

PPN NW Annual Conference

14th November 2024

Guest Speaker Biographies:



John Herring - Director of Organisational Development and Culture: NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care

John has over 20 years of experience working as a leader across Public Services. Initially trained as a psychological therapist John went on to set up a drop-in and therapy centre for homeless people in Liverpool before moving on to leading community mental health services across Lancashire for the NHS. John has worked as part of the devolution of Health and Care across Greater Manchester since its inception in 2016 working on a number of areas addressing the reform of public services and the leadership and cultural challenges of implementing the GM Mayor's vision for a One Workforce approach and integration. John led on the commitment across Greater Manchester to address Race Equality across the entire public service workforce and commissioned the work to create change in experience and outcome for racially diverse groups in public services – this was the first project of its kind in the UK.

John sits on both the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter Board and the Real Living Wage Board supporting health and care organisations to improve their employment practices ensuring good work and proper pay for staff.

Outside of his public service roles John is the Chair of Abandon Normal Devices – an arts charity based in the North of England who champion experimental art, disrupting received notions of what an arts organisation and festival should be. John is also a singer songwriter with two albums to his name and has worked in partnership with Unconvention raising awareness of the unique mental health challenges artists experience.

Finally, John was overwhelmed to receive the Greater Manchester Leader of the Year at this year's GM Good Employment Awards - an award he dedicated to the fantastic team he is blessed to work with.



Ali Wheeler – CEO: We Mind the Gap

In July 2022 Ali took on the role of CEO, bringing 29yrs Public Sector, Community Sector, and Charity Trustee experience. Ali is an accomplished transformation and improvement leader across public and community sector organisations, with Board level experience in systems

leadership, organisational and social system change. With a career history featuring the Police Service, NHS and Local Authority Transformational change and Directorships of her own businesses. Ali is passionate about population health approaches, lived experience and intelligence led re-design of services which meet the needs of communities, supporting services and organisations to re-imagine ways of working. Ali also manages to be a supporter of the scouting community, enjoys amateur theatre and is a choir member with Handbags of Harmonies.



Leon Pietrzak - Development Manager (Youth Engagement): NHS England North West

Leon is the Development Manager (Youth Engagement) for NHS England North West. My role across the North West of England is to maximise the potential of youth engagement developments. Embed the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England by ensuring that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values, and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

Previous roles include local authority senior manager for sports development, community engagement, employability support, youth services, housing services, education, and training across the North West. Voluntary work includes being a volunteer teacher, sports coach, mental health first aider, internet safety advisor, parent support and tackling child sexual exploitation champion and child poverty through awareness campaigns.



Dr Will Curvis - Clinical Neuropsychologist: University of Lancaster

Dr Will Curvis is a Clinical Neuropsychologist and has worked across a range of acute inpatient and community based physical health and neuropsychology settings, supporting people with long-term physical health problems and neurological conditions. He also works as a Clinical Tutor for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology programme at Lancaster University. Will is part of the #ClassClinPsych collective, a group established to improve diversity and inclusion in clinical psychology, with an emphasis on supporting aspiring clinical psychologists from disadvantaged/working class backgrounds and raising awareness of the importance of social context on psychological wellbeing.