CALL FOR CONVENORS TO LEAD WORKING GROUPS
#ReimagineFE19 Conference, 2nd July 2019, BCU
#FESpeaks

After three successful conferences, we are continuing to reimagine further education.

At #ReimagineFE, we are subverting what ‘centre stage’ means. Our focus is not on the people at the front, but the people in the seats: educators, leaders, and researchers. This year, our speakers will be not ‘keynotes’ but provocateurs, and when they stop speaking, the real work begins—and this is where we need your contributions.

The theme for 2019 is #FESpeaks. We want to position #ReimagineFE at the heart of an ongoing programme across the rich diversity of the further education sector. This summer’s conference is part of a challenging, raw and much-needed conversation which unites our voices and brings us together in projects, discussions and networks.

The focus of the day remains the same: providing a space where FE practitioners can revitalise their thinking and work towards developing new visions for the sector. Working groups have always been the most important element of #ReimagineFE. One of the questions we have wrestled with is how to take the important work of participants beyond the conference walls. The difference in 2019 is that we are encouraging the work that begins here to continue through the year.

The purpose of the #ReimagineFE ‘movement’ is to empower FE to formulate its own solutions to the pressing problems of the day. To do so we need to find and amplify the FE voice.

CALL FOR CONVENORS
We are looking for educators, leaders, and researchers from all walks of FE life to volunteer as working group convenors at the #ReimagineFE conference on 2nd July at Birmingham City University. Whatever your current role, whatever FE context you work in, if you’re the sort of person who has ideas and energy about the future of FE, we want you to get involved. You will need to be able to facilitate a group of people and take them forward to convert ideas into actions that can carry on beyond the day of the conference. For example, at #Reimagine2018, a Research Working Group was convened. As a direct result of the work they did during the conference, one of the group’s convenors established the Bedford College Group Research Network with the aim of supporting and disseminating research across the FE sector.

We don’t expect convenors to have all the answers; what is required is curiosity and the ability to ask some key questions around a particular theme of interest to you and others in the sector. We call on you now to propose the themes and to think about a plan to facilitate a group of your peers to tackle it. We do not want to dictate the themes; it’s really important that you suggest issues which you believe are important to the sector. Following are a few examples to stimulate your thinking, but please don’t be limited by these:
• Coaches/advanced practitioners: how do you support authentic teaching within a performative environment?
• Quality: practitioners, leaders and researchers explore alternative ways to understand ‘quality’ in the FE educational context
• Sector voice: Who speaks for FE? How can we develop a platform to formulate and articulate FE views to policymakers?
• Traditional vs Progressive teaching—where does FE stand on this debate?

We hope you will all think of many more possible themes and challenges for working groups to tackle. Convenors will be given plenty of support beforehand, afterwards and on the day. **We especially encourage expressions of interest from previously under-represented areas of the sector including adult and community learning, offender learning, and third sector organisations.**

Travel expenses for 2nd July 2019 will be paid, and of course we will offer you a free conference place.

If you would like to express interest in convening a working group, think about the following questions:

1. What are some of the most pressing challenges in your area of FE which need fresh, reimagined thinking?
2. Can you formulate these challenges into some key questions to explore with a group of colleagues?
3. You will have approximately 3.5 hours to work with the group. How would you facilitate the group to reimage new approaches to the theme(s) you’ve raised?

**Interested? Email Suzanne Savage suzanne.savage@bcu.ac.uk with your answers to the above questions by 20 January 2018.**

If you’d like an informal chat about what’s involved and support with how you might approach the convenor work, please get in touch with Suzanne or any member of the steering group:

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**The deadline to express your interest in convening a working group is 20 January 2019**