

BASE Conference 2021
Evaluation of the Brighton Conference



The conference was held on 9-10 November 2021 and attended by 208 delegates. This evaluation is based on responses from 98 delegates (47%).

Headlines

4.8★
average rating



How well was the conference organised?

4.7★
average rating



How would you rate the conference dinner & awards?

4.7★
average rating



How would you rate the conference overall?

How did you rate the speakers?



NB. Kate Nicholls did not attend due to an injury.

The DWP one was very heavy with lots of text on slides, so got slightly lost but understand the text might have been needed.

There were some technical issues with some of the presenters, and non-attendance of DWP reps.

My comment for Debbie Bradford and Ian Milton is based on their attendance and contribution to our Supported Businesses and Social Enterprises 'what next?' workshop.

I thought all the speakers had been great again this year. some more engaging than others. (but that will always depend on the individual subject matter)

The speakers were amazing - especially Lee, Millsy, Matt, Tom, Huw, Bex, Steve and Julie (Mark's wife) Thank you for this brilliant opportunity to be in their presence and sharing their knowledge.

Inspiring speakers - felt the DWP should have attended - I understand about COVID issues but those coffee conversations with them have helped our organisation in the past.

The DWP presentations are very wordy, too many words on the slide. Keep it simple and people will be more engaged. However, the rest of the presentations were excellent. Really engaging and inspirational.

I felt the DWP proved that they don't talk to each other in their own departments and wasn't aware of recent changes around education and UC.

Good range of diverse speakers but it could be shaken up a bit to include professionals at grass root level. The work is generally not delivered by the CEO, let's hear from the individuals with a disability who are working and from the individuals who support them into, during and give ongoing support whilst in work. Less statistics and money talk. Increased discussion of the dynamic approach of getting candidates a long-term job. share success stories and give candidates the opportunity to present.

Great range of speakers and content matter in the morning. Would have liked to see the DWP in person - slides were also over complicated/contained too much information. Personally, felt the chairs were a little close together within the main room (especially considering COVID and how hot the room was)

Too many speakers, especially Tuesday morning. everyone was talking too fast to cram everything in disappointing by DWP - all blarney and no real facts workshop would have been more productive perhaps. e.g. a session re kickstart, the uptake from people with disabilities and how this could be improved upon in future projects Patrick from DFE sounded a bit lost. i didn't get anything useful from his talk at all

Great speakers, shame DWP speakers didn't attend in person

It was inspiring to hear from employers and what they are doing from the inside to ensure they have a diverse workforce. It would have been better to have colleagues from DWP present as there were some technical difficulties.

Great group of presenters this year.

Great speakers that covered a range of good practice experience and some great food for thought

Would of been easier if DWP in the room as so many others were and with messaging to go back to work !!!

Really good variety of speakers

Generally the content was good

Best BASE Conference I have been to for a long time with some excellent workshops. It was lovely to also be back face to face which is great for networking

Very disappointed in the DWP people, seemed very rushed and didn't want to ask if anyone had any questions.

Good range of speakers. It was a shame that DWP could not attend as I think it would have been more interactive.

Not feedback for BASE but DWP should have spoken or sent at least one representative to the conference and the handwriting slide show what little thought they had given to their attendance remotely as it was unreadable. I am from a SEND school with a broad range of needs and so Steve Mill's speech was really inspiring that such a large company is creating opportunities for all range of needs.

Varied & broad range of topics. Interesting speakers.

Great variety of speakers, with valuable experience and knowledge to share to the group.

Only attended day two of the conference.

Have something that's more motivational at the end of the conference!

As always, this is the highlight of my Conferencing year. I, like others, attend many Expos and Conferences in a typical year, I also attended our own industry AGM with over 700 delegates in attendance, (which was shocking) on the Thursday of this week and wow what a difference!

Good variety of speakers and really good to hear from employers.

I thought that there was a good range of speakers to listen to. The DWP ones were difficult and I found the slides awfully full to follow.

The speakers were rich and diverse, all giving really good insight into what they do and why they do it, as well as how people could learn from what they did and do.

Really good overall, DWP and A2W waffling as usual. We missed the Wednesday afternoon ones as we had to travel back.

Fantastic speakers

I really enjoyed the speakers, particularly Lee who opened the speeches. There was a mix of perspectives, challenges, and solutions. There were references made from some of the speakers to initiatives I was unaware of. On the one hand, this was helpful as it meant I was able to research them as I went and develop my knowledge, but most of these could have been quickly explained during the speech to help aide understanding in the moment. It would have been good if we had been able to get clearer answers from the DWP.

Surprised to hear Steve Beyer say that job coaches are essential to the success of supported employment when this is not the case.

Overall, I thought the speakers were excellent and really informative. The speakers on day one in the morning I thought were particularly excellent and enthusiastic.

Some speakers were much more engaging than others - but overall I enjoyed them all.

it was lovely to hear from more employers this year

I think people have got too used to delivering presentations via Zoom and so when it came to those from the DWP they were exceptionally difficult to read. There was a tremendous amount of passion delivered by most speakers and it was not only visible but you could feel the energy grow in the room when they spoke, quite the opposite to the DWP session.

The speakers were a really informative and interesting listen. I particularly enjoyed listening to the speakers on Tuesday morning. The way they conveyed their experiences and how they delivered their message was superb.

The quality of the speakers was absolutely great; and most of them spoke with real passion and connection with the work we are all doing. I must admit I was a little disappointed with Hugh Pullinger as it felt like a 'lip service' talk where he was just going through the motions, but I appreciate he has one challenging job to do!!

Really enjoyed Tom's research and his knowledge and critique of DWP. I found it very inspiring and interesting. Also, the life experience of Steve and Lee. Unfortunately, I did not see the other speakers as I had to tidy up the stand etc.

What a way to start off the conference, the opening speakers came across as passionate, and at times it was highly emotional, all of them were funny and inspiring. It was just brilliant!

How did you rate the workshops?



I didn't manage to get to the workshops as was one of the workshop hosts and in between was at my stand.

Claire Atkinson was fantastic. She gave a real view and understanding of what it is like being diagnosed and living with autism. Her humour and presentation were fab and I hope she comes back next year.

All workshops I attended were fab! just wished we could have a joint up approach across the county. There's pockets of excellent work and we need to share these.

Wow! A lot of knowledge! It was great to be sharing such a beautiful space with amazing people with such passion and drive, to encourage our young people to do the best that they can be.

Good workshops - be great if Preparing for Adulthood could be there again.

Unfortunately, I only attended one workshop.

The workshops were amazing, I wish I could have experienced them all. Thanks to everyone for presenting.

From a personal view, I feel it would have been better to have less workshops and be given more time in the workshops for discussion. The workshops I attended were mostly PowerPoint and not very interactive,

Valuable and inspiring. Wonderful to meet and hear about the Bee Keeper's experience/journey. Mitch's passion filled the room, Brilliant. WoodMor and Camphill collaborative workshop was simple and very effective, truly inspiring and thought provoking.

Room set up (Noblesse) wasn't great and all rooms were very hot!! Loved the interactive element within A3 and D3 - it was great to talk to new and existing colleagues in person

Sorry I couldn't get to many of these

Bit disappointing. Some not very relevant to SE. Need to be more interactive and engaging D4 - Claire was understandably nervous and did well considering this. I think this could grow into being a great workshop with more interactive content C4 - Matt lost us a bit. too much playdoh and not enough actual info on how his scheme worked on a day-to-day basis and how this relates to SE B2 - Catherine was engaging and professional. Would have been good to do some more interactive group work with her

Again, some technical difficulties meant the workshop with DWP wasn't as fluid as it could have been. Also, frustrating that there are not clear answers on Trailblazers...I get why, but still frustrating. I found the Project Search presentation a little data heavy which can be difficult to focus on. It would also have been good to ensure there was time for group questions at the end. It was great to see how Surrey Choices and SEND are working together! I found Claire's knowledge and insight into apprenticeships from a provider point of view very useful.

Really interesting and informative workshops.

Workshops were really interesting - some inspirational work described and opportunities to hear from others built in.

Enjoyed the more interactive workshops.

I would have loved to have been able to give the lady who presented the You don't look autistic workshop some feedback as she said it was her first presentation & that she was nervous. Her

workshop was the most captivating, thought provoking & the one I learned the most from out of the whole conference. She was funny and engaging in her approach.

All very interesting, there were more that I wished I could have also attended, but you can't be at more than one place unfortunately. The social media D5 was good, but only focussed on Linked In, I was hoping to gain some business understanding about Twitter, Facebook and Instagram also and it was quite basic.

This year had a really great variety of workshops to choose from.

Between our three Woodmor team members and I we attended most of these so I hope we collectively covered it all. The workshops I attended were brilliant.

The best workshop I attended was Audrey Bodman's. She has such an excellent and engaging presentation style, you just can't get bored or switch off.

I've only added feedback to the presentations I remember being present for. It's always harder to engage with an audience via video call especially if you're trying to share lots of very full slides. The DWP trailblazer talk feedback was more about my expectation to be briefed rather than consulted - I hadn't prepared to give input in advance and so it was a really tricky session to get involved with. My comments about the workshops result from the fact that I work at a strategic level, if I was a practitioner I would have found them really useful. You have a wide audience and I understand you need to offer something for everyone so I didn't feel short changed at all.

A really good range of workshops available to choose from - I was really disappointed I couldn't attend more. Great to hear from practitioners about what they have been doing and have opportunities to share practice and ideas - more of that please.

The workshops that I attended were all really useful, and I have learnt valuable insights from all of the ones I attended and have taken learning points back to my team.

Trailblazer w/s was disappointing - perhaps have another screen purely for zoom so the person talking is much bigger. There didn't seem to be a lot of new information instead they had questions to pose to the audience - perhaps might have been better to break the audience up into groups for facilitated round table discussion of the questions and get back together as a large group to feedback and discuss.

Matt's workshop (Millwood) was absolutely amazing! Really engaging and informative.

On the whole the speakers and workshops were very passionate, informative and fun!

The workshops were all of a high quality. The speakers were enthusiastic about their topics. HK Consults was a particularly excellent and interactive workshop which offered answers to the most difficult question of what the employers needs are and how could this be offered.

I think the workshops may need updating as I felt that there was a lot of them that were duplicated a little from the last conference. Really enjoyed the BASE and MILLWOOD ones as they were really engaging and also love the interactive parts of the workshops. More fun and engaging workshops please?

The workshops I attended have left me feeling inspired and have given me so much to try and take back into my own work place.

Really wanted to attend various sessions that were on at the same time

Such inspirational sessions! I came away from all of the ones I attended with a renewed inspiration for making changes in our sector and it's also been a reality check of where our service is compared with others. Mitch is such an energetic and engaging speaker! I was also very impressed that a commissioner was presenting with Surrey Choices - what a way to show his support for the service he is working with and supporting.

It was great to see a wide range of engaging workshops

Really enjoyed all the workshops I attended.

I haven't commented for a B workshop as I was delivering one. Just a big shout out to Alex Seddon from BASE who supported me doing back of house and was kind enough to take the group shot at the end (once we had found the elusive light switch!)

The delivery of C4 and D2 were brilliant. They were captivating to listen to and interactive. Group conversations were included which was nice.

How good was the pre-conference information and organisation?

All the information I required, concise and to the point, thanks Huw

This event was organised in the most thorough of ways - Thank you.

This was good but wanted to tell you about an app used when I went to a conference previously - HubSeven - great for keeping in touch with people after and you don't need business cards. All on your phone.

Very informative, especially with the hotels etc.

Would have appreciated the conference information slightly earlier although not always possible given COVID situation. Organisation was good though.

I can't untick the other stars but tried to tick excellent

Excellent. Huw kept us informed and got all the details needed re dietary requirements etc. Good to get the brochure in advance.

Clear and concise instructions

Brilliant as always

Clear and informative.

Fantastic

To be fair the pre-conference stuff I didn't have much to do with as our admin chap did that.

4.7★
average rating



How did you find the conference brochure?

I went to a conference recently and they used an app called 7 it was brilliant and no printing required! really easy to use, it was a great networking tool too!!

Good

I was impressed with every last detail.

Loved it.

The only extra info it could have had would have been on presenters making their slides available after the conference.

Helpful - have all of the information needed for the two days

Excellent - easy to follow, well presented

I used this as my bible throughout the 2 days to ensure I attended the right workshops and remained on time throughout the tight schedule, really helpful

Include some blank pages in the brochure for people to take notes/keep track of people they connected with

Good quality and informative.

Brilliant as always

Would've liked to see space to make notes alongside the workshops in the brochure

Well laid out and easy to use - and of course fabulous printing.

Really fab!

For me it's the list of delegates that I need so that was fantastic as well as information on the workshops.

Lots of information.

How good was the conference registration?

Good

Loved the choice of lanyards

I really liked the different coloured lanyards

Excellent - lanyards a good idea.

Well organised - loved the lanyards, really made everyone feel at ease with socialising

It was quite straightforward and easy

I thought the colour coded lanyards was a great idea

4.7★

average rating



4.7★

average rating



Brilliant as always!

Easy and friendly

How well was the event organised?

Good

Amazing event, it was my first time attending and was honoured to be there. Thanks to Huw and all involved for making it so special.

Needed proper signage to make more accessible and save time. The rooms upstairs were hard to access for some and lifts weren't clearly signposted either

The lanyards were a fabulous idea!

It was made to look effortless.

Excellent - Nothing seemed to go wrong. Excellent time keeping.

Brilliantly

Again, it would be good to have a dedicated second screen for the zoom presenters

Amazing work guys - seemed seamless and brilliantly organised

For my first in person conference post covid I was initially nervous, but it was so much better than I anticipated. I chose to wear a mask due to our service being part of adult social care and our restrictions still being higher than that of the general public - this was so respected and I was able to relax knowing that no-one was judging me for it.

Well organised as always.

No hiccups! Very smooth!

How would you rate the conference dinner and awards?

Food was yummy, live band ace and most of all, seeing and hearing about winners and nominees at the award ceremony, really lovely

The hotel staff could not make enough fuss over everyone - especially for those with special diets.

What a night! I will never forget it. Felt very proud to be part of the sector.

Dinner was very disappointing, almost inedible. Awards were fantastic and some amazing speeches. Great band.

4.8★
average rating



4.7★
average rating



The awards were great, (seems like a lot was spent on wine, so other drinks (soft) options would have been nice to make it more inclusive. The dinner itself was pretty poor, the food was undercooked, and again limited options for vegan, Halal, veg options, it seemed like the same theme continued. (cold food and limited selections of choice) I thought being by the sea, fish selection would have been nice, and as Brighton is a diverse city more options for Indian, Chinese, halal, vegan options would have been nice.

Food was excellent throughout the event, great atmosphere and nice to sit with other organisations and network socially.

The sound wasn't great, food okay, award speeches excellent

Awards ceremony was brilliant, unfortunately the food was not.

Vegetarian options were average

The only thing that could have been improved on was the music and entertainment. It would be cool to have some different genres (J Rock, anisong or video game music etc) and maybe disabled/neurodiverse performers too. Apart from that tasty food and some really powerful speeches by award winners etc.

Fantastic dinner and awards, really heart-warming to see some of the amazing work happening across the country.

I didn't attend but heard great reviews!

Presentation great, good length. Band were good and over all good evening spent.

Lovely food, plenty of drink, great timing, completing responses. Great brand!

Can't complain about anything. The food was fine, (maybe not excellent but fine) and plenty of wine and tables well laid, service good etc. Awards always very interesting and entertaining

Loved the celebration, think this is so important as although my first time at a conference and only just getting to grips with supported employment but can already see that it's a challenging area to work in.

Such a great way to celebrate the outstanding work that goes on in the sector. The band were very good but needs a bigger dance floor!

The awards were really good, however, the food during the dinner was less than good. For a location such as Brighton, I think that the Jury's Inn let themselves down a lot. It was such a shame as it would have been excellent if the food was better than what it was.

Very loud and dark during dinner also felt like a small area for so many people - very confined and close quarters especially in light of pandemic. Dinner took a long time to serve. Food was plentiful and was a very nice touch that BASE provided wine.

The conference dinner and awards were a highlight. The winners gave passionate speeches which really hit home and encouraged me within my role.

I missed the comedy this year - but great party as ever!

Award excellent, dinner and dietary requirements poor

Absolutely terrific - always the best part to see the awards ceremony - thank you! Also, the band and dancing was great.

A truly fantastic evening. With it being my first conference, I was a bit unsure of what to expect. But the whole evening was brilliant. I felt privileged to sit and here so much wonderful work is going on and this is rightly acknowledged. Junior the winner of the David Grainger award was amazing.

Disappointed with the others that were sat on our table, they behaved quite unprofessional taking the mickey out of the way an autistic award winner pronounced words and spoke over all of the speeches.

I wish I could have stayed for this section, but unfortunately childcare issues meant that I couldn't. It sounded like a great time!!

After some discussion with colleagues and thinking about the introduction of AtW+, is there room to expand the Practitioner award to include those working in supported business - or room for separate recognition?

Fantastic! I very much enjoyed watching the rewards and seeing the recipients achieve.

Emotional and uplifting

It was nice to include the highly commended as well as winners. Would have been excellent if seats were named instead of pick your own.

How suitable was the venue and location?

Really good, near home so no long journey! Hotel was nice, it was good food and great company.

Managed to do a run!!

Good

Great location and the right size for our group

Simply the best! Views were to die for - high quality.

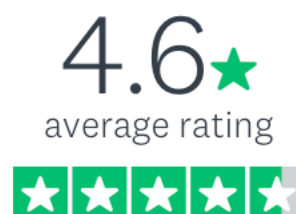
Good venue but some toilets without locks working or even on them.

Good central location for other hotels and road networks, although parking was expensive (expected within Brighton)

The hotel was average, the food average but the location was difficult - 6 hours travel and it meant taking 2 1/2 days out of my week and then I missed some workshops which I really wanted to attend as I had to leave early on day 2 to catch trains. The only other option would have been to stay another night which would have then lost me another day

Brilliant location. The only thing that could have improved it would have been a bit more signposting around the venue. But otherwise fine.

Location was not particularly central or easy to get to.



From Cornwall public transport wasn't really an option due to journey length, so a long drive, but great location when we got there.

Brighton was fine as a location. Meeting rooms were ok, but stuffy and airless.

Free parking would have been an advantage, as it was costly staying in Brighton for that length of time. Venue was ideal for the conference though, great there was so many breakout rooms and all clear, airy and spacious.

Have a venue with hearing loops would be great!

Ideal!

Excellent

The venue was great, the location was great, but as above, the food at the venue let itself down.

Loved the venue and location, but was a long way to travel from the north.

Just want to put in a bid for the next one being in my home city of Durham

Excellent venue and location.

Negotiating the M25 at rush hour never fun, but we didn't have as far to come as many. I just wondered about a more central location. I appreciate it is very hard to arrange these things and please everyone, so just a thought really about people coming from the far north. It's also really annoying when lots of people leave before the end. Not sure if you will fix that by moving location but maybe a slightly earlier end time would mean people don't miss the last slot. Feel sorry for the speakers as much as anything!

Not the best located rooms - didn't like no air in the rooms.

Venue was nice, happy it was all under one roof!

Good, hotel was beginning to look a bit tatty, but only a very minor concern.

There were accessibility issues getting to the workshops in particular. I spent a fair bit of time in the laundry lift!

I mean I live in semi-rural Scotland so I am going to have to travel anyway BUT for me it was a breeze as I got there quicker than my colleagues who live in Kent. The hotel was the usual quality I have come to expect from Jury's Inn.

How good were the facilities and food?

Food was pretty poor, the food was undercooked, and again limited options for vegan, Halal, veg options, it seemed like the same theme continued. (cold food and limited selections of choice) I thought being by the sea, fish selection would have been nice, and as Brighton is a diverse city more options for Indian, Chinese, halal, vegan options would have been nice. Facilities were ok



The evening meal was great. But the food for lunch often dry and combinations not to my taste, but edible. Facilities average but OK.

Attention to details - above satisfactory

Food excellent - but had shower gels in shared toilets for soap??

The facilities were excellent but the food was average. It wasn't in any way poor, but I did think some of the options were quite limited and the way they set up 2 buffets but would only let you go to one was an interesting tactic.

Food was dreadful. Facilities were good.

Food was excellent throughout the event although heard some people commenting there were no vegan options. Felt the hotel could have paid more attention to the cleanliness of the toilets (the ladies near the main room were particularly unpleasant) and temperature within the rooms needs addressing.

Snacks, drinks and breakfast were very good. Lunch and dinner options for vegetarians were very average

Gluten free options were minimal

Great food.

Vegetarian options were limited repetitive. Toilets were dire - out of paper by the afternoon and no locks on some of the toilet doors in the basement.

Checking in was difficult.

Rather dry bread at lunch on the first day - hard to cut and chew.

Good selection for lunch, would have liked a choice of juices though as I drank so much coffee. Nice touch to have baked goods in the morning as we didn't have breakfast at our accommodation. Good variety on offer.

Breakfast and the awards dinner was ok but the lunches were not to my taste

Disappointing how many of the ladies toilets had no lock on whatsoever. Out of BASE control but worth feeding back to the venue.

The bar staff of the Tuesday night could have been slicker, and more of them. It's not like they didn't know we were all turning up!

Food was excellent. The ladies toilets near the main hall did not have any locks on the toilet doors.

Food was excellent. Can't comment on rooms as didn't stay.

The food during the dinner was less than good. For a location such as Brighton, I think that the Jury's Inn let themselves down a lot. It was such a shame as it would have been excellent if the food was better than what it was. We had vegans at our table who weren't able to eat much as it was so below par. The general food for the rest of the table was not what you would expect from a hotel on the waterfront of a trendy city such as Brighton. Undercooked chicken, watery chicken skin, and frozen vegetables were not what you'd expect from an event such as this.

I also stayed at the hotel - I know they were struggling for staff. Check in on Monday evening was a long and tortuous affair with only two people working the check-in. The hotel bar closed at 10pm - so if people wanted a drink after that they had to leave the hotel. Some areas of the hotel were in bad repair (no locks on several doors in basement toilets) no hand soap in some toilets instead shower gel from the rooms.

Food was particularly excellent.

Lots of empty sanitiser dispensers made me uneasy

Food very poor and no consideration for vegans on the whole. Facilities not ideal in the room

I'm sorry but I am a vegetarian and I thought the food was really poor for me. It looked okay for everyone else. But all I ate was mozzarella, as everything was courgette, tomato and aubergine based which I cannot stand - so I didn't eat much. The evening meal felt like it was the leftovers from lunch. Ratatouille is my worst kind of food and it is totally unimaginative for chefs to still be creating this type of food for vegetarians. SORRY!!

Great facilities and the food was really good.

Plenty of food available at all times

Delicious and plentiful!! So many treats!!

Pretty good - no food available Mon evening though.

Food could be more simple at lunch time, with things that are more widely liked.

How would you rate the conference overall?

It was my first even and definitely won't be my last.

Good

I was truly impressed and I made a lot of 'connections' with a whole variety of people.

Little Gate love this conference - such good networking

Really enjoyed my first conference and look forward to seeing you again next year

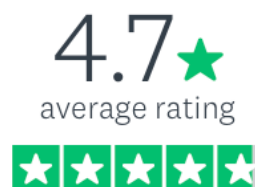
Really enjoyed attending the conference! I came away feeling excited and daunted all at the same time...in a good way. I love being reminded about the bigger picture and how supported employment continues to grow!

A fun, interesting, much needed event that was held in a great venue.

Great two days - chance to network alongside more structured sessions, a great mix of inputting and taking away information.

Excellent conference, thoroughly enjoyed it.

Very enjoyable and great networking



This was my first time attending the conference and it was everything I had hoped it would be! I will definitely bring colleagues with me next year so we can make the most of the information and knowledge being shared in the breakout sessions.

Enjoyed meeting so many people all with the same passion, and hearing from some inspirational people. Will definitely recommend and would love to attend again next year.

I'll be back- and next time with BELLS ON!!! thank you to the entire base team for making this the best conference of the year! Now there's a national award if ever I've heard it.

Excellent

For the first time that I have attended a BASE conference, it was really useful. I learnt a lot and connected with a lot of like-minded people and made friendships that I am sure will last a long time. Thank you

Great opportunity to network - although again it would be nice to have seen more intentional work by BASE leadership to encourage and support people meeting one another.

This was my first conference. I have learnt a lot and will bring new ideas to our organisation. It was very well organized and hope to see you next year.

Overall, the conference was excellent, informative and extremely useful.

Loved it - well done to everyone involved!

I can't speak highly enough of my experience of the BASE conference. An inspirational and brilliant few days and I have already said to my team that an opportunity to go should not be passed up.

Great networking, some of the most useful workshops in recent years.

Had a fantastic time

Guys you did a fantastic job in what were potentially difficult circumstances - given how the world fell apart last year, this was amazing.

What did we do well?

Superbly arranged. The badges in different colours was an excellent idea. Everyone was very friendly and even though I attended on my own I didn't feel like I was on my own. Thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to have a dance after the meal too. The band was excellent.

The organisation and to accommodate so many people, after a very long time to meet up face to face! The admin was great. So, thank you!

The vibe was really good and we were all so happy to see each other; the conference gave us the time to be together, share best practice and hear what's been going on. Speakers really inspiring and have learnt lots that I am taking back to develop for my team and wider. The lanyards were highly praised by everyone, because hugs or distance on them became an easy conversation starter

Brilliant conference- very informative and engaging.

A diverse range of speakers and content. I felt inspired by the work we are all doing

Great to be together with people. Liked the lanyards which indicated people's preferences for being together. The conference had some really good topics and it was very informative but it was also fun and we were ready for some of that!

I would say the event was well organised and well attended.

Hospitality, warm welcoming atmosphere, food and the choices - Wow - wee!! No words to describe the precision of everything - Thank you. I will be wanting to come back again and to bring the whole Team :)

Bringing people together for the networking and sharing.

It was a complete triumph and a lovely finale from Huw. Great energy, values and ethos which shone through from all delegates. What an uplifting place to be!!

The event was very smooth, it was covid friendly and everyone was made feel welcome. Everyone left feeling motivated and inspired by each other. Really looking forward to the next event. Thanks BASE.

Everything seemed to go smoothly and on time. Good range of speakers and interesting workshops. Also, it was lovely to be in Brighton!

Kept the workshops and speakers on time and had a good range of topics

Great workshops. Organisation. Brochure. Location

Good organisation, and inspiring first day speakers - a really great introduction to the event

Everything

The presenters were good but they were preaching to the converted and we have heard them before

Huw! Some speakers were very good

Well organised and very informative

I thought it was very well organised and had a great range of speakers and workshops.

Holding the conference! It was great to see people and chat face to face

Really well organised conference, clear on what the days consisted of and very informative across both days

Organisation and smooth running.

You gave a good sense of the landscape in supported employment in the midst of COVID-19. - Nice to see autistic people represented and the David Grainger award reflected strength in depth in the disability field. Kind of tied in with the general "track" for lack of a better word on awards like the Power 100. Nice touch with the lanyards - could be useful in a different form in future to highlight degrees of social interaction people are comfortable with. I'd recommend taking a look at Autscope (a conference for autistic people) and seeing how they use interaction badges - Really helpful people.

Structures of the day between content and networking time was well planned.

Interesting and varied speakers and workshops, able to spread knowledge and learn about new developments. Excellent networking opportunity and good to share and learn from others practice in the same field

Good speakers, Good venue and nice food.

Organisation, affordability, facilities, speakers, friendly accessible feel.

The whole set up from beginning to end was brilliant. Loved the lanyards, made it really clear for people.

Good range of speakers and workshop sessions. Would have liked to see more information stands. Also liked the option of the lanyards which really helped some people feel more comfortable being there

Really well organised, nice balance and choice of workshops.

A good selection of workshops

Lanyards was an excellent idea. Workshops made it hard to choose as there was so much choice

The workshops were informative and beneficial

Well organised

Brilliant workshops and really inspiring awards ceremony

The organisation and the range of speakers

There were some excellent speakers. I enjoyed the workshops. The food was pretty good and I was happy with the 10:00 start time.

It was a great event - well organised and felt covid safe. Excellent mix of speakers and a great atmosphere.

I absolutely loved all of it. Venue, workshops, speakers, meal, awards & networking.

Well organised with a good selection of workshops. Informative stands with additional information. Well structured event.

A brilliant array of speakers, on the whole all the sessions ran to time, good breadth of speakers lots of interesting subjects covered and at one stage I wanted to attend 3 workshops as they all sounded worthwhile.

Held a great conference under still difficult circumstances. Relevant and interesting guest speakers, chaired by Huw who as ever provided great leadership and enthusiasm

A fantastic, uplifting and well organised event. Really well done :-)

The whole conference was well organised, presented and inclusive being a friendly, welcoming and informative two-day experience

Excellent work in organisation of the event. The entire event was smooth and easy to follow and network with the right people

Lanyards for type of contact are a genius idea. The whole conference ran smoothly. Brilliantly organised with a wide range of topics covered. Inspirational speakers.

Everything, literally everything!

A good mix of speakers on relevant topics. Great to get everyone together after such a long time.

Organisation. Range of speakers and workshops.

What would you like to see different next time?

Better food for sure.

Nothing, it was great!

Occasionally it felt a bit doom and gloom in some presentations and was a bit frustrating when certain speakers didn't have the answers.

Be good if all the speakers were in person

I would love to hear from a company who has embarked on a supported employment in their multi million pound business who do not have a son/daughter with additional needs. The last few years XPO and DPD employment projects started as someone in a very senior role has a loved one with additional needs. (I wonder without a son/daughter with LD would they had ever set up the projects and hired job coaches??) The work they are doing to raise the profile is great but I would love to hear from a company who did it without a personal connection.

Seating arrangements - mixing people up - so there was 2 people from each group/ company - encouraging people to mingle and speak with other services.

Some different types of workshops if you can get the people in to deliver them - ATW attract those commissioners again

Nothing I can think of off the top of my head.

I wouldn't make any changes.

Personally, I would like to be able to select more workshops, and have few talks in the main room.... some of them were a little dry, especially the last ones on the last day.

More people talking from lived experience. More employers attending interactive workshops perhaps a networking hour each day (at lunch you tend to stay with your own group or catch with people you already know)

Less stats. Less talk of money. Let's see and hear from more disabled candidates and job coaches. Less CEO's giving presentations.

Access to Work - how the current problems are being addressed rather than stats and information via a remote link. On the second day, perhaps consider starting earlier to have

speakers in the morning and early afternoon rather than last thing - had to miss the last two due to travel arrangements and to be honest we were all exhausted as well!

More food choice for lunch would be nice.

Different speakers with a different context

More relevant and interactive workshops

Supported employment information for young adults with PMLD

I just wish DofE and DWP could have come a bit more prepared to answer questions and to offer some solutions to the problems we are all facing.

I think it would be good to try and make the workshops more interactive as all the workshops are similar with how they are presented.

I think it is important that anyone delivering at such a large and important conference is in the room.

More sessions on how we can bring forward the voice of disabled people as part of part of the push to bring supported employment

An altogether space for exhibitions (or highlighting initially).

I would favour slightly less workshop options.

More information stands.

Nothing - as always a great event.

It would have been nice to have gone to all the workshops

More interactive workshops rather than just being given facts and figures.

Main speakers were already preaching to the choir. Perhaps future speakers could include people who challenge the status quo, present a new point of view or include training around new services, legislation or national updates. Distancing was very relaxed, would have felt more comfortable if social distancing was encouraged and seating was more spread out.

More interactive workshops

I can't think of anything at the moment.

Perhaps all the stalls in the same area would be easier. I am still not convinced I saw everyone there! :)

I can't think of anything, I think it was spot on.

Delivery and attendance in person rather than relying on zoom as signal was intermittent

A return to Covid free conference (hopefully)

Why change anything that works well

I attended a workshop on social businesses and the same information was covered the next day with a speaker. It felt very repetitive but only for the people who attended B5.

Notepads and pens in the conference bag along with the conference brochure.

Francesca Martinez back on day two perhaps?

Sometimes, workshops that you think might be popular could be repeated on the 2nd day? It can be hard to choose sometimes and there is usually more than one that is of interest each session. But appreciate that would mean less in total - so maybe wouldn't work. I really can't think of much that could be improved.

It would be great to see some join up between BASE and the Careers and Enterprise Company - not necessarily in conference planning but Huw did mention that working with DfE was a bit of a refreshing change in one observation.

A broader range of speakers from across the UK. Some interactive workshops / structured idea sharing / group work.

More opportunity for workshops and may be less plenary presentations

More information and activities geared towards employer engagement, and how we can get employers on board

Perhaps try to mix people up a bit at dinner - an intentional seating plan (number tables and give people a table number with their dinner ticket) - so people sit with people they don't know so well - especially for those who are attending as the single person from an organisation but it also ensures that large work groups are broken up and have an event led opportunity to meet people beyond their work colleagues. Some ice breakers during dinner. Somehow make it less noisy at dinner so people can talk without shouting. Play music more quietly during dinner, look for a venue with a larger dining space - a banquet room that is more open and not in basement with higher ceilings would have made things less cacophonous. I wonder how people using wheelchairs would have navigated their way around the room during the dinner. Some conference initiated ice breaker/networking sessions. Perhaps a welcome drink then cash bar on the night before the conference - something that could be sponsored? Feedback forms at each session

I want to hear real innovation and creativity in the sector. Aspirational was needed

More employers!

More opportunity to network

It was difficult to know who was who - with covid it didn't feel as easy as in the past to approach those who you don't know/check name badges etc., and network with new faces. Not sure of the answer to this though - it's a tricky one!

Not sure as it was good - would it work to have some structured conversation groups? - be interesting to find out what people are doing differently, maybe their three biggest challenges, three successes, most proud moment - maybe sent in advance then some facilitated solution finding... Or people can send in a question and then be set up with speed dating on people who think have the answers. Really not thought this through though, so perhaps it's one to your consideration, a way more people can share their good practice. I might be being too ambitious; it's just I always think what a lot of talent in the room! Don't feel you have to change anything - it works!

Need more variety for the workshops

I wondered about doing some speed-networking - to make sure we are making the most of being all together. I think it would be particularly helpful for new-comers. It could even be done as something optional in one of the breaks as they are a reasonable amount of time? I also thought maybe some of the workshops could be a bit more interactive/doing some group work.

More consideration for vegan and vegetarian people. Several felt excluded

More engaging speakers - more people with disabilities. More workshops to really help people understand about supported employment.

Nothing

With so many interesting workshops to attend I could have done with another day! :-)

DWP presence

More workshops - or interactive workshops that could be revisited at a later date.

More opportunities to access the parallel talks; perhaps recordings or duplicate sessions. I wanted to go to so many of them!

Perhaps DWP on site, which I think is essential and was the view of everyone I discussed this with. Not Base's fault, as I know you tried to get them there.

More chances to see the workshops, there were many topics I would have liked to have seen, however they were overlapping and I missed them. Understand if not though, due to timings.

Due to a former brain injury, it was sometimes difficult to process information and speakers as quickly as I would've liked. It may be handy to have an interpreter there in the future. I appreciate this could be difficult though.

More workshops rather than lots of speakers in the mornings and afternoons.

I couldn't really say - keep up the great work.

Slightly better covid management.

Do you have any general comments to make?

From a stand point of view, I was tucked away in the corner and as a result not many knew I was there. After I did the workshop and mentioned where I was the foot-flow increased. I wonder if it could be mentioned that there are stands and who they are so people know. Apart from that grateful I was able to take part.

Thank you, it was my first time to Brighton, and the BASE conference. Thank you for the award too, our team really appreciated it, looking forward to continue the momentum. Our jobs are not easy and to be recognised for the work we do is highly appreciated as working with clients with severe mental illness and getting outcomes has been rewarding in itself. I got back more energised, yet realised that we have a lot to do to change the systems!

The BASE conference is a real high point in my year - thanks for being amazing and setting the right tone, you have nailed it. Huw, we will miss you lots, but am sure you won't miss all the work that goes into planning and organising our yearly event.

Just a brilliant conference as always- thank you very much!

Keep doing it. It's a brilliant event that will improve partnerships and increase professionalism in the industry

I think this conference was really good value for money and that the content was excellent.

I wanted to thank the staff at Jurys Inn - :)

It would be great if we could receive all of the presentations from the workshops. Thanks :-)

I really enjoyed the conference overall and am excited to attend next year. I really enjoyed the discussion for the SI framework although I felt the power point from project search was duplicated as I had attended their workshop.

Huw gave an impassioned speech. Thank you Huw and your wonderful team.

Well done to all involved in organising the BASE 2021 conference. I enjoyed the conference and have shared my experience and encouraged other staff members to attend next year.

Well done on a really good conference it was lovely this took place face to face thank you

Everyone at The Michael Tippett College really enjoyed the conference and found it very inspiring and informative.

Looking forward to attending again.

The BASE conference is always a brilliant event to attend. I learn something new every year and it is a great opportunity to network and to be surrounded by passionate and like-minded professionals that all share the same values

Thank you to everyone :-)

Thanks for helping with my hands and knee which are healing somewhat nicely. I owe you a presentation next year on a subject to be determined. Strange comment to make in an evaluation survey but I left the conference wondering how can we get what's said inside these conferences to the people that we help or represent etc. I know that there a lot of disabled people who aren't pros would have appreciated Diane Lightfoot's presentation, especially the part about businesses. Food for thought at the very least.

Thanks a lot for a great conference. It was great to be in a room full of like-minded professionals, thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone and the presentations/workshops were fantastic.

Loved the different lanyards. I did find the main room overwhelming with so many people sat so closely. Hotel weren't so great at topping up the sanitizer. (not your fault at all)

It was a great couple of days and I learnt a lot from it.

The hotel facilities where very limited due to COVID restrictions. Also lacked staff when checking in.

Brilliant event and I can't wait until next year!

Just that the next one really won't be the same without Huw. Base won't be the same without Huw. Supported employment won't be the same without Huw :(But very happy for him to be retiring & having some time to himself.

A big thank you to all those involved with setting up and delivering the conference, it was my first conference and I thoroughly enjoyed it but more importantly learnt from it.

Thanks for another great conference

Overall, it was excellent with so many people focused on a common goal - wonderful. The awards ceremony was just amazing and I wished I could bottle it and send it to every employer in the country! Well done everyone. met so many amazing people and made so many great connections - my LinkedIn is on fire!

Fantastic event that was really valuable for myself and the colleague I was able to bring along.

This was a wonderful conference. It was so good to see people again after the break last year due to COVID-19. I went to the conference expecting to learn new things and to get inspired and re-energised and it didn't disappoint! Well done to everyone involved in the conference organisation.

Only that we will fulfil our promise to Huw that we made on Tuesday

Very informative experience. Excellent networking opportunities. Good to meet teams and individuals from across the country who are involved in Supported Employment.

Thank you for a great event. We are currently drafting up some actions in follow up and will share these with you in the next week or so.

I thought the introduction of the different coloured lanyards in terms of COVID precautions was good. However, during the large group talks and evening awards, seating was extremely close together so those choosing to maintain distance could not necessarily do this.

Really enjoyed the conference. It was a great opportunity to hear about the fabulous work that's going on, what's coming down the line and to see real people in a room again. A really great conference, always informative and inspirational.

Can I please be invited back next time? It was fabulous! Thank you for putting on a great conference!

Just thank you!

It was a really helpful event for me to understand more how the sector has been affected by Covid, gain examples of best practice to improve our own service, and consider how we can develop moving forwards.

Thanks particularly to Huw as the conference will seem strange without him being there! Good luck in finding a replacement or at least a new person who will inspirationally lead. Thanks for the opportunity to present. We got some really good feedback and hope it will spread - think our commissioner could spend the rest of the year visiting different councils for a whole year :) His linkedIn profile was almost smoking hot after the presentation ...

I thought Huw's point to remove the word "Special" from SEND showed a need for BASE to continue the good work which is being done and to put pressure for change. If this was a

hashtag on Twitter. I believe this could be trending throughout SEND schools and I would advocate this. I also believe the change would then happen.

Another great conference - Thank you!

Thank You - will miss Huw!! - hope you still attend next year!

Had a fantastic time, learnt some new ways of thinking and made some excellent contacts.

Well done, a great conference.

This was the first BASE Conference that I have attended, I approached with an open mind and have to say the passion I could feel and inspirational stories and commitment will stay with me forever. Personally, I learnt so much, met some exceptionally talented and committed people who I can only learn from as I move forward in my career and the efforts we are making as a business.

I really enjoyed the conference this year. I feel as if I came away with more inspiration this year than ever. We are even more focused on creating more opportunities for young people with additional needs than before. I will look forward to next year.

Fab conference, so lovely to see everyone in person again. Great idea re the lanyards and social distancing preferences!

This was my first ever BASE conference and it was absolutely brilliant. I'm feeling more in love with our sector than ever before despite the challenges and hurdles we are facing. Being united in the conference has made me realise what a national family we have and I'm proud to be part of it.

If you can make the event work at the reduced delegate rate again, it would be great. It really does allow teams to bring more people, increase diversity etc. If an overall discount isn't possible, how about 'buy 2, get one free' or something similar.

It was my first BASE conference and I really enjoyed it!

Really great conference.

Excellent conference and lovely to see everyone face to face at last.

For me as a trainer its potentially daunting running a workshop for my "home crowd" but, honestly, I had the best time. Particularly emotional as it was Huw's final one. Stand down sir, you have carried the flame for long enough, we owe you much for all you have done.

Thank you

We'd like to thank everyone who completed the evaluation survey. Your comments are important to us and we will consider the feedback closely before organising future events.