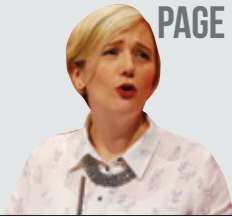


# FE Week



**CREASY DEFENDS  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
AFTER BRAWL**



PAGE 2

**COLLEGES BACK  
ON TRACK**



PAGE 3

**RECOGNISE THIS SKILLS  
SHOW FIGURE?**



PAGES 10 & 11



## Could Hancock be facing his biggest test yet?

**Cabinet minister's IT system role in large employers' apprenticeship levy**

**This is the man with the daunting task of implementing a new cross-government IT system for large employers to pay into the proposed apprenticeship levy — and he's got to do it in just 18 months.**

In an exclusive interview with *FE Week*, Cabinet Office Minister and 'earn or learn' taskforce chair Matthew Hancock opened up on just how far officials have to go in designing the new system that will determine and track levy cash revenue on one side and pump out digital apprenticeship vouchers on the other.

The architect of Traineeships also discussed how he saw the youth unemployment programme just over two years after it was launched in a wide-ranging interview that goes on to touch upon his taskforce, Trailblazer apprenticeship standards and that 'halfcock' comment from his Skills Minister successor, Nick Boles.

For more see page 4



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## NEWS

## Creasy intervenes after mass brawl

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Former Labour deputy leadership candidate Stella Creasy (pictured) has spoken out in defence of "innocent young people" after reports that college learners in her constituency had been involved in a mass street brawl.

The Walthamstow MP, who got 26 per cent of votes to come second in her party's deputy leadership race to Tom Watson last month, pledged to work with police in response to the violent scenes that erupted on Tuesday (October 6) evening.

Around 200 people aged 16 to 20 were thought to have been involved in the fighting in Walthamstow, East London. It was said to have started after a row between a female Leyton Sixth Form College learner and another from Sir George Monoux College over a boy.

The sixth form colleges, both rated as good by Ofsted, confirmed the two were their learners but Ms Creasy, writing in her online blog, said she wanted to "protect the good name and safety of the vast majority of young people in Walthamstow who are not involved in this behaviour".

"As local MP I will support and work with schools, parents, colleges, youth organisations and the police to ensure those who encourage such disorder and commit assault and violence on our streets are held directly accountable," she said.

She added: "It is now confirmed the source of the disorder was an altercation between two young women, from two different local



PA/Wire

colleges. It was not a gang-related incident."

A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said the trouble started just after 5pm and the group dispersed around four hours later.

A 16-year-old male and a 16-year-old female were arrested on suspicion of affray, while an 18-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of violent disorder.

Kevin Watson, principal of Leyton, said: "The college is cooperating fully with the police following Walthamstow's disturbance. Clearly, we take such incidents very seriously and will respond accordingly if and when more information becomes available."

Paolo Ramella, principal of Sir George Monoux, said the college was working closely with local police to find out if any of its learners were involved.

"Sir George Monoux College has a zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour, whether inside or outside of college. If any of our students are found to be involved in any way, they will face serious consequences," he said.

## Area review colleges step in as local school shuts sixth form

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Three Greater Manchester colleges subject to one of the government's post-16 education area reviews have been called on to take learners from a local school after it suspended sixth form enrolment.

Parents and carers of prospective Stockport Academy sixth formers have been told by the school that Stockport College, Aquinas College and Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College — three of 21 Greater Manchester colleges whose futures have been put into question by an area review — could take their children.

Small numbers in preceding years at the academy, which opened just eight years ago, forced the temporary move from next September — and it has drawn an angry response from the FE sector with the school exempt from the same area review process that could ultimately see the colleges closed.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, said it highlighted the "absurdity of not including schools and academies in the area review process".

And while schools did not automatically feature in any of the six area reviews announced so far by the government, Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel said they should take into account "the

unsustainable nature of all post-16 school provision".

He also said the government should not open any new post-16 school provision while reviews were taking place.

The government has said the "need" to move towards "fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers," underlies the area reviews.

However, Mr Kewin said increasing pressure on pre-16 funding meant more schools were questioning whether maintaining an "unviable" sixth form with money intended for younger students was sustainable.

He said: "Although this may have been a difficult decision for Stockport Academy, it was also a sensible one. Many school and academy sixth forms limp on with uneconomic class sizes and a narrow curriculum, which leave students poorly served.

"If all sixth form providers were in scope [of the area reviews] it would be much easier to ensure that all young people had access to sustainable and high quality 16 to 19 provision."

Mr Doel said: "We are likely to see more school sixth forms suspending enrolment as funding pressures grow."

He added that in its Spending Review submission, the AoC recommended that school sixth forms with fewer than 250

## FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF

## Witnesses announced

Witnesses for the first evidence session of the House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee inquiry into the government's Productivity Plan have been announced.

Mike Cherry, policy director at the Federation of Small Businesses, and Rain Newton-Smith, director of economics at the Confederation of British Industry, are among 13 listed witnesses.

They are set to be called across three separate sessions on Tuesday (October 13) starting at 9am, 10.15am. The plan includes proposals for the large employers' apprenticeship levy.

## Resit pass rate down

The proportion of learners passing GCSE English and maths re-sits at 16-18 fell between 2011/12 and 2013/14, Department for Education figures have revealed.

They show that in 2013/14, 36.2 per cent of GCSE maths re-sitters achieved a pass, compared to 42 per cent in 2011/12.

In English, 44 per cent of GCSE resitters between the ages of 16 and 18 passed in 2013/14, compared to 50 per cent in 2011/12.

## Ofqual evidence session

Ofqual bosses have been called to give evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee.

Glenys Stacey, chief regulator and chief executive, and Amanda Spielman, chair, are expected to tell MPs on the committee about the work of the qualifications watchdog.

It comes with Ms Stacey, who has led the watchdog since 2011, planning to step down in February.

The one-off evidence session is pencilled in for a 9.30am start on Wednesday, October 14.

students merge with others.

"We hope that this could not only ease the funding pressure but create a more stable environment for students," he said.

"We will be speaking to local councils and regional schools commissioners about the future of sixth form provision in their area as and when the reviews are completed," he added.

David Robinson, governors' board chair at Stockport Academy, said: "To run a viable sixth form we need a minimum of 100 students per year group and currently have 49 on roll in Year 12 with lower numbers than this likely in the future from our small current years 9 and 10.

"Taking into account our need to provide more Year 7 spaces and the falling intake at Year 12, our conclusion is that with regret we will suspend enrolling students into our Sixth Form from September 2016."

Ryan Jones, assistant principal of Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College, said: "We have guaranteed all Stockport Academy students a place at the college subject to satisfactory references."

Stockport College declined to comment. Aquinas College did not respond.



## NEWS

## FE Commissioner ends work at 'back on track' Barnfield and Weymouth

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Further Education Commissioner Dr David Collins will be stepping back from involvement at previously troubled Barnfield College and Weymouth College, *FE Week* has learned.

Barnfield, in Luton, received a letter last month from Skills Minister Nick Boles confirming Dr Collins' role at the college was over.

It followed a visit in July from his adviser that concluded the college had addressed all of Dr Collins' recommendations.

The adviser's report, seen by *FE Week*, praises the college for progress in "reviewing staff and removing those who are not willing to change the way they work" and notes that a new leadership team is in place "with a clear vision of where they want the outcomes to be".

Tim Eyton-Jones, principal of Barnfield, said: "This is a major milestone in the college's recent history and marks a positive transformation and direction we will be continuing."

Dr Collins' recommendations to Barnfield, which has more than 7,250 learners, were intended to address areas of concern identified during his two visits to the college, in January and the same time last year.

He saw weaknesses in governance and management, financial regulation and quality



Tim Eyton-Jones

improvement measures.

His recommendations included a management structure review, cutting staff costs, and ensuring the governing body had greater scrutiny of curriculum, standards and finance.

Dr Collins' first visit to Barnfield College was triggered by the college being assessed as inadequate for financial control by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

The second followed an Ofsted inspection in November, which rated the college as inadequate in all areas with no key strengths.

The letter to the college from Mr Boles states that: "While the college remains inadequate for Ofsted inspection and in formal intervention until it has fully complied



Nigel Evans

with conditions in the Financial Health Notice of Concern, the FE Commissioner is satisfied that his engagement in the current process is complete and intervention monitoring will pass to the SFA."

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Department for Business, Skills and Innovation (BIS) confirmed the FE Commissioner-led Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) at Weymouth was concluding after it met financial and enrolment targets set by the SPA.

Weymouth, which has almost 4,000 learners, was told by an FE Commissioner adviser



Dr David Collins

this month that Dr Collins was "ready to take a step back from his oversight role" following indication that its break-even budget plan for 2015/16 was on track, according to a college spokesperson.

Nigel Evans, interim principal at Weymouth, said: "The FE Commissioner and his team helped us identify and implement a sound financial plan, which should allow us to continue to serve the needs of students, parents, employers and the wider community right across Dorset."

Dr Collins started the SPA at Weymouth following his visit in March last year, after the college had been assessed as inadequate for financial control by the SFA.

In his report, Dr Collins said: "The college's financial difficulties arise partly from ambitious plans to grow its 16-18 provision after several years of decline in learner numbers.

"Unfortunately, the college did not ensure it had the necessary finances to fund all developments in advance."

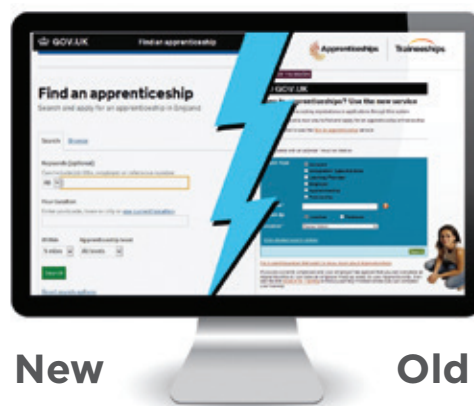
An Ofsted inspection in January resulted in an inadequate overall rating, despite good ratings for learner outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment, due to principal Liz Myles' handling of college finances. She resigned in February having been suspended late last year.

A monitoring visit by Ofsted in July found "significant" and also "reasonable" improvement in all areas it looked at again.

## Two apprenticeship vacancy websites still running

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*FE Week* has previously reported on the potential for confusion arising from having two apprenticeship vacancy websites running simultaneously.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, said: "In order to deliver high quality apprenticeships to everyone, we need to offer applicants clear and accessible routes into apprenticeships, therefore it is disappointing if this issue is creating confusion."

Stewart Segal, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), said: "The sooner we move to one single site the better."

A spokesperson for the SFA said the old website "remains available as some users still have live applications — some vacancies can have a long lead time and therefore learners still need to access these applications".

The spokesperson said the old site would be closed when they know no one is still using it.

Two official apprenticeship vacancy websites are still running five months after one of them was said to be closing down.

A spokesperson for the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) told *FE Week* in March that the old National Apprenticeship Service vacancy matching website would be taken down in May, once the new 'Find an apprenticeship' service was fully operational.

There had been concerns that with both running at the same time there could be confusion over whether both were official, however. Despite this, both sites are still live and both are still listing new apprenticeship vacancies.

And an SFA spokesperson said she could not give a date for when the old site would be shutting down.

On the day *FE Week* checked the sites, the old one listed 14,373 adverts and the new one listed 14,306.

A notice on the home page of the old site tells users that the site is no longer accepting new registrations or applications, and directs users to the new site to apply for an apprenticeship. When users click on any of the adverts on the old site, they are taken through to the new site.

## Merger consultation sets out Institute of Technology ambitions

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Two central London colleges have laid out their ambitions to become an Institute of Technology (IoT), as consultation opens on a possible merger.

In a joint proposal sent out by City and Islington College and Westminster Kingsway College, the two colleges outline a number of collaboration models.

These include developing their "offer of the highest quality" intermediate and higher level technical and professional training, which would put them "in a unique position to become an Institute of Technology at the heart of London".

Collaboration, the proposal outlines, would enable them "to become recognised as the 'go-to' place for technical and professional training in London and the South East".

Andy Wilson, principal of Westminster Kingsway, which received a grade two Ofsted rating when it was last inspected in 2011, said: "We're trying to create a college that employers and students see as the place to go for higher level technical qualifications.

"If there was the opportunity for us to be recognised for that type of work", he added, "it fits in with our aspirations".

IoT's are part of the government's plan to address the UK's skills shortage and close the productivity gap. First outlined in the government's Productivity Plan, launched in July, they will have a specific focus

on delivering high-standard, high-level professional and technical training.

The government expects there to be one IoT per local enterprise partnership, according to its guidance on the area reviews of post-16 education. The steering group for each area review is expected to consider the case for an IoT in its area, and whether any existing colleges could become one.

The City and Islington and Westminster Kingsway consultation follows on from the announcement, covered by *FE Week* in July, that the two colleges were exploring working more closely together.

Speaking to *FE Week* at the time of the announcement, Sir Frank McLoughlin, principal of City and Islington, which received a grade one Ofsted rating when it was last inspected in 2008, said: "This is nothing to do with survival or cost cutting, it's about ambition."

According to a spokesperson for City and Islington, the colleges were consulting with staff, local and regional authorities, suppliers, funders, colleges, banks and other organisations they have relationships with.

Respondents to the consultation, which is available on fewweek.co.uk, are asked for their views on the benefits of collaboration between the two colleges, what the strengths of the two colleges are and what form of collaboration they would like to see — from loose collaboration, federation or full merger. The consultation, which was sent out on October 2, closes on November 6.

# Scale of apprenticeship levy IT task emerges

@FCDWHITTAKER

NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The government is yet to make a start on designing an IT system to track large employer payments into a proposed levy despite the fact it would need to be in place in just 18 months, *FE Week* can reveal.

But Cabinet Office Minister Matthew Hancock has been charged with overseeing the development of the system and he told *FE Week* that it would be done “properly”.

“We’ve got to settle the full details of the policy first,” he said.

“But I’m now responsible for digital implementation across government, so believe you me it will get the attention it deserves.”

But while a Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the levy proposals closed earlier this month, the government has already said it wants the system in place in 2017 — and has tied it closely to the planned new digital apprenticeship voucher.

Indeed, the levy consultation document said: “Government intends for employers to have an online “voucher account” where they will be able to see their levy contribution and the digital vouchers that they can use to purchase apprenticeship training.

“The amount in an employer’s individual voucher account available for apprenticeship training will be dictated directly by the amount levied from the employer by HMRC.”

It added: “This would be part of a broader digital system that enables employers to advertise vacancies, search for applicants and engage registered providers to provide training for their apprentices.”

But memories of the botched data collections and funding transformation programme, in which among other issues a new funding information system produced inaccurate reports, from largely under his watch while Skills Minister will still be fresh in the minds of many in *FE*.

Nevertheless, Mr Hancock also told of his determination that the IT system would be worked out “properly”.

“You can only work out the full figure once the policy details are set, but we’re going to do it properly,” he said.



## HANCOCK ON...

### Traineeships

We set out what we were trying to achieve with Traineeships at the start, which was to make sure people who aren’t yet quite ready to take a job can get into a job, and can get the training that they need, the work experience and the English and maths.

So the key is to learn from where the people who have been on them have ended up, that’s what really matters, and the value for money that we get from the taxpayers’ point of view too.

### Similarities between Traineeships and new “activity programmes”

The intensive activity programmes are about making sure that if somebody’s unemployed and signing on, then they get the intensive support within the jobcentre in the first instance, aimed very much at the skills needed to get through an interview and the support you need there. There isn’t the English and maths element. Where needs differ, so too should the support that people get.

Apprenticeship reforms and Skills Minister Nick Boles’s claim that the first round went off “half-cock”

It was a choice phrase. Nick and I work very closely together. We’re old friends from before either of us went into Parliament and I think he’s doing a magnificent job, so there’s



Reporter Freddie Whittaker interviews Cabinet Office Minister Matthew Hancock in the foyer of Manchester Central during the Conservative Party conference

no way you’ll get an inch of paper between us on policy issues. I take it with a grin on my face.

On the substance of it, the levy proposals are different from the original PAYE proposals. I think, actually, they’re a better set of proposals and the only regret I have about them is that I didn’t come up with the idea myself.

### Number of new apprenticeship standards

I remember those early days of re-writing the frameworks when we gave the pen to employers and said: ‘You write down what you need people to be able to do’. And in some cases they were astonished that we didn’t then take the pen back and we said: ‘No really, we want you to write it’.

There’s a large number of occupations in the economy and apprenticeships need to reflect the economy if they’re going to reflect the economy.

### Should the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency should merge?

There’s all sorts of ways you can organise a government in order to deliver, but I think it’s very important to stay focused on the needs of young people and we can get too tied up with bureaucratic design.

Decisions of the taskforce

The decisions of the task force are announced through the ministers who sit on it. So the purpose of the task force is to bring together the different departments and ministers who are involved in delivering this agenda.

### Life without Sir Vince Cable

I always had a very professional relationship with him. He was always very straight-dealing, he was a strong supporter of the skills agenda. But there were things we were unable to do.

We were unable to be as clear as we now can be that all young people under the age of 21 should either be earning or learning, and to deliver that you need both support for training opportunities but you also need very strong incentives in the benefits system.

That’s something we weren’t able to deliver, that’s something we now can and I hope that leads to a further fall in youth unemployment.

### Young people and apprentices won’t benefit from the new living wage

People gain experience through time and people are inevitably, on average, less experienced when they are younger.

We’ve put up the apprentice minimum wage very sharply. It was much lower. And we decided to put it up. So it’s gone up to over £3 an-hour. It was £2.65 when I was apprenticeships minister.

Let’s be clear, there is a good reason that there’s an apprentice minimum wage that’s different to the national minimum wage and the new national living wage that’s coming in. When you’re an apprentice you are learning and earning at the same time but you’re learning and that’s why the wage is lower to reflect the fact you’re training on the job.

### JAVID GIVING EVIDENCE

Business Secretary Sajid Javid will be grilled by MPs about the work of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on Wednesday (October 14).

Martin Donnelly, permanent secretary at BIS, will also give evidence before the House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee chaired by Labour MP Iain Wright, during the one-off hearing set to start at 9.30am.

See editor’s comment on page 8

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## NEWS

## Imminent Ofsted review likely to highlight 'a lot of bad practice'

An upcoming Ofsted review of apprenticeships is likely to lay bare "quite a lot of bad practice," Skills Minister Nick Boles has said.

The results of Sir Michael Wilshaw's much-awaited inquiry are expected this month and Mr Boles told Conservative Party conference-goers on Tuesday (October 6) that he did not think they would paint a positive picture of the programme.

He also pointed to the shift to Trailblazer apprenticeship standards from frameworks, set to be finished by 2017/18, as a helping to improve standards.

"Ofsted is doing this review and I suspect that they are going to discover what in a sense we all know, which is that there is quite a lot of bad practice," said Mr Boles.

"We are in the process of transferring from the old apprenticeship frameworks to these new Trailblazer standards and let's be honest, while development of the standards is going very well it is still the case that almost all the apprenticeships are being done on the old frameworks.

"Some of those frameworks are great, but some are a bit flaky quite frankly, and you add some employers who are a bit flaky and training providers who are a bit flaky and you will get some bad practice.

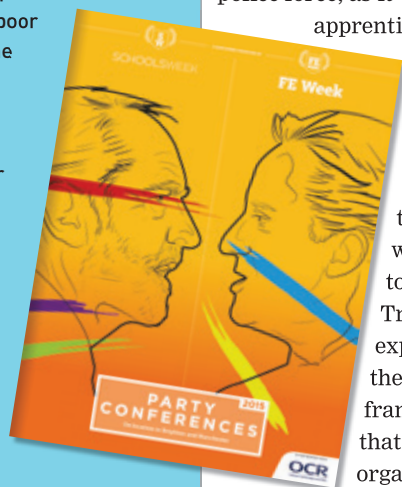
"I've met recently with Ofsted at a senior level and asked them to give me to ask their whole network for examples of bad practice so we can start shining a light on it and driving it out of the system.

Paul Warner, Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) director of employment and skills, criticised Mr Boles for the comments.

He told *FE Week*: "We are a little surprised by the minister's comments on bad practice, because while we agree that all of it should be rooted out, we have not been presented with any evidence to suggest that poor delivery occurs on the scale he suggests.

"If we are trying to engage more employers to hit the [government's] 3m target [for apprenticeships], it is vital business is hearing positive messages."

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## Boles addresses standard quality concerns

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Skills Minister Nick Boles addressed concerns about how the quality of apprenticeships will be policed as the government drives towards its target of creating 3m apprenticeship by 2020.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) raised the possibility, in its consultation on the proposed large employers' apprenticeship levy set to be introduced in 2017, of allowing employers to use providers that are not subject to an approval system or even Ofsted inspections.

It sparked concern that quality might be sacrificed for quantity as the government tries to meet its manifesto pledge to create 3m apprenticeship starts over the next five years.

Yet Mr Boles appeared to pre-empt any decisions over how training standards might be maintained, before BIS published its response to the consultation submissions, at the Conservative Party Conference on Tuesday (October 6).

Speaking at a fringe event hosted by Sky News reporter Adam Boulton, Mr Boles said: "You will have to spend your apprenticeship levy money with a registered training provider who is on the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) register and Ofsted will have a continuing role in inspecting those registered training providers.

"I don't intend to change that at all, I think it's an incredibly important reassurance for everybody."

He added: "I think they [Ofsted] have a crucial role to play [in maintaining apprenticeship standards] and while we are going to put a huge amount of emphasis on employers being the police force, as it were, of their own apprenticeships in their own

sectors, that doesn't in any way remove Ofsted from the process."

Mr Boles also looked forward to a time when employers would be so committed to apprenticeship Trailblazer standards, expected to fully replace the current system of frameworks come 2017/18, that they would root out any organisations undermining

Nick Boles at party conference



the brand.

He said: "What I want is for all of the employers affected to be really annoyed that one of their competitors is undermining the brand and the quality and reputation of the apprenticeship that they created and are investing in and to kick them out.

"I think that in addition to Ofsted will actually produce results."

The apprenticeship levy consultation asked respondents whether they thought providers that receive levy funding should "have to be registered and/or be subject to some form of approval or inspection".

Meanwhile, Ofsted chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw wrote last year in his annual report on FE and skills for 2013/14 that the "quality of apprenticeships is still not good enough".

Mr Boles spoke out at the Tory conference on the issue after Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden warned in *FE Week* this month against a "Soviet-style five-year plan simply churning out numbers at the expense of quality and progression".

He said he was "especially concerned" that success rates for apprentices aged 19 and above fell by almost six percentage points, from 74.3 per cent in 2011/12 to 68.4

per cent in 2013/14.

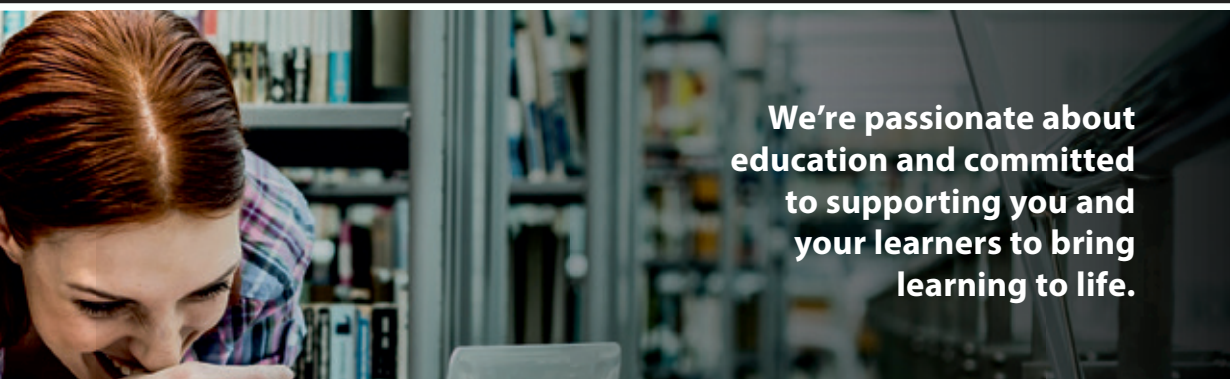
The same national success rates table, reported by *FE Week* in April, showed that overall apprenticeship success rates had fallen by nearly 5 percentage points, from 73.8 per cent in 2011/12 to 68.9 per cent in 2013/14.

Meanwhile, *FE Week* reported last month that the government had rejected calls to stop employers running in-house 'apprenticeships' of less than 12 months, despite a 12-month minimum duration being a key element for ensuring quality for publicly-funded apprenticeships.

The SFA has also said that it will not publish achievement rates for the new apprenticeship standards in the national success rate tables, and that apprenticeship standards will not be included in minimum standards for 2015 to 2016.

The SFA has also opted to keep the minimum standard threshold for apprenticeship success rates at 55 per cent for 2014/15 — although it has said it is "intending" to raise that threshold to 62 per cent for 2015/16.

Ofsted declined to comment on Mr Boles's plans for the education watchdog under Trailblazers.



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# It's about finding the right measures of quality

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A panel of six representatives from industry and trade unions was drawn together by City & Guilds to discuss the findings of the Industry Skills Board (ISB) report **Making Apprenticeship Work**.

The report includes 25 recommendations from the ISB for improving the way that apprenticeships are delivered. It was launched the same day as the panel event — Monday, October 5 — which was held at the Haberdasher's Hall in London.

## Quality and how to measure it

The panel was clear about what a quality apprenticeship should look like.

"Every apprenticeship needs to be of high quality and high value," said Andy Smyth, vocational learning development manager at TUI Group and chair of the ISB.

"It needs to make an impact on the individual taking that apprenticeship. It needs to be such that they can make a contribution to their organisation positively. And collectively it needs to have an impact on the productivity targets that we're setting for the UK."

From a parent's perspective, a good quality apprenticeship "means their son or daughter is going to get paid a reasonable wage, and relatively quickly if they progress, and they're not going to incur a massive student debt going to university, and it's going to lead to a job," according to Nicky Taylor, head of training and development at Ginsters.

But how do you ensure that level of quality? It's about more than just duration, the panel agreed — although a minimum was necessary, according to Tom Wilson, director of Unionlearn at the TUC, "because there were so many scandals". Nonetheless, he said, a "one-year duration is a very crude proxy".

It was a point echoed by Mr Smyth, who said: "We could almost classify the 12-month



L-R Mark Maudsley, chief executive officer, GTA England Ltd; Nicky Taylor, head of learning and development, Ginsters; Warren Page, apprentice co-ordinator, Xtrac Ltd; Andy Smyth, chair of the ISB and development manager, vocational learning at TUI Group; Tom Wilson, director Union learn, TUC; and Mark Lavington, HR manager, PGL Travel



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duration as being a set of stabilisers on the system. It was designed to do something, and we all understand that."

There was less agreement on what those measures of quality might be — not least because, as a member of the audience commented,

"there's an awful lot more to a quality experience for an individual".

Mark Maudsley, chief executive of GTA England, proposed looking at the outcomes of an apprenticeship as a quality measure. "Sustainability of employment I think is something we should pull into the suite of things to look at," he suggested.

Whatever measures of quality were identified, they would need to be reflected in the Ofsted inspection of those involved in delivering the apprenticeship.

However, Mr Smyth said: "It's about

finding the right measures of quality, rather than finding an easy way of doing it that just happens to fit a system."

## Flexibility

An apprenticeship should be flexible enough, according to the panel, to meet the needs of both the learner and the employer.

When someone starts an apprenticeship, said Ms Taylor, "you're giving them the experience of how that sector works and operates and lives and breathes, and therefore the model needs to be flexible enough to reflect what's really going on in different employers".

It should be easier for people to take a break during an apprenticeship, according to Mark Lavington, HR manager at PGL, so that those who aren't in full-time, permanent employment — for example, seasonal workers — could still take one. This would help to ensure that apprenticeships "reflect the pathways that people are walking," he said.

Mr Smyth also stressed the need for greater flexibility in the education system as a whole. "People will go in and out of the education system," he said. "Our job is to make sure the system can respond appropriately to the needs of the individuals."

This includes ensuring that people don't come out of education and find themselves



Kirstie Donnelly, managing director, City & Guilds

ineligible for further support because of the learning they've already done. To address this, Mr Lavington called for colleges and employers to be "incentivised to think further through so that the journey was being created at a start point".

This, he said, would mean greater involvement of employers at the start of a college course, in order to create a package that included enough learning and work "to get them to a point of mastery as a unit".

## Apprenticeship levy

The apprenticeship levy is a "hot topic at the moment" according to Mr Smyth, and the ISB "recognised there is a lot of good that can be done" but at this stage he said they needed to make sure they didn't constrain themselves.

"There's a lot we don't know about the levy yet, but we are positively engaged in, OK, what could we do with this?" he said.

To celebrate the launch of the Making Apprenticeships Work report, we gathered a group of employers and educators together to hear from our Industry Skills Board (ISB) members about what makes a great apprenticeship for them and what needs to change in the system to maintain quality.

All panellists agreed about the positive impact apprentices have on their businesses and Warren Page, from Xtrac, said that apprenticeships are the best way to maintain skills.

However, the discussion quickly moved on to the difficulties of convincing parents and young people to consider apprenticeships as well as the difficulty of getting onto an apprenticeship when you've made that choice.

We didn't have all the answers but everyone in the room wanted to build better links between education and employers so that young people can get



## KIRSTIE DONELLY

Managing director, City & Guilds

### How to build a quality and sustainable apprenticeship system — the employers' perspective

excited about industries that they may never have been exposed to before.

We came back again to the poor careers advice in this country and the need to involve employers a lot more in this. Someone asked whether the employers would be willing to use some of the levy funds to pay for an improved careers service.

Something that I am proud of is the diversity of employers we have on the ISB.

It allows us to understand the variety of skills needs across different industries and the flexibility that is required in the system to make it work for everyone.

One of the panellists, Mark Lavington, from PGL Travel, feels constrained by the notion of a fixed-length apprenticeship as this doesn't give him enough flexibility to train seasonal staff. This led to a discussion around the ideal length of an apprenticeship with everyone agreeing that the length

matters less than the quality. The consensus was that learning doesn't just happen in one block but it's something people return to throughout their entire careers.

Chair Andy Smyth, from TUI Group, was keen to point out that it's not all about apprenticeships. The ISB acts as a skills advisory body and while apprenticeships are part of its remit they are not the only answer.

I look forward to continuing the discussions around the broader skills agenda with the ISB over the coming year.

Finally, what we tried to put forward with our report and certainly what came across on Monday was that the ISB is not a talking shop.

We will all hold ourselves to account and report on the progress of our action plan. As Mark put it: "We are keen to influence what happens rather than criticise what's occurring."

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## FE WEEK COMMENT

## Action man given mission impossible?

It seems very obvious that Matthew Hancock, the man of action when it comes to 'digital implementation across government', has been given an impossible mission.

If the government deadlines are to be believed, they have less than two years to develop, test and roll-out a new online apprenticeship payment and funding system.

The history of problems with the current intermittently available SFA apprenticeship funding system, which took three years to develop, have been well documented on these pages.

Yet the current system is child's play compared to one that will need to accommodate hundreds of thousands of time limited employer levy payments via the Treasury, millions of online apprentice voucher applications and many more millions of individual payments to employers, colleges and training providers.

So my advice to the minister is simple.

Commission a feasibility study from some relevant technology experts who know they won't gain financially from developing the new system.

I suspect the study would conclude, regardless of development costs, that the timescales are too tight and the risk of failure too great.

More time is needed, alongside carefully considered action, else this movie genre will quickly switch from fantasy to disaster.

**Chris Henwood**

chris.henwood@feweek.co.uk

## TOP CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE TWEETS

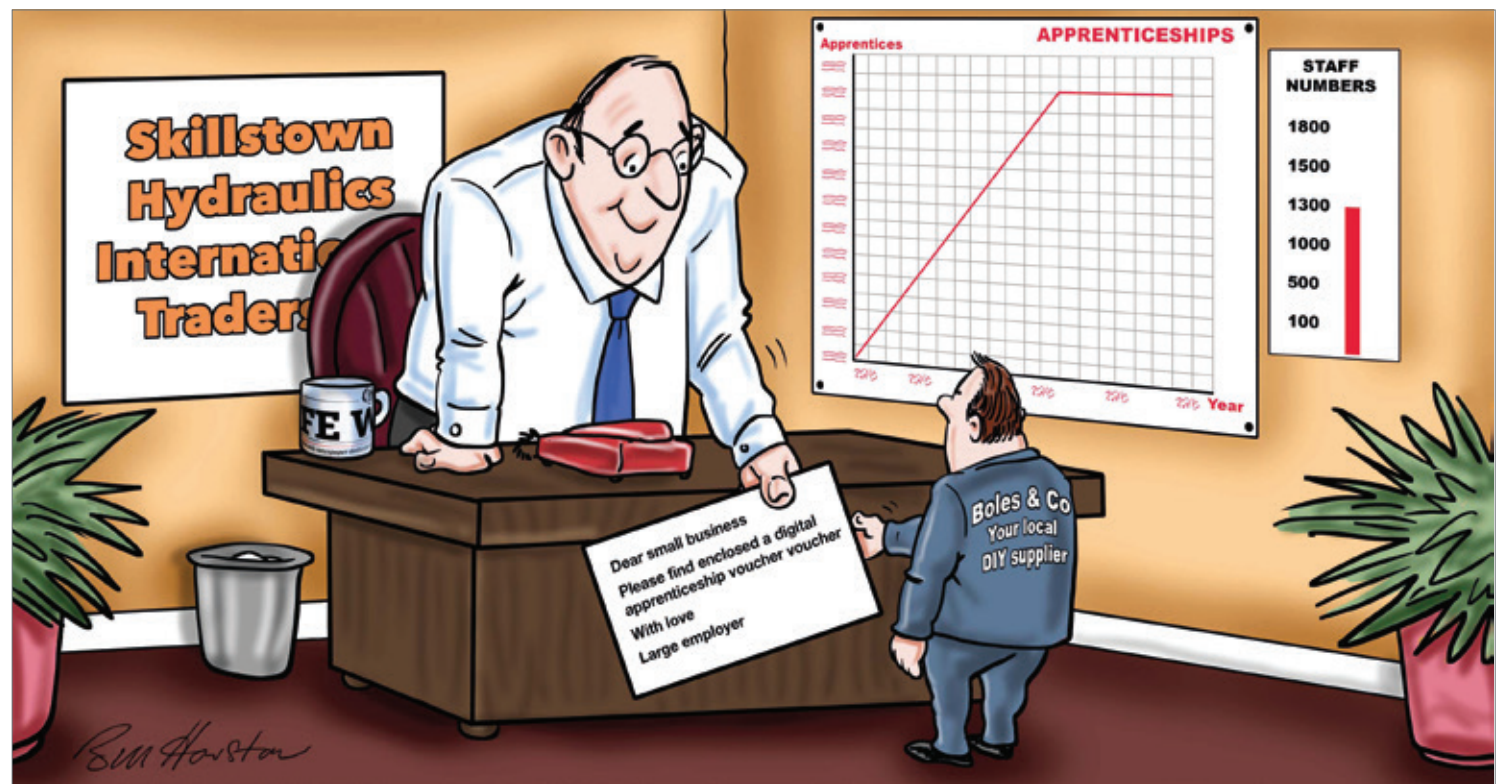
@CBIKatja  
We need more vocational routes to higher level skills - level 4 and 5 is the new middle of the labour market #CPC15 #construction

@G\_Gathercole  
Interesting comments fr @NickBolesMP on need, perhaps, for a loans system for shorter more targeted learning #CPC15 @Policy\_Exchange fringe

@Mikecoxone  
Division between FE and HE driven by funding. The levy could see an avalanche of debt free degrees. #CPC15

@ewgjoness  
"Education is the springboard to opportunity", Yes @David\_Cameron: so fund FE colleges above school sixth forms & end grammar schools #CPC15

@tomstannard  
Refreshing to hear @CBITweets DG on #CPC15 fringe: "qualifications are inadequate proxy for #skills for many young people" (and adults)



## Share levy funding with small firms, says FSB

@PAULOFFORD  
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Large employers should be able to hand out apprenticeship funding earned under the government's proposed new levy system to smaller firms, ministers have been told.

The call was made by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in its response to the government's consultation on the plans, which closed on October 2.

It said large employers set to be made to pay the levy "may not have capacity to take on additional apprenticeships 'in-house', while others may already have a fully qualified workforce that fulfil their immediate needs".

"We believe these employers should have some control over where their levy money is spent and, in keeping with the 'use it or lose it' model, be permitted to select other companies to receive a proportion of their levy contributions," the response added.

It stated that large employers may want to hand over surplus funding from the levy, set to be introduced in 2017, to smaller employers in their supply chains that would

not be required to pay the charge.

"Others may wish to fund the training of apprenticeships, for instance, for corporate social responsibility or community purposes," it added.

Senior FSB policy adviser David Nash told *FE Week* that spending levy cash on smaller companies would "make commercial sense for the large firm too, if skills gaps within the supply chain are filled".

David Pollard, chair of the FSB education and skills committee, also said in a letter accompanying the consultation response that "it is important the levy is designed in a way that meets the requirements of employers over the long-term, and that we avoid constant policy churn".

"Whichever model is ultimately agreed must deliver a secure long-term funding source," he said.

The consultation responses of a number of other sector bodies, including the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Confederation of British Industry (CBI) were reported in edition 149 of *FE Week*.

The CBI stated that "employers should

be allowed to spend their levy on training outside the company — for instance in their supply chain if they choose to.

"Many businesses train apprentices for their partners or the wider supply chain. Toyota, for example, operates a 'co-operative model' of apprenticeships with its suppliers and local businesses."

It also called for the levy to be controlled by a new independent board, using the Low Pay Commission as a "blueprint".

Meanwhile, the AoC warned the "government must not be seen to be using the levy as a reason to reduce its own £1.5bn annual spending on apprenticeships".

The response from the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, covered on feweek.co.uk, proposed that cash generated by the levy should be combined with government funding in a central pot available to all employers.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills declined to reveal how many consultation responses it had received, but said: "The government response [to all consultation submissions] will be published in due course."

## COMMENTS

## College area review 'shambles' — Shadow Minister Nic Dakin hits out over 'unwieldy' key meetings

The chances that these reviews will be democratic, objective, or comprehensive are zero. Hastily convened with partial representation, with a single objective of saving money but with a preferred outcome which has already been shown to be a gamble at best, (K College anyone?), the ingredients for a complete fiasco are all in place. The fact that everyone knows this will be a road crash makes for gruesome spectating. I fully expect the decisions that are made will, like the flawed LSC reviews, lead to a weakened sector, fewer opportunities for individual learners and a continuing failure to bridge the skills gap. Intellectually, morally and logically bankrupt reviews have no chance of producing anything other than fatally flawed recommendations. Watch this space!

L.Roding

The issue with the LSC STAR was the lack of 'teeth' and schools did just ignore. The whole concept of the current Area Reviews again lacks 'teeth' as the outcome will be voluntary collaboration in the HOPE that recommendations will be adopted. The lack of the inclusion of school Post 16 provision is questionable and moves further away from that level playing field that recent funding changes have been trying to achieve. Schools can continue to offset the cost of small group sizes through their whole school funding envelope.

Jacqui Kinch

Apart from maybe a single LEPs representative, what seems to be lacking is any employer voice. I am also concerned about whether anyone is taking a cross-border, national look at provision. For example the government has just published its National Infrastructure Plan which notes that 'a lack of detail on demand and supply — particularly within regions — coupled with fragmented approaches to skills planning and high levels of bespoke training limit the effectiveness and

efficiency of labour market mobility.' (p.6). For a sector such as construction, there is a danger of the review process contributing to this fragmentation.

Andrew Stanley

## CBI calls for Low Pay Commission-type body for levy rate

There are a lot of employers in the Care Sector that are by many business measures small employers. However, as domiciliary care providers they could employ large numbers of part-time staff in excess of 250 "heads". It would be unfair and undesirable if they were caught up in the Levy mechanism. They do not typically employ under 19 year's staff for the obvious care service reasons, and would therefore have no apprenticeships that it would fund. The Levy is therefore effectively a tax on what is already a significantly underfunded sector at breaking point. Has this been thought through?

Neil



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## PROFILE



We've got a huge issue in the UK as a whole, of not valuing and not understanding the crucial importance of vocational education, careers and skills



# HALF CENTURY OF FE SE

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When Find a Future deputy chair David Cragg is asked how long he has been working in FE he cracks a smile and says "110 years."

It's an exaggeration, of course, as he was born in 1946 and became involved in FE in the late 1960s with a general studies teacher post at Warley College of Technology (nowadays part of Sandwell College).

But it's nonetheless hard not to be impressed by the small matter of the half century or so that he does have under his belt.

And it's even more impressive that his formative FE experience didn't put him off education altogether.

He says: "It was a period in which the whole introduction of general or liberal education was a government policy, but was profoundly resented by all the technical and specialist staff, so you always got timetabled for killer slots.

"However, it was a great experience and I learned a huge amount about FE — the good, bad and sometimes ugly — and how important it was."

Before long, Cragg's college bosses took advantage of his German languages skill and asked him to teach modern foreign languages, which he duly did and then built a teaching team around him.

He had studied languages at university, having gone to grammar school before that in his native Yorkshire.

After academia, Cragg secured a role as a languages assistant in Germany for a year in the late sixties, where he discovered his passion for teaching, and then put it into practice in Warley upon his return to England.

He then went on to work for a decade as the chief executive of Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council.

"I built up a whole network of connections with business at a time when things were changing in the outside world, and the college I worked at was under significant

threat," says Cragg.

"So there was more and more need to relate more clearly and strongly to local business."

Further into his career, with his developed business acumen, Cragg was able to play a vital role in both of the Rover crises.

When Rover collapsed in 2005 he led the retraining programme for former employees to ensure that many got new jobs.

"Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and a whole entourage were sitting in a room with the regional development agency, myself and my then chairman of the regional board saying: 'What the hell should we do about it?' when we heard the news," Cragg recalls.

"We were able to put in place a retraining package for people in the space of a week, which was a fantastic tribute to the flexibility and responsiveness of FE."

Then under the government's reform programme in 2007, Cragg managed the overall transition of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), where he was regional

director for the West Midlands, to the newly created Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

His responsibility was to distribute 3,200 staff members from the LSC across 155 organisations.

He says: "I managed the whole process and had the responsibility of reporting to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [BIS] for the design and set-up of the SFA."

He then served on the management board of the SFA as national development director, with a responsibility for policy implementation, until his retirement in 2011.

But then WorldSkills London happened the same year.

"I suppose you've got to understand a little bit of the history of this to see where I fit into it," he says.

"BIS asked me to oversee WorldSkills London, so we had the big, once-in-a-generation opportunity of running a huge international show equivalent of this year's Sao Paulo show."



RVICE

## It's a personal thing

### What is your pet hate?

Probably elitism in education and the hypocrisy of many of my friends and colleagues about which school they choose to send their children

### What is your favourite book?

One in German, one in English. All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues). And probably Birdsong — so I'm a bit rooted in the First World War but that's part of my personal history. The First World War is an exercise in supreme futility and it's in my bones

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

I read a lot. I'm a German speaker, and the promise I made myself when I formally retired and went to part-time working, was that my German would be as good as it ever was. So I speak German every Friday morning to my personal tutor, and I think I've spoken two sentences of English to her in four years!

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

My uncle because he lost his life in 1917 at the age of 18, having been sent to this crazy war [First World War]

### What did you want to be when you were growing up?

A cricketer and I failed miserably.

I might have been a professional opera singer when I was about 27, and I trained at what is now called the Birmingham Conservatoire, but then I had the misfortune — or good fortune — of having a child, which kind of meant that economic security had to come first.

But my daughter is a professional singer so I get satisfaction from traipsing off and seeing her in Germany or Austria or elsewhere

vocational, professional education system produces, but it's also a modelling tool, and a laboratory for demonstrating what we really ought to be doing."

When asking Cragg what new elements he is bringing to the show next month, he says: "It's evolution, rather than revolution, because we know the show works and we've got a fantastic opportunity this year because we've got a gang of people who have just come back from Brazil."

The Sao Paulo team will be attending the Skills Show and different skills champions will be sitting among guests on every dinner table at the welcome dinner.

Cragg says: "The focus is on these young people who have achieved such fantastic things, not just winning a competition, but what they've done with their lives, what they are doing now, how enterprising they are, and the show will more and more reflect that."

Influencing people is a key element in this year's Skill Show and Find a Future carried out research last year which showed that

for 70 per cent of young people, their parents were most influential in their life choices.

"At this year's show we are having a family and an adult day so parents can feel well-informed about the breadth of careers available and are more likely to recommend a vocational option to their children," says Cragg.

The influential role parents can have on their children is central to Cragg and he wants to highlight to them the importance of taking the FE route.

He says: "The most interesting thing about FE is that it sits right at the core of the economy, which means it's changing all the time, so it gives a platform for innovation and almost an inbuilt need to innovate."

He adds: "FE is where our whole education system should be and it's a role model we ought to have applied in our university system, in our schools system, and regrettably we haven't."

And Cragg has a clear vision to improve that situation.



Prince Charles awards Cragg his OBE at Buckingham Palace in 2008 for services to training and to education. In 2012 he also received a CBE for services to education and skills



Cragg (right) sings with a friend while working in Germany in 1968

Cragg (left) in the German Alps when he worked as an interpreter and tour guide for an American college tour with a colleague



Cragg's father, Thomas Cragg, pictured at the end of the First World War



Cragg's college ID when he taught general studies at Warley College of Technology

Cragg continues: "I had the good fortune and the opportunity of writing a legacy strategy and proposing that to a group of ministers."

With Find a Future, which organises the UK's participation in WorldSkills and also the Skills Show, he explains that the idea behind the London WorldSkills remains the fundamental, underlying principle behind the Skills Show now.

He says: "We've got a huge issue in the UK as a whole, of not valuing and not understanding the crucial importance of vocational education, careers and skills."

"And the show makes a direct impact on attitude and we've got evidence on behaviour to prove it."

Over the three years that Find a Future has run the show, it has seen a 25 per cent increase in the likelihood of young people taking up a vocational option and pursuing a vocation career, he says.

He explains: "The Skills Show is, on the one hand, a showcase for everything, for the whole breadth of what our technical,



He says: "What's crucially important is that we acknowledge and recognise that the world around us is changing, and in particular devolution's going to change all of that, so we are working closely with local enterprise partnerships and the emerging combined authorities."

"Sao Paulo is a fantastic example, but the challenge for us is to say: 'We want to be Switzerland,' as it has a fantastic vocational system that uses competitions as an integral part of its mainstream, as an integral part of the development of its workforce and as an integral part of their vocational system — that is where we want to be."

# THE INDY SCENE



**John Hyde is the chairman of HIT Training, a hospitality training provider that operates across England, and on the second Monday of every month he writes in *FE Week* about issues affecting independent learning providers**

**C**hancellor George Osborne's decision to impose a levy on employers to fund apprenticeships is a positive move if carefully and fairly implemented and if the unintended consequences and opportunities for fraud are thought through in advance.

Training prescribed by industrial training boards was funded by a statutory levy until abandoned by Margaret Thatcher in the 1990s. My first work-based learning job was with the Hotel and Catering Industry Training Board, one of 32 training boards funded by a statutory levy.

In those days, most companies paying the levy ensured they undertook sufficient prescribed training to claim back in full their levy payments. As it was compulsory, some employees and employers benefited from the training delivered and others begrudged it.

**Compulsion to take an apprenticeship will probably drive the completion rates down from their current highest ever level into the 60 per cent range**

But this is no different from today when a head office HR department imposes apprenticeship programmes across the whole company without explaining to the site managers, supervisors and potential apprentices the benefits and responsibilities.

Any taxation, which is what the levy is, has to be perceived as fair by all required to pay it. The danger lies with limiting it to companies with at least 250 employees.

They will see themselves paying and training staff, who, when competent, will be poached by smaller companies.

The levy should encompass all employers, apart from the very small, say those with fewer than 25 employees.

The powerhouse for economic growth is the small and medium-sized enterprises, so they should be encouraged to take on apprentices, albeit through the imposition of a levy.

The increased income raised by including all employers in the levy, apart from the

very smallest, would allow those employers with fewer than 25 employees to have free apprenticeship training.

Of course there will be consequences. Being forced to undertake an apprenticeship so their employer can recoup their levy payments will drive up early leavers.

Our statistics show the highest number of early leavers come from employers who demand the age grant and only pay the minimum apprentice wage.

Compulsion to take an apprenticeship will probably drive the completion rates down from their current highest ever level into the 60 per cent range. However as Prime Minister David Cameron's target is only for 3m starts, completions and early leavers will not figure and most early leavers will not join the unemployment register.

How the levy is raised is being pondered by government, whether on a company's turnover or a headcount of employees.

In some sectors, this may induce employers to make their staff self-employed to avoid paying the levy. It is common practice in hairdressing for the saloon owner to rent out 'chairs.'

This could convert into other sectors, for example self-employed waiters could 'rent' tables from the restaurateur. I have no doubt a whole industry of 'levy advisers' will evolve to show employers how to avoid or minimise payments. These people will creep out of the woodwork in the same way there are a plethora of 'consultants' who trade sub-contracting around FE colleges and providers for a 'small' fee.

I think it is important that the smaller companies and enterprises, ie those with 25 or more employees are brought into the levy as well as large employers.

The overwhelming message from government is the 3m target. If this is not met by manufacturing and service industry employers, it will be easy for the government to switch the tap on for national and local government departments and the NHS to 'fill their boots' with apprentices.

While this may benefit the efficiency and productivity of the government departments concerned, the emphasis for apprenticeship recruitment should be concentrated on manufacturing and service employers who need the improved efficiency and productivity a skilled workforce can bring and thus contribute through taxes to the Treasury to fund and improve state services.

And if there is not enough money in the pot to pay for all these increased apprenticeship and there is no other source of government funding, simple — just raise the levy.



## JUDITH DOYLE

Principal Gateshead College

## Outline of a two-grade college leap to outstanding — with an 'employment edge'

**Judith Doyle inherited a grade three Ofsted-rated college in August 2013 and within eight months of her appointment inspectors dished out the same result again. But, picking up the gauntlet, she instigated a raft of changes that in July saw the college rated as outstanding.**

I was proud and delighted to be made principal at Gateshead College in 2013, a college which at that time was graded by Ofsted as requiring improvement.

I relished the opportunity to build on the improvements that were already in evidence but equally recognised that turning things around would need focus, clarity, and ultimately a bit of backbone.

Gateshead College had an impressive legacy of being a technical college; close to local business and close to its community.

At some point this got lost in translation, focus and delivery.

My primary goal became the delivery of a strategic transformation programme, starting with a shift in culture. Simplified, it was going back to what we always did best.

The priorities were having a relentless focus on quality improvement and a curriculum that suited market, employer and business needs. We could no longer afford to be distracted from this approach, however interesting or attractive new opportunities appeared to be.

Our first priority was our students [and our strategy] — to make them the most highly-prized in the jobs market, and to give them the best learning experience in a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment.

We aspired to give our students the 'employment edge' — a point that Ofsted recognised in its report. Our approach to safeguarding was also recognised as outstanding and we continue to review and improve beyond the current framework — we'd been working on the Prevent agenda for a number of years.

We restructured our college board; traditional structures made way for more dynamic, agile and focussed committees with a greater business representation. The support of my chair and board was very important to developing a clear strategy going forward.

My role was clear: to drive and lead — encourage, motivate and kick (a little). I had to communicate a vision, a clear sense of purpose to which all staff could engage every member of staff had to understand the part they had to play in delivering excellence for students.

We recognised the need to improve communications with all staff. Regular, more focussed team briefings were introduced to encourage and cascade communication in

departments and there was an increased focus on informal communication. I used every opportunity to reinforce the message to all staff that if we delivered high quality, teaching, learning and assessment the rest would follow. It is our core business and we had to get that right.

Another huge internal shift was establishing a 'one college' approach to our business. We used to effectively have a college that operated as two — work-based learning on one side and classroom-based learning on the other.

There was a lack of a coherent sense of purpose and no real accountability as well as waste, duplication and lost opportunities.

We enhanced our management information systems and became far more rigorous about capturing and routinely analysing data. We now have extremely detailed and accessible information about every student's achievement, progress and experience along with a range of performance data which is used this to make quick management decisions and early interventions.

**We used to effectively have a college that operated as two — work-based learning on one side and classroom-based learning on the other**

Our links with the local and regional business community have always been important, but I set about strengthening these further by listening to employers and working with them to shape our curriculum and enhance students' experience of work. We had proven our ability to be highly responsive to businesses, delivering many bespoke solutions, and could demonstrate the impact of this to the inspectors.

We have forged outstanding — and very meaningful — partnerships with regional organisations like the Confederation of British Industry, North East Chamber of Commerce, Entrepreneur's Forum and our local enterprise partnership.

All of this is being achieved within a tough political and financial landscape, but we are working from a robust financial position to deliver on the government's skills agenda.

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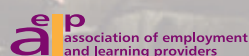
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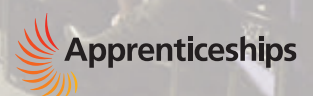
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## EXPERTS

The relationship between lead and sub-contractor may be one defined by tension for some, and tranquility for others. Matthew Lord outlines how to help make these relationships fall into the latter camp.

With the final push to sign off contracts and the last-minute dash for recruitment dominating our lives, I've been thinking about exactly what we, as a 'sub-contractor' are looking for from our college partners (although 'sub-contractor' is surely a misnomer if ever there was one – to us it's a partnership, with all the sense of alliance and co-operation that implies).

We're all united by a single aim — to deliver great learning to our students — but too often the sub-contractor-college relationship founders because one 'side' or another doesn't understand what the other needs. So let's banish misunderstanding, frustration and soaring blood pressure and make the relationship work.

The first thing to consider are time frames and contracts. Timing is everything. Is your college able to commit to our time frames, process the necessary due diligence and get the course under contract in time for us to be able to recruit learners at the right time of year? If you can do this, it tells us you're a super-efficient college — just what we like.

Secondly, count date meeting. Meet with us one week before the count date and please make sure you withdraw learners that need to be withdrawn.

Third is registers. Decide how these are submitted and monitored. And please make



## MATTHEW LORD

Director of youth training provider Let Me Play

### Ten ways for colleges to forge a successful relationship with sub-contractors

sure someone from the college does actually look at them and that they are monitored regularly.

Bursary application forms comes fourth in this list. Provide us with a checklist of the exact evidence required. And once you receive the forms, please process them quickly. Delays at this late stage cause real problems for us and, more importantly, our students. Many of ours are entirely dependent on financial help to pursue their studies.

Fifth is being 'Ofsted-ready'. Check that your sub-contractor is Ofsted-ready — you don't want your next inspection to be adversely affected by any shortcomings beyond your control. It will boost your confidence — and that of your sub-contractor — to know that everything is hunky-dory.

And sixth is English and maths. Does the sub-contractor have the necessary support to ensure success in these crucial areas?

Do staff have the necessary training and resource support? This should include initial testing, teaching delivery and exam

preparation. Good results are in everyone's best interests.

It hardly needs saying, but keep in touch. This is number seven. Do meet regularly with your sub-contractor and draw up a set agenda around numbers, quality and support.

Number eight is fewer points of contact. With the best will in the world, we simply haven't got the time to be passed around the college talking to all and sundry (delightful though your colleagues are). Less is definitely more, so let's agree a few key points of contact at the start of the relationship. These are sub-contracting/business manager (responsible for internal liaison with safeguarding, HR, finance and contracts); registration (enrolments, withdrawals, bursary forms, exam registration); quality assurance; and heads of department.

And if your staff change, remember to tell us.

Back to the list of ten and at nine is learner support. Make sure that your contractor has a robust system in place for learners who

need support. In the case of Let Me Play, the vast majority of our students have been turned off learning by bad experiences at school and have very low self-confidence, so this is second nature to us. Before they can even begin to learn, our young people need to acquire the habit of regular attendance at our learning centres and find some self belief. Many have difficult home lives, and some are already living alone at the age of 16 or even homeless. These are all potential barriers to learning which have to be overcome before they're ready to move on to college at the end of our courses.

**We simply haven't got the time to be passed around the college talking to all and sundry (delightful though your colleagues are)**

And ten is free school meals. Young people need feeding — and nutritious meals aid focus and concentration. If your sub-contractor delivers full-time study programmes to 16 to 18-year-olds off-site, do you have a system for paying for free school meals to eligible learners?



## REBECCA GARROD-WATERS

Chief executive, Ufi (formerly University for Industry) Charitable Trust

### Catching the imagination of tomorrow's teachers and learners

A host of new learning technology projects have been funded to the total tune of £750k. Rebecca Garrod-Waters explains some of the projects and what she hopes they might achieve.

In a bold move to help stimulate the take-up of digital learning in vocational education, Ufi Charitable Trust has funded 16 demonstrator stage projects — any one of which could catch the imagination of tomorrow's teachers and learners.

And this month saw the launch of the new projects funded with £750k from the Ufi Trust's Vocational Learning Tech Fund.

All are at an early stage, and each has received up to £50k funding for the next 12 months to help develop their product or service.

We are really excited about funding this cohort — we want Ufi funding to be

about more than the grant, where projects get benefit from each other and from the association with Ufi.

Tight budgets mean that people are unwilling to take a risk on something unproven.

This presents difficulties for innovators who have great ideas but need help to get a project to a stage where they are ready to go to market or attract further investment.

What Ufi, as a charitable trust, is able to do is to de-risk this developmental stage and help products and services reach a marketable point.

This includes looking at technologies that had initially been developed for a different market, but where building them to concentrate on vocational technology could have real benefits.

Our driving goal is to catalyse change — achieving an increase in the scale of people

who can gain and develop vocational skills.

The 16 projects cover a wide range of technologies and services — including hardware, apps, e-learning and supporting services.

**We want this model of a Ufi 'family' of projects to underpin future funding**

This was a deliberate decision — we don't believe there is a single solution for FE and training, and the blending of a range of tools woven into more traditional teaching methods will be key to the successful growth of workforce training. Together the projects form a cohort, supported by the trust and benefiting from the opportunity to work with each other.

We hope there will be synergies and connections formed — and we want this model of a Ufi 'family' of projects to underpin future funding.

The projects include Target, a full commercial trial of wearable technology (the HoloLens and Epson Movario smart glasses) in a manufacturing environment. When switched off the glasses form a standard pair of safety glasses, but when switched on will deliver interactive content directly to an

individual as they look at a specific machine.

There is also NanoSimbox, currently used in schools to teach chemistry by visualising how molecules work. This is being developed to refocus on vocational learning for those who need a better understanding of chemistry to enter the workplace.

Meanwhile, two of the projects are developing new ways of using simulations. One is combining audio analytics with situational skills practice, to provide objective insights into performance when rehearsing skills which would otherwise be difficult, expensive or risky to practise in real life. The other is developing a digital platform that will use virtual reality to create multi-agency emergency scenarios. Learners will include emergency response incident commanders within the West Midlands Fire Service and other fire and rescue services who work within the emergency services.

In addition, Ufi Trust looked to fund projects that bring e-learning to new, sometimes hard to reach audiences, and cover non-traditional subjects. Myerscough College is developing videos on horticulture, Cuppa is a project to bring bite-sized learning to care workers, and GivebackUK is producing a library of video resources for the charity sector.

It is clear that ways of accessing and gaining vocational skills need to be brought in line with the way people live their lives. We live in an increasingly fast-paced digital world and we have expectations about how we learn — we must make sure that vocational teaching and learning is at the forefront of new ways of skills delivery.

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## CAMPUS ROUND-UP

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Richard Huish College music students perform the rock opera

## Teenager's space opera rocks

**A** budding composer from Richard Huish College has written and conducted his own rock opera aged just 17 years old.

Chris Grabham's 45 minute production, called *The Invaders — Act One, Part One — The Journey to Zergo*, was performed to around 40 audience members at the Somerset college last month.

Featuring a full orchestra, choir and soloists, it is set in 2050 and portrays the emotions of a character that has to leave Earth because a meteor is heading for it.

Chris, who is studying A-level music, maths, further maths and physics and plays orchestral percussion, said: "There was enormous applause at the end, everyone was on their feet and that has given me confidence in my writing and conducting."

He is now planning to write a follow up rock opera and hopes to perform the original work again at the college next summer.

Chris Grabham playing a xylophone during a practice session



## Producing hit album is a buzz for Patrick

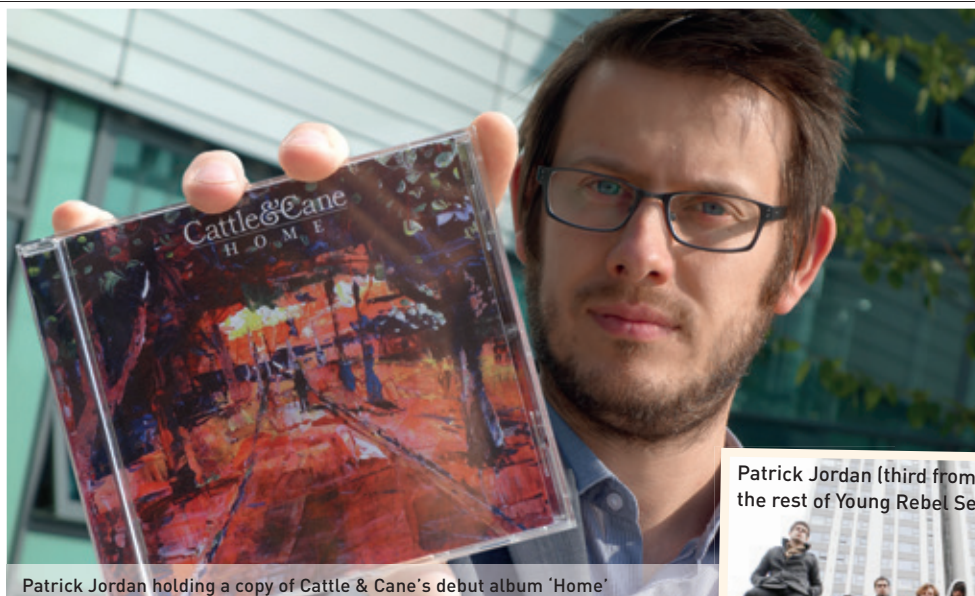
**A North East college lecturer has proved he can still hit the right notes with music fans, after quitting his own band tipped for stardom and producing an album with his students that entered the UK Top 40 Indie Album Chart, writes Billy Camden.**

Indie rock success is still a buzz for Patrick Jordan second time around, especially now his learners are experiencing the thrill with him.

The senior music technology lecturer and recruitment, guidance and support manager at Stockton Riverside College (SRC) Bede Sixth Form produced and mixed the debut album for North East England-based band, Cattle & Cane. It entered the UK Top 40 Indie Album Chart at number 26, following its release last month.

It is his second experience of music industry success, after the talented guitarist secured a record deal with indie rockers Young Rebel Set, before quitting to concentrate on teaching in 2011.

Closing track 'Dancing', on the Cattle &



Patrick Jordan holding a copy of Cattle &amp; Cane's debut album 'Home'

Cane album called 'Home', was even recorded with five of his music technology A-level learners — Emily Bean, Callum Rattray, Jordan Blyth, Ben Thompson and Kathryn James, all aged 18.

The 33-year-old said that it was "great for

the students to get real experience", as "there are things that happen when you go

can't teach".

"They were so professional, behaving in a way that made me and the college very proud," he added.

Reflecting on the album's popularity, Patrick said: "Even when I was in Young Rebel Set that [chart position] wasn't a feat we were able to meet, so to have been so heavily involved in this project and to have it be so well received is a huge deal for me."

Patrick studied music, media and English A-levels at the college between 1998 and 2000, before working as an assistant sound engineer to Trevor Horn, who produced some of the most



The Eagles during a live performance

## Internships help students with learning difficulties find long-term employment



Foundation students taking part in the supported internships pilot at Kirklees College

**K**irklees College is piloting a work placement scheme for young people with learning disabilities geared towards helping them find long-term jobs.

There are 19 students taking the 'supported internships', who all come from the college's foundation learning department, based in Dewsbury and Huddersfield.

The pilot scheme, set to become a permanent fixture at the college if it is judged to be a success, will involve them spending two days a week throughout this academic year with an employer, for example at garden

centres, sports centres and retail shops.

They will spend a further one day a week training with the college.

The learners will gain either a Pearson E3 award in customer service, or a Pearson level one award in the principles of customer service after completing the internships.

Jenny Evans, the college's head of foundation learning, said that they "will be a great way for our learners not only to learn new skills but to prepare them for work so that hopefully they will get a job that suits them at the end".

FEATURED  
CAMPUS  
ROUND-UP

successful hits of the 1980s with Frankie Goes to Hollywood, at Sarm West Studios, in London.

He formed Young Rebel Set with friend Matt Chipchase after returning to the North East and starting as music technology course leader at the college in 2005.

They secured a record deal with Ignition Records, toured the UK and Europe, and were championed in 2009 the *New Musical Express* as "the perfect antidote to cold careerist indie".

However, he said that "working until 4pm in the North East and then driving down to London for a show at 12am, before driving straight back to teach the next morning was very tiring and very difficult".

"Eventually, the strain of all of that became too much so a few months after the release of the first album I left the band," he said.

Patrick now enjoys being "the voice of reason" when recording music, but said that producing was "only a hobby" made all the more rewarding when he can get his students involved.

### DO YOU WANT TO BE IN CAMPUS ROUND-UP?

Send your stories with pictures to [campus@feweek.co.uk](mailto:campus@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course details of students where applicable

### PATRICK'S TOP FIVE BANDS AND PERFORMERS:

- The Eagles:** One of the things I have always admired in music is the use of close vocal harmonies and they are the absolute masters at this
- Sia:** She lets her music do the talking and doesn't seem interested by the celebrity lifestyle of the music industry
- John Fullbright:** He writes lyrics that are able to transport you to another world in the way that a true country artist should be able to
- John Mayer:** I have discovered an amazing amount of guitar technique from watching and listening to his records
- Ben Folds Five:** I've been a fan since I was a teen and they remind me of college days spent in the music room practising with friends



# & MOVERS SHAKERS

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

Former student Samantha Harvey has returned to Derby College as the first head gardener at its Broomfield Hall land-based studies campus.

Ms Harvey's role will involve supporting students in work experience programmes and leading work to open the grounds to more visitors.

She studied horticulture at the college 15 years ago, before training and working at London's Royal Botanic Kew Gardens, where she won a number of awards including top practical student, best vegetable plot, and top

student at plant identification.

Ms Harvey then worked as head gardener on private estates in Yorkshire and Warwickshire and also volunteered at the Botanic Garden in Belize, where she managed the orchid nursery and trained staff to look after the delicate plants.

Speaking as the college announced her appointment earlier this month, Ms Harvey said: "It is wonderful to be back at Broomfield Hall.

"As head gardener, I will be using my experience at Kew and the private estates to

re-establish and expand the borders and shrubs in key parts of the grounds, including the walled gardens.

"This will provide horticulture students with valuable work experience for their future careers and also create a wonderful visitor attraction."

Meanwhile, Cambridge Regional College (CRC) has appointed Paul Skitt as assistant principal, to head employer engagement.

The former head of business development at the College of North West London, who started in his new role last month, will focus on increasing the college's work with regional employers, offering specialised training to support their growth.

"Cambridge is a great city with a vibrant, growing economy and I'm looking forward to working with employers here and inviting them into the college to see our fantastic training facilities and meet the students who could be part of their future workforce,"

he said.

"As a college, we want to continue making sure we meet the skills needs of local and regional employers through apprenticeships and staff development, as well as training our students for jobs in the local economy.

"There is a huge opportunity to work with regional employers and support their growth and CRC is well placed to meet their needs for more skilled staff."

Sean Harford has also started in his role as national director of education at Ofsted, taking on responsibilities for early years and FE and skills in addition to schools.

Lorna Fitzjohn, who had been national director for FE and skills since April 2014, will now focus solely on her position as Ofsted regional director for the West Midlands.

Mr Harford, who started in his role last month, said: "Now that we are working on the shared basis of the common inspection framework, this is the right moment to draw together all that Ofsted does in these areas [early years, schools and FE and skills] and to ensure comparability and consistency across Ofsted's inspection of these sectors."

Mr Harford joined Ofsted in 2003 as an inspector and has since worked in school improvement, school inspection policy, and organisational restructuring.

Before joining the inspectorate, he was a teacher and senior leader in a secondary school in the East of England, as well as associate adviser for Cambridgeshire County Council.



Samantha Harvey



Paul Skitt



Sean Hartford



Lorna Fitzjohn

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, training provider or awarding organisation please let us know by emailing [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)

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## JOBS



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# East Riding College

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(would consider 2 x 0.5 posts) Ref: 15/16-13

A significant opportunity has arisen for a committed individual to teach a range of English qualifications including GCSE and Functional Skills; to provide appropriate support and take tutorship responsibilities for groups of learners.

Applicants must possess a BA (Hons) in English; hold or be willing to gain a Level 5 teaching qualification, (Cert Ed/PGCE) and Level 5, (or equivalent) Literacy qualification and Level 2 Numeracy. Applicants will also have recent experience teaching GCSE, Functional Skills English.

**Closing date: 16 October 2015 (5pm) Interview date: 4 November 2015**

The College is a great place to work and we believe that every employee has an important role in the success of the College. We are firmly committed to training and development, and there is a friendly and supportive culture.

East Riding College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment.

East Riding College encourages equality of opportunity for all.

For more information about experience and qualification requirements and application details, visit our website: [www.eastridingcollege.ac.uk](http://www.eastridingcollege.ac.uk) or telephone: **01482 390900**.




## Solihull College & University Centre

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25 hours per week over 34 weeks per year

Salary up to £27,390 pro rata, actual salary up to £13,640 per annum

Post No: SS303

We are seeking to recruit a Support Tutor to provide cross college English and / or maths support for learners in GCSE and Functional Skills classes at both the Blossomfield and Woodlands Campus. There will also be a requirement to provide one to small group support in our Learning Zones.

You should have a minimum Level 3 Literacy and/or Numeracy qualification, together with the ability to adapt to a variety of models of delivery and to work closely with Lecturers to ensure support is targeted to students' needs.

Fractional applications will be considered for either specialism based on 12.5 hours per week, predominantly English support at our Blossomfield Campus and maths support at our Woodlands Campus. Please specify on your application if you are applying for one specialism only.

For more information and to apply, please visit:  
<http://www.solihull.ac.uk/jobs/current-vacancies/>

Closing date:  
Tuesday 13th October

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We would also welcome applications from those willing to work on a part-time or termly basis, as well as applicants who would like to specialise at either GCSE or Functional Skills Maths only. The post may suit an experienced school teacher or a practitioner from an FE background (current or retired), although we welcome applications from less experienced candidates, including recent graduates or individuals considering a career change who can demonstrate the necessary skills and enthusiasm for the post. Programme Lead responsibilities are available for suitable candidates.



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**Closing date: 9:00am Thursday 15 October**

**Interviews: Thursday 22 October**

For further details and to apply for the above post please contact the HR Department on: [recruitment@wmcollege.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@wmcollege.ac.uk)

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

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



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- 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
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### Director of Curriculum and Employer Partnerships - £61,503

The Director of Curriculum and Employer Partnerships will lead the college's curriculum strategy of FE, HE & Apprenticeships with the skills and experience to inspire and motivate the college's curriculum management teams. Key to success for this role will be the ability to develop strong long term partnerships with local employers to support a pro-active approach to vocational provision at the college.

### Director of Quality and Support - £61,503

The Director of Quality and Support will drive forward quality across all points of the learner journey, improving provision and the student experience through enriched teaching, learning, assessment and ILT. This role offers the successful candidate opportunity to also lead student-facing services that impact quality.

### Director of Finance and Business Services - £61,503

The Director of Finance and Business Services will be instrumental in leading the college to deliver its objectives through sound management of finances and the realisation of the college's true business potential. The successful candidate will demonstrate an ability to work closely with college managers to improve the commercial quality of decision making.

Closing date for applications is Monday 2nd November 2015, the assessment day will be held on 30th November and successful candidates will be interviewed 1st - 3rd December.

To apply for any of these roles or to download an application pack visit: [www.protocol.co.uk/WLC](http://www.protocol.co.uk/WLC)

Alternatively you can contact our FE Management Recruitment Team for an informal and confidential discussion at any time on 0115 911 1206 or via [femanagers@protocol.co.uk](mailto:femanagers@protocol.co.uk)

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## PART TIME PERMANENT TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GCSE ENGLISH TEACHER AND GCSE MATHS (SOUTHAMPTON, SALISBURY AND POOLE AREAS)

**Hours: Up to 16 hours a week, may include evening cover**  
**Salary: £23,000-£24,000 (pro rata) depending on experience and qualifications.**

FNTC Training is one of the south coast's leading training providers offering a range of courses including Maths, English, First Aid, Apprenticeships and Traineeships. The successful candidate will be required to teach at one or more of our centres and may be required to travel to the Isle of Wight. Place and times of work are agreed with the Director of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Quality.

In your role as the successful Teacher you will need the ability to inspire and motivate students. Committed and conscientious, you will have high standards of professionalism and expectations of students. Most importantly, you will be passionate about your chosen subject and must also possess the ability to work in collaboration with the wider teaching team, guide students' academic, personal and professional development, in accordance with the centres guidelines and procedures. You should also display the ability to inspire high achievement of students and to be prepared to participate in extra-curricular activities as may be appropriate.

Candidates must be qualified to degree level in their chosen subject and possess a teaching qualification, as well as having proven experience in successfully delivering the GCSE syllabus to a range of students.

**Deadline for the posts is Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015**  
**interviews will take place Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

For further information or to submit your CV and application form please email Bev Samuel: [Bev.Samuel@fntctraining.co.uk](mailto:Bev.Samuel@fntctraining.co.uk)

*FNTC is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. FNTC is an equal opportunities employer and as a member of the Positive About Disabled People scheme will interview all candidates who wish their application to be considered under this scheme.*

[www.fntctraining.co.uk](http://www.fntctraining.co.uk)



## Teacher in Maths

### GCSE and Functional Skills

**Full time/Part time**  
**Maternity Cover until July 2016**

- Up to **£35,000 p.a.** (pro rata for PT hours) depending on skills and experience
- **Sessional hours** (£27.08 per hour) may also be available

We require a teacher to deliver GCSE and Functional Skills mathematics to students working on vocational programmes from Entry level to Level 3. The successful applicant will understand the GCSE and Functional Skills courses and how to best enable our students to achieve well.

You will join our strong and experienced Maths team and with them, inspire, excite and engage students and help them to move on to higher education, further education, employment or training. You will be sensitive to your students' needs and enable and encourage them to express and reach their

true potential. You'll also know how to monitor each step of their progress however big or small and celebrate their successes.

Whether you are a graduate, a teacher new to the profession or someone with experience of teaching maths we would like to hear from you.

We are able to offer you a final salary pension scheme, generous holidays and the facilities of a College campus set in 70 acres of green belt in a peaceful setting. The College has excellent transport links and is set in a location convenient to London and the South East and offers a large free on-site car park.

Please indicate which contract type you are interested in.

**Online applications must be submitted by 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015** and interviews will be held on 3rd November 2015.

[www.nescot.ac.uk](http://www.nescot.ac.uk)

Nescot, Reigate Road, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3DS



NescotCollege



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# FEWweek



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computer consultants ltd

# Annual Conference

**20th October, Manchester 2015**

Manchester United Football Ground, Old Trafford, Manchester

## ***Book your FREE place at the Compass Annual Conference***

After the success of last year's conference and the huge numbers of our wonderful customers that came, this year it's going to be bigger and better! For 2015, the Compass conference has joined forces with our parent company Advanced to be part of the Advanced World for Public Sector & Enterprise user conference. This bigger event offers a fantastic opportunity to network with other users, meet key Compass & Advanced staff and partners, and learn more about important product developments.

### **Why attend?**

- Opportunity to hear from expert speakers.
- Educational user-led presentations.
- Meet up with the Compass team who'll be there to answer your questions.
- Network with other users of Compass products.
- See the latest products and services available from Compass and the wider Advanced Public Sector & Enterprise business.

 @advworldpse



See [www.compasscc.com/annualconference](http://www.compasscc.com/annualconference) for more information and to book your FREE place, or telephone the team on **01928 725522**

[www.compasscc.com](http://www.compasscc.com)

# I.T.'S THE REAL DEAL



We believe in real-life functional assessments, equipping learners with the skills they need to succeed in life. That's why we've developed our Functional Skills tests in ICT on-screen, so they can now be assessed using 'in-app' technology. Now learners can benefit from 100% non-simulated tests which include 'real' email and internet searches.



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 Call our Customer Contact Centre: 02476 851509  
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## 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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

Solutions:  
Next week

### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



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

The last edition's spot the difference winner was Ben Wyse (pictured right), regional projects manager at Hertford Regional College.

