

Speakers & Panellists



Lucy Armstrong

Lucy is chair of the Enterprise Research Centre (ERC) Advisory Board and a Visiting Professor of Innovation and Enterprise at Newcastle University. She is Chief Executive of The Alchemists which works with high growth mid-corporate businesses to accelerate their development and success. Her experience ranges from funding start up and early stage manufacturing businesses in the North East through to mergers and disposals of international operations. She was a member of the government's Business Bank Advisory Board and chaired Capital for Enterprise, its forerunner, responsible for over £4bn of government backed debt and equity for small and medium sized businesses. She is the first chair of the Independent Professional Standards Council for the Asset Based Finance industry and deputy chair of NCFE, the national qualifications organisation. She chaired the CBI's national Small and Medium Business Forum from 2010 to 2013 and was a member of a government advisory board looking at new interventions in private business finance alongside the Banking Taskforce and Future Shape of Business projects for the CBI. She was educated at Oxford, holds an MBA and an MSc in forensic psychology and criminology.



Sergio Arzeni

Sergio Arzeni is the Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Local Development at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, France. The Centre oversees the work of the Programme on Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), the Trento Centre for Local Development in Italy, the Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship and the Tourism Committee. It is under his leadership that the OECD Scoreboard on SME and Entrepreneurship Finance has been developed as well as the SME Policy Review series and the SME Policy Benchmarking Report.

As an economic journalist he has contributed to several Italian and international newspapers. He holds a First Class Honours Degree in Political Science from the University of Rome and specialised in Industrial Economics at the International University Institute of Luxembourg and in International Economic Relations at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., USA. He is Visiting Professor at the School of Entrepreneurship and Business, University of Essex, UK; President of the Scientific Committee for Research and Innovation of the Piedmont Region, Italy; Member of the Strategic Committee of BPI France; Member of the Scientific Committee of Formaper, the Milan Chamber of Commerce Special Agency on Skills for Entrepreneurship and Management in SMEs; Member of the Advisory Board of SRM, the Research Centre on the Mediterranean of Intesa San Paolo Bank.



Sara Carter

Associate Director, Enterprise Research Centre Deputy Principal at the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at Strathclyde University.

At the ERC Sara leads the research on underrepresented groups in enterprise. Her research focuses extensively on entrepreneurship policy, gender, entrepreneurship and finance; and rewards and lifestyles within the entrepreneurial household.



Sherry Coutu

Sherry Coutu chairs Founders4Schools, is the author of 'The Scale-up Report' on UK economic growth and serves as a non-executive director on the boards of the London Stock Exchange Group plc, Raspberry Pi, Zoopla plc and Cambridge University (Finance Board).

She was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to entrepreneurship in the 2013 New Year's Honours List and has been named as an "Ambassador for London" by the Mayor. She is an alumna of the London School of Economics, Harvard Business School and the University of British Columbia.



Lesley Giles

Lesley Giles is Deputy Director at the UK Commission for Employment and Skills. She currently leads the research, strategic planning and performance management process within the Commission. This involves leading a programme of work providing research and evaluation, labour market analysis, and insight to inform the business priorities of the UK Commission. Prior to this, Lesley was Acting Director for Strategy and Research (2006-08), and Head of Research (2002-06), at the Sector Skills Development Agency, an umbrella organisation, set up in 2002 to license and performance manage the Sector Skills Councils as part of the Skills for Business network. In this role she provided research and intelligence services on skills issues for the SSC network and wider partners in the skills system. In addition, Lesley has worked in a variety of other roles across Government undertaking skills and/or employment research and policy analysis: including for the Department for Education and Employment, the Employment Service and the Cabinet Office. Prior to joining the Government, Lesley was a researcher for the Institute for Employment Studies, the University of Portsmouth's Business School, and the University of Central England. Her research interests cover skills, employment and human resource management. She is also a graduate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.



Mark Hart

Deputy Director, Enterprise Research Centre

Professor Mark Hart is Deputy Director of the Enterprise Research Centre and leads the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses programme. He has worked and published extensively in the areas of entrepreneurship, enterprise and small business development and policy. He jointly manages the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in the UK (www.gemconsortium.org). He advises a number of UK Government Departments and the Devolved Administrations on enterprise issues. He chaired the Executive Group for Lord Young in 2013 to devise and implement the Small Business Charter and is now involved in developing a number of business support programmes for the Charter schools. He is a member of the Small Business Charter Management Board. His work on High-Growth Firms (HGFs) at Aston has been influential in shaping policy discussions and actions in the UK and Ireland and has undertaken numerous evaluation studies of business support products and services and is currently a member of the BIS Peer Review Evaluation team.



Dr Ann Limb

Dr Ann Limb CBE DL is a business leader and social entrepreneur and is Chair of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). After a 25-year career in Further Education, Ann was responsible for the UK government's flagship digital learning initiative, learndirect and the national e-services programmes Direct Gov and UK online. Moving to the private sector in 2005, Ann has worked as a government adviser both in the UK and overseas. Ann now holds a number of public and private sector non-executive directorships, including at the Homes & Communities Agency. She is also the Chair of a number of organisations including Destination Milton Keynes – the city's official tourism and visitor information service, and the MK Major Events Board (with overall responsibility for delivering the Rugby World Cup 2015). She founded, and now chairs, a major national educational charity - the Helena Kennedy Foundation, which promotes social inclusion in further and higher education. She is Deputy Lieutenant of the county of Buckinghamshire.



Jimmy McLoughlin

Jimmy McLoughlin joined the Institute of Directors in August 2014 as Deputy Head of Policy. His role covers the 'new' economy, specifically disruptive technologies, the sharing economy and start-ups. The IoD is the UK's longest running organisation for professional leaders and is dedicated to supporting its members, encouraging entrepreneurial activity and promoting responsible business practice for the benefit of the business community and society as a whole.

Prior to joining the IoD, Jimmy was Associate Partner at Bell Pottinger where his team focused on a wide range of technology clients. He has over six years' experience in political communication and policy making, having also worked for Fleishman Hillard and Boris Johnson.

Jimmy read Political Science at the University of Birmingham, achieving a first class honours



Monder Ram OBE

Director, Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME)

Monder has extensive experience working with, researching and acting as a consultant to small and ethnic minority businesses and is a leading authority on small business and ethnic minority entrepreneurship research and has published widely on the subject.



Stephen Roper

Director, Enterprise Research Centre and Professor of Enterprise at Warwick Business School (WBS). His research interests include innovation, enterprise growth and development, regional development, and industrial policy evaluation.



Patience Wheatcroft

Patience is a non-executive director of Fiat SpA and of St James's Place Plc. She is an advisory board member of both Huawei Plc, the Chinese telecoms company, and Bell Pottinger, the public relations consultancy. She is also a deputy chairman of the British Museum. Most of Patience's career has been spent in journalism. She was Business and City Editor of The Times for nine years before taking up the Editorship of the Sunday Telegraph. Then she decided to see business from the other side, leaving journalism to join the boards of Barclays and the property company, Shaftesbury. In July 2009, she returned to journalism, as Editor in Chief of the Wall Street Journal Europe. She left that role at the beginning of 2011 to become a working Conservative peer. She is a visiting fellow at Oxford's Centre for Corporate Reputation and a member of the UK/India Round Table. In the Lords she sits on the Constitution Committee and she heads the Association of Conservative Peers Group on Economics and Business.