

FE Week

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QUITS AOC**



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**APPRENTICESHIP
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'VERY FEW'**



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DIGITAL INQUIRY**



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“SIMPLE AND MORE
TRANSPARENT
PROCESS URGENTLY
NEEDED”

Gordon Marsden



Shadow minister hits out over DfE climbdown on funding rule

- Schools, colleges and independent learning providers fail to enrol learners on English and maths
- 35,000 16 to 19-year-olds without pass didn't go back to studying the subjects, representing loss of up to £150m to FE
- New exemption from 'condition of funding' granted to some and others keep half the cash

SEE MORE ON PAGE 2



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Principal says 'no' to AoC

BY PAUL OFFORD & BILLY CAMDEN
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Burton & South Derbyshire College (B&SDC) is set to leave the Association of Colleges (AoC), *FE Week* can reveal.

A spokesperson for the college, which received a grade two Ofsted rating in December 2011 and was allocated £6m by the Skills Funding Agency as of July, said it would not be renewing membership this academic year, but declined to comment further.

AoC membership fees, which its spokesperson said were based on "total income of a college from the previous year" and ranged from £1,886 to £47,323 last year, coincide with academic years.

The AoC website listed 246 general FE colleges, including B&SDC, 82 sixth form colleges, and 21 specialist colleges as members on Thursday (September 24).

An AoC spokesperson declined to reveal whether any other colleges would also not be renewing membership, but said: "We invite members to renew their subscriptions [which will increase 1 per cent for 2015/16] at the beginning of each academic year and it is for each individual college to decide whether they join us."

It comes as the results were announced on Thursday (September 24) of the long-awaited Gazelle membership review, in which its annual membership fees had been slashed from £35k to £15k.

But along with the membership fee price cut, it was also revealed that the number of college

members had more than halved in just over a year from 23 to just 10 — with three of its five founder college members among those to have left. It comes after *FE Week* reported last summer how Gazelle had raked in around £3.5m from colleges in membership and other fees since launching around the start of 2012. A key criticism was that no return on investment (ROI) analysis had been carried out by Gazelle to justify the spending of public money amid shrinking budgets — and the results of the membership review do not indicate any plans for an ROI assessment.

Nevertheless, Gazelle chair Stella Mbubaegbu, principal of continued Gazelle member Highbury College Portsmouth, said Gazelle "needed to change in order to better reflect the financial pressures facing colleges".

Meanwhile, the 157 Group, which formed in 2006, is also undergoing a "strategic review" set to be completed by December.

Chief executive Ian Pretty tweeted on Thursday (September 24) that it was "focusing on productivity and devolution as key drivers".

Membership of the group, which cost £15,000 for 2013/14 according to Companies House, has fallen from its peak level of 30, to 26. Among those to have left were Lewisham Southwark College and City of Liverpool College.

Email paul.offord@feweek.co.uk if your college is thinking about leaving a group.



Dawn Ward, principal of B&SDC

'English and maths funding process clearly caused problems'

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Newly-appointed Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden has called for an urgent review after the Department for Education (DfE) watered down a key 16 to 18 English and maths funding rule.

Mr Marsden, who was confirmed in the post on Friday (September 18) and previously served in the role under former Labour leader Ed Miliband for three years, hit out after the DfE said it would not fully apply the condition of funding in relation to last academic year.

The rule states that any 16-18 student that does not have a grade C in English and maths and fails to enrol in the subjects would be removed in full from the 2016/17 funding allocation.

However, the Education Funding Agency (EFA) confirmed this week that the penalty would be halved. And even then it will now only apply to providers where more than 5 per cent of relevant students (by value) did not comply with the funding condition.

The announcement came in light of data showing that 3 per cent of 16 to 19-year-olds without at least a grade C in GCSE English and maths attending an FE institution did not continue their study of the subjects.

The DfE did not specify how many learners this equated to but according to *FE Week* research, around 35,000 learners did not meet



the condition, representing a potential loss of earning to the sector of up to £150m.

"This particular process and set of requirements has clearly caused problems for providers across the sector," Mr Marsden told *FE Week*.

"The belated EFA recognition of this by partially relaxing them may have staved off some of the immediate difficulties.

"But Ministers must urgently now ensure there is a process that's more simple and transparent for providers while delivering the strong strategy for English and maths which learners need."

The condition of funding emerged from the 2011 review of vocational education by Professor Alison Wolf (pictured) in which she recommended that 16 to 18-year-olds who do not have at least C grade for English and

FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF

Charity director in Lords

The House of Lords Social Mobility Committee will next month hear from Education and Employer Taskforce charity director Nick Chambers.

The committee is focussing on the relationship between employers and the group of young people, aged 14 to 24, who are not necessarily going onto higher education.

Other witnesses are expected in sessions taking place on October 14. They comes as part of the committee's ongoing investigation into the transition between school and work.

See feweek.co.uk for more.

Over 26,000 FE loans

The total number of processed applications for 24+ advanced loans throughout the whole of August was 11,870, bringing the total number so far for 2015/2016 to 26,420.

The figure for August this year was up 0.3 per cent on last year. The number received was 16,080.

The total number processed for 2015/16 so far, which included applications processed before August, was 4.3 per cent up on 25,330 for 2014/15 over the same period last year.

See page 14 for an expert piece on FE loans by Stephen Evans.

Maitlis to host AAG 2016

Registration for the second annual apprenticeships conference has opened — and host next year will be BBC broadcaster and journalist Emily Maitlis.

More than 800 delegates are expected and it will be held in the prestigious surrounds of Birmingham's ICC, in March.

FE Week managing director Shane Mann said: "Following the tremendous success of AAC 2015, we have had to relocate from London's QEII Conference Centre and upgrade to the ICC, which will allow to welcome hundreds more delegates."

VISIT FEWEEKAAC2016.CO.UK FOR MORE.

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NEWS

Clampdown on apprenticeship misuse 'affects very few', says AELP

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A much-hyped government clampdown on "misuse" of the apprenticeship term will only affect a "very few" cases, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has warned.

It was a view echoed by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), which urged the government to instead "focus on driving up the quality of apprenticeships".

New rules contained in the Enterprise Bill will stop providers using the apprenticeship name for courses that do not meet the same criteria laid down for government-funded apprenticeships — such as a 12-month minimum duration.

However, employers running 'in-house' apprenticeships will continue to be allowed to ignore the rules, despite the government having been urged to rethink its plans in a three-week consultation that ended on August 19.

And Stewart Segal (pictured), AELP chief executive, told of the limited effect the new rules will have — echoing the government's own impact assessment of the new rules, which said there was "little evidence to suggest that the existing scale of misuse of the term 'apprenticeship' is widespread".

Mr Segal said: "We support initiatives to improve the quality of the apprenticeship programme but we do not believe that the



misuse of the term is a major issue.

"The exemption of employers from the Bill may cause some confusion, so we have recommended that the apprenticeship brand developed by the government is protected rather than the general term which can now be used by employers."

And the CBI response said: "We have seen little evidence that the terms "apprenticeship" or "apprentice" are being misused — and have received no feedback from businesses that this is a genuine cause for concern.

"Legislation should always be a last resort and, without a solid evidence base, we do not believe that the case for new legislation has been made. Instead, government should focus on driving up the quality of apprenticeships and ensure that the reforms are working."

The Association of Colleges (AoC) meanwhile, told the government, in its response, that it would "not support" moves to let employers who run in-house, non-statutory, apprenticeships use the proposed large employer levy or any other "government

funding to support this training".

"It would be useful if Government could set out what it will do if non-statutory employer programmes, badged as 'apprenticeships', appear to be having a detrimental impact on the brand," it added.

The government is introducing the new rules as part of its commitment to create 3m new apprenticeships in this Parliament. It is hoping to stop unfunded providers who ignore official apprenticeship rules, such as the minimum duration, benefitting from the increased promotion of the programme. It is also hoping to stop the brand being "diluted" and having a negative impact on growth of statutory apprenticeships.

However, its response to the consultation was published on Monday, September 21, and it revealed how calls to make employers also subject to the new rules — which carry the threat of a Magistrates Court appearance — had been rejected.

"While the government has considered expanding this measure to employers it feels that the potential costs of doing so would outweigh the benefits," it said in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills response document.

"There are many employers that offer high-quality apprenticeships of their own and we do not want to prohibit this practice, nor do we want to put in place any measures that could be perceived as burdensome or put off employers from offering apprenticeships."

TARGETS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICES

Government plans to introduce a target for the number of apprentices in public sector bodies, to help it meet its goal to deliver 3m new apprenticeships by 2020.

The target is one of the measures included in the Enterprise Bill, along with proposals to prevent misuse of the term 'apprenticeship'.

The bill contains measures to "provide a power for the Secretary of State to set targets for public sector bodies in relation to the number of apprentices they employ in England" and to "require the public to have due regard to any targets set on them and to report annually on progress against meeting those targets".

These measures are intended to apply to most public sector bodies with more than 250 employees. There is no detail yet of what the targets will be.

To protect the term 'apprenticeship' from misuse, the bill includes a measure to "create an offence for a person, in the course of business, to provide or offer a course or training as an apprenticeship if it is not a statutory apprenticeship" and to exclude employers by ensuring they "cannot commit the offence in relation to their employees".

The maximum intended penalty for committing the offence is a fine.

The Enterprise Bill was introduced by Business Secretary Sajid Javid in May. It is due to have its second reading in the House of Lords on October 12.

Later starts to continue at college after pilot success

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A North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) lie-in pilot has won longer-term approval after bosses saw a rise in 16 to 18 attendance rates.

The Epsom college scrapped 9am starts for learners last September, as revealed by *FE Week*, in a trial responding to research by the National Sleep Foundation and the University of Minnesota.

The researchers claimed that exam results would improve if providers respected learners' "circadian rhythms" by starting later in the day.

A spokesperson has confirmed to *FE Week* that Nescot, which had around 8,800 learners last academic year, will be broadly keeping the 10am starts for 2015/16, as "early indications" showed that "it has been a success."

She said the experiment had worked because attendance rates for 16 to 18-year-olds improved from 88 per cent in 2013/14 to 89 per cent last academic year.

The learner retention rate for the same age group also increased from 90 per cent in 2013/14 to 91 per cent in 2014/15, she added.

She said that while later starts were continuing for most lessons, staff "have the



Cartoon from *FE Week* edition 103, dated May 19, 2014

flexibility to start earlier if they feel it would benefit their students".

"The timetable also gives students the flexibility and responsibility to use the 9am to 10am slot in a way that benefits them, whether that's studying in the Learning Resources Centre, or getting extra support from teaching and learning staff," she added.

The spokesperson said that "teaching and support staff are in at 9am" and can carry out development training, team meetings and cross-college briefings before most lessons start an hour later.

A source at the college last year had raised concern at the time that the later starts could undermine learner motivation and was "not overly popular with the staff, particularly as it's a vocational college and there's the idea of being self-motivated".

Has your college adopted a 10am earliest starts policy, or maybe even later? If so, email paul.offord@feweek.co.uk with your experiences.

Job cuts consultations at over 50 colleges

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The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) has issued a list of more than 50 colleges that have looked to shed jobs in the last year as it warned of the effect "savage and unrelenting government cuts" were having on the sector.

Dr Mary Bousted (pictured), ATL general secretary, said that budget cuts over the last five years had "led to colleges continually restructuring, merging and rationalising curriculum provision".

It comes with the ATL having produced a list of 52 colleges from across England that have launched job cuts consultations, placing the employment of nearly 3,000 college staff at risk.

Dr Bousted said: "Savage and unrelenting Government cuts to the FE sector over the last five years have led to college's continually restructuring, merging and rationalising curriculum provision.

"The inevitable redundancies are having a devastating effect on hundreds of thousands of young people, who rely on FE colleges, as well as those adults who need to develop their skills or be retrained to stay in work."

Providers were told in July that they would be hit with a 3.9 per cent cut to the adult skills budget combined with the 24 per cent cut announced earlier this year.

And ATL has reported that around 400,000

young people will lose out as a result of the cuts.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) meanwhile has said that 190,000 adult skills courses could be lost within the next year as a result of spending cuts with health, public services and care being the hardest hit.

Dr Bousted said: "FE is vital to developing the skilled workforce necessary for increased productivity and economic growth, but over 440 redundancies are being announced at colleges in Birmingham alone.

"The government must take responsibility for the ludicrous situation where colleges are making their staff redundant when they are the very people who have the knowledge and expertise to develop the skills which businesses are currently crying out for."

The warning comes with University College Union (UCU) member lecturers in FE currently voting on whether to accept the AoC's refusal to recommend a pay rise.

A UCU spokesperson said voting closes on at Thursday, October 15.

Other unions have been involved in the talks, but have not put the AoC offer to a vote of members.

Marc Whitworth, director of employment policy and services at the AoC, said: "There is a willingness from the employers' side to work together to protect the prospects of FE, its skilled workforce and the students it serves."



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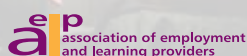
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'It's a different way of thinking about how we regulate'

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) was unveiled by Ofqual last week and was designed to be more descriptive and less prescriptive than its predecessor, the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Jude Burke spoke to Jeremy Benson, Ofqual executive director for vocational qualifications, to find out more about the new framework and what it means.

How would you explain the new approach to regulating vocational qualifications?

Awarding organisation (AO) accountability is at the heart of how we regulate. Effectively, our approach now is asking a simple question, which is, are these qualifications any good? And then asking the AOs to show us how they know that they're good. That's really what it boils down to. Obviously there's a lot of detail on top of that. But it's a different way of thinking about the way we regulate.

How confident can Ofqual be that the new conditions that you've created for the RQF do not become bureaucratic, and that the new framework will not become as restricting as the QCF was?

At the moment I'm pretty confident. The requirements we're setting are outcome focused, they say what awarding organisations should do. They don't prescribe in detail how they should try and do them.

What will the move to the RQF mean for a college principal or the managing director of an independent learning provider? How will it affect them, their staff and their organisation?

In the short-term, it shouldn't need to affect them very much, because we're not requiring every qualification to change. What will happen over time is two things. Firstly, the way that qualifications are described and explained will become clearer. Part of our role as the qualifications regulator is to help people understand and choose qualifications, and to find out information about them, and gradually that will improve.

The other thing that will change over time is that some of the detailed design of the qualifications will perhaps become a bit more flexible and will be more different.

But really I would encourage principals and other people in FE not to worry as much about the qualifications framework as they have in the past.

Almost every qualification has QCF attached as a suffix – does that have to be removed?

From October 1, next week, all new qualifications shouldn't have QCF in the title because QCF no longer means anything. For existing qualifications that have QCF in the title, we will expect that to have been removed by the end of 2017. We're giving the awarding organisations quite a long transition period to



Main: Jeremy Benson and, left, Ofqual documentation on the shift to the RQF which, it says, is "like a bookcase in a library, with qualifications indexed by their 'level' and 'size'" Visit feweek.co.uk for a link to the documentation

shift the current qualifications over to the new world where they will no longer be talking about the QCF.

Qualifications that are used as part of apprenticeships may have been developed jointly with other AOs and Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) — so who will do the Total Qualification Time (TQT) work? Will it be a lead AO or will the group have to reconvene?

This comes back to the first point I made, which is that every AO is accountable and responsible for its own qualifications. So regardless of how a qualification was developed – whether an AO was working with others or with SSCs – if an AO wants to award a qualification it has to be accountable for it, therefore it has to be accountable for the TQT and the Guided-Learning Hour values as well.

And, slightly off the RQF/QCF topic,

what place does Ofqual have in the new Trailblazer apprenticeship standards? If the implication of reform of apprenticeships is to put them in the hands of employers, does Ofqual have a role in this? What action are you intending to take?

We've been talking to the apprenticeships unit in government for many years about the reforms and discussing the issues around assessment, both the individual qualifications and the end-point assessments, and our advice has been pretty consistent. The new apprenticeships need good valid assessment to underpin them, and that's what we've said to government and to Trailblazers. And interestingly, when we talk to employers, they agree as well that the assessments need to be good, they need to be valid. Now there's various different ways of achieving that and making sure the assessments are quality-assured and well-designed. We have said that we will be happy to regulate the end-point assessments as qualifications if that's what the Trailblazers want us to do. There are other alternatives available and we are obviously going to be interested to see what decisions

government makes over the next few weeks and months.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has again asked the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) to review Functional Skills (FS). Do you welcome this?

Yes we do. We were delighted because we worked well with the ETF on the review that they published earlier this year. So our role is to look at qualifications, and to make sure qualifications are valid and well-assessed. What we're not responsible for is thinking about what should be assessed, what the curriculum should be. So we really need someone else, some other organisation in the system, for any particular qualification to work out what the curriculum should be. Although we owned the way that the current FS qualifications are described, we don't own the curriculum decisions that feed into that.

Visit feweek.co.uk for more of the Q&A and see page 12 for an expert piece on the new framework by Gemma Gathercole

FE WEEK COMMENT

EFA gets a grade D

The English and maths condition of funding was introduced a year after Study Programmes began.

So school sixth forms, colleges and independent learning providers had time to prepare.

Despite this, we estimate in 2014/15 there were 35,000 learners worth £150m that should have been studying English and/or maths, and weren't.

The EFA's softening of the condition represents an inevitable consequence of so many providers failing to implement the rule.

And it is a condition which only gets tougher, as providers have to stick with the GCSE option this year if learners have a grade D.

This is a failure on the part of the EFA to enforce its own policy, as well a minority of providers that have let their learners down.

More broadly, the climbdown is a blow to fairness and the principle of providers being treated equally.

It also adds yet more complexity to the funding allocations process.

For these reasons the EFA gets a policy implementation grade D, making a retake inevitable.

Chris Henwood

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Action plea for BIS digital skills inquiry

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The purpose of a new government inquiry that will look into how the FE sector contributes to the development of digital skills has come in for questioning from a leading learning tech figure.

Toshiba education adviser Bob Harrison (pictured below), who contributed to the FE Learning Technology Action Group (Feltag) report, published in March last year, said "positive action" was needed "not another report," after the House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee announced its new probe.

The committee, chaired by Hartlepool's Labour MP Iain Wright (pictured front), announced its inquiry into the digital economy on Monday, September 21.

But Mr Harrison said: "How many investigations, select committees and reports do we need before we stop talking about the need for digital skills in the workforce and something actually happens?"

"The reforms to the ICT national curriculum and its emphasis on computer science knowledge rather than IT and digital skills falls far short of what the UK economy needs from the workforce.

"Furthermore the FE sector is being devastated by deep cuts at a time when it is struggling to keep up with the demands of a digital future.

"The government response to the House of Lords report on digital skills was spot on when it said: 'Training and education must keep pace with the ever-changing technological landscape, with the right skills and infrastructure to underpin digital transformation' — but we need positive action not another report."

The new inquiry will follow six strands of investigation, including the development of digital skills.

It will also ask, among other things what the major barriers to UK business success in the digital economy are and what steps the government could take to help businesses to overcome these barriers.

And Mr Wright told *FE Week* that he was sensitive to the need for action identified by Mr Harrison.

"I really want to push the fact that something needs doing in this sector and make sure that this inquiry will tackle the key issues with the digital skills sector," said Mr Wright.

"I want to ask the government

what they will be doing and ask if they believe the tech sector is doing enough.

"I want people involved in FE to get involved with this inquiry and send submissions to help new businesses adapt."

Evidence sessions are yet to be announced, as are witnesses, but Mr Wright said he also wanted to look at the role of the government and its record in helping to produce a skilled workforce for the digital sector.

"I want to really push the government to find out what they will do to make sure apprentices and FE students have the skills to support businesses in the digital economy," he said.

He added: "I have a broad ambition to look at the FE and skills sector in detail in the upcoming evidence sessions.

"Apprenticeships are of key importance in the digital skills sector of FE and we want to know how traditional businesses are continuing and progressing in this new digital economy.

"Newly qualified plumbers, for instance, should be able to engage with their local FE provider and be able to expand their business on forms of social media in a flexible and fast changing way."

The closing date for submissions to the BIS digital economy inquiry is Thursday, October 29. Visit feweek.co.uk for more, including a link to send submissions into the committee.



COMMENTS

Sector leaders spell out key issues for Shadow Business Secretary

I recall similar sector briefings in early part of last parliament when the opposition was in listening mode only to find their big idea prior to the election was to abolish the Level 2 apprenticeship, hopefully lessons learnt on that score this time around.

Terry Fennell

Gordon Marsden to carry FE flag for Labour again as new Shadow Skills Minister

This is very good news indeed. To have two experienced people who really know the Skills world very well, who are known to be perceptive

and progressive on the Skills agendas will ensure that FE and its potential will be fairly championed.

Ruth Silver

Apprentice numbers 'a disaster', says Ofsted's Sir Michael Wilshaw

The only way young people will ever get decent Advice and Guidance from schools is if it is made compulsory by government and if it becomes and Limiting Grade in Ofsted. If anyone thinks it will change any other way then dream on. It's not that schools are necessarily misleading their 16 and 17 year olds, it's more that they are not making it clear that students are at liberty to leave when

they're 16 and go elsewhere. It's not just about Destination Data, it's about giving students the information that they are entitled to.

Nelly Bates

Reflections on a Trailblazer journey

Well done on getting a qualification included — hair and beauty is going through the same policy battle with BIS. The Trailblazer process has been tortuous, time consuming and expensive as small business owners fall by the wayside because the whole process has been so drawn out — but the prospect of raising standards keeps us going.

Hilary Hall

TOP APPRENTICESHIP TERM 'CLAMPDOWN' TWEETS

@OldDitch
If firms do nothing wrong they should have nothing to fear from the law

@John_Field
So expect more damaging stories

@CEIAG4All
so much for getting though on quality!
#threemillion

@HollyTonge1
Fake #Apprenticeships - crackdown planned!
What a dreadful practice

@ChantalHughes2
Fake apprenticeships - crackdown planned.
My fear has always been the risk of young people being exploited #tightenup



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'Not only a car crash, but a multiple pile-up

The 2015 *FE Week* and Policy Consortium survey was published on the brink of a general election.

Six months on and the new government has introduced a flood of reforms affecting the FE and skills sector.

But far from showing improvement, this follow-up survey, in which the Policy Consortium revisited 32 of the initial survey respondents, paints a picture of ever-growing uncertainty amid conflicting priorities.

Jude Burke looks at the survey revisit results in detail.

Funding

Funding came out as the biggest issue facing the sector in our survey earlier this year — and six months on, things are only getting worse.

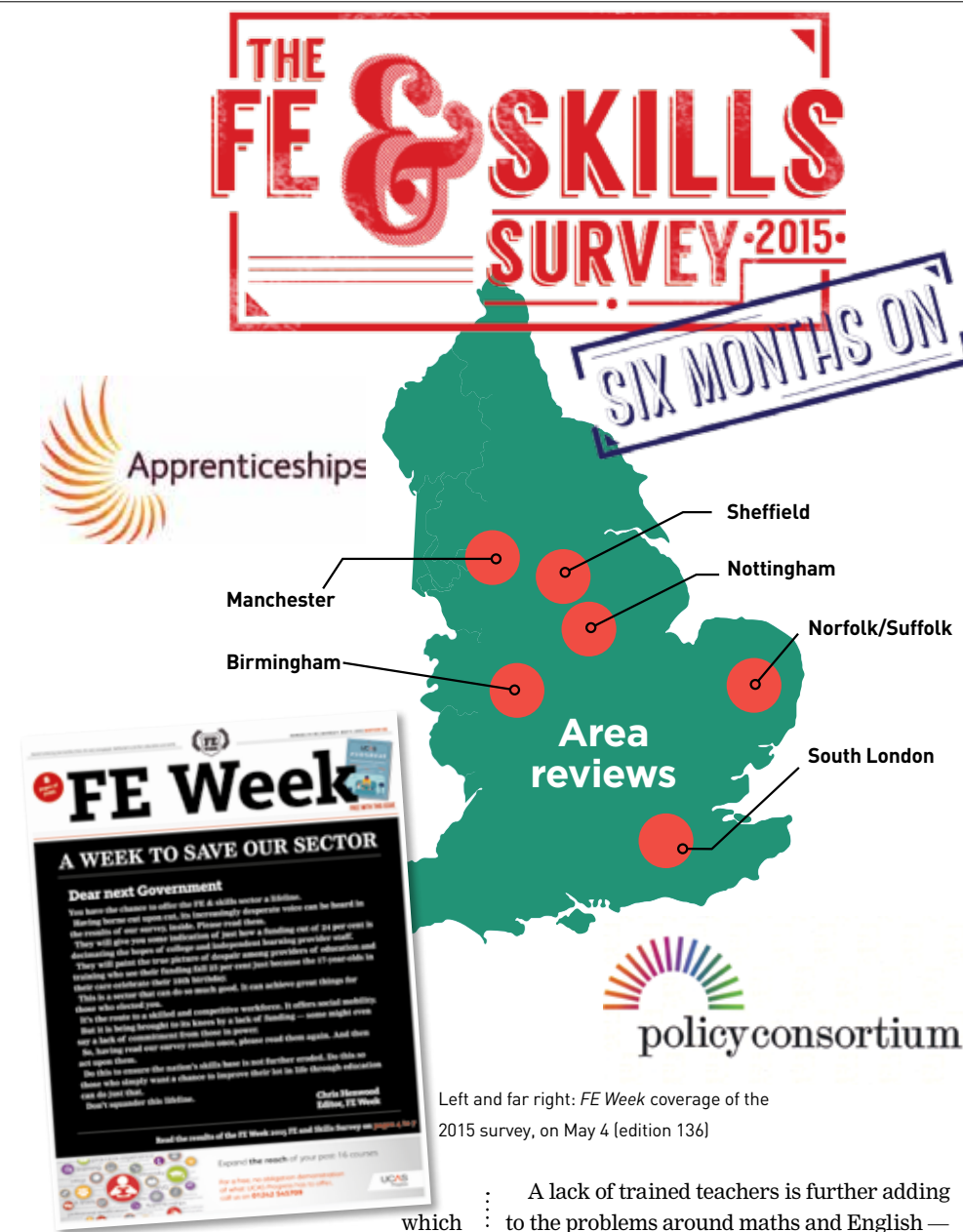
At the time of the original survey, the sector was dealing with the impact of 24 per cent funding cuts. Further cuts to spending on adult basic skills, announced in July, are now pushing colleges over the brink. One large college said the most recent cut had an immediate impact of £160,000. Other colleges talked of “seven-figure deficits”.

Overall, what emerged from the interviews was a sense that the government’s funding strategy is rushed, austerity-driven and focused on diverting cash to protected school budgets at the expense of the FE and skills sector.

Many of those interviewed for the six-month follow-up could see “not only a car crash, but a multiple pile up” from the unintended consequences of conflicting government funding policies.

Maths and English

Nowhere is this more evident than in the teaching of maths, English and Functional Skills. While some of those interviewed welcomed the increased focus on these areas —



Left and far right: *FE Week* coverage of the 2015 survey, on May 4 (edition 136)

which was attracting learners on to courses “where once we had to drag them” — many said they simply did not have the money to meet demand: “If we sign everyone up, we will run out of money by mid-year”, was one response.

A lack of trained teachers is further adding to the problems around maths and English — and with schools able to offer better pay and conditions than the FE sector, this shortage is only going to continue.

As a result, maths and English were causing “major problems in the sector, stress on staff to deliver and stress on the administration of

it — stressed, demoralised staff” according to one interviewee.

Apprenticeships

Further compounding this stress was a sense that apprenticeships were being made into the only show in town — at the expense, literally, of other vocational training. There was a widely-held view that training related to apprenticeships and traineeships was the only skills-related training that the government felt deserved public funding.

Given this, it’s worrying that many interviewees felt that ministers “still don’t get it” when it comes to apprenticeships.

Lack of clarity over standards and a lack of information for employers were high on the list of concerns — leading to worries that apprentices and trainees were “being sold short”.

There were also questions over the government’s target for 3m apprenticeships, particularly in relation to Trailblazers. Some suggested the push for quantity was undermining the quality of apprenticeships: “There is no quality control at all in the new Trailblazers; they can and are getting away with virtually no training,” according to one interviewee.

While there was support for the large employers’ apprenticeship levy — “if it is well conceived in detail” — the as-yet unresolved issue of funding arrangements for small and medium-sized enterprises was identified as a huge problem.

Uncertainty over the levy is also having an impact on employers, according to some: “Employers are still in the dark about how the levy will work. There’s still too much bureaucracy”.

Even before the question of the levy arose, there were still “far too few” employers coming forward. As a result, providers are cutting corners or breaking the law — such as creating jobs in college admin departments

Sector viewing FE mission as increasingly impossible

IAN NASH

Freelance journalist, partner in Nash & Jones Partnership and member of the Policy Consortium



Further education’s struggle for survival may not be quite on a par with Tom Cruise battling the Syndicate — that network of dastardly operatives out to establish a new world order following the demise of the IMF.

Nevertheless, it looks increasingly like a Mission Impossible to many people in the sector. Well, they do seem to be bearing the brunt of austerity after the near collapse of the world’s banks. And the network of — maybe not quite as sinister — ministers and civil servants certainly wants to see a radically different world order for colleges and other providers.

“Mission impossible” sums up the views of teachers, managers, leaders, directors and governors interviewed in-depth six months

from the Policy Consortium/*FE Week* annual survey. This representative group of 32 from the 700-plus original respondents was asked whether they were more optimistic than around Easter time and prior to the General Election. Had ministers set out a fair and effective reform programme and what impact was envisaged?

The results published this week are disheartening. As one might expect, cash concerns and low staff morale feature prominently — this is austerity after all and it is symptomatic of the wider public sector. That said, there is equally a remarkable sense of determination to make reforms succeed provided they have the wherewithal, freedom from central constraints

and flexibility to respond to local and national need rapidly. And there’s the rub.

What emerges from interviews at every level is concern over inconsistency, the rise in bureaucracy despite repeated ministerial pledges to the contrary and a restrictive target-driven culture focusing almost exclusively on an ill-defined notion of apprenticeships. Such initiatives are being developed piecemeal, on the hoof (and in some cases cutting across each other). There is irritation over the way the latest consultation document specifically equates commitment to training with involvement in apprenticeships, even though this is patently inappropriate for many learners.

There is incoherence and contradiction from government around pressing issues such as the wind down of adult education and the end of mandated English for Speakers of Other Languages (Esol), negating wider social cohesion policy. A lack of consultation over apprenticeships means employers, especially

small to medium-sized enterprises, will have little real ownership. Nor are reforms likely to increase employer confidence in the sector. Many people in the interviews reported a lack of sufficient and adequately qualified teachers to fulfil maths and English policy. And, most of all, there can be no coherence in conducting area reviews while schools can stand outside.

Were this just about FE then that would be bad enough. But the key threats are to economic revival through lack of skills for work and social cohesion through reducing services to people who are most in need. So, the FE practitioners say, they are teaching maths without maths teachers, selling loans to a public that rejects them and trying to integrate communities while ESOL is cut, etc.

To paraphrase the majority of people interviewed, what they are saying is ‘give us the right vehicle or change the destination because we can’t get where you want like this’.

'the view from the sector, six months on

for business studies-related apprenticeships. Some private training providers were reported as taking on apprentices without an associated employer.

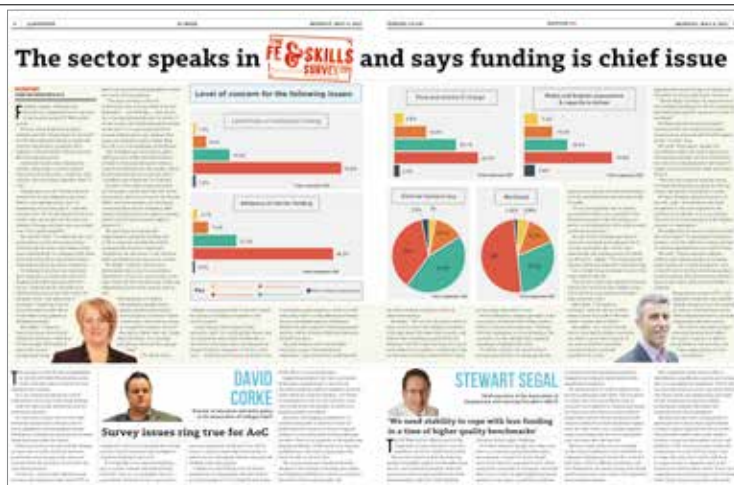
Adult learning and skills

There was widespread concern over the impact of the government's focus on apprenticeships on the rest of the FE sector. As one person said: "FE is being destroyed for apprenticeships, which are not the answer for those who need vocational preparation and for whom opportunities are being curtailed."

One area that's been particularly badly hit has been adult learning and skills. The most recent cuts, announced in July, were described as "stultifying" by one respondent: "How can colleges — supposed to be businesses — plan when conditions of funding change? It threatens delivery and threatens staff morale."

The impact of these cuts on learners is also alarming. Whether intentionally or not, those who have been worst affected so far have been the ones who need the most support — the most deprived and least likely to have access to other resources or loans.

Return-to-learn programmes have been among those hit by the "swathe of cuts to adult basic skills" since the election, despite the retention of the safeguarded £210m adult and community learning fund. The number



of return-to-learn adults — those who "used to progress from around Entry L3 to L2 and subsequently find work" — has dropped sharply.

Area reviews

The view on area reviews was unanimous: to be successful, they must include all education and providers, not just colleges.

Making it optional for other providers to take part is seen as thinly disguised central government control that "side-steps the pressing issue of the uneven playing field between schools and colleges".

There was also concern over the fate of specialist colleges. Despite government proposals for more specialist colleges, there is a fear that existing small specialist colleges will be swallowed up in the area reviews. In

the words of one interviewee, there will be "collateral damage, unintended and lamented by all".

It was also felt that the area reviews were "skewed to mergers" based on misinformation about the effectiveness of such reforms. As one person said: "We know larger colleges do not always result in better quality or performance, or greater financial stability."

Conclusion

There was a clear sense from everyone in the follow-up survey that government reforms will have unintended and damaging consequences. These reforms appeared to be based on little or no evidence, it was viewed — if impact assessments had been carried out, they hadn't been communicated to the people interviewed.

Despite the determination of everyone to provide a professional and effective service, the deep cuts and contradictory policy demands will inevitably hit learners — with the most disadvantaged being the worst affected, it warned.

Provision to school leavers who — through no fault of their own — fail and need the help of FE will almost certainly deteriorate, it said.

As one person said: "Cuts affect 50 per cent of young people. If this were done to the NHS there would be marching in the streets".

OTHER KEY ISSUES

- Loans are seemingly the only option for many post-19 learners — but how do you sell them to people who don't want them?
- Localism — balancing out the desire for more local control against the pressure for aggressive competition at the cost of quality
- The impact of the end of mandatory English for Speakers of Other Languages (Esol) funding on social integration
- Ofsted reforms: "Does teaching and learning change so much every couple of years that Ofsted must constantly revise the way they evaluate it?"

Responding to our survey, a spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, said: "The government welcomes input from the sector, and the new Area Reviews of post-16 education are involving local FE providers, communities and stakeholders in discussions."

Read the full Policy Consortium report on its interviews of 2015 survey respondents six months on at www.fewweek.co.uk

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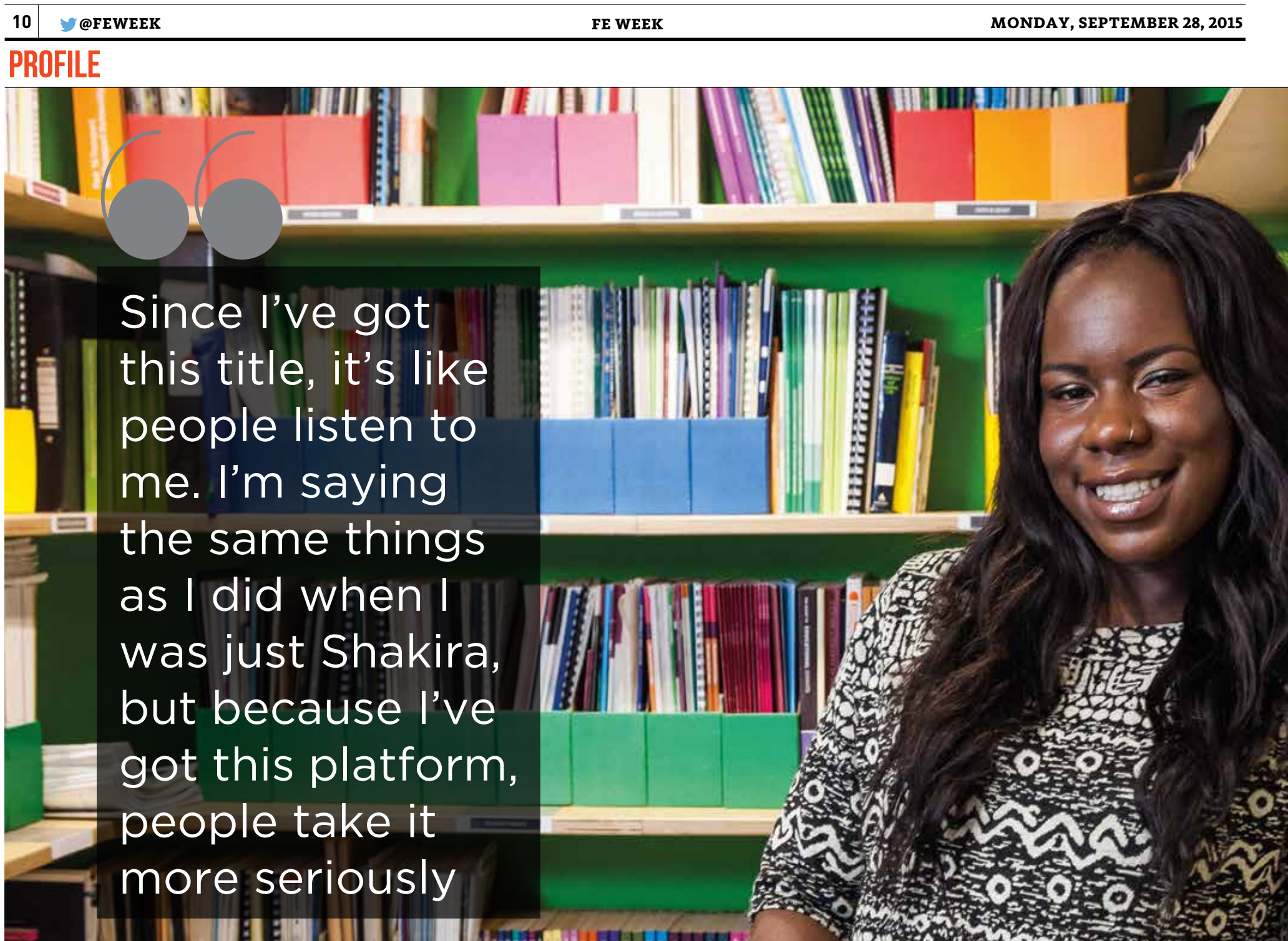
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PROFILE



Since I've got this title, it's like people listen to me. I'm saying the same things as I did when I was just Shakira, but because I've got this platform, people take it more seriously

BRUSHING UP ON NATIONAL PO

BY REBECCA COONEY
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Shakira Martin's first brush with national politics came as something of a surprise — in fact, she didn't even know it had happened.

In March last year, Martin was a newly-elected member of the National Union of Students' FE and society and citizenship zone policy committees attending a work summit.

"There was a panel and it was the normal panel — white men in suits, maybe the occasional woman — so I put up my hand and I asked this man a question," says Martin, the surprise victor in April's NUS vice president for FE election.

"I said something about 'How are you going to build a representation of colleges?' or something, and the guy, he replied, but he really didn't answer the question.

"But then afterwards I started getting phone calls and texts saying: 'Well done, Shakira!' and I didn't understand why — I just asked a man a question."

The man, it turned out, was then-Business Secretary Dr Vince Cable.

Martin only discovered this when she

happened to mention the incident during a phone call to her cousin on the bus home — and when she did, she wasn't impressed.

"If I knew he was that person he wouldn't have got away with answering the question like that," she says, tartly.

The past couple of years have been a steep learning curve for Martin, she admits.

"At that time I wasn't NUS-shaped. I was just going in raw," she says.

"Now it's more difficult — since I've got this title, it's like people listen to me. I'm saying the same things as I did when I was just Shakira, but because I've got this platform, people take it more seriously.

"But on the other hand, now I know how to talk to my members and my audience, I phrase things differently now — but I don't want to lose the authenticity of what I'm saying."

When Martin, aged 27, was elected to the vice president role in April, the former Lewisham Southwark College student vowed to put FE centrestage in the NUS — where discussion can be dominated by higher education — and her experience of education is one many in the sector will recognise.

"I hated school," she says.

"Well, I loved school when I got into Year 7, but then when I got to Year 8 there were barriers preventing me from reaching my full potential, as I wasn't in the same position as some of my peers."

Martin grew up in Lewisham, a borough with one of the highest child poverty rates in London, with mum Juliet.

"Growing up in a single parent family and being on benefits, it just makes things much more difficult," she says.

"I never used to bring home those letters to my mum, like the trips to France and stuff like that, because I wouldn't want to put them in a tough position."

As a result, Martin began skipping school and was "disruptive" when she was there.

"I didn't know why I was there, it wasn't relevant," she says.

A fortnight after her 16th birthday, Martin moved out into shared council accommodation.

Shortly afterwards, she left school with one GCSE — a B in RE — and moved to the now closed Crossways Academy sixth form to do a business studies course.

"I went there because I was just following friends," she says.

"I didn't have any aspirations or any end goal, and I dropped out of that course in the first six to 12 weeks.

"My excuse at the time was, 'It's winter' — you know when you wake up and it's the same moon that you went to bed with? I was like, 'No, I'm not doing this'."

Next, Martin enrolled at Bromley College for a legal secretary course, following in the footsteps of an aunt she'd "always looked up to".

"I thought I liked it but then one week turned into one month and then you're late, and winter comes and the weather, and the same thing happened again."

For each of the next two years, Martin enrolled on a social science at Morley College, but once again, winter came and Martin stayed in bed.

"I didn't understand why I was dropping out of so many courses because I thought I had an interest in it," she says.

However, while this was going on, Martin got her first paid job at a doctor's surgery in Camberwell.

"I really enjoyed it," she says. "I loved the community spirit of it, the types of people, the challenge of working within a diverse



It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

Who Moved My Cheese by Dr Spencer Johnson. I'm not really a big reader, to be honest, but what I did find about the book and it was really easy to read. It was quite descriptive, so you could imagine it yourself. I like that you can read it again and again and get something different from it each time. It's about anticipating change

What do you do to switch off from work?

I think just chill with my family and friends and watch *The Housewives of Alabama*

What's your pet hate?

People that tell lies. I hate lies. Also, my family is from Jamaica and there's a saying there — Duppy know who fi frighten — which means people take advantage of the people that they think that they can do.

So at certain times in my life, or in situations that have arisen, it kind of gets me more agitated, because I'm like: 'You're only doing that because you think you can get away with it.' And that's a pet hate

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

My grandma. Her name was Cochita. I would ask her a load of questions I didn't get to ask her when she was alive — I was 10 when she died, so I was still young. I'd like to get some history and for her to see who I am now

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to dance for Destiny's Child. And then I realised there was no money in it, and then they broke up. So I used to like dancing



From left: Shakira Martin with daughters Kiara, aged two, and Kai'shay, four

Shakira Martin speaking at the NUS conference in April



Shakira Martin at an anti-cuts march in central London in May

Shakira Martin on a demonstration outside Lewisham Southwark College in July



range of people within the NHS."

Martin decided she wanted to be a practice manager, but was astounded when one of the doctors told her she could make it — in 20 or 30 years.

"I was thinking, I could be a doctor three times over and you're telling me I could be a practice manager in 30 years?" she says.

"I wasn't disheartened, in fact, I thought, 'let me tell you, I'll get there in five'."

"So it's kind of like a push because I'm a bit cocky like that."

So, following the birth of her first daughter, Kai'shay, Martin headed back to college, this time at Lewisham Southwark to study a level three leadership and management course, and vowed to see it through — which she did, winning student of the year award for the course.

"It all started to make sense for me," she says.

"I felt like I was being fed, like I was going home full and it was relevant."

A job in a development and learning consultancy led to more courses — a 12-week Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector course, which Martin completed despite giving birth to her second daughter,

Kiara, two days later, followed by a level five diploma in education and teaching.

One day at college Martin noticed a poster for the election of the student union women's officer.

"I had done a few courses about confidence and communication, those type of things, and I was feeling really empowered," she says.

"And I realised that, as much as I was a victim I was also a survivor in my own right."

"I wanted to go out and empower other women to understand the importance of knowing their value and their worth and stuff like that."

"So when I saw the poster — I didn't know what student union was, I just saw 'women's officer' and I was like: 'Right, that's what I want to do'."

She won the position and the following year she won the presidency of the college union and was elected into the zones, where she had her encounter with Dr Cable.

Her move into politics was, she believes, therefore "accidental really".

"I've never been political, but I've gone from watching Jeremy Kyle to BBC Parliament and finding it interesting — I'm like, 'whoa, I've changed'," she explains.

But she says, her politics remain shaped by her upbringing in what she only semi-jokingly calls "the ghetto".

"So for me, in my role, I'm in a national position and I have the ears of people, decision-makers and stuff like that, but I think it's important for me to let people know within the sector that I'm adaptable," she says.

"So when things go down, I'm ready to be at the front of the line, shouting, protesting, occupying, doing whatever I need to do, but I can also articulate myself around a board table."

And it's this active view of politics which she brings to her plans to fight for FE.

"Everyone is talking about FE at the moment — but don't do it because it sounds good because your actions aren't going to show," she says.

"FE is a very bespoke institution where the diversity and the experience and the negative and positive things that the students bring need to be understood by the decision-makers. Because if it's not relevant to the people what's the point in us wasting time, resources and money?"

Within the NUS, she says, the lack of focus

on the 4.1m of the 7m members who are in FE is "frustrating, and almost insulting" she says.

"My overall big piece of work that I want to do is to build student unions within FE colleges. I believe that's what got me involved, and it allowed me to link my personal and social issues and realise how policy is important," explains Martin.

"So I want to develop student unions across the FE sector, but also in sixth forms and apprenticeships."

This work within the NUS, she hopes will lead to "a domino effect of getting FE recognised in society".

"It's about general conversations that people have. I want secondary school and Year 11 students to be excited about going to college and not going because they got a U," she says.

"So it's one thing changing policy, which mandates organisations to work on it, but it's another thing changing a mindset — and it's not until a mindset is changed, that the policy will."

"People like me don't normally get this type of opportunity so I am going to do what I can to save FE."

LITICS

EXPERTS



THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Graham Taylor is principal and chief executive at New College Swindon. He has more than 25 years' experience in further and higher education across six colleges and writes exclusively for *FE Week* on the last Monday of every month.

There's understandable angst in FE colleges about the area reviews. It's an issue that's been playing on my mind and so I've tried to get down some of the main points about these that are bugging me.

Government says that the 'post-16 education sector is critical to our strategy of raising productivity and economic growth'. Yes, everyone says they love FE — but no one wants to pay for it.

Schools are safe (at least in cash terms) and higher education has the benefit of uncapped loans. However, the imminent Spending Review will signal less public money and more cuts.

There are 1,200 schools in England with fewer than 100 learners in each. A review of these should come first for value for money with average class sizes that would be unaffordable in colleges

Meanwhile, Scotland has gone from 37 to 20 colleges saving (allegedly) £50m through a 9 per cent staffing cut.

And so we hear there is 'significant scope for greater efficiency in the sector' — really? Overall, the sector makes 1 per cent profit. That's a miracle given the cuts since 2008.

It's therefore clear that the number of colleges in financial difficulties will increase unless things are sorted quickly. And that's tough. Sacking people is no fun and the other option is to be 'rationalised' by someone else.

There are 1,232 providers, of which 341 are colleges making up just 28 per cent and 48 per cent of funding — 45 per cent of 16 to 18 and 53 per cent of Skills Funding Agency funding.

It's clear therefore that area reviews must include all post-16 providers — including school sixth forms and independent

learning providers.

But does 'area' even make sense? Travel to learn and work patterns do not easily align with area reviews. Many colleges have regional or national coverage across local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) working where the business is. Using geographical boundaries makes little sense for modern, forward-thinking colleges.

Area reviews won't reflect modern delivery systems — borderless e-learning and globalisation in education. Digital is transformational.

And analysing supply and demand for skills and training is difficult and out of date by time of publication. It might just work for 16 to 18s but adult markets are complex and dynamic; trying to plan them is nigh on impossible.

There is however over-supply in the 16 to 18 market and the government has allowed too many new school sixth forms, free schools, private trainers, etc.

There are, for example, 1,200 schools in England with fewer than 100 learners in each. A review of these should come first for value for money with average class sizes that would be unaffordable in colleges.

Government wants "fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers" — but there's no guarantee that bigger means better, either in effectiveness or efficiency. It's how an entity is managed and responds to markets that counts. Indeed, there's little correlation between size and financial performance — some big 'uns are running big deficits.

Colleges and other providers should always work together where it makes sense to (it was ever thus), but forced merger or federation will only happen if you are in serious financial trouble.

Mergers can make sense but only half of them work — in business and education. Is this evidence that supply-side restructuring improves quality and value for money? Time will tell.

And UK PLC? Localism can be a myopic distraction. We've been here before. Remember how Trade and Enterprise Councils tried to impose dirigiste economic plans. Their impact? No, me neither. FE delivers generic and employability skills which transcend local LEP skills plans.

Keep focussed on learners so they value FE and pay for it. Lobby for uncapped 19+ adult loans for all provision to give us a chance to survive — it's worked for higher education.

Work it out yourselves before you are 'done unto' No expensive consultants telling us what to do. Markets move faster than reports. Be there first.



GEMMA GATHERCOLE

Head of policy — FE and funding, OCR

Meet the new framework, not quite the same as the old framework

Gemma Gathercole outlines her views on the new qualifications framework coming into force next month.

Anyone that works in the awarding sector will understand that for us change is the only constant. I was involved in qualification development during the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), and now we are at the dawn of another new qualifications framework, the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

This is the third qualifications framework I have experienced during my time at OCR and the framework is only one aspect of the qualifications system that is subject to reform. You would be forgiven for thinking that all this framework change matters only to the awarding bodies (and for a large part, I think you'd be right), but the framework does fundamentally affect what we develop and therefore what is delivered in classrooms and work places.

If the new framework gives awarding organisations greater flexibility, it also brings greater emphasis on our responsibilities

I recently gave an update to one of our teams at OCR about what the implications were of replacing the QCF with the RQF. I used a slide containing two pictures; the first was of a person whose arms had been freed from chains that were binding them and the second was a sign that said 'this changes everything' only 'everything' was crossed through and 'nothing' was written over the top. I think the reality of the implications of the RQF is probably somewhere between the two.

The introduction of the RQF provides awarding bodies with greater flexibilities when we are creating qualifications or reviewing and refreshing or replacing existing ones. The QCF relied too heavily on structural regulations that stifled rather than supported innovation.

The RQF, created to be a descriptive framework, allows us to design and develop qualifications in ways that meet the identified purpose of the qualification, in a size and structure that supports that purpose.

It also supports Ofqual's role as the regulator of awarding organisations. It is their expectation of us that we have processes, procedures and experience in place to design, develop and award valid and reliable qualifications.

So if the RQF gives awarding organisations greater flexibility, it also brings greater emphasis on our responsibilities. The RQF once again returns us to the role of owners of the content and design of our qualifications and it is a responsibility we welcome.

It is an opportunity that awarding organisations must take full advantage of. We want to be able to directly engage with stakeholders about the content and assessment of our qualifications; we want to ensure that they lead to positive outcomes. The changes to the framework and other associated changes have removed some obstacles that became barriers to this sort of engagement.

Part of the difficulties with the QCF came with the speed of its implementation, which were as much the responsibility of funding drivers as the introduction of the QCF itself. We are particularly glad to see that this is not a step that will be repeated. Although the RQF officially comes into effect on October 1, there is to be a phased transition for existing qualifications with the requirements on removing reference to QCF from qualification titles and ensuring that all qualifications assign a total qualification time value by December 31, 2017.

So what does this mean for those providers offering QCF qualifications? In the short-term, probably very little. Ofqual has confirmed that where qualifications are valid and reliable they can continue. Awarding organisations must keep their qualifications under review to update and withdraw or redevelop when they no longer meet the need they were designed to address. As those reviews happen you may see changes to qualifications that replace them, but these changes will not necessarily be due to the framework, unlike when the QCF was introduced.

Frameworks, like qualification reforms, need time to settle in and embed themselves. So, we and other awarding organisations have again a big responsibility to explain our qualifications and their position in the system in a way that is clear and easily understood by learners, educators and employers. And hopefully, this framework acronym will be the last one we have to explain.

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EXPERTS



SELINA STEWART

Education and Training Foundation (ETF) lead on Prevent

Outline of a helping hand to help prevent terrorism take root in the FE environment

An Association of Teachers and Lecturers survey last week showed how many FE professionals felt unprepared for their new duties to help prevent learners become attracted to terrorism. Selina Stewart explains the help at hand from the ETF.

The new FE Prevent Duty guidance document became statutory on September 21, so the duty is now law.

All FE providers — college, private or adult education — now have a clear legal obligation to prevent extremism in their organisations and to protect their students from exploitation by extremists. The Prevent Duty applies to all providers and to all areas, not just the big cities.

Colleges, independent learning providers (ILPs) and adult and community learning (ACL) providers will all be aware of the high profile of the Prevent Duty. This may be because in the North East of England Liam Lyburd was recently convicted of planning mass murder at his local college or because families and young men and women are travelling abroad to join extremist organisations.

The Prevent Duty applies to all providers and to all areas, not just the big cities

The ETF recognises what a challenge the duty is for providers. To comply with it, one requirement is that board members, staff and volunteers are Prevent Duty-trained. The ETF has developed a suite of four free online training modules, tailored to the needs of leaders and managers, practitioners, support staff and governors or board members. These present the Prevent Duty in various FE contexts with case studies. They cover different groups of staff including facilities staff, librarians and practitioners.

The materials are flexible, accessible, and derived from work with the sector. They deal with the broad scope of the Prevent Duty,

including who needs to comply, policies and procedures. The modules provide an insight into how to implement British values into practice and how to exemplify British values which include compliance with the Equality Act 2010. They give examples of how British values can be integrated into curriculum areas and what is expected in terms of staff, governor, board member and volunteer behaviour.

It is often difficult to get staff, governors or board members together for training sessions, which is why the training is provided free and online.

Staff, governors and board members can use the materials wherever they have access to the internet and at a time which is appropriate for them. This gives a flexibility which many providers appreciate.

The feedback on the modules has been very positive. Angie O'Neil, head of Wirral adult education service, said it was a "great resource – really straightforward, informative and easy to navigate".

"The modules and the resources available are really helpful for all staff to understand what is meant by Prevent and how this understanding can be applied and integrated into wider service practice – in particular teaching, learning and assessment," she told us.

The ETF is aware that it is very time-consuming for colleges, ILPs and ACL providers to collect the certificates for everyone who has completed the modules. Therefore in addition we offer a paid-for service, the Provider Access System (PAS), which allows provider to upload the details of all those who need to take the modules and to monitor their progress.

The cost of the licences varies between £250 and £850 depending on the number of licences organisations need to buy. If you are interested in finding out more about the provider access system then go to www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk.

We are confident that free online training modules and the PAS will make it much easier for colleges, ILPs and ACL providers to Prevent Duty train their staff, volunteers and governors or board members.

We plan to continue to develop Prevent Duty support for the sector in the form of face to face training sessions for Safeguarding officers and a consultancy offer to provider face to face support for providers.



STEPHEN EVANS

Deputy chief executive, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Niace)

Follow key priorities to make FE loans system work

Latest figures show little progress with take-up of 24+ advanced learning loans. Stephen Evans looks at how the system needs to be reformed to encourage more interest.

With our low skills base has long held us back as a nation. We need to do better to improve our economy and boost social inclusion.

Every month, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) releases data on how many people have applied for 24+ advanced learning loans.

And each month we at Niace hope for a dramatic rise in take-up to deliver the skills we need for our future success. So far our hopes have not been realised.

In 2014/15 there were around 60,000 applications for advanced learning loans under an allocation that could have paid for nearly six times that.

For 2015/16, the loans allocation has increased to £498m. We've calculated that this would pay for up to 430,000 eligible learners this year, but would require a seven fold increase.

The latest data showed a welcome increase in loan applications, but not on the scale needed to deliver the government's ambitions.

There were around 16,000 applications in August 2015. Based on past trends, around 100,000 applications would've been needed to put us on track to utilise the full loans allocation for this year. And this really matters.

The shortfall in our skills base and how this holds us back as a nation is well-trodden ground. But it is still startling to look at the facts: of the 34 OECD nations, we are 24th for intermediate skills. These are the sort of skills that loans were designed for.

The result of this relatively poor performance is seen in low productivity, falls in social mobility, and lack of individual opportunity.

And yet it is not enough to say that the current system is not working as well as it should.

November's spending review is likely to bring further cuts to public funding for skills.

Unprotected departments like BIS are expected to face cuts of between 25 per cent and 40 per cent by 2020.

It is therefore highly likely that the loans system will be extended to younger age groups and lower levels of learning.

Part of the rationale is to increase investment by employers and individuals and to put people in greater charge of their learning — as this is not just about cuts.

So there is a philosophy behind the loans system that is important. And it is likely to be a growing feature of our learning and skills system.

People are more likely to invest if they can see how learning will lead on to greater earning and link to their life and career goals

So where do we go from here?

At Niace we think we can, and we must, make the loans system work. We argue there are three key priorities to make this happen.

Firstly, people are more likely to invest if they can see how learning will lead on to greater earning and link to their life and career goals — so we'd like to see an open data revolution, giving providers the tools to prove the value of their learning.

People also often want shorter, tailored provision. But you currently can't get a loan for a module or a unit. We'd like a flexible learning revolution, working in partnership to stimulate demand for learning among individuals and employers.

Also, with regards to devolution, learning and skills will have greater impact where integrated with support for social inclusion and economic growth, in other words matched to employer and local needs.

We, therefore, want to see cities and local areas given power to provide wraparound career advancement support and tailor provision to local need.

Our low skills base has long held us back as a nation. We need to do better to improve our economy and boost social inclusion.

Advanced learning loans will be important in doing this, but they're not working as they need to at present. We must do better and, working together, we can do better.

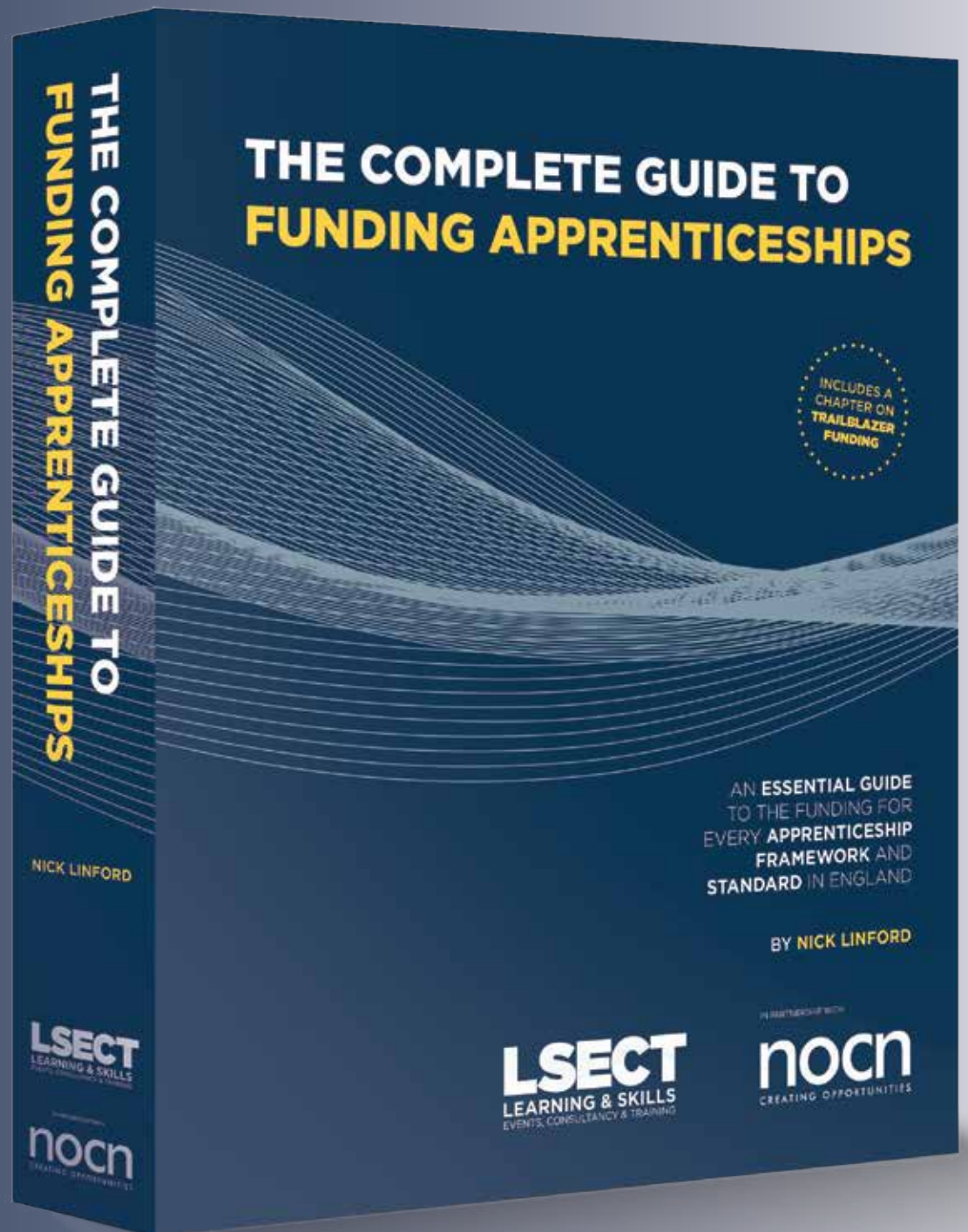
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Danny (left) and Curtis with presenter Davina McCall during production of the One Hundred and Eighty game show

Bullseye with TV star Davina

Two Stockport College learners are at the bullseye centre of Sky 1's new darts-based series One Hundred and Eighty.

Learners Danny O'Donnell, aged 23, and Curtis Reeves, 22, spent three days working with hosts Davina McCall and Freddie Flintoff at Blackpool's Winter Gardens.

They supported rehearsals by acting as competitors, working on the cameras, and aiding the production of the programme.

The opportunity came about after ITV Studios, who produced the series, contacted

Stockport College's darts academy to use their facilities to host auditions for the new game show.

From this, Danny and Curtis, members of the college's Darts Academy and sports enrichment programme, were offered the chance to assist on set.

Curtis said: "For years I have been watching the match play darts at the winter gardens but never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I'd be up there myself, it's been such an amazing experience that I will never forget."

Kathryn lends hair support to friend undergoing chemotherapy



From left: Kathryn braved the shave for close friend Tanya

A Solihull learner braved the chop and had her long locks cut off to show support for a close friend who has just started chemotherapy.

Kathryn Sainsbury-Wilkes, who studies biology, mathematics and photography A-levels at The Sixth Form College, Solihull, took part in Macmillan's 'Brave the Shave' campaign in August.

She did it to raise money for the cancer charity and her friend, 21-year-old Tanya Marie Henderson, who has lost her hair because of chemotherapy treatment.

Kathryn said: "I wanted to show her

[Tanya] support and so decided to do so by shaving all of my hair off while raising money for a charity supporting people with cancer at the same time."

The 17-year-old managed to raise more than £1,000 and has also donated all her hair to the Little Princess Trust, a charity that makes real hair wigs for children who have lost their hair while undergoing chemotherapy.

Visit bravetheshave.org.uk/shavers/kathryn-sainsbury-wilkes/ to donate to Kathryn's 'Brave the Shave' efforts.

Reality check as learners see real poverty in Tanzania

A group of once disengaged young people from Brighton and Hove have returned to college with a positive attitude this year after experiencing a life-changing trip to Tanzania, writes Billy Camden.

Life at home may seem tough for this group of eight City College Brighton and Hove learners, but their eyes were opened up to true poverty during a summer trip to Tanzania.

The group, all on a pathways course aiming to re-engage disadvantaged students back into education by improving their vocational and employability skills, spent a week in the remote village of Wasso, where they renovated rundown school rooms at Lumo English Medium School.

Pathways construction tutor Stephen Wilkins, who led the trip, said: "They

[the Tanzanian's] have very little facilities out there so it was great to try and make their schools fit for purpose and create something that they could feel comfortable in."

The group scrubbed down walls and filled them in, as well as painting and decorating with stencil designs in the classrooms that "really were in desperate need of it".

During the trip, as well as donating their

practical skills, the students played with the local schoolchildren and led a variety of activities for them.

They also experienced a safari, seeing the Ngorongoro Conservation Park, met with Maasai tribe warriors, and enjoyed beading with the Maasai women.

Deaf student Kieron Nugent, aged 17, who studies a level two sport pathways course, had a particularly memorable experience on the trip, befriending a local deaf child, Rogati, and teaching him basic sign language.

"I feel like Rogati and I connected so quickly, I taught him many things he'd never

seen before and it was so touching how delighted he was to learn sign language and express himself," said Kieron.

"I thought that Tanzania was an amazing place and the bonds we made with the local people made it a very

emotional experience."

Faustas Elenbergas, an 18-year-old who recently moved to England from Lithuania and studies a level two motor vehicle pathways course, also found the trip inspirational.

"As well as feeling that we were making a positive difference at the school through all our hard work, seeing the incredible local landscape and wildlife and experiencing such



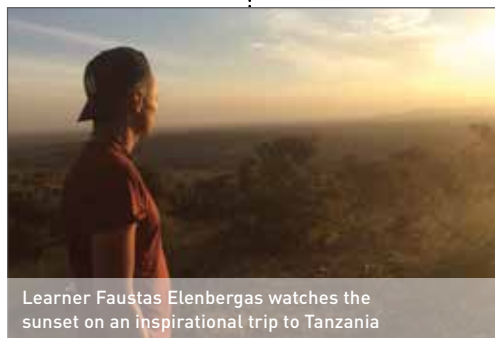
kindness from the Tanzanian people made this a life-changing trip for me which I'll never forget," he said.

The highlight of the trip for most was experiencing the robing of the new chief of the Maasai. The ceremony included the Maasai warriors dressing in their uniforms with painted bodies, with students joining them by chanting and singing.

"It was a real African experience," said Mr Wilkins.

"The students reacted really positively. One or two were maybe a bit overawed but generally speaking they engaged with the local children, joined in with dancing and singing and overall got really involved which was great for their development."

He added: "The trip really does opens the students' eyes, it takes them out of their comfort zone and broadens their horizons. It is a hell of an experience for them."



Learner Faustas Elenbergas watches the sunset on an inspirational trip to Tanzania



Main pic: Deaf student Kieron Nugent with the Tanzanian school children
Group shot: The City College Brighton and Hove group of students with staff and children of the Lumo English Medium school in Wasso

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Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course details of students where applicable

MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Bosses at Lincolnshire's New College Stamford will be hoping for a period of stability after appointing their fourth principal in just over year.

Janet Meenaghan has taken the helm, replacing interim principal John Allen. It comes after Mr Allen's predecessor, April Carrol, was initially put on extended leave in March having been hit with two votes of no confidence from staff.

She in turn had been appointed in July last year following the retirement of Andrew Patience.

However, Ms Meenaghan was upbeat about the college prospects.

"I have only been here a few weeks, but I'm already very proud of what I have seen, both with regards the students and the staff," she said.

"We have exceeded our enrolment figures this year and are financially very sound. I think the future of New College Stamford is very bright."

Ms Meenaghan was formerly deputy principal of Selby College, and prior to that

held various roles at FE colleges in Manchester, Peterborough and Grantham. She was also a lecturer at the University of Humberside and worked at the Learning and Skills Council.

Meanwhile, Plumpton College, in Sussex, has announced that Jeremy Kerswell will take over as principal when Des Lambert retires at the end of the month.

The appointment will take effect from October 5 when Mr Lambert ends his tenure of more than 40 years at the college, including 15 years as principal.

"Plumpton College has an excellent reputation among the rural communities it serves in Sussex and

further afield and among its many partners," said Mr Kerswell.

"That is a tribute to the dedication of the staff and to the wise and steady leadership Des has provided. I am proud to be following in his footsteps."

Mr Kerswell is currently area head at land-based Bridgwater College's Cannington Centre and has previously worked at other land-based

colleges, including Brinsbury and Hadlow.

He has a degree in animal science from Reading University.

In Ipswich, Viv Gillespie has officially taken up her position as principal of Suffolk New College, having held the post at South Worcestershire College.

She joins having taught and managed in FE for more than 25 years and will be filling the void left by Professor Dave Muller's retirement after 16 years as principal.

"I am delighted to join Suffolk New College as principal and I am very much looking forward to the opportunities ahead, working with staff, governors and students, as well as local employers and partners in the community, to lead the College in its next stage of development," she said.

"I have already found that there is a great deal of support for the college from the town and the county."

And Skills Show organisers Find a Future have appointed Dr Neil Bentley as new chief executive.

Dr Bentley will join the education careers advice organisation in Autumn from Outstanding — a start-up not-for-profit membership network for LGBT leaders.

He replaces Ross Maloney who left to join the Scouts as director of operations.

Dr Bentley said: "I am looking forward to building on the great foundation already established to help inspire more young people right across the UK to get off to the best possible start in work and life."



Janet Meenaghan



Jeremy Kerswell



Viv Gillespie



Dr Neil Bentley

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Curriculum Manager Maths - Ref: 15/180

(Salary plus Market Rate Supplement)

Salary per annum £36,933-£38,974

A full or part time Curriculum Manager for Mathematics is required. This is an exciting opportunity for a bright and committed individual to work with mature as well as 16-19 year old learners as part of a large and successful department within a well-respected, progressive Institute. The successful candidate will take responsibility for the Institute's mathematics provision, encompassing the full range from Entry 1 to GCSE, with the majority being at GCSE and L2 Functional Skills. The opportunity exists to develop A-level provision for delivery in September 2016 if desired or to contribute towards the Institute's HE teacher training programme if experience allows. This is an important new position within the Group, involving generous remission from teaching in order to reflect the leadership aspects of the role. Being a large and diverse department, the flexibility is available to make the most of the successful candidate's skills and experience in terms of their teaching commitments.

Curriculum Manager HE Education and Social Science - Ref: 15/178**Curriculum Manager Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities - Ref: 15/182****Curriculum Manager Visual Arts - Ref: 15/181****Salary per annum £34,683 - £36,724**

Our curriculum managers are the engines of the Group and we aim to resource and train them to deliver the outstanding curriculum and quality that our learners and employers deserve.

Quality Manager Flexible and Community Learning - Ref: 15/184**Quality Manager Digital and Creative Industries - Ref: 15/185****Quality Manager Advanced Technologies - Ref 15/186****Salary per annum £38,000**

Our quality team are at the heart of the Group and provide support and challenge across our Higher Education, Further Education and Work Based provision. You will need to be a fully qualified teacher, have experience of curriculum management and have extremely high standards for what all learners can achieve.

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Your technical qualifications (Electrical NVQ3 or equivalent and a teaching qualification) must be supported by proven ability to develop and deliver course material for an Electrical Installations syllabus. **Ref: OST003.**

Electrical Tutor Up to £40,000 depending on experience

You must combine an Electrical NVQ3 or equivalent with a formal teaching qualification and experience of teaching an Electrical Installations syllabus. **Ref: OAT004.**

Electrical Assessor/Tutor Up to £35,000

This role calls for an Electrical NVQ3 or equivalent with relevant teaching, presentation and IT skills. Assessor qualifications (D32, D33 or A1) are also essential. **Ref: OAA004.**

Closing date for all roles: 9th October 2015.

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CIPD Lecturer (Part Time)

Salary: c£17.71 per hour plus £2.14 per hour with respect to holiday pay (unqualified – PTTLS) or c£19.94 per hour plus £2.41 per hour with respect to holiday pay (qualified - DTTLS, Cert Ed, PGCE) dependent upon qualifications and experience plus excellent benefits.

Hours/weeks: 3 hours per week (Tuesday evenings 6.00pm to 9.00pm) plus some Saturday workshops (at least 3 or 4 a year), 52 weeks per year.

Mechanical Engineering Lecturer (Part Time)

Salary: c£17.71 per hour plus £2.14 per hour with respect to holiday pay (unqualified – PTTLS) or c£19.94 per hour plus £2.41 per hour with respect to holiday pay (qualified - DTTLS, Cert Ed, PGCE) dependent upon qualifications & experience plus excellent benefits.

Hours/weeks: 7.5 hours every Thursday and 7.5 hours one Tuesday a month, 36 weeks per year

Must be able to teach: City & Guilds 2850 L3 – Unit 306, Principles of Engineering Maintenance, Installation and Commissioning and City & Guilds 2850 L3 – Unit 332, Mechatronics, Systems Principles and Fault finding.

Welding Lecturer / Assessor (Part Time)

Salary: c£17.71 per hour plus £2.14 per hour with respect to holiday pay (unqualified – PTTLS) or c£19.94 per hour plus £2.41 per hour with respect to holiday pay (qualified - DTTLS, Cert Ed, PGCE) dependent upon qualifications and experience plus excellent benefits.

Hours/weeks: Wednesdays, 6.30pm to 8.30pm for 15 weeks would be able to change to a Tuesday or Thursday to suit the ideal candidate.

Must be able to teach: C&G 3268-13 Award Introductory MIG Welding Level 1.

Performing Arts Lecturer (Part Time)

Salary: c£17.71 per hour plus £2.14 per hour with respect to holiday pay (unqualified – PTTLS) or c£19.94 per hour plus £2.41 per hour with respect to holiday pay (qualified - DTTLS, Cert Ed, PGCE) dependent upon qualifications and experience plus excellent benefits.

Hours/weeks: 10 hours per week Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 36 weeks per year.

Childcare Lecturer (Part Time)

Salary: c£17.71 per hour plus £2.14 per hour with respect to holiday pay (unqualified – PTTLS) or c£19.94 per hour plus £2.41 per hour with respect to holiday pay (qualified - DTTLS, Cert Ed, PGCE) dependent upon qualifications and experience plus excellent benefits.

Hours/weeks: 10 hours per week Mon - 11am to 4pm, Tues - 1pm to 4pm Thu - 9am to 2.30pm, 36 weeks per year.

Must be able to deliver: L3, 4 & 5 Childcare.



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The person selected for this role will need to have experience of managing a team with a proven track record of success. You are also required to hold a level 5 teaching qualification as well as a minimum level 3 or equivalent vocational qualification. Ideally you will have recent teaching and industry experience.

Learning Manager for Sports, Travel & Tourism

We are seeking an inspiring, innovative, dynamic and enthusiastic Learning Manager to manage the Sports, Travel and Tourism curriculums.

You will be required to manage a team of lecturers, technicians, assessors and support learners to achieve their goal of progression onto a higher level course or into employments.

The person selected for this role will need to have experience of managing a team with a proven track record of success. You are also required to hold a level 5 teaching qualification as well as a minimum level 3 or equivalent vocational qualification. Ideally you will have recent teaching and industry experience.

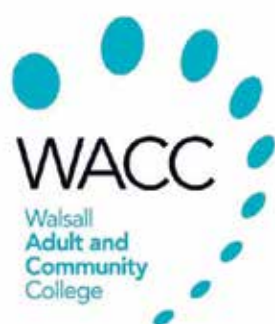
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WACC is a young organisation that has been recognised by OfSTED as Outstanding. In addition we have just commenced our journey to independence from the council. This journey to independence provides us with greater responsiveness and access to additional funding streams.

Following the recent appointment of its new Principal, the College is now looking to recruit to 2 further senior leadership roles.

We are a forward thinking and community orientated College supported by a committed Board of Directors and we are looking to recruit a Vice Principal - Curriculum and an Assistant Principal - Quality & Support. This is your opportunity to be involved and play a key part in the exciting future of Walsall Adult & Community College.

With a current turnover of over £4.1 million, providing over 8,000 learning opportunities to around 4,500 individuals the College is well placed for its planned expansion and independence.

WACC has an excellent and committed workforce and we are looking for innovative, enthusiastic and passionate staff to join our teams.

If you would like to work for us and be part of our exciting journey take a look at the roles we have on offer and join us.

**Vice Principal - Curriculum**

£51,165 - £57,573

You will support together with the Assistant Principals, the Principal and Directors in creating a shared vision and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan for the College. Providing inspirational leadership to support the College to retain and develop its reputation as an outstanding college and to oversee and report to the Principal on all academic matters, promoting the maintenance and enhancement of high standards of learning and achievement across the curriculum. You will have a strong curriculum background with excellent teaching, learning and assessment expertise.

Assistant Principal - Quality Assurance & Support

£45,468 - £52,695

You will also support, together with the rest of the Senior Leadership Team, in creating the shared vision and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan for the College. You will report directly to the Principal on all aspects of the College's quality standards, reporting mechanisms and continually improve and develop the College's performance as an outstanding provider. You will have a strong quality assurance background and Ofsted experience.

Interviews for all posts will be held from week commencing 2nd November 2015

Closing date - Friday 9th October 2015
Visit our website at www.wacc.ac.uk



Assistant Principal

Curriculum Innovation & Development

Salary in excess of £63K per annum

Formed on 1 August 2012 through the merger of South Birmingham College and City College Birmingham, with an annual turnover of £52m, a very diverse student population of 18,000 and a staff base of 1,000. With outstanding facilities at 8 campuses and centres, excellent pass rates, South and City College Birmingham has a reputation for excellence and for its focus on its students and the Birmingham economy. The last Ofsted inspection commented 'The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding' ... and is strongly and consistently promoted throughout the curriculum. The staff and student profile of the college reflects the diverse population of Birmingham.

To help us deliver these aspirations, we are seeking to appoint an exceptionally talented Assistant Principal:

Assistant Principal: Curriculum Innovation & Development

You will have the ability to develop and expand all areas of the College's curriculum and bring in new and innovative provision and approaches. Your focus will be on the current and future job aspirations of students and the development of local businesses in line with college priorities, learner and employer needs and Government policy initiatives.

You will be an energetic, innovative and open thinker who puts ideas into practice. This role will also have responsibility for developing the college higher education offer.

Qualified to degree level you will have an impressive track record of achievement within further education.

Planned interview dates: 7 & 8 October 2015

This senior post requires a dynamic and ambitious individual with well-developed skills in working collaboratively both within and outside the college. Managing staff and resources are essential requirements, as is experience in establishing effective relationships with external partners and other stakeholders. Passionate about raising the success rates of our students and ensuring they achieve their true potential, you will have a record of successful management experience at senior level within a large and complex institution along with the ability to inspire and motivate others.

If you have the drive and ambition to succeed in this exciting opportunity we would be pleased to receive your application.

If you would like to discuss this position before making an application, please contact Mike Hopkins, Principal or Sardul Dhesi, Deputy Principal on 0121 694 6293.

If you require details in Braille, large print or in any other format please contact us. As part of our referencing procedure a criminal records check will be required.

South and City College Birmingham is committed to making appointments on merit, using fair and open processes which take account of equal opportunities.

We encourage applications from all sectors of the community to reflect our diverse student population.

The closing date for applications is 30 September 2015



For information and application details visit www.sccb.ac.uk or call the recruitment team on 0121 694 6187

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The ideal candidate will have a proven record of providing management information services within the further education sector and have an honours degree or similar equivalent professional qualification. It is essential you have experience of operating either commercial or bespoke Learner Record Database systems including the production of validated ILRs and other funding returns.

Applications for the above post should reach us by:

12 NOON FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER 2015

Curriculum Vitae are not accepted, Application Forms only.

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Contact / How to Apply

For an application pack go to:

www.truro-penwith.ac.uk/recruitment-and-job-vacancies

email: recruitment@truro-penwith.ac.uk or call: 01872 267000

Truro and Penwith College is an Equal Opportunities Employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, all applicants must be willing to undergo a Criminal Record (DBS) Check and past employment checks.



FE Week

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

Protocol

Excellence in FE

Maths and English Lecturing Opportunities Nationwide!

In the last academic year, Protocol found Maths and English jobs for over 1,000 Candidates! With a further 150 opportunities available across the UK every month, we can help you find your next role - fast!

Some of the top temporary opportunities we have available now...

GCSE English Lecturer (Lancashire)

Various hours available, £17 - £19 per hour + statutory holiday pay

GCSE and Functional Skills Maths Lecturer (Derby)

Full time, £17 - £19 per hour + statutory holiday pay

Functional Skills English Lecturer (Milton Keynes)

Various hours available, £17 - £19 per hour + statutory holiday pay

GCSE and A Level English Lecturer (Shropshire)

Various hours available, £17 - £19 per hour + statutory holiday pay

To apply for one of these roles or to be considered for any of the amazing opportunities we have across the UK please send your CV to:

jobs@protocol.co.uk or visit www.protocol.co.uk to register online.



Somerset
Skills & Learning CIC

Experienced English and Maths Tutors Required Part-time and Casual

Salary Range: £20,253 - £22,937 pro-rata

Somerset Skills & Learning CIC is looking for enthusiastic and experienced English and maths tutors to work across the county delivering functional skills and GCSE provision. We have availability for a permanent part-time English tutor and for casual English and maths tutors.

You will need to have QTS or an adult tutor qualification and will preferably have a relevant subject specialism at Level 4 or 5. You will become a member of a team of dedicated and inspirational tutors totally committed to the well-being and successful outcomes of their learners.

For a full job description, person specification and application form please email hr@sslccic.co.uk

Closing date: **02 October 2015**

Interviews to be held **w/c 12 October 2015**

www.sslccic.co.uk

ncc
skills

FULL TIME MATHS & ENGLISH TUTOR/ TEACHER - £35,000PA OTE

LOCATION: ENGLAND

Due to the outstanding successes of our work to date, we are looking to recruit a new team of 15 experienced Skills for Life tutors. You will be delivering English and Maths from Entry Level through to Level 2, contextualised with a vocational award. Some delivery will be in the Health and Social Care sector, and therefore any experience in the H&SC sector would be an advantage but not essential. The role will be working on a peripatetic basis, delivering in your region. Willingness to travel and your own transport are essential.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA - PLEASE DO NOT APPLY IF YOU CAN'T COMPLY:

- Full time ONLY with flexible hours
- Have achieved a recognised full teaching qualification - Cert ed/ PGCE/ DTLLS or equivalent
- Experience in teaching English and/or Maths
- Outstanding personal written and verbal communication skills
- A driving license and access to your own transportation

HIGHLY DESIRED CRITERIA

- Experience of working with adult learners
- Working towards or have achieved a Level 4/5 Subject Specialist qualification in literacy and/ or Numeracy
- Excellent ICT Skills

The successful candidate will also be required to have a valid DBS Clearance Check. In the first instance, please send an email outlining your recent relevant experience together with your CV. NCC Skills Ltd is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

No agencies please jobs@nccskills.co.uk

TRIBAL

To all Finance Professionals in FE...

which of the following benchmark data would you like to see?

- A** Provision of workplace delivery productivity
- B** Provision of overall teaching productivity (eg class size and utilisation)
- C** Teaching delivery pay

Benchmark+ from Tribal identifies **savings on average of 3% of college turnover** using objective, accurate and comprehensive analysis of college datasets.

To compare hundreds of benchmarks, get your free access to the Benchmark+ demo.

Simply email your response along with "compare" to benchmarking@tribalgroup.com or call Nick Pidgeon on 0115 934 7378



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

Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



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

Difficulty: **EASY**

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next week

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**



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.

The last edition's spot the difference winner was Association of Employment and Learning Providers head of marketing and membership Stephen Ram Kissun (pictured right).

