

# FE Week



## Same time next year?

The inaugural *FE Week* Annual Apprenticeship Conference went with such a bang, how could we not do it again next year?

Hundreds of delegates from across England and across the spectrum of FE and skills organisations — from providers to awarding organisations, and from government officials to MPs, and more besides — descended upon the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (pictured left, top).

Broadcaster Kirsty Wark kept the speakers — including Skills Minister Nick Boles (pictured left, main), Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Umunna and Ofsted FE and skills director Lorna Fitzjohn (pictured left, bottom), among others — in check.

Extensive coverage of the two-day conference can be found in the supplement (pictured far left) with this edition of *FE Week*.

See page 17 for an expert piece overview of the conference from David Harbourne

## PROVIDERS ESCAPE '£2M' BILL AS FEE PLAN DROPPED

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Apprenticeship providers have escaped a potential sector bill of more than £2m after the body which issues completion certificates for all frameworks scrapped plans to introduce a charge for resubmitted forms.

The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (FISSS) wants to simplify its process for applying for the certificate in a bid to bring down a rejection rate that two years ago stood at 29 per cent of the 354,487 forms handed in.

It is understood the rate has since fallen with new guidelines and the introduction of the ACE-it online database of example applications.

FISSS, which took over responsibility for issuing completion certificates from

the individual sector skills councils in January 2012, is also scrapping the physical Apprenticeship Certificate England (ACE) declaration form and moving to a simpler, online process with which it hopes to help get the rejection rate down to 10 per cent.

It had also considered applying the £22 submission fee to resubmissions — and based on the 2013 numbers such a move would have cost providers, who submit the forms, a total of more than £2m.

But Mark Froud, FISSS managing director, told *FE Week*: “We spoke to providers and not surprisingly they weren’t overly keen on that as a route — but they were very helpful and came up with lots of different suggestions about how to handle the process going forward.”

The plans to simplify the application process were unveiled by FISSS chair Brian Wisdom at the *FE Week* Annual

Apprenticeship Conference in central London last week.

The new online system is due to launch next month.

“We’ve made the system a lot simpler and easier for training providers to use,” said Mr Froud.

“The ACE declaration form accounts for about 50 per cent of all rejections — so what we’ve done is embed it in our IT system so most of the information we require is drawn down through our IT system.

“Now, all the training provider has to do is go through a very simple electronic procedure, check all the required information is there, and tick the box confirming it.”

He added: “We hope the changes will take the rejection rate down below 10 per cent, which is probably still too high.

“We will review the new system on a

weekly basis — if it’s not working, we’ll withdraw it, go back to the old systems and try again.

“But we’re fairly confident this will simplify things still further.”

And in addition, said Mr Froud, FISSS would also remove the requirement for apprentices to submit a consent form to FISSS, via the provider, giving the provider permission to apply for the completion certificate.

Instead, providers will confirm they have a copy of the consent form on record and FISSS will carry out random spot checks.

The move has been welcomed by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, whose chief executive, Steward Segal, said: “We are pleased the process for applying for a certificate is being simplified.”

See editor’s comment on page 8

**CITB PULLS LEARNER FUNDING**



PAGE 2

**COLLEGE FREE SCHOOL APPROVALS**



PAGE 3

**DR SUE’S HERE TO HELP**



PAGE 9

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## EDITION 131

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## NEWS

**NCG IN THE RUNNING TO TAKE ON A4E AFTER SALE PUT FORWARD**

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Newcastle College Group (NCG) could be in line to take over troubled welfare-to-work provider A4e, *FE Week* can reveal.

A spokesperson for the Ofsted grade two-rated college said it was committed "to delivering welfare and employability training" and would consider "any opportunity".

NCG, which already runs Newcastle College, West Lancashire College and Kidderminster College along with Sheffield-based Intraining and Rathbone youth charity among other educational institutions, did not deny it was considering adding A4e, which in January saw several employees found guilty of fraud, to its portfolio.

Company founder Emma Harrison, who is a former adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron and is believed to have an 87 per cent stake in the company, has appointed auditors Deloitte to advise on the sale or break-up of A4e, according to the Financial Times.

An NCG spokesperson said: "NCG has a clear strategy, which includes commitment to delivering welfare and employability training, and we continue to monitor our portfolio of activities against that strategy.

"We would consider any opportunity as it arises however it would not be appropriate to make any further comment at this time."

A4e is believed to be one of the biggest providers for the government's £5bn welfare to work scheme and was paid £6,699,758 in the latest Department for Work and Pensions accounts.

NCG has been offering welfare to work

provision in the North East through Intraining since 2011 through two contracts with the DWP.

However, one of those contracts was terminated by the government last year following concerns over quality.

A spokesman for NCG, said: "Our initial performance on the North East Yorkshire and the Humber Work Programme contract did not achieve our expected standards when it started almost four years ago.

"But last summer we vastly improved our performance and ranked eighth nationally — in the top quarter of performers. We are now exceeding DWP's latest performance standard benchmarks.

"Intraining is committed to improving performance because we believe in value for money for the taxpayer and providing the best possible chance to the unemployed to find work. Our improving performance over the past year demonstrates this."

A4e, which employs more than 3,000 staff, reported a pre-tax loss of £11.5m in 2013-2014, but had climbed to a pre-tax profit of £2.2m last year as sales rose from £167 to £189m.

In January, 10 former A4e employees were found guilty or admitted ripping off a DWP Inspire to Aspire scheme, submitting fake learner records to claim extra funding and bonuses.

A4e chief executive Andrew Dutton said it would pay back all the fraudulently claimed money, adding DWP and Skills Funding Agency audits found no evidence of fraud in current A4e contracts.

Both A4e and Deloitte declined to comment on the sale of the company.

**Funding pulled from construction apprenticeships**

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London-based construction training charity Building Lives claims 180 people currently on pre-employment training schemes face missing out on starting apprenticeships after the industry training board pulled £2m of future funding.

Sian Workman, interim managing director of the registered charity, said the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) told it on February 27 that it would no longer be providing any cash for its apprenticeship training.

"We were expecting to receive around £2m from the CITB up to August 2016, which would have accounted for around a third of our basic income," she said.

Ms Workman added the CITB's decision meant that 180 "hard-to-reach" recruits currently undertaking level one pre-employment construction training with the charity were now at risk of not getting onto level two apprenticeships as had been planned.

But, she claimed, the CITB had committed to continue funding 55 apprentices already training with Building Lives and a number of different employers until they completed their training.

Steve Rawlings, who founded Building Lives



Steve Rawlings (front row, centre) with Building Lives apprentices

four years ago, said the charity could be forced to close without alternative funding.

"We have reacted quickly to redesign our model to attract additional funding, but it's an extremely worrying time for staff and learners," he said.

The CITB funds construction apprenticeships through training levy payments paid by construction firms.

Carl Rhymer, delivery and customer engagement director for the CITB, said his organisation had never directly funded Building Lives, but funded its apprentices through payments to the charity's partner employers.

He added: "We provide funds to in scope

**FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF****More EDMs on cuts**

Three early day motions (EDM) condemning the recently-announced FE funding cut that will see the Skills Funding Agency 2015/16 budget fall by up to 24 per cent have been tabled in the House of Commons.

Respect MP George Galloway's EDM, covered in the last edition *FE Week*, now has eight signatures, but two more have since been tabled, the first by senior Labour MP Keith Vaz with three signatures and the second by fellow Labour veteran Barry Sheerman with 18.

**Ofsted on Trailblazers**

Ofsted hopes to report on the success of the government's apprenticeship trailblazer programme, the education watchdog's director of FE and skills, Lorna Fitzjohn, has revealed.

During her speech to the *FE Week* Annual Apprenticeship conference, she also outlined plans for Ofsted's next apprenticeships survey.

She added: "We will also hope to report on the impact of Trailblazers and the new standards. We intend to publish our report in the autumn, and it will of course include recommendations for the new government."

**Subcontractor form plea**

The Skills Funding Agency has urged providers to submit their updated subcontractor declaration forms.

All funding agreement holders must complete a form, even if they do not have subcontractors.

Providers must return the form by the Friday, March 27, deadline or face having their April payment suspended.

The agency has warned it would not extend the deadline. Instructions on how to submit the forms are expected to be emailed out by the Central Delivery Service shortly.

**Employers and in this case, a standard verification process revealed that an in scope employer had not complied with the grant scheme rules" — which was why the CITB pulled the funding, he said.**

"The CITB is fully supportive of what Building Lives is doing to help unemployed and disadvantaged people, but we are unable to change these rules at will," he added.

A spokesperson for the CITB declined to comment on which employer had broken the rules, or which regulations had been breached.

Mr Rhymer added: "We have committed to support all apprentices currently training with Building Lives who were enrolled with the CITB by January 2015."

## NEWS

# Traineeship financial incentive proposal rejected by government

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The government has rejected an employer and provider suggested proposal that traineeship learners should be offered a financial incentive for taking part.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) revealed how the idea of payment for trainees emerged from the sector in its first year evaluation of the scheme (pictured far right), published on Wednesday (March 12).

It said: "The main improvements to the programme that were suggested by providers and employers were to offer a financial incentive to participating trainees, and to improve the promotion or advertising of the programme."

However, a BIS spokesperson said that while it "encourages, but does not require, employers to consider providing trainees with support to meet their expenses such as travel costs," there were "no plans at present to offer a financial incentive to participating trainees".

Trainees can already access financial support including the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, and Learning and Learner Support funding for 19 to 24-year-olds, she said.

Access to Work funding from the Department for Work and Pensions might also be available for the work experience element of traineeships if the learner has a disability or health condition.



She said the National Apprenticeship Service's traineeship marketing and PR campaign would continue to raise awareness. "This complements the work of training organisations locally," she said.

A National Union of Students spokesperson said it was "supportive" of the programme, launched in August 2013 with the aim of giving young people high quality work experience and training to help them into an apprenticeship or employment, but that "offering a salary would be a huge incentive for these often vulnerable young people, as well as offering them a route into permanent employment or an apprenticeship".

"Many of the employers offering

traineeships are similar in size to those offering apprenticeships, so they should be able to afford to pay trainees," she said.

A CBI spokesperson said: "If firms are in a position to pay trainees then that is welcome, but what is important is that such opportunities exist in the first place to allow young people to get a foothold in the labour market."

John Allan (pictured), national chair of the Federation of Small Businesses, said: "If employers feel able to offer financial support for trainees, this should be encouraged. However, any mandatory paid requirement could risk turning some businesses away from the scheme. A



careful balance is required.

"Where they can, businesses should look to offer expenses. The Government could do more too, by promoting financial support schemes. For example, the 16-19 bursary fund and the learner support funding."

The evaluation document further found that half of 1,590 trainees surveyed went on to apprenticeships or employment, and a further 17 per cent undertook further learning.

Skills Minister Nick Boles, in a framework for delivery document (pictured far left) out the same day the evaluation was published and which referenced the results, said: "We owe it to young people to retain this focus on quality outcomes, which is why we have strengthened the use of performance data from 2015/16.

"As announced in the government's response to the funding consultation on traineeships, we will do this via a number of routes; provider funding, the publication of provider-level employment outcomes to inform young people's and employers' choices, and by setting minimum standards for progression to employment from traineeships."

The evaluation document came the same week Mr Boles revealed government hopes of doubling traineeships to hit the 20,000 mark this academic year.

## TWO COLLEGES WIN SCHOOL APPROVALS FROM DFE AS THIRD PREPARES NEW PLAN

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Two colleges have been granted permission to open their own free schools in the latest wave of 49 free schools given the go-ahead by the government.

New College Swindon's bid to open a school and sixth form in Swindon and New College Pontefract's plans to open a 1,200 learner sixth form centre in Doncaster were successful.

The latest Department for Education (DfE) approvals bring the number of college-sponsored free schools up to 11, with six already up and running and five still in development.

New College Swindon principal Graham Taylor (pictured front) said getting permission to set up its business and enterprise-focussed Great Western Academy was "simply great news for Swindon".

Free schools are state-funded schools which are not required to follow the national curriculum, operate outside of local authority control, and answer directly to the Secretary of State for Education.

"As the third fastest growing town in the country there's a desperate need for new schools and I'm pleased the government acknowledged this," said Mr Taylor.

He said the local community had been very supportive of the bid, including local MP Justin Tomlinson, who initially

suggested the grade two-rated college put in the bid.

Mr Taylor said the college would be seeking advice and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and successful schools.

"We are really excited to be starting up a new school from scratch for the digital age and we will do our very best to create a great learning environment that our local community deserves," he said.

No one from New College Pontefract, which has an Ofsted grade one rating, was available to comment, but when the bid was submitted in September, principal Pauline Hagen (pictured below) told *FE Week* she thought the college "had a lot to bring to Doncaster, where most existing providers are grade three or four".

Both free schools are expected to open in September next year.

A third FE institution, Croydon College, was also vying to get a school off the ground in this wave of approvals, but was not named among the successful bids.

However, a statement on the prospective New Croydon Academy website said the proposal had "received positive feedback from the DfE", but that it "required more detail and further expansion on the proposal before we could proceed".

A proposal is expected to be resubmitted in May, with the school, if successful, due to open in 2017.



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# Finance key concern for commissioner reports

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Finance problems figured prominently in the two latest college inspection reports from FE Commissioner Dr David Collins (pictured below left).

The reports by Dr Collins on Greenwich Community College and 11,000-learner Central Sussex College were both published on Monday (March 9), following visits in early January.

The commissioner was particularly critical of the South East London college, which had around 3,500 learners as of November, which Skills Minister Nick Boles, following his advice, placed into administered status.

Among the problems identified by Dr Collins, who was sent in to inspect the college after it was given an inadequate Ofsted grading in December, was a "somewhat different picture" to its previous estimate of a £3.5m bank balance at the end of 2014/15 — the prediction now stands at around £500k after a £3m "deficit".

And the report of Ofsted monitoring visit carried out a few weeks after Dr Collins' was there highlighted little in the way of progress at the college, which currently has a £5.9m adult skills budget.

Andrew

Murdock, the college's finance director and vice principal, told *FE Week*: "The commissioner raises a number of issues which have been acted on.

"The college has taken immediate steps to address the projected deficit by cutting all unnecessary expenditure and making plans to reduce its long term cost base. This includes a review of staff costs and utilisation."

Dr Collins also said that "a financial recovery plan is needed to address the college's financial weaknesses, including issues of overstaffing and inefficient resource utilisation". He added that a structure and prospects appraisal should be carried out "as soon as possible to determine the best way of providing high quality education and training for the learners and employers of the area" and called for "weaknesses at board level" to be addressed.

Richard Bourne OBE, chair of the college corporation, said: "We look forward to participating in the structure and prospects appraisal process. The board is aware of our role to ensure the community of South East London is well served with high quality FE in the future."

Dr Collins was more positive about the Ofsted grade three-rated Central Sussex College, which he inspected after it was assessed as inadequate for financial health by the Skills Funding Agency in February last year.

He praised the "well

balanced" governing board which has "changed significantly over the past two years" and said: "The senior management team has been completely revised following the appointment of a new principal [Sarah Wright, pictured below right] in 2013.

"The incoming principal inherited a number of major problems including a debt representing more than 100 per cent of turnover and unsatisfactory internal auditing arrangements."

But Dr Collins added: "The new board and management team are performing well and should be supported in what is a major turnaround situation."

However, he recommended that the audit committee at the college, which currently has a £4.5m adult skills budget, needed strengthening and "ways of reducing the college's level of debt to manageable levels should be explored as a matter of urgency".

Dr Collins added the senior management team needed someone with "overall college-wide responsibility for quality improvement and curriculum development".

Ms Wright said: "We are pleased to note their published recommendation that the senior team and board of corporation are performing well and should be supported in what is a major turnaround from an inherited poor position.

"The college is working to ensure speedy progress against all recommendations."

# Council told to drop skills offer

The FE Commissioner has recommended that Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL) should offload its skills programmes after he was sent in to inspect over a grade four Ofsted result.

The report by Dr David Collins on LAL, which has around 7,000 students including 5,300 community learners, was published on Monday (March 9).

It recommended that the provider should "restrict its activities to adult and community learning", while consideration needed to be given to "more appropriate ways of delivering the skills pro-grammes currently being offered through LAL by using colleges and providers with greater experience and success in the delivery of this provision."

There were around 550 employability learners, 300 apprentices and 80 students on traineeships being trained by LAL as of December.

And Dr Collin also called for changes to governance arrangements to "provide suitable monitoring and challenge of the executive".

A spokesperson for Lancashire County Council, which has a current adult skills allocation of £2.2m, said: "We are working closely with the Skills Funding Agency, colleges, training providers and employers to ensure there is no reduction in the skills investment in Lancashire and students enrolled on courses are able to continue with their studies."

# CHANCELLOR TOLD 'NO SCOPE' FOR MORE FE FUNDING CUTS

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The Association of Colleges (AoC) has told Chancellor George Osborne (pictured below) there is "no scope" for further reductions to FE funding in its submission for the 2015/16 Budget.

The AoC's submission makes 10 suggestions for the Treasury to consider in its planning for the next financial year — five for 16 to 19 education and five for post-19 education.

The document (pictured right), published on the AoC website ahead of the March 18 budget, said: "There is no scope for further reductions in the funding rates in addition to those made in recent years without significant damage to the quality of education that can be offered to young people."

It added: "There should be no further reductions in funding for FE and skills in addition to those announced in the 2013 spending review and the BIS grant letter to Skills Funding Agency [SFA].

"This is because the cuts and reforms already in train are resulting in a reduction in training and education for adults at a time when there are growing skills shortages."

As well as calling on Mr Osborne to resist the temptation to reduce funding any further for both

age groups, the AoC recommended "one-off funding" to support maths and English level two provision for 16 to 18-year-olds, which, since August, all providers must deliver for youngsters who don't have a GCSE A\* to C grade in those subjects.

The AoC said: "Budgets already allocated should be reviewed and consolidated to allow money earmarked for employer ownership

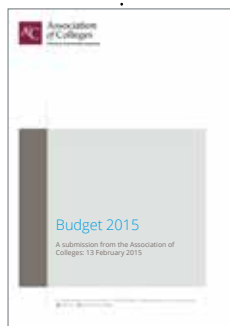
pilots which have not delivered on their original promise (but which provide useful innovation) to be redirected to areas of more pressing need."

It also called for "an end to large capital grants to boutique institutions, such as new free schools", a reform of rules which mean colleges and sixth form colleges pay VAT while school

sixth forms do not, an innovation fund to support the use of education technology, and "flexibility" to allow the SFA to carry forward capital expenditure into the 2015-16 financial year.

The AoC document warned devolution proposals should "enhance not inhibit" colleges' ability to respond to the local needs of their communities.

It also said plans to extend FE loans to learners over 19 should be "widened" to consider how the government can "foster individual investment in learning".



# Funding agency dishes out extra cash for improvement strategy

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The Education Funding Agency (EFA) has promised extra cash to support a struggling college's improvement strategy, following a visit from the sixth form commissioner.

Hartlepool Sixth Form College will use the extra £22,000 to support professional staff development after commissioner Peter Mucklow found not enough students were completing their courses, teaching was not "consistently good" and staff performance monitoring processes were "not sufficiently robust".

Mr Mucklow visited the college on January 22, following a grade four Ofsted result in September.

Principal Alex Fau-Goodwin said it had been "a very productive visit, challenging but extremely supportive and a fair outcome".

"The EFA has agreed to support the college improvement strategy with additional funding to support the quality improvement strategy," he said.

"It will be used on professional development to help staff access excellent practice, either through work shadowing, good practice visits, consultancy or external staff development events."

The extra cash was suggested by Mr Mucklow as one of his 10 recommendations for the college, including the chair of governors and committee chairs should

consider "twinning" with peers in a high performing college to share experience and expertise.

In his report Mr Mucklow criticised the college for focussing on "attaining student numbers and financial viability to the detriment of quality".

However, he acknowledged the college was facing "increasing competition" and an expected drop in the number of 16 to 19-year-olds available locally which would "present significant financial challenges".

This meant the college would need to "reduce costs" and "undertake scenario and contingency planning" to enable it to "live within its 2015 to 2016 academic year budget", he said.

Mr Fau-Goodwin said: "The college is already making good progress in addressing the recommendations made by the commissioner.

"We anticipate meeting full all recommendations before the end of this academic year."

Mr Mucklow agreed with the principal's assessment, saying Mr Fau-Goodwin had drawn up a "comprehensive" post-inspection action plan.

An EFA spokesperson said the financial contribution was "nothing unusual".

He added: "We have consistently shown that we will not hesitate to take action where there is evidence that any school is failing to give young people the very best start in life."

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## Government identifies 'potential risks' for Trailblazer programme

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A government report on the apprentice Trailblazers has identified the emergence of "potential risks ... that require national attention in coming months".

The changeover to a new funding system and the pace of development of new apprenticeship standards were among several risks to successful delivery, according to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills interim report entitled Evaluation of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers.

It was published on Thursday, March 12, and looked at how the Trailblazer groups, which the government sees as implementing the Richard Review recommendations for greater employer ownership of apprenticeship training, was progressing.

The 60-page report said the ability to manage risks and "set up a structure and process that allows Trailblazers to truly take ownership of their development is the key challenge for the national policy team and one they are tackling head on".

Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), said: "We have for some time been recommending that there should be an independent evaluation of the Trailblazer process so we welcome

this assessment.

"The report makes some interesting observations on the new standards and raises the issue of different approaches between sectors. We need to ensure that there is a balance between flexibility and having a coherent and transferable system.

"We welcome the flexibility we have seen recently around matters such as end-assessment and grading where the government has accepted that grades are not appropriate for all sectors.

"On funding, the report raises a number of issues that AELP has brought up including the fact that co-investment can take many different forms. It reinforces the concerns of employers if mandatory cash contributions are part of the new system.

"We have long recommended the need for employer investment but this can be achieved in other ways. We hope that the government takes this report's findings into account in its rethink of the funding model."

The report came out the same day Skills Minister Nick Boles announced 200 more employers had signed up to the Trailblazer overhaul of apprenticeships.

Mr Boles said: "Giving leading firms from British Gas to video games manufacturer Ubisoft the power to design and deliver high quality apprenticeships, means we can ensure more young people have the skills our economy vitally needs."

## Report calls for FE inspection shift towards 'self-regulation'

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An Association of Colleges (AoC) report has called for "radical reforms" to the way FE provision is inspected, saying it should be separated from school inspections.

The 26-page discussion paper, commissioned by the AoC and produced by FE consultant Mick Fletcher (pictured), recommended self-regulation for adult provision and "a slimmed down" Ofsted process for learners up to 19.

The report foreword by West Nottinghamshire College principal Dame Asha Khemka, said the document was "intended to stimulate discussion, to gather views and to encourage a debate".

The report examines the history of inspection in the UK, how inspection is carried out around the world as well as the impact of the current Ofsted regime.

In the report, Mr Fletcher said: "The time is right for radical reforms that separate arrangements for school age students from those for older learners.

"There need to be changes to the way provision for those up to the age of 19 is inspected,

but the approach should be common across all educational settings.

"For adults there needs to be a decisive step towards self-regulation."

The report highlights that in other countries, external inspection of post-compulsory education is "rare", and weighs up the possibilities of alternative forms of performance management.

Mr Fletcher said: "Some argue the FE sector is now sufficiently mature to move to self-regulation in line with higher education institutions. Colleges have over 20 years' experience of self-assessment."

He added: "In a world where individuals and employers are increasingly expected to fund FE, a college's focus should be on their paying customers rather than a government agency."

But, on the other hand, he added, there was "strong political support" for keeping external inspection.

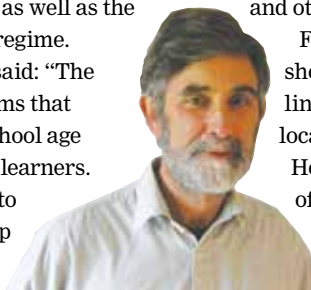
"It is seen as more objective and is increasingly well established across the public sector," he said.

Mr Fletcher went on to make three key recommendations.

He called for "a slimmed down and more independent Ofsted inspecting provision for those up to the age of 19 in schools, colleges and other settings".

For adult provision, he said, there should be "a peer review process... linked with expanded arrangements for local accountability".

He also called for quality assurance of FE higher education delivery to recognise the "distinctive nature" of the provision.



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BH, Assistant Head  
Loreto College, St Albans

Media Partner

**FE Week**

## Fetl announces first firm grants worth £270,000

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The names of the first five organisations chosen to receive a total of £270,000 in research grants by the Further Education Trust for Leadership (Fetl) were announced to a packed hall of sector leaders.

Organisations with an interest in FE were invited by Fetl last November to apply for grants worth up to £100,000 each to fund research into sector leadership issues.

Mike Smith, vice chair of Fetl, announced the winners to around 200 senior sector figures at Kings Place arts and conference centre, in London, after the trust's inaugural lecture on the future of FE leadership was delivered by American management consultant James Krantz on Tuesday (March 10).

Mr Smith said the chosen organisations, whittled down from 56 applicants, were the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), Coleg Gwent, the Emfec Group, a membership body for East Midlands providers, the University of Hull, and Working Well, a private firm that specialises in organisational development.

They will carry out research on the impact of new leaders in the sector, austerity measures on provision, new models of leadership through innovative governance,

## FE BOSSES WARNED AGAINST 'HEROIC' LEADERSHIP

Senior FE figures were told to abandon the traditional "heroic" leadership model at the inaugural Fetl lecture.

The speech was delivered by James Krantz (pictured right), management expert from New York-based leadership consultancy Worklab, to a packed lecture hall containing leading lights from across the sector including Peter Lauener, Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency chief executive, Lorna Fitzjohn, Ofsted national director for FE and skills, and Martin Doel, Association of Colleges chief executive.

Mr Krantz said FE had been a "neglected second child" compared to schools and higher education, but there was "a new aura of hope in the air" because of the importance politicians were attaching to training and retraining workers.

He warned that hiring charismatic individuals for top management posts could cause a "collective escape from responsibility" by staff lower down in the management chain who needed to contribute more to the overall success of their organisations.

Jill Westerman, chair of Fetl, told the audience

behaviours and approaches adopted by ethical leaders, and psychoanalysis and systems thinking for FE.

Dame Ruth Silver, Fetl honorary president, said: "The five projects selected reflect both the complexity and curiosity of the sector but, more importantly, focus on areas of wider contemporary concern and interest to all."

Gabriella Braun, director of Working Well, said: "Our project will look at how



From left: Fetl honorary president Dame Ruth Silver and Mr Krantz

afterwards: "Most of us know a different style of leadership is called for than the one we grew up

with in the 1990s when heroic leadership felt like the right way to lead."

psychoanalysis and systems thinking can contribute in interesting ways to improving leadership thinking.

"We hope, like all the grant recipients, to really generate some interesting and useful new ideas for how to drive the sector forward."

It comes after Fetl, which was launched last summer with a budget of up to £5.5m left over following the closure of the Learning and

Skills Improvement Service, announced in January the names of the first four individuals it had chosen for research fellowships.

Alex Day MBE, Ruth Allen, Tim Ward and Ann Creed will get up to £40,000 each to fund their research on attitudes to risk in leadership of sixth form colleges, leadership challenges among third sector providers, the impact of leadership on part-time teachers and fostering creative leadership in FE.

# "Government-backed apprenticeship grants help engineer our success."

Oliver Mangham, Applications Director,  
Fairfield Control Systems

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## FE WEEK COMMENT

## Listen like FISSS

The prospect of a further financial burden being placed upon the FE and skills sector is something it could well do without right now.

It is therefore heartening to hear that FISSS has listened to provider feedback on its proposal to apply a £22 submission fee for completion certificates to resubmissions and decided not to go ahead.

It comes at a time, it hardly needs repeating, when the SFA's budget for 2015/16 has been hit by up to 24 per cent and, individually, those it funds who do not run apprenticeships could be hit by more than when they get their allocations this week.

It also comes with two of the latest FE Commissioner reports highlighting financial problems at colleges, again, while the AoC submission to Chancellor George Osborne ahead of his budget on Wednesday (March 18) says simply 'no more'.

These are all warning noises coming from the sector and all we can do is hope that someone in power hears and is listening to them, much like FISSS did.

**Chris Henwood**

chris.henwood@feweek.co.uk

## TOP NAW TWEETS

@MJCRyton

Have enjoyed following one of our (@balticttraining) apprentices days on @ncfe account today. Makes me proud! #Apprenticeships #NAW2015

@ryanrfcarey

Enjoyed shadowing a #Craft #Apprentice today at @BAES\_Maritime Great to see what they learn and growth plans for the Skills Centre! #NAW2015

@fsb\_policy

79% of #apprentices said their training improved their career prospects #NAW2015 #GetInGoFar

delineo

Apprenticeships are right for me because I want to stay in education and get a head start into my career #NAW2015

@alicepchecks

#NAW2015 Get hands on work experience whilst gaining a qualification and earn money at the same time...why wouldn't you!? #apprenticeships



## Stamps and envelopes in Hub meltdown plan

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The emergency plan that the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) would set in motion if its online data collection system went into meltdown could require a large box of stamps and plenty of envelopes, *FE Week* can reveal.

The SFA said in January that it had a 'contingency plan' to help providers meet deadlines for individual learning record (ILR) submissions in the event of widespread and prolonged system failure.

And that contingency plan — released to *FE Week* under the Freedom of Information Act and following repeated breakdowns with the SFA's online systems — involves a return to more traditional methods of transferring data.

It stated: "In the event of sustained problems with our data collection system, we will assess the impact and consider whether there is a need to introduce a manual method of collecting data from providers."

An SFA spokesperson said the "manual method" could involve asking providers to

send files saved onto discs or memory sticks in the post, through Royal Mail or a private courier.

Another possibility would be sending encrypted messages by email.

An SFA spokesperson said on Wednesday (March 11) that she hoped it would provide users with "future reassurances" after users complained on the FE Connect online forum about repeated problems with the Hub, which fully replaced the old online data collection (OLDC) system in October.

But it failed on January 5, less than 48 hours before the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) R05 (fifth return of the academic year) deadline, following previous breakdowns in August for R12, September for R13 and December for R14.

The contingency plan says "We have service level agreements (SLAs) that underpin our contractual agreements. Where an issue is deemed to be a priority one or two, and those SLAs are breached, a major incident will be declared."

An SFA spokesperson said priority one situations could include when the "majority

of application transactions are failing" or follow "widespread data corruption of critical data".

Priority two situations scenarios could include where "processing of data failed for a critical deadline due within [the] next two days".

Stephen Hewitt, funding manager at London's Morley College, said he was pleased to hear the SFA was planning for worst-case scenarios.

He told *FE Week*: "There have obviously been problems with data collection recently and it's hard to believe that there won't be more again, so it is good to know that the SFA is thinking in terms of a contingency plan."

An SFA spokesperson said: "Recognising that the data collections processes in the 2013 to 2014 funding year did not run smoothly, we have listened to user feedback to improve our systems and have contingency plans in place as part of our overall business continuity planning.

"We hope this provides our colleges and training organisations with future reassurances for this key system."

### COMMENTS

#### Develop 'world class apprenticeships' to tackle global productivity shortfall, report urges

I agree in theory with the body of the report, but as with all reports like this they leave gaping holes in them. Comparing the UK to Germany / Switzerland for example and citing lower youth unemployment. In those countries the retirement age and pension circumstances free up more jobs, with youth unemployment being naturally lower as a consequence. The jobs have to be there in the first place and not just fantasy jobs to massage the numbers.

Country Bumpkin

#### A4E up for sale

A4e was a great company to work for with a strong ethos and culture, they gave me a great living and inspiring opportunities for 11 years. Unfortunately they lost their way due to the ego of the new regime, the wrong people being valued in the business, business leaders losing sight of their customers and key staff with integrity. There are still a lot of good people in the business on the ground but the leadership and senior team has failed everybody over the last 5 years.

This is no surprise at all as A4e has been going downhill for some time now.

Ewan Metcalf

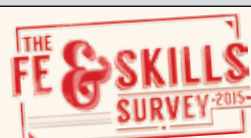
#### Apprenticeships commission puts colleges forward as solution to schools' vocational offer for 'all' 14 to 16-year-olds

On a good day I think "this is all good stuff-progress at last!" On a bad day I think "these are the same points and arguments I — and a few others — was making 20 years ago. Are we really making progress? Well yes, but only at the snail pace permitted by the academic community".

Ever optimistic!

This is no surprise at all as A4e has been going downhill for some time now.

Graham Hoyle OBE



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# Dear Dr Sue

How do you handle your new principal's demands? Is the managing director refusing to budget? Dr Sue Pember, the former head of FE and skills investment at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), who was awarded an OBE for services to the sector in 2000, puts her extensive sector knowledge to good use in a new section for *FE Week*.

On the third Monday of every month she answers your questions, backed by the experience of almost a decade as principal of Canterbury College, in addition to time served in further senior civil service posts at the Department for Education and Employment, Department for Education and Skills, and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Email [DrSue@feweek.co.uk](mailto:DrSue@feweek.co.uk) to ask her your question.

## NEW GOVERNOR VERSUS AN EXPERIENCED ONE



It can take a newly-appointed governor (fresh to FE and corporate governance) at least two years to get their feet under the corporation table, so to speak.

Over the following six years they accumulate considerable knowledge and governance experience, at a cost to the college for training events, conferences, and as well as their own time. Knowledge associated with the running of the college — with all the complexities of the various funding streams, multi-site campus operations, curriculum and associated delivery quality management.

Then, just when they consider that they are making a really worthwhile contribution their (two by four years) eight years are up and they are off the Board and "redundant".

Current personal experience suggests that colleges are not too keen to take on experienced governors and some still operate a representative

agenda. Perhaps this attitude needs further research and maybe a "recycling scheme" introduced for experienced governors who still wish to support this exciting sector?

*Graham Briscoe, former college governor*

You raise a very interesting question which is being widely discussed at the moment. There is a move to limit the time governors spend at a single college, mainly because there is perceived wisdom that the longer a person stays the less likely they are to challenge and scrutinise the way a college

operates. I agree with you that research needs to be done in this area.

It is felt that new governors will bring new ideas and challenge established assumptions and long held views. It is thought that some of the problems of governance seen in recent years exist because everyone is too comfortable and cosy.

New governors, if well selected, could bring in new ideas and fresh perspectives but, they need a good induction and support to get them up to speed quickly. The role of a search committee is to get a balance of experience and knowledge, which provides challenge and fresh new ways of thinking and working.

I see some scope for your concept of recycling although I wouldn't like it be called that. Experience and challenge is much needed in the sector. I recently heard of several governors who, having done their two terms in one college, have moved on to another college to support that college's development. Often these governors have been able to go in as the chair because they have exactly the skills needed to match college needs.

## HOW TO REPRESENT THE STUDENT VOICE



I am a sabbatical officer and therefore am not a student or elected representative. This means that I often feel very out of touch with my students and fear they find me difficult to talk to and do not see me as a peer.

I do try to hold regular Student Executive Meetings but attendance is often poor and students are far from enthusiastic and proactive. Although I put on workshops and the like as part of the Youth and Wellbeing Team these are rarely well received and students are blasé at best.

This makes it incredibly difficult for me to truly grasp the wants and needs of my students. Is there something I can do to improve this or are these simply the trials that should be expected when trying to represent FE students?

*Aubrey Powell, student president at Lincoln, Newark and Gainsborough College*

Please don't lose faith or get demotivated. Seeing that you attended the NUS conference and are now writing to me shows you are very committed. And yes, it is difficult and you are not alone in being unsure about whether you are making an impact.

Your first step is to talk to your principal, head of student experience and clerk, and explain that you want to be proactive but you need their help. Ask about whether they feel the student voice is strong enough? You might find they are worried too. Go with a set of suggestions about what you would like to do, such as monthly surgeries, and ask if they could advertise them. Say you would like to join the programme course reviews so that you can pick up on student issues, and start a "you said it and we acted upon it" initiative.

You also need to see what's happening elsewhere. Go on visits to other colleges to pick up on best practice and bring those ideas back. Talk to NUS and look at their development materials. Get other governors on side by taking a paper to the board about strengthening the student voice. And, of course, make the best use you can of social media.

Please let me know how you get on.



## PROFILE



We would vote in the education committee in the council on the budget for the local FE college. That seems unthinkable now



## PLAYFAIR'S FORMER COUNCIL LIFE IN

@REBECCAKOONEY  
REBECCA.COONEY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Eddie Playfair carefully opens an A4 envelope and tilts it forward, prompting a few dozen neatly cut press clippings to fall and scatter across his desk.

The yellowing pieces of newsprint date back more than two decades to his days as a councillor in Waltham Forest, North London.

They've kindly been dug out for the purposes of this interview and they paint an interesting picture of a life long before his time as principal of Newham Sixth Form College and chair of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association (SFCA).

"I was only on the council for four years," says the father-of-four. "But it was a very intense four years — a very heady time.

"It was the heyday of municipal socialism, where local councils really had the ability to do things, to try out different ways of doing things.

"I became chair of education, and found myself, as quite a young councillor, really

making very significant decisions about education in the borough.

"We inherited a big reorganisation of schools in Waltham Forest which led to the creation of two sixth form colleges [Sir George Monoux College and Leyton Sixth Form College], which was my first contact with sixth form colleges.

"I was very committed to the idea that these colleges would be comprehensive and would serve all the young people and offer a very broad curriculum and that the staying on rate would rise, achievements should rise and so on."

In the days before colleges were incorporated in 1992, the FE landscape looked very different.

"It was possible in those days to say that the local authority did actually run and steer education," says 54-year-old Playfair.

"We used to steer the FE colleges' budget. We would vote in the education committee in the council on the budget for the local FE college. That seems unthinkable now, and as a principal I would hate it.

"Looking back, it must have been very difficult for the management of the college, so I think the move towards institutional autonomy has broadly been a good thing.

"On the other hand, it has been a bad thing that local democracy has been hollowed out in education and in some of the other areas.

"Local authorities still do lots of good work, but in a much more constrained way.

"I'm not saying we were all perfect but we did try and actually use our powers to shape our area in a distinctive way, and that's much, much harder now."

Playfair, who has a grandson, threw himself into the council role — and admits that his job as a science teacher at Haringey's White Hart Lane School (now Woodside High School) took "a bit of a back seat".

And his own personal experience of schooling in England had done little to prepare him for such a profession.

Playfair, whose mother Line is from Corsica, attended a French school near where he grew up in West London, and so, he says, he's always looked at English schooling "as a

bit of an outsider".

"Things like assemblies and form tutors and the traditions of English schooling just were very alien to me," he says.

"I have no experience of them at all, despite the fact I was growing up in London as an English boy."

The French method of teaching at the time, he says, was "dry, rigorous and didactic".

"The classroom wasn't very involving," he says.

"I was capable of doing what needed to be done, but I didn't see the point of lots of the things we were doing, and I don't think the teachers put a lot of thought into helping us see the point of things."

The experience left him convinced he "definitely" didn't want to be a teacher.

He initially wanted to be a scientist, following in the footsteps of his immunologist dad, John, but realised after spending the sandwich year of his degree working in a research lab "that it didn't really suit me".

"It wasn't social enough," he says. "You weren't out and about, interacting with

## It's a personal thing

**What is your favourite book, and why?**

I don't know if I have a single favourite book, but I do love the Philip Roth novels, like *American Pastoral* and *The Human Stain* and things like that. If I had to choose a favourite book it would be Primo Levi's *The Periodic Table* which I read years and years ago and keep coming back to — it's just absolutely marvellous

**What do you do to switch off from work?**

Music. I play the piano, so sitting at the piano and just playing for my own enjoyment is incredibly relaxing and a lovely contrast to what I'm doing the rest of the time. It's a very therapeutic experience

**What's your pet hate?**

I do have a very kind of optimistic and positive outlook on the future, so I suppose if there's something I don't like, it's when it feels like people have given up believing that we can make things better. I suppose cynicism, you might say

**If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?**

I should say a composer or a writer to try and distract me from education, which is a bit of an obsession, but honestly I think I would probably say John Dewey who was a great educationalist and a great public intellectual in early 20th Century America. He would be a very interesting person to have a chat with

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

Not a teacher, definitely. I wanted to be a scientist and I probably went through a phase of wanting to be a politician as well

because I realised I could do this and I could enjoy this, and I could commit myself to this."

He signed up to a PGCE course on graduating and got a job at Walthamstow Girls School, before moving on to White Hart Lane and then Enfield County.

From there he made a sideways move into FE as the head of science at Tower Hamlets College.

"I wanted a more exciting job," he explains.

"And I arrived in this place where I had my own building, effectively my own staff, my own curriculum.

"That was the point when I started to think actually there was such a thing as leadership, and you had to think a bit about what it was to be a manager and to steer an organisation."

This epiphany, he says, was largely down to the "wonderful" Tower Hamlets principal at the time, Annette Zera.

"She was, I suppose, the person that showed me you could be a principal without being like all the other principals," he says.

Playfair's ID card for Waltham Forest Council



Leyton Labour Party's newsletter from 1986. From left: Labour council candidates Clive Morton, Annette Briggs and Playfair.



Playfair's campaign poster when he ran for Parliament in 1993



Playfair aged 3 in Corsica

people and I realised that wasn't how I wanted to spend my time."

In the end, it was Playfair's interest in politics that brought him round to the idea of teaching, after getting involved with the Labour Party as an "idealistic" 17-year-old and then taking the unusual step of becoming a primary school governor at the tender age of 19.

"I was still looking in on a system I had no personal experience of, which was quite interesting," he said.

"And it was that experience that made me think maybe teaching might be worth considering."

But, he says, what really got him "switched on" to teaching was observing a PGCE science class towards the end of his degree.

"I just thought: 'This is fantastic — here are people reflecting and thinking about how to teach scientific topics to children, how to engage and interest them and help them acquire these concepts and enthuse them about science,'" explains Playfair.

"And it was a bit of a moment really,

"Not so much now, but in those days you did feel like there was a bit of a 'type', you know, a rather grey, middle-aged, middle class, white, male type, who were principals, and who did the job in a particular way, expressed themselves in a particular way — it felt like a fairly narrow spectrum really.

"And if you didn't feel like you fitted that type, it was hard to see yourself being a principal, so it didn't even occur to me.

"But what Annette showed us was that you could be authentic and true to your own style, values and way of doing things and still be a great principal.

"And the sector has been enriched by a more diverse set of people, I think, and Annette was a role model for that."

From there, Playfair moved to Leicester's Regent College for six years, before the role at Newham came up in 2008, which he describes as having presented "an irresistible opportunity".

But as chair of the SFCA, Playfair knows the allure of a sixth form colleges' career is taking a hit from the current government's

handling of the sector.

"Politicians are not really clear what they want but, I think if there's any one thing it seems to be a market — they want a choice," he says.

"So we find ourselves now in competition with a lot of new providers, either converter academies that have created sixth forms, or some of the new free school sixth forms.

"But I think it's a phase we're going through — the pendulum will swing back.

"There will be a much more positive, more collaborative climate, where people will see the point of looking at an area and saying, 'let's have a rational, sensible post-16 plan for the needs of students in this area'."

And it seems Playfair doesn't miss his political career.

"My passion is the college — making it as good as it can be and developing it further," he says.

"It's a wonderful place with wonderful values and ethos — it's very rooted in the community.

"It's the dream job for me."



# THANK

TO ALL THOSE THAT ATTENDED AND SUPPORTED THE FIRST FE WEEK





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# AAC | 2015



# A week of celebration — a week for apprenticeships

The achievement of apprenticeships up and down the country was celebrated with the eighth annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW), writes Billy Camden.

The week, from March 9, saw events including a flash mob, a student principal and a nuclear training rig competition among others.

Ministers and senior government officials were also out and about taking part in events, visiting businesses, and talking to apprentices and hundreds of firms pledged to take on apprentices through a National Apprenticeship Service pledgeometer.

Here we take a look at some of the events in celebration of everything apprenticeship — and don't forget to visit [feweek.co.uk](http://feweek.co.uk) to download the NAW 2015 supplement



Dr Vince Cable (centre) attends a launch event at the London Eye to celebrate NAW



Three teams of apprentices from Lake College battled it out and tested their limits on a nuclear training rig. Students completed a number of practical tasks against the clock while being judged by employers



Newcastle College Performance Academy dance students surprised passers-by at Grey's Monument with a flash mob

The foundation degree dance students worked on designing and performing the show as part of the "urban dance" section of their course and to help raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships



Skills Minister Nick Botes tried his hand at being an apprentice at Holition, a reality solutions and software provider in London where over 40 apprentices were in attendance



Twelve motor vehicle apprentices, including Amy Cosford (pictured) showcased the high standard of work that apprenticeships can cultivate when they went head-to-head in Bolton College's STEM Centre.

The motor vehicle tutors created a competition wherein 12 apprentices competed against each other to be crowned the best in their trade



Middlesbrough College was under new headship last week as level two accountancy apprentice, Laura Nolan (right), took the reigns from Zoe Lewis (left) to mark NAW. She attended college leadership team briefings, marketing strategy meetings, a weekly review of staffing and a presentation to the local authority's executive team about the college and its future plans



The Deputy Prime Minister celebrated the growth of women taking up apprenticeships over the last five years by welcoming 40 apprentices from the banking, insurance and legal services to learn about their experiences of earning whilst they learn

## SUE HUSBAND

Director, apprenticeships and delivery service,  
Skills Funding Agency



### National Apprenticeship Week 'surpasses itself'

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) is always a highlight of the FE calendar and this year the sector has surpassed itself.

The excitement generated by those who, like me, are passionate about apprenticeships has been huge — for example we saw more twitter activity in the first three days of the Week than we did in

the whole of last year's NAW.

Key events during the Week included a launch event at the London Eye attended by Vince Cable — at which almost 1,500 new apprentice vacancies were pledged by employers who have never offered apprenticeships before.

The House of Commons played host to a Made by Apprentices event focusing on the

benefits of apprentices to small businesses and showcasing some of the products and services created by apprentices working for SMEs.

The week also saw the launch of degree apprenticeships by the Prime Minister. Now for first time, apprentices will be able to achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree while earning and learning.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, used the Week to outline the rise in women taking up apprenticeships in the last five years. Moreover, the results of an evaluation of the first year of the traineeship programme reported that 50 per cent of trainees went on to an apprenticeship or employment, and a further 17 per cent undertook further learning after their traineeship.

No wonder then that BT and the BBC announced plans to expand their traineeship

programmes which give young people the work preparation training, English, maths and work experience needed to get an apprenticeship or other job.

The benefits of employing apprentices were revealed in a Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) report released earlier this week. It found 5 million consumers prefer to do business with apprentice employers, while the typical apprentice is estimated to deliver productivity gains of over £10,000 per annum.

And, crucially, even more young people will be able to 'get in and go far' with an apprenticeship, as more than 20,000 new apprenticeships have been pledged by employers as part of NAW.

The Week is only ever a success due to the hard work and innovation of the sector — so my huge thanks to everyone involved.

Here's to #NAW2016!



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## EXPERTS



## GERALDINE SWANTON

Senior associate solicitor, education team, SGH Martineau LLP

# Safeguarding and wilful neglect — a colleges brief

Geraldine Swanton explains how Prime Minister David Cameron's plans to extend the law of wilful neglect to education might affect colleges, and how existing legislation in the area is currently being enacted within the sector.

**O**n March 3, 2015, David Cameron announced a commitment to tackle child sexual exploitation and the government's intention to impose criminal liability on those who fail to protect children.

This will be done by an extension of the law of "wilful neglect" to education.

The press has reported that teachers who fail to protect children could face up to five years in jail under the proposals.

**Colleges have applied their safeguarding policies to vulnerable adults as a matter of good practice**

Following the Francis Enquiry into the causes of the failings in care at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust between 2005 and 2009, the government enacted in February this year a new offence of ill-treatment or wilful neglect of patients in formal health and social care settings. It is not yet in force.

The offence applies to individual providers of health and social care who ill-treat or wilfully neglect an individual to whom they provide care, as well as to organisations which provide or organise such care. "Wilful neglect" is not defined. The proposal is to extend this offence to education.

The offence also applies to organisations in the same way as the offence of corporate manslaughter ie if the way in which the care provider's activities are managed amount to a gross breach of a relevant duty of care to the person who is ill-treated or neglected and in the absence of the breach, the ill-treatment or neglect would not have occurred or would have been less likely to have occurred.

Organisations found guilty of the offence will be subject to a fine, a remedial order and/or a publicity order.

Colleges already have a statutory duty to

promote and safeguard the welfare of children who receive education.

The guidance issued by the Department for Education is called Keeping Children Safe in Education. It gives substance to the duty and states that colleges have a responsibility to identify children who are suffering or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Once identified, colleges should "take appropriate action", which means reporting the fact to the relevant agencies and working with them to support the child.

That may include supporting social workers to take decisions about individual children. Colleges are also required by the guidance to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

This is consistent with local authorities' duty to make arrangements with relevant agencies, including colleges, to co-operate to improve the welfare of children.

Ofsted inspects colleges' safeguarding performance and failure to discharge the duty could result in intervention by the Secretary of State.

Colleges have no comparable statutory safeguarding duty in respect of vulnerable adults, though they have duties in respect of health & safety legislation and disability discrimination, particularly the duty to make reasonable adjustments and to provide auxiliary aids to prevent disabled learners from suffering substantial disadvantage as a result of their disability.

Colleges have nevertheless applied their safeguarding policies to vulnerable adults as a matter of good practice, relying to some extent on guidance provided by the Department of Health for those providing adult care.

Colleges have, since at least 2002 when the safeguarding children duty came into force, been sensitive to the signs of abuse and have engaged with the relevant statutory agencies to protect the victim.

The current safeguarding duty is however a different order from the government's proposal to impose a positive duty to prevent harm, with the spectre of criminal liability for a failure to do so.

While no one would challenge the need for society to protect its most vulnerable from harm, the propensity of governments to extend the reach of the criminal law beyond the actual perpetrators of heinous crimes is a source of concern.

It is too early to speculate on the extent of the proposed offence and its implications for colleges. No doubt colleges and their representative bodies will press for further information and participate at the earliest stages of the consultation process.



## DAVID HUGHES

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace) chief executive

# Charting an upward trajectory for apprenticeship success

David Hughes outlines his hopes for a new Apprentice Charter

**T**here are many uncertainties surrounding the general election, but one thing we can be sure of is that the next Government will support more apprenticeships.

That support will almost certainly survive any permutation of parties entering into coalition (or minority Government) negotiations, probably unlike some other manifesto commitments.

I spoke at the *FE Week* apprenticeship conference this month about the dangerous place the apprenticeship programme is in at the moment and the need for us to focus on three things — defining what an apprenticeship is and what it contributes for the apprentice themselves, for the employer and for the Government; the quality of the experience and how we measure success; and, really getting to grips with inequalities in access and achievement to apprenticeships.

These issues contribute to the other big issue we have to face up to — how to get more employers, parents, teachers and careers advisers to value apprenticeships. We are still a long way from convincing enough people that an apprenticeship will be a good investment for them as they enter the labour market.

This is not the same for degrees where the presumption seems to be prevalent from many that any degree will be a good investment.

Convincing people to change their views is not easy of course, and there is no silver bullet. Improvements in defining the experience, quality and access will help, but they will not be sufficient on their own.

At Niace we are convinced that we have a concept which will help and we're keen to engage with the sector, employers, apprentices and others to develop our idea into a workable proposition. We call it the Apprentice Charter and it is a simple idea which is already capturing people's imaginations.

The Apprentice Charter is a new quality mark which would be awarded to employers that demonstrate a commitment to give their apprentices a high quality learning experience which will set them up for a career.

The employers we have spoken to are attracted to an independent quality mark which can help them show that they are doing the right thing, that they take seriously the investment they are making in their apprentices.

As well as differentiating employers offering apprenticeships, we believe that an Apprentice Charter can help achieve a number of other things. It will codify and set a new standard for what the best employers do in addition to the

formal training and the employment contract.

This includes the informal learning, the soft skills, the mentoring, the support, the advice about future careers and the opportunities to understand the business and not just the job. For prospective apprentices and their families and advisers, it will be a simple guarantee that the experience is worth their investment, enabling them to make informed choices about how to make the transition into work.

It will stimulate demand from people who want the chance to enter the labour market and progress into a career, giving a strong alternative to the well-trodden higher education path, particularly for young people.

**The quality of the apprenticeship experience will become more and more consistent and positive, without the need for centralized, top-down Government intervention**

The Apprentice Charter will help the Government to be confident in the quality of the programme and allow them to target support to those employers who want to aspire to achieving the quality mark. In this way, the quality of the apprenticeship experience will become more and more consistent and positive, without the need for centralized, top-down Government intervention.

We are now keen to engage with stakeholders in developing the concept. We want employers, providers, colleges, apprentices and others to work with us to scope out how this will work. The next Government will want to improve quality at the same time as increasing numbers, our Apprentice Charter will help ensure that the experience for apprentices and the return on investment for employers matches up to the strong political support which apprenticeships now have.

Please get involved and help us develop the concept into reality.

See the *FE Week* Annual Apprenticeship Conference supplement, free with this issue of *FE Week*, for more on Mr Hughes speech



The speakers spoke and the audience listened — they even got to pose questions. So with the curtain having come down on the huge success that was the first *FE Week* annual apprenticeship conference, David Harbourne gives his overview of events.

The inaugural *FE Week* Annual Apprenticeship Conference was a fantastic opportunity to catch up on the latest developments in apprenticeship policy and practice.

There were plenty of facts and figures, clearly presented — not least by the newspaper's former editor, Nick Linford, who has a knack of making complicated information easy to absorb.

Conference host Kirsty Wark also did a fantastic job of asking just the right questions, in just the right way.

That said, we didn't get clear answers to every question. Skills Minister Nick Boles couldn't announce the government's final decision on funding reform, though he hinted we might not have long to wait.

Meanwhile, his advisers told us what they could about future stages of reform, but when they talk about "open policy making" and "iterative processes", they usually mean "watch this space".

On the other side of the political divide, Chukka Umunna didn't go down as well as he might have hoped. Labour has made technical education and apprenticeships a major theme of their election campaign, but two things niggled this time round.

First, he wants to limit the word "apprenticeship" to levels three and above.



## DAVID HARBOURNE

Edge Foundation director of policy and research

### Inaugural conference success, but hopes for programme clarity remain

He plans to rename level two provision, not abolish it — but the audience clearly didn't like the idea, and didn't hesitate to tell him.

Second, he gave no pledge on adult skills funding. Instead, he told us Labour would face "some very difficult choices" if elected in May, and would "have to justify every pound of government spending".

Yet in almost the same breath, he reminded us that Labour wants to limit higher education fees to £6,000. That helps the "remembered 50 per cent" — but what about the "forgotten 50 per cent"?

We also heard from the chair of the House of Commons Education Select Committee, Graham Stuart.

Presenting the committee's new report on apprenticeships, he started by highlighting the risk that Trailblazers will be dominated by larger companies.

On funding, he said small firms should be given a choice between administering it

themselves, or accessing it via a provider.

And he called for the return of pre-16 work experience and Young Apprenticeships.

But as the dust settled in the days after the conference, one thing struck me more than any other. It's the remarkable resilience of colleges and independent learning providers.

I've been involved in vocational education and training for 25 years now and lived through seemingly endless reform. A constant has been the willingness of providers and professionals to say: "Give us the tools and we'll do the job".

It's no different this time round, except we're not working to a clear, coherent plan.

Straight after Doug Richard delivered his report, the government made a deliberate decision. Rather than draw up a detailed implementation plan, it said: "Let's just get on with it and deal with issues as they arise."

So we don't know what the final apprenticeship landscape will look like. We

don't even have a firm grip on some of the things that matter most to employers and apprentices alike, such as end assessments.

What we do know is that there are living, breathing people out there whose future will be brighter because of apprenticeships. We heard from one of them — Michael — at the conference, and he stole the show.

**We don't know what the final apprenticeship landscape will look like. We don't even have a firm grip on some of the things that matter most to employers and apprentices alike, such as end assessments**

So for the sake of all the people who need apprenticeships and all the people committed to delivering them, let's hope we soon get a good, clear plan, the funds to deliver it, and the political will to see it through.

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## CAMPUS ROUND-UP

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## Hair today — gone tomorrow

**A** Chelmsford College student shaved off her locks and raised more than £2,000 for Cancer Research UK.

Health and social care level three apprentice Jodie Guyver took the bold chop after witnessing her close friend, Rebecca James, suffer with cancer as a teenager.

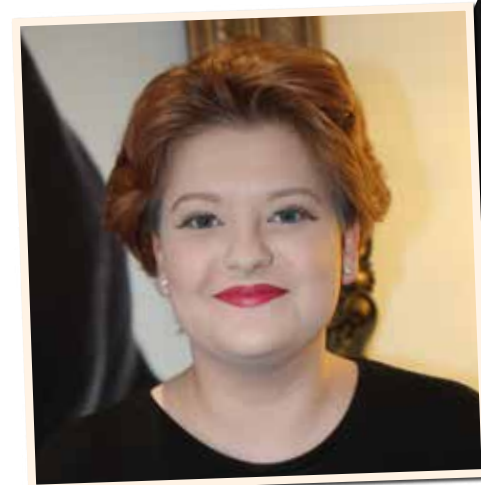
After hearing the news that Rebecca had been given the all clear, Jodie was determined to do more for others and chose the hairdressers as the perfect opportunity to raise money.

The 17-year-old said: "I am overwhelmed with the response from friends, family and all those that kindly donated and showed up here today to give their support.

"The charity is one that is close to my heart and hopefully we can make a difference to other cancer sufferers. I'm getting used to my new hair, or lack of."



Above: Jodie Guyver gets her head shaved by NVQ level three diploma in hairdressing apprentice, Danielle O'Donoghue, aged 23, for cancer research UK. Left: Jodie Guyver before her fundraising cut for cancer research UK



Abbey Joe Clarke, aged 20, who studies a one-year Skills for Work course at National Star College with Abby Guilding, director of operations for Wiggly Worm

## StarBistro lives up to its name with restaurant prize

**A** college bistro run by students with learning and physical disabilities has won a national restaurant award.

Based at the National Star College's Ullenwood campus in Gloucestershire, StarBistro, was named the 'people's favourite' in the sustainable restaurant awards beating more than 800 entries after a public vote.

Open to the public, the bistro is a

partnership between National Star and health charity, Wiggly Worm. It serves dishes made with fresh locally-sourced produce at value for money prices.

Kathryn Rudd, principal of National Star College, said: "StarBistro serves fantastic food, is a great vehicle for young people with disabilities to learn valuable skills but critically, it also challenges perceptions and stereotyping."

## Specialist Army training boosts Peter's icy trek hopes

Not even wild polar bears will stop West Cheshire College learner and former soldier Peter Bowker when he takes on a world record attempt of being the first amputee to complete the unsupported crossing of the Greenland ice cap, writes Billy Camden.

**F**acing -37°C temperatures over a 600-kilometre trek 27-year-old counselling learner Peter Bowker will rely on his specialist army training to overcome the obstacles in his way.

He takes on the world record attempt to become the first amputee to complete the unsupported crossing of the Greenland ice cap on May 5 to raise money for a charity close to his heart, Help for Heroes (H4H).

"I left the army in 2012 so I understand the amazing work that H4H does and I wanted to do something different to raise money for the charity," said Peter.

"I haven't set a specific target, we just want to raise as much as we can."

He added: "People who have done this type of challenge before say it is 10 per cent physical and 90 per cent psychological, and for me, coming from a military background, I think gives me a good base level of psychological readiness."

From left: principal and chief executive of West Cheshire College Nigel Davies with Peter Bowker



Peter working tirelessly to prepare himself for the 65 degrees north expedition



Peter being stretchered into a helicopter after hitting an IED in Afghanistan

Peter will lead the '65 degrees north' project, a six-person team undertaking the 30-day trek.

It has gained support from the Endeavour Fund, a Royal foundation set up by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, as well as backing from celebrity Ross Kemp

as a patron.

Travelling on skis and pull pulks containing food, clothing and survival equipment, the team is expecting to come face-to-face with resident polar bears and deep crevasses.

Peter said: "We have to assess what the risks and dangers are and what the possible outcomes can be. I have accepted the element of risk and am determined to complete the expedition."

Peter's right leg was amputated after an explosion in Afghanistan in 2008. Travelling in an armoured vehicle called a Mastiff, Peter's team hit an IED road side bomb resulting in

him badly injuring his foot and ankle and shattering his femur.

He spent three and a half years at Headley Court rehabilitation centre where he was eventually told that he would lose his right leg.

"What affected me the most was being surrounded by so many seriously injured young men for that length of time, it changed me quite a lot," said Peter.

"After that experience I made some really drastic personal changes and now make the most of the life I have because when you see it being taken away from so many people it

really does change your outlook and perspective on life."

Since his return from rehabilitation, Peter made it his goal to help others.

In 2013 he completed a trek to Peru and then took part in an event called Heroes Challenge UK, a cycle from John O'Groats to Land's End via the four highest peaks of each country in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

He joined West Cheshire College to study a counselling and psychotherapy central awarding body (CPCAB) intermediate certificate in counselling studies with a view to using the qualification as a stepping stone to university and the pursuit of a career in the profession.

Visit [www.bmycharity.com/65degreesnorth](http://www.bmycharity.com/65degreesnorth) to make a donation to 65 Degrees North.



Peter takes a break during his demanding training schedule in preparation for the world record attempt

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# MOVERS & SHAKERS

Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

**R**ichmond upon Thames College has appointed Nanda Ratnavel as deputy principal for finance and resources.

Formerly the director of finance at Lewisham Southwark College, he has spent 18 years working in the health service culminating as deputy director of finance at Ealing Hospital before taking up the position of director of resources at the Crafts Council.

He was director of finance and resources at the Fashion Retail Academy between 2008 and 2010 before joining Lewisham Southwark College.

"I am delighted to be appointed deputy principal for finance and resources at Richmond upon Thames College," he said.

"I'm excited to be joining the senior team and to contributing to the excellent work the college does for its students, for local employers and for its stakeholders."

And Basingstoke College of Technology (BCot) has a new face among its ranks in Dr Sean Moley.

He has taken on the newly-created role of higher education manager and will lead

on both university-level provision and international work within the college.

He has worked in education for the past 24 years, bringing experience from the secondary, sixth form, further and higher education sectors, and joins BCot from the University of Southampton.

"For all of my working life, teaching and learning has been central to what I do," he said.

"Six years teaching in an East London secondary school proved a very valuable learning experience for me and, after completing my PhD, I was fortunate to be able work on projects to improve young people's key skills, adults' workplace basic skills and the quality of teaching and learning offered by work based learning providers."

He added: "I am very excited to be coming to work at BCot and am especially looking forward to working closely with colleagues to meet the needs of our higher education students, providing them the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the



Nanda Ratnavel



Dr Sean Moley



Matthew Grant

world of work. BCot has ambitions plans to meet the needs of an increasing number of international students and I am looking forward to contributing to the success of this new venture."

Jackie Grubb, BCot's deputy principal for curriculum performance and innovation, said: "We have offered university level professional and academic courses for many years and we are keen to expand on these further.

"There seems to be the misconception that this level of qualification is not available in Basingstoke — that you have to travel to access them — so Sean has been targeted with addressing that."

Meanwhile, Priestley College's new principal, Matthew Grant, who used to be its deputy principal, will count on George Contos as his newly-appointed vice principal.

"As a dad of two and a grandfather of two, you see how important education is from my own children's perspective as well as the future generations like my grandchildren," said Mr Grant.

"Education faces many challenges going forward, but we will make sure we stick to what we believe in, which is making a difference to the lives of young people and ensuring they are able to progress into work or university. If we can do this then I will be really pleased."

To let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, independent learning provider, awarding organisation or other sector body email [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)

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Outstanding education requires outstanding business services and leadership too and so we have expanded our executive management team to ensure that our business strategies and processes are robust and keep pace with our needs and aspirations. As a result we are now looking to recruit able and ambitious individuals for the following new posts.

### Assistant Principal - Operations **Salary up to £60k**

Passionate about customer service, you will ensure that students' first experience at the College's two centres is welcoming, professional and efficient. With lead responsibility for Customer Services and enrolment functions, facilities management, IT infrastructure, HR and health and safety, you will be adept at juggling priorities and energised by being responsive, motivating teams and ensuring that learning environments are the best they can possibly be.

### MIS Director **Salary up to £50k**

In a time of funding cuts and close scrutiny of public expenditure, you will develop and use your thorough knowledge of SFA and EFA funding to support curriculum planning, ensuring that delivery patterns are optimised for learners whilst being compliant with funding rules. You will help us exploit the power of the newly installed student record system to design and interpret reports on performance and model future delivery.

### Finance Director **Salary up to £50k**

You will develop financial strategies and lead the finance and payroll department's operations to ensure that our £5.5million annual budget is deployed effectively to the benefit of learners and stakeholders. With a strong background in systems and procedures, you will lead the implementation of devolved budget holding and support greater financial empowerment of managers across the College.

#### Head of HR

**0.5: Salary up to £50k pro rata**

You will maintain our suite of HR policies to keep them in line with legislation and best practice and train and support our managers in their understanding and operation. But more than that you will be passionate about people and want to ensure that we are a caring employer, providing a positive and enjoyable working environment. You will promote a culture that gets the best out of staff and rewards them accordingly.

#### Curriculum Posts

#### Head of Department - Vocational and Employability Skills

**Salary £41,916 - £45,792**

You should have a successful track record of curriculum leadership and management and experience of working with employers and partnership building. We need someone who has the strategic vision and operational expertise to help ensure that this key area of work continues to grow and thrive. You will lead on developing the Vocational provision which includes Business, Administration, ICT, Early Years, Health, Social Care and Hair and Beauty.

#### Curriculum Manager - English and Maths

**Salary: £32,142 - £36,162**

We are looking for an outstanding Curriculum Manager to develop and grow our Maths and English provision from Entry level to GCSE. We need someone who is enthusiastic to achieve innovation, flexible delivery and outstanding learner outcomes.

**Closing date for Curriculum posts is 5pm on 23rd March**

**Closing date for all other posts is 3pm on 20th March**

**Interviews for all Management posts will be held in week beginning March 30th**

**Interviews for Curriculum posts will be held in week beginning April 20th.**

*For further details and to apply for one of the above posts please contact: [jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk](mailto:jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk)*

*Or please download further details and an application pack from our website: [www.wmcollege.ac.uk](http://www.wmcollege.ac.uk)*

*When you have completed your application you can email it to [jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk](mailto:jturner@wmcollege.ac.uk) or by post to Jo Turner, Working Men's College, 44 Crowndale Road, NW1 1TR*



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For an informal discussion about the post please contact Linda Houtby, Principal,  
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### Teacher of Physics

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*Closing date: Friday 27th March 2015 Interview dates: Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st April 2015*

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## ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL for LEARNER ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

**Salary: c£55,000 (+ benefits)**

Newcastle-under-Lyme College is the best college in Staffordshire and, increasingly, one of the most successful in the country. Over the last five years we have:

- utilised our outstanding financial health to invest in the further development our outstanding campus;
- seen exceptional growth in student numbers;
- consistently achieved 'top 25%' success rates for all areas of activity; and
- been recognised by Ofsted as a very good college with many outstanding features.

Reporting to the Principal, and working as a member of the Senior Management Team, this is an outstanding opportunity for an ambitious and innovative manager to play a part in shaping the future direction of the College.

In short, your job is to help to make us even better and even more successful.

If you have what it takes to meet this challenge we'd like to hear from you.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact Ian Hookway, Director of HR & Communications on (01782) 254225 or [ian.hookway@nulc.ac.uk](mailto:ian.hookway@nulc.ac.uk)

For further information and to apply online please go to our vacancies page at [www.nulc.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.nulc.ac.uk/jobs). Alternatively you can e-mail us at [vacancies@nulc.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@nulc.ac.uk) or leave a voicemail on 01782 254123.

The closing date for completed applications is 23 March 2015  
Interviews will be held on 30 March 2015

This college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All college based positions are subject to enhanced DBS check and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications from all sectors of the community.

## ENGLISH AND MATHS JOBS



**WE ARE CONTINUING TO OFFER FREE RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING FOR ALL ENGLISH AND MATHS TEACHING ROLES. GET IN TOUCH WITH HANNAH BELOW FOR MORE INFO**

**TO ADVERTISE WITH US CALL HANNAH SMITH ON**

**020 81234 778 OR**

**HANNAH.SMITH@FEWEEK.CO.UK**



## RECRUITING FUNCTIONAL SKILLS TUTORS IN MATHS AND ENGLISH

The Skills Network, a leading training provider, is currently recruiting full and part-time flexible Functional Skills tutors, to support learners while they work to complete our blended learning Functional Skills/GCSE qualification in English and Maths.

### ABOUT THE ROLE

As a Functional Skills tutor you will be responsible for providing face to face support to learners in half-day sessions at a local venue. And or you will provide remote/online subject specific support to learners, as well as providing encouragement and feedback with the assistance of Learner Support and Retention Advisors. You will be required to liaise with the Learner Support Advisors in our office, regarding support for learners and any areas of concern. Once appointed you will need to attend an induction/training day at a Mercia venue.

### WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU NEED?

All applicants are expected to hold a relevant qualification in the following areas:

- A teaching qualification PTTLs/CTTLs/DTTLs/Cert Ed/ PGCE or equivalent (or working towards)
- Level 3 in Maths and/or English
- Experience in supporting the delivery of functional skills in FE.

To apply for a role, please visit [www.theskillsnetwork.com](http://www.theskillsnetwork.com) to download an application form and send your completed form to [careers@theskillsnetwork.com](mailto:careers@theskillsnetwork.com)



## Trainer Assessor – Functional Skills Maths & English (Apprentices)

**Reference:** JP1118/FEW  
**Salary:** £22,783 - £28,629pa  
**Location:** Broad Oak Campus  
**Hours:** 37 per week, full-time, full year

Working within our Faculty of Advanced Skills and Foundations you'll deliver and assess functional skills for apprentices who receive their training away from the College Campus. The role is designed to support the completion of Functional Skills Maths, English and, ideally ICT in company and off-site, working on a 1-1, small group and blended learning basis to ensure successful outcomes for our apprentices.

With a recognised teaching qualification at L4 or above and experience of developing, delivering and assessing in a variety of settings you will have the enthusiasm and determination to meet demanding targets and establish positive and supportive working relationships with our learners.

Previous applicants need not apply. No agencies please.

**Closing date:** Friday 20th March 2015, 9am sharp  
**Interview date:** Thursday 26th March 2015

For more information and to apply online visit [www.accross.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.accross.ac.uk/jobs)

*Accrington and Rossendale (Accross) College exists to provide high quality education and training to the widest range of local people.*



## Maths Tutor Vacancies!

£18,000 - £23,000 Per Annum

Vacancies available in—Castleford, Halifax, Bradford and Derby

Potential4Skills is a large and dynamic training organisation that offers a range of qualifications to a wide variety of employed and unemployed learners.

We also offer Maths and English qualifications to employed learners through the European Social Fund contract and we are looking to hire a qualified maths tutor to work closely with learners and employers to deliver this contract.

All applicants need to have the following:

- \*A relevant Level 3 maths qualification.
- \*Experience delivering Functional Skills and full Maths Certificates from Entry Level 3 to Level 2 is essential.
- \*An ability to work one to one or remotely with learners to ensure they complete within the required time frame.
- \*Confidence in liaising with employers
- \*Must be able to travel.
- \*May be required to work some evening and weekends.

If you do not fulfil the above requirements then your CV will not be shortlisted.

**To apply email your CV and covering letter to—  
jobs@potential4skills.co.uk**



**SESSIONAL ESOL, ALDD, GCSE MATHS  
and FAMILY LEARNING TUTORS  
West Sussex  
Up to £21.45 per hour (plus paid holiday)**

Aspire Sussex Ltd plans, promotes and delivers vibrant adult education across Sussex, enabling people to achieve their aspirations.

We are looking for additional ESOL, ALDD and GCSE Maths and English tutors to join our Employability & Skills Faculty team to deliver sessional courses to adults (16 years plus) from April 2015 and also Family Learning tutors for adult learners or adults and children learning together.

**ESOL** (English for Speakers of Other Languages) applicants will need teaching qualification and subject specific qualifications along with previous teaching experience in their subject area, ideally to adults.

**MATHS & ENGLISH** - we are looking for tutors who are able to teach to GCSE level. Applicants will need teaching qualifications and subject specific qualifications along with previous teaching experience in their subject area. Opportunities are available across West Sussex to tutor day and evening Functional Skills and GCSE courses.

Our **ALDD** tutors teach entry level English and Maths and also Independent Living Skills. Applicants will need a teaching qualification and experience of teaching adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. We have vacancies along the South Coast (Worthing to Bognor Regis) and Burgess Hill, offering both daytime and evening courses.

**FAMILY LEARNING** courses fall into two categories - "Family English, Maths and Language" and "Wider Family Learning". Applicants should have a teaching qualification and recent experience of teaching adults and/or children. Experience of pre-school or KS1/2 and an up to date knowledge of how skills are taught in schools would also be advantageous.

Applicants for all of the positions should be able to adapt teaching and learning strategies and select resources as appropriate in order to meet student needs. They should have excellent communication and interpersonal skills and have the ability to lead, develop and motivate adult students to achieve their learning goals. Excellent record keeping skills and the ability to demonstrate relevant ICT skills including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, E-mail and Internet will also be needed.

Christine Austin - email: [christine.austin@aspireSussex.org.uk](mailto:christine.austin@aspireSussex.org.uk). Phone number 01293 853481

# EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT



Practical, fresh and inspiring qualifications to meet the needs for a broad range of learning styles and abilities from 14 - 16+ in school or further education.

They allow for a high degree of flexibility with a wide choice of units that make up the qualifications, so students can specialise in the specific areas of the subject that interest them most.

They have been developed to give students the knowledge and skills as well as developing behaviours and attributes to progress and succeed at university and in the workplace.



Great for students who want a more practical course than GCSEs

The qualification covers a range of skills that would be hard to come across in conventional GCE qualifications

It has Pass, Merit and Distinction at Level 1 which helps to motivate our pupils

Find out more:



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ocrblogs.org.uk

ocr.org.uk/vocational



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

## FE Week Sudoku challenge

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

			4	2				6
		1	8				7	
	2				1	3		
3								9
9		2					1	7
6								2
		6	9					8
		9			8	4		
3			4	2				

Difficulty: **EASY**

	6		2					1
					5			3
		7		3		4	2	
9	8	4						6
5						2	7	8
	3	9		2		8		
	2		9					
8					1			9

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week

### Last Week's solutions

6	3	8	4	9	5	2	7	1
4	7	1	8	2	6	5	9	3
2	5	9	7	1	3	8	4	6
3	8	7	5	4	2	1	6	9
9	4	2	3	6	1	7	8	5
1	6	5	9	7	8	4	3	2
8	1	6	2	3	4	9	5	7
7	2	4	6	5	9	3	1	8
5	9	3	1	8	7	6	2	4

Difficulty: **EASY**

1	3	6	8	4	9	2	5	7
5	2	7	6	1	3	4	9	8
9	4	8	5	7	2	6	3	1
4	9	1	3	8	6	5	7	2
7	8	2	4	5	1	9	6	3
3	6	5	2	9	7	8	1	4
2	1	3	9	6	8	7	4	5
6	7	4	1	2	5	3	8	9
8	5	9	7	3	4	1	2	6

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug. Text your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to 07969 166 374.

Last week's spot the difference winner was Simon Kelleher (pictured right), senior researcher at Policy Connect in London.

