

Advisory Board Members

Biographies

Dr Tim Coulson (Chair)

Tim Coulson is currently Chief Executive of Unity Schools Partnership, a multi-academy trust of 30 primary, secondary and special schools in Suffolk and East London.

He has formerly held a variety of posts in education, including headteacher of William Tyndale Primary School, National Director of the National Numeracy Strategy, Director of Education for Essex County Council and as the first Regional Schools Commissioner for the East of England and North East London.

He studied mathematics - a first degree at Durham University and a PhD at London University.

He is currently Chair of the Norwich Opportunity Area Partnership Board. He and his wife have experience in both fostering and adoption.

Nick Bent

Nick is Co-Founder and CEO of The Tutor Trust, in his native Manchester. Nick has been involved with a number of educational and youth work charities for over 25 years. He is a Director of the academies charity Oasis Community Learning and was previously Chair of Governors at the Oasis Academy MediaCityUK in Salford. During 2017, Nick was a Clore Social Leadership Fellow.

An Associate of the think tank Demos, Nick spent seven years working in Westminster and Whitehall, including four years as a Special Adviser to Rt Hon Dame Tessa Jowell MP.

Nick has also served as Director of the think tank Policy Network and as a lay member of the General Assembly of the University of Manchester.

Bernie Brown

Bernie Brown is a qualified social worker of 30 years. Bernie is currently the Director of People in Bolton Council but has worked in a number of Local authorities across the UK and Scotland and spent 5 years working in New Zealand as a social worker and family therapist.

Bernie is an elected director on the board of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).

Michael Merrick

Michael has worked in the education sector for ten years, initially within secondary and now within the primary sector. He is the Executive Headteacher of two primary schools in Cumbria and has extensive experience of safeguarding and ways in which deprivation impacts on schooling.

Ann Mroz MBE

Ann Mroz, MBE, is the former editor of Tes (Times Educational Supplement) and Times Higher Education. She is on the education advisory group of the Sutton Trust, the advisory board of the Education Endowment Foundation and the advisory board of the Education Policy Institute. She is also a member of the Princeton University Press European advisory board. She is a trustee of Shine, the Institute for Research in Schools and the Reach Foundation.

Natasha Porter

Natasha is Founder and CEO of Unlocked Graduates, an award-winning charity which develops outstanding leaders to break cycles of reoffending. She has dedicated her career to public service, focusing primarily on challenging educational disadvantage and advocating for social justice.

Natasha's background is as an English teacher and senior leader in inner city schools. She co-founded King Solomon Academy in 2009 and led their frontier cohort to ground-breaking GCSE results in 2014.

Prior to founding Unlocked, Natasha was a policy fellow in the Department for Education and an advisor to the Ministry of Justice, as well as working at the Westminster think tank Policy Exchange where she authored a number of reports on education and schools. In her spare time she is a trustee for charities which focus on disadvantaged young people, and is an experienced school governor.

Baroness Philippa Stroud

Philippa Stroud is CEO of the Legatum Institute. Previously, she was Chief Executive of the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), a think tank that she co-founded in 2004. Philippa's life and career to date have been strongly influenced by her passion to tackle poverty and social breakdown.

Prior to the CSJ, she was Special Adviser the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP (then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) from 2010-15, and also to the Prime Minister from 2012. In these roles, she was responsible for the development of the Social Justice agenda, working on the Government's key Welfare Reform programme, the introduction of Universal Credit, the creation of Social Investment and the new child poverty measures.

Her early career was spent in the voluntary sector including spending time in Hong Kong and Macau working with heroin addicts and ex-members of triad gangs who were undergoing rehabilitation. On her return to the

UK she founded and directed a four-stage project that supported people off the streets and into independent living before moving to Birmingham in 2000 where she became Executive Director of the Bridge Project, a voluntary sector project that provided supported accommodation for homeless men and women.

Following the 2015 UK General Election, Philippa was ennobled and became Baroness Stroud of Fulham.

Ed Vainker OBE

Ed is the CEO of the Reach Foundation, which is developing cradle to career models in Feltham and around the UK. He was the co-founder and Principal of Reach Academy Feltham, an all-through in South West London which was judged outstanding in 2014. The Foundation launched the Reach Children's Hub in 2017 and seeks to offer support from conception onwards. Prior to founding Reach Ed worked in Washington DC for Teach For All, supporting organisations around the world to train and develop teachers.

Ed has sat on numerous policy commissions and was awarded at OBE in 2019.

Professor Russell Viner CBE

Russell Viner is a clinical academic paediatrician, professor of Adolescent Health at the UCL Great Ormond St. Institute of Child Health in London and has a long history of leadership in national health policy, from involvement in the 2005 National Service Framework to helping ensure children and young people were central to the 2019 NHS Long Term Plan. He was President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) from 2018-21. During the COVID-19 pandemic he was a member of SAGE and continues to advise government on children and young people, schools and COVID-19. Clinically he still sees young people with diabetes each week at University College Hospital.

He is currently Vice-Chair of the NHS England Children and Young People's Transformation Board, responsible for strategic oversight of children's health in England, and Chair of the Stakeholder Council for the Children's Transformation Board. He also has significant 'hands-on' experience within the NHS, having been Clinical Director in a busy teaching hospital and clinical director for children and young people for the NHS across London, responsible for leading healthcare strategy for London's 2 million children and young people.

His research focuses on population health, policy and health services for children and young people. He directs the Department of Health Obesity Policy Research Unit. He has published over 250 peer reviewed papers and is currently named on >£20 million in current research grants.

Jon Yates

Jon Yates is the Executive Director of the Youth Endowment Fund – a £200m endowment whose vision is 'a world where no child becomes involved in violence.' The Fund's mission is to find what works to reduce violence and build a movement to put this into practice. To this end, it has constructed the largest repository of evidence on youth violence in the world.

Jon is an experienced leader and social entrepreneur. He was the co-founder of a number of charities and initiatives including the fastest growing programme for young people in Europe since the creation of the Scouts. Jon has spent a portion of his career working with and in government. This includes a period as the chief policy adviser in the Department for Education, reporting directly to the Secretary of State.

Jon is the author of 'Fractured: Why our societies are coming apart and how we put them back together', which was published by HarperCollins in 2021. He lives just outside London with his wife. Together, they are outnumbered by small humans and small animals.