



Koulla Yiasouma took up appointment as NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) in March 2015. She trained as a social worker and previously worked in probation, NI Women's Aid and prior to her appointment was the Director of Include Youth for almost 17 years. Include Youth is an organisation that works to promote and protect the rights and best interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

Koulla has been involved with a number of strategic and inter-agency bodies seeking to improve outcomes for children, families and communities. She is a passionate advocate for

the rights of all children, especially those with the most challenging behaviours, and she represented these issues on these bodies.

Koulla was involved with a number of voluntary and community based organisations. She was a Board member of the Patient and Client Council, a school governor, a member of the NI Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

As a Human Rights institution, the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People is appointed by the First and Deputy First Ministers and tasked to promote and safeguard the rights and best interests of children and young people across Northern Ireland. This includes advising public authorities and holding them to account in a variety of ways, on their delivery of children's rights. Koulla set key strategic priorities for her term in Office. These include addressing educational inequalities, tackling child poverty, improving emotional and mental well-being and addressing the on-going legacy of the conflict on children and young people.

Koulla is of Greek Cypriot origin, is married and has two daughters. She is also an avid Arsenal supporter.



Dean Beadle has toured the UK for over fourteen years sharing his experiences of being autistic. He has also delivered keynotes in Ireland, Denmark, Belgium and Germany as well as undertaking four seminar tours of Australia and New Zealand. Through his humorous and insightful speeches Dean outlines his positive outlook on being autistic, and challenges negative public attitudes. In 2011 Dean's work was brought to a wider audience, as a clip of one of his speeches was viewed globally on YouTube. In recent years he has also become an in demand inset trainer and delivers training to staff across the UK. To date Dean has delivered over 800 keynotes, lectures and training sessions.

He is also an experienced journalist, having been a reporter, reviewer and columnist in local and national publications. In 2012, this part of Dean's career culminated in him being appointed editor of the National Autistic Society's 'Autism in Practice' newsletter which had subscribers in 90 countries.

Between 2012 and 2014 Dean sat on the judging panel for the NAS Professionals Awards. Dean has co-chaired the NAS Professionals Conference, hosted charity balls, conferences and diversity festivals and co-hosted the Autism Uncut Film Awards at BAFTA in 2017. An interview with Dean is featured as a key resource in the Autism Education Trust training programme which has reached 200,000 schools' staff.

Dean is also a singer and performs at charity balls and various events nationwide. Building on this, he also creates an annual series of Christmas edited social media comedy music videos, "The 12 Days of Instamas". In November 2020, Dean released his first original music video, 'Me And Your Normal Are Done', which he co-wrote and performed with the band Aukestra. The song highlights the attitudes autistic people still have to face in society.

During the lockdowns of 2020, when all conferences and training sessions were cancelled, Dean moved his work online. He began by creating a series of humorous social media music videos, designed to lighten the mood in an otherwise overwhelming time. He also delivered, produced and edited filmed keynotes for online autism conferences and courses. Throughout lockdown, Dean filmed a series of popular weekly Facebook live vlogs 'Walk with Dean', took part in online Q+As for a variety of autism organisations and teamed up with colleagues Sarah-Jane Critchley, Dawn Brown, Lynn McCann and Sally Glossop to deliver a series of highly successful autism webinars.

Dean is honorary president of APCymru- an autistic led parent charity in Cardiff and is also patron of SPACE, a parent led charity in Hertfordshire, and ONE to ONE Enfield, a charity providing meaningful activities for LD/autistic adults.



Mary McCann is the STRIDE Project Manager for Usel who help people living with disabilities or health conditions get support into employment or further learning opportunities.

Mary is an Autism Champion for Usel and was successful in getting the company its Autism Impact Award. As a parent of a child with ASD Mary is passionate about supporting those with ASD.



Paddy Crothers is an Employment Officer for the NOW Group in Ballymena and surrounding areas, supporting individuals with a learning difficulty or Autism into training and jobs with a future.



Eileen Traynor – Department for Communities

I am a Disability Employment Manager for Department for Communities.

My job mainly entails assisting client who have disabilities to overcome barriers in the workplace. This is done through our Access to Work NI Programme. We have a team of Access to Work Advisers who are based in Belfast and various Jobs and Benefits Offices throughout Northern Ireland.

If you need a bit more information you can let me know.



My name is **Anna Bradley** and I am one of the AccessAbility Advisers in Ulster University's Student Wellbeing Team. The AccessAbility team provide support and guidance for all current and prospective students with a diagnosed disability or long-term medical condition who choose to study at Ulster University. You will find more information on the team and our service at <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/wellbeing/disability/accessability> Today's session aims to provide you with information to allow you to prepare for transition into University life, including what to expect from University, support available and how to access this



Barbara Teague

Advisory Teacher
AAIS Autism Advisory and Intervention Service



Helen Martin

Advisory Teacher
AAIS Autism Advisory and Intervention Service

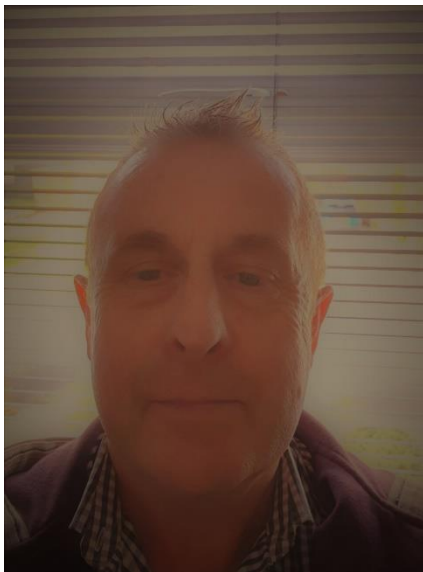


Joanne Murphy
Paediatric ASD Service, NHSCCT



Gillian Cooper
Paediatric ASD Service, NHSCCT

Joanne and Gillian are Senior ASD Therapists working in the Paediatric ASD Service, which offers services for children and young people from ages 2-18 years. As part of this role, we offer specialist diagnostic assessment to children and young people referred where there are concerns of a possible ASD. We also provide support to autistic children, young people and their families, and to those awaiting assessment to prioritise managing immediate needs with specialist interventions, advice and support.



Chris Lindsay: Education Welfare Projects Officer. Working across all Trust areas developing and delivering Wellbeing programmes in partnership with primary and post-primary schools.



Aine Wallace is writer, creator and curator of 'Positive Products' and Mental Health, Resilience, Trauma and Suicide Prevention Training for children and adults. She is the Director of a vibrant social enterprise called Fresh Minds Education and they are Northern Ireland's leading specialists in creative and therapeutic education reaching more than 6000 people every year. They focus on supporting parents, carers and teachers to raise children strong, which starts with learning how to love and look after ourselves.



Brenda Breen – Department for Economy

Brenda works as a Careers Adviser for Careers Service NI, providing careers advice, guidance and support to young people and adults in the Ballymena area. In her role she supports people to make well informed decisions about careers including those finishing education, changing career or requiring support following redundancy or unemployment.



Stephen McCartney is Head of Student Services at Northern Regional College and manages a variety of areas within the college including Student Finance, Education Support, Libraries, the Sexual Health Clinic and is also the designated lead for Safeguarding.

As part of his role he works closely with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and was part of the team who originally set up the Northern Adult Autism Advisory Service. He is also a member of the Northern Area ASD Forum.

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I love to help, support, encourage and believe in all my participants. To watch someone grow, even a little, brings me joy and satisfies my purpose as a SEO.

Heather Logan Assoc CIPD
Job Match
Supported Employment Officer
(Ballymena, Ballymoney, Cookstown, Coleraine, Magherafelt)

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Anna Collishaw-Nikodemus has been a Local Campaigns Manager at the NSPCC since September 2020. Previous to this she spent 10 years working in policy and campaigns, the majority of that time being spent at the National Autistic Society. Prior to that she worked as a family support worker for autistic children and their families both in community and educational settings.