

# Caretakers' honour as New Year awards bring wide-ranging recognition

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The new year got off to a flying start for FE and skills with more than 30 sector figures named in the 2015 Honours list.

And it wasn't just the well-known names and faces who were honoured — the contribution all staff make to learners was recognised, not least with Christopher Willder, groundsperson at Brooksby Melton College, and James Jackson, caretaker at Woodhouse College, in line for British Empire Medals (BEMs).

The sector also gained a new Dame in Nestle UK boss Fiona Kendrick following her contribution to skills development, four CBEs, 11 OBEs, a dozen MBEs and a total of seven BEMs.

Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel congratulated those who were honoured, paying particular attention to the six principals listed.

He said: "Principals work tirelessly for their college, students and local community and receiving such a high honour is a sign of how important their work is considered to be.

"I offer my congratulations to everyone who received an award — it is very well deserved."

An Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) spokesperson said it was "really encouraged" to see the efforts of so many from the FE sector recognised.

"AELP extends its warmest congratulations to its members who have received awards and to others in the FE and skills sector," he said.

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education chief executive David Hughes said the honours helped "highlight the many personal, social and economic benefits FE and skills brings".

## 'I wanted to jump up and down' — ex-AoC president



Michele Sutton

Former Association of Colleges president and Bradford College principal Michele Sutton struggled to keep her CBE honour a secret.

"I wanted to jump up and down and tell everybody," she told *FE Week*.

"I was delighted — it's so nice to know even when you have left somewhere that the skills and expertise you put in have been recognised."

Ms Sutton, who already has an OBE, was joined in the CBE list by former Skills Funding Agency (SFA) interim chief executive Barbara Spicer.

Ms Spicer, who stepped down from her SFA role in September to head up construction firm Plus Dane Group, scooped her gong for services to education, learning and skills.

She said: "This award is the product of a team effort, a hugely supportive family and the amazing people I've worked with over the last 20 years."

Colin Booth, from Barnsley College, Ian



Barbara Spicer

Clinton, from Stockport College and Walsall College's Jatinder Sharma were all awarded OBEs for services to FE.

Mr Booth, who has run Barnsley College for six years, said: "I am very proud of the things that I have helped to make happen so far in 30 years of working in the FE sector.

"I have had the fortune to work for and with some of the best people in the FE sector and most importantly I have had innovative, imaginative and committed people working for me.

"This honour truly is a reflection of the effort of everyone I have worked with."

Mr Clinton took over Stockport College in February. He was previously in charge of Blackburn College and said: "I believe the sector is essential for a skills and education system that supports future economic prosperity and I am proud to have spent many years surrounded by learners who have such talent and aspirations and colleagues who



Colin Booth

work relentlessly to help them achieve their goals.

"For this reason I am humbled but delighted to be given such a prestigious award for services to the sector."

Mr Sharma, whose college was the first to achieve an outstanding rating under Ofsted's current common inspection framework, said: "I am very humbled by this achievement which would not have been possible without the fantastic support of the governors, staff and students who make Walsall College outstanding, and my family."

There was also an OBE for Rodney Bennion, for services to construction training and the community in the South East, in recognition of his work with the Construction Youth Trust (CYT).

He was chair of trustees for the charity, which helps young people to access training, education and employment opportunities in the construction industry, for 12 years before



Ian Clinton

standing down six months ago.

He told *FE Week*: "I have worked in the construction industry for 50 years and always believed in the talents of young people. If you don't utilise their talents then you have got problems.

"This award is not just for me, it is for the whole of CYT — all the people who work there and the young people we have helped over the years."

And services to FE earned Chesterfield College governors' board chair Frank Smith an OBE, too.

Chesterfield principal Stuart Cutforth said: "We are delighted that Frank has received this great honour, it's well deserved for the years of dedicated service he has given to Chesterfield College. Throughout his time here Frank's commitment to ensuring young people receive the best education and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to progress into work or further study has been clear for all to see."



Jatinder Sharma

Rodney Bennion



Frank Smith

## Skills scoop honour for Fiona



Fiona Kendrick

The New Year Honours provided a sweet treat for Nestle UK chief executive Fiona Kendrick, who was awarded a damehood for services to skills development and also the food and drink industry.

She became president of the Food and Drink Federation in November and said she was hoping to use her role to raise the profile of skills training in the sector.

"I particularly want to encourage our industry to provide employment and training opportunities for young people," she said.

Nestle employed 51 apprentices as of March, when it announced plans to take on up to 50 new learners by the end of the year, at which point 15 were due to have finished their training.

It offers four apprenticeship programmes — four-year in engineering; three-year in processing; two-year in manufacturing; and, one-year in operating.

## New Year Honours round-up

The following FE and skills-related people were also recognised:

**CBE:** For services to FE — Dawn Ward OBE, principal, Burton and South Derbyshire College; for services to the jewellery sector and apprenticeships — Jason Holt, chief executive, Holts Group, and founder, Holts Academy

**OBE:** For services to FE and teaching — Sue Crowley, lately chair, Institute for Learning; for services to education — Maura Regan, principal, Carmel College, and chief executive, Carmel Education Trust; for services to training and improvements — David Timothy Marsh, offender outcomes unit manager, HM Prison Barlinnie; for services to agri-food education — Dr John Damien Fay, director, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise, Northern Ireland Executive;

for services to FE in North East Wales — David Baden Jones, principal and chief executive, Coleg Cambria, and lately principal and chief executive, Deeside College; for services to the community in Rochdale — Robert Clegg, Hopwood Hall College Corporation chair

**MBE:** For services to FE — Sheila Selwood, lately director of governance, West Herts College, and member, Association of Colleges governors' council; for services to FE and training — Nicky Perry, director, Beyond Standards; for services to FE for adults with learning difficulties — Maryanne Hodgkinson, head of arts, media and business administration, Derwen College; for services to skills training — Jean Duprez, senior manager, K&M McLoughlin Decorating Ltd, and Ambassador, London Chamber of Commerce;

for services to education — Susan Jane Kirksam, lately curriculum and assessment specialist, Association of School and College Leaders; for services to young people through the ICT apprentice scheme — Gail Ramsden, senior officer, IT skills and capability manager, Valuation Office Agency; for services to apprenticeships in the chemical and process industries — George Ritchie, lately senior vice president, Sembcorp UK; for services to public administration — Celia Romain, higher executive officer, joint apprenticeships unit, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills & Department for Education;

for services to FE in Northern Ireland — Celine McCartan, deputy director, head of corporate and support services, South West College; for services to education in Northern Ireland — William James Greer, Head, Training Organisation, South Eastern Regional College

**BEM:** For services to FE and to the community in Leicestershire — Anne Williams, lately community development officer, Loughborough College, and borough councillor, Charnwood; for services to further and higher education and to the community in Cornwall — Alan Lemin, head of student recruitment, Plymouth College of Art; for services to prison education — Wendy Ann Sherlock, curriculum co-ordinator for further and higher learning, HM Prison The Mount; for services to adult education — Sharon Tinn, learning in the community worker, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire; for services to education and training in the construction sector in Wales — Ann-Marie Smale, director, Powell Dobson Architects

See [feweek.co.uk](http://feweek.co.uk) for more coverage of the New Year Honours, including quotes from those listed above.

## Care on campus leads to medals joy for Christopher and James



Christopher Willder

Two college caretakers with almost 70 years' experience between them came in for BEMs in the New Year Honours.

Christopher Willder has been the groundsperson at Leicestershire's Brooksby Melton College for 54 years and said he felt "complete surprise and delight" when he found out he'd been honoured for services to horticulture and land-based education.

"I had no idea I was ever likely to be considered for such a medal," he said.

"My brother got an honour several years ago for services to teaching so I am chuffed that I can now say so have I."

He added: "You don't stay somewhere for 54 years if you don't enjoy it. I have enjoyed seeing the place change from only having a handful of students to being a busy place with hundreds studying a variety of land-based courses."

Principal Chris Ball said Mr Willder's long career at the college had been "exceptional".

"Chris is a well-respected member of the college staff and liked by everyone who is or



James Jackson

has been fortunate to work with him," he said.

"He possesses a wealth of knowledge about the college and its history and has brought laughter in his many tales of past experiences of working and living on the Brooksby campus"

James Jackson is caretaker at Barnet's Woodhouse College and was also daunted to find out about his BEM for services to education.

"You get this letter and it says Cabinet Office on it and you think 'well I've paid my taxes so what can it be?'" he said.

"And then it says the Prime Minister has asked to put your name down for the Queen and you think 'blimey, this is serious'."

Mr Jackson has worked at the sixth form college since 1990.

"I love my job — I especially love the young people and it's important to communicate and ask them what they're up to," he said.

"It keeps me young, I think."

Mr Jackson said it had been "a shock" to realise someone had put him forward.

"I think like most of the general public I always thought normal people should get awards too but when it came to me — I never thought I'd get one," he said.

"My family are over the moon, especially my wife, she's my rock. We're both royalists so we're really looking forward to the royal garden party."

Julie McLean, director of work based learning and school partnerships at City College Plymouth, said she was in "total shock" when she found out about her MBE.

"It's an honour for the people I've worked with for 29 years," she said.

Ms McLean, who works helping disengaged young people into work or training, has experience of unemployment herself, but was helped by a programme similar to the one she now runs.

"I love my job, I'm so proud of the department and what we do for people who are unemployed," she said.

Shirley Davis-Fox, chair of ISA Training, who was given an MBE for her services to the



Julie McLean

hairdressing industry, has also experienced the importance of vocational training first hand.

"I'm one of those people who left school at 15 without any qualifications, and here I am," she said.

"I believe passionately in the hair industry — it gets a lot of stick, but why shouldn't my



Shirley Davis-Fox

apprentices feel like they can do anything? I want them to feel that the world is their oyster."

She added: "I'm just doing my job — so to be given an award for something you love and believe totally in, it's wonderful to have recognition for working in the vibrant sector I'm privileged to be a part of."