetic and family relationship factors and children's psychological development, working with cohort longitudinal data resources, and implementing recommendations of research relating to family influences on child and adolescent mental health. He is a consultant and advisor to several government departments in the UK and internationally.

### **Dr Ann Hoskins, Independent Public Health Consultant**



Ann has over 30 years' experience working in public health in the UK and in the Republic of Yemen. She has successfully led innovations in health strategy, policy development and programme implementation to improve health and service delivery. She has local, regional and national senior leadership experience with Public Health England, Deputy Director Health and Wellbeing: Healthy People; NHS North West Strategic Health Authority, Director Children, Young People and Maternity; and Manchester and Wirral Health Authorities, Director of Public Health. She has a career-long commitment to improve socio-economic opportunities by reducing health inequalities and is passionate about the importance of early years development for future life chances. Ann previously was a member of the Public Health Interventions Advisory Committee for eight years at the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). She was also a member of the Board of Trustees for Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) until 2015, and continues her interest in maternal and child care overseas by her membership of the External Advisory Group, Centre for Maternal and Newborn Health also at the LSTM. Ann is currently a member of Centre for Policy Research Population, Policy and Practice Advisory

group, University College London, Institute of Child Health. She is chair of Best Beginnings a national children's charity and has recently joined the board of Plus Dane Housing Association.

**Professor Vivette Glover, Professor in Perinatal Psychobiology, Imperial College London**



Vivette Glover is Professor of Perinatal Psychobiology at Imperial College London. Her first degree was in Biochemistry at Oxford University, and she did her PhD in neurochemistry at University College London. Her research focusses on the effects of the emotional state of the mother, both on the developing fetus and longer term on the child. Her group are also studying the biological mechanisms that may underlie such fetal programming. She has published over 450 papers and been awarded the Marcé Society Medal. She is currently an advisor to the Early Intervention Foundation, the NSPCC, the Maternal Mental Health Alliance and is the biometric lead on the Big Lottery Better Start program.

**Professor Kathy Sylva, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Oxford**



Kathy Sylva is Honorary Research Fellow and Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Oxford. She has conducted several large-scale studies on the effects of early education and care on children's development. She was a lead researcher on the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education study (EPPE/EPPSE) and is currently co-lead on the national Evaluation of Children's Centres. She has led three randomised controlled trials to evaluate parenting interventions aimed at improving children's behaviour and literacy; the most recent is a parent programme aimed at supporting children's early reading. She has published 7 books and more than 100 papers on early childhood, early literacy, and ways to support families. Currently Kathy is researching the early childhood curriculum across Europe, funded by the EU. She was awarded an OBE in 2008 for services to children and families and in 2014 the Nisbett Award for outstanding contribution to educational research.

**Hannah Meyer, Deputy Director, Troubled Families Programme, Department for Communities and Local Government**



Hannah Meyer took up her current post as Deputy Director for the national Troubled Families Programme in January. Prior to this, Hannah was a senior policy adviser in the Prime Minister's No.10 Policy Unit where she led on home affairs and justice policy, including child protection and safeguarding. Hannah has also worked at the Cabinet Office and at the Ministry of Justice where she led on victims' policy and reforms to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Before joining the civil service, Hannah completed a PhD in medieval history at the University of Cambridge.



**Candi Lawson, Assistant Service Manager, Children and Families Service, Sheffield City Council**

Candi has worked as part of Sheffield's Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) service for 7 years, previously having worked in London Borough of Greenwich as a Sure Start Manager, and within the voluntary sector across London. The MAST service delivers whole family support from 0 – 19, including provision of evidence based parenting across the city. Candi is responsible for the Parenting Service in Sheffield.

**Suzy Robertson, Service Manager, Families in Need, Early Help, Blackpool Council**



Suzy has worked with Children and Families for 18 years, starting her career as a Youth and Community worker in projects across the country before moving to Blackpool Council in 2006. Suzy has responsibility for managing a large multi-agency service delivering support to families building on the well-established Family Intervention Project. She has also been developing a new model of tackling transience in some of the most deprived wards in Blackpool.

**Stephanie Cash, Flying Start Programme Manager, Flying Start Luton**



Stephanie is an experienced project manager who has worked in the Public Sector for over 30 years. Qualified as a dietitian, and with over 16 years of experience working in community dietetics, Stephanie obtained a Masters in Public Health in 2004. Following working as a Programme Manager for the DFE Children's Fund in Luton, aimed at tackling disadvantage in children aged 5-13 years, she worked in Public Health at Luton PCT as an advanced Public Health Specialist in obesity. In 2007 Stephanie moved into Local Government and worked as the Children's Trust Partnership and Commissioner Manager in the integrated Children's Commissioning team. In the last three years Stephanie has been the supporting the development and implementation of Luton's early years' prevention and early intervention strategy Flying Start.

**Gill Thornton, Programme Manager, Better Start Bradford, Bradford Trident**



Gill joined Better Start Bradford as Project Manager for the bid stage and became Programme Manager following Bradford's success in securing £49 million. Her priorities for the programme are continued involvement of local parents and stakeholders coupled with a commitment to developing and building the evidence-base. Gill previously worked for Rathbone as the national Director of Policy and Communications and as CEO of Voluntary Action Wakefield, Gill secured Big Lottery funding to create a streamlined and more effective offer through NOVA Wakefield. Gill's involvement in children and health dates from her time as a youth leader, Community Health Council member, to her more recent involvement with the National Childbirth Trust as antenatal teacher.

**Sally Bridges, Programme Coordinator, Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub, Born in Bradford**



Sally Bridges works in the [Born in Bradford](#) team at the Bradford Institute for Health Research. Sally is the Programme Coordinator for the [Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub](#) and works closely with all members of the Innovation Hub team to ensure the smooth running of the projects. Sally has lots of experience in delivering complex research projects after leading large scale population health studies like the Health Survey for England and the Mental Health of Children and Young People Survey. Sally's research interests are focused around mental health and wellbeing research and health inequalities.

**Lucy Butler, Deputy Director, Children's Social Care and Early Intervention, Oxfordshire County Council**



Lucy Butler is Deputy Director of Children Social Care and Early Intervention Services for Oxfordshire County Council. She has over 20 years' experience in local government, covering both children's and adults, and commissioning and delivering front line services. Currently leading the implementation of a new model in Oxfordshire integrating children social care with early intervention services. She is also a trustee for Respond, a small charity offering therapeutic support to children and adults with a learning disability who are victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse.