

FE Week

PRINCIPAL FURY AT OFSTED INADEQUATE

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COLLEGES THAT IGNORE APPRENTICESHIPS CRITICISED

- Apprenticeships account for less than 5 per cent of Adult Skills Budget for some large FE colleges
- AoC says colleges 'see significant role' in hitting 3m and should 'start planning strategic response'

@JUDEBURKE77

JUDE.BURKE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

EXCLUSIVE

The college sector's performance on apprenticeships has come under attack after exclusive *FE Week* analysis uncovered budgets with as little as 2 per cent allocated to the programme at the heart of the government's economic strategy.

Skills Funding Agency figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act revealed startlingly low levels of apprenticeship delivery at many colleges — and particularly in London.

Colleges, on average, have 27 per cent of their 2015/16 Adult Skills Budget (ASB) allocated to apprenticeships, *FE Week* found, compared with 60 per cent at other providers.

But the college figure varies significantly across the country, with London colleges averaging just 12 per cent.

Ian Cass, managing director of the Forum of Private Business, which represents more than 25,000 small and medium-sized businesses, called the figures "worrying", adding that "it suggests that there is a bias against apprenticeships".

Given the "very real need" for apprenticeships, said Mr Cass, "we would argue that FE colleges are failing in their

duty of care to their students if they do not give them the skills needed to get work in the real world".

Teresa Frith, senior skills policy manager for the Association of Colleges (AoC), said colleges had "always been about more than apprenticeships" and were "working hard" to respond to changes in government policy.

However, nationally, 11 colleges have set aside less than 5 per cent of their ASB on apprenticeships. Among those with the lowest set out for apprenticeships was City and Islington College, where just 2 per cent (£202,787) of its £9,733,513 ASB will be spent on apprentices.

The college declined to comment, but ministers will be unimpressed by the figures with the government pushing to hit its 3m apprenticeships target for this Parliament.

Indeed, the Department for Education is thought to be looking at ways to get more 16-year-old vocational learners onto one-year courses and then into apprenticeships. And just days ago, Prime Minister David Cameron said he wanted "either apprenticeships or universities for almost everybody," as reported on feweek.co.uk.

Meanwhile, funding for the programme is expected to be protected in the

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Professor Cox on hand for new centre

Professor Brian Cox opens Middlesbrough College's new Stem centre. Also pictured is principal Zoe Lewis



Celebrity Professor Brian Cox was guest of honour at Middlesbrough College to open a new £20m science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem) centre.

The TV presenter said the centre — which has facilities including process operations and maintenance, an advanced manufacturing centre, and logistics and warehousing to replicate a real industrial environment — was "an incredibly impressive place".

Professor Cox, speaking to scores of youngsters, added: "It's ground-breaking

— there's a real understanding here of what industry needs and the new centre is delivering the kind of training that provides real experience."

Principal Zoe Lewis said: "Five years ago we had fewer than 100 apprentices. This year we will train more than 1,000 across a wide range of disciplines.

"We and our partners firmly believe that Stem education and training has the potential to transform this region's economic competitiveness."

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GCSE
Functional Skills
Cambridge Progression



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| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
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| Designer: | Russell Hardman |
| Sub editor: | Paul Offord |
| Reporters: | Alix Robertson |
| | Billy Camden |
| | Freddie Whittaker |
| | Jude Burke |
| | Rebecca Jones |
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| Sales executive: | Felicia Byrne |
| Administration: | Frances Ogefere Dell |

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Contributors: | Dame Asha Khemka |
| Stewart Segal | Graham Hasting-Evans |
| Sam Parrett | Holger Bollman |
| Andy Wilson | Charlotte Bosworth |
| Theo Paphitis | |

Managing director: Shane Mann

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Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd
161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

NEWS

Uncertainty over future of Fisss

@ALIXROBERTSON4
ALIX.ROBERTSON@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The future of the Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (Fisss) was today uncertain with the government looking at a new system of issuing apprenticeship certificates.

More than 7,500 providers and 500,000 apprentices in England, Scotland and Wales work with Fisss as it verifies that programmes have been finished successfully before handing out final paperwork.

However, the position of Fisss, which has certificated nearly 320,000 apprenticeships in the last year, was put into question with the Deregulation Act 2015.

A Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) spokesperson the Act meant it was “considering options for a system for the issue of apprenticeship certificates for new approved standards”.

The Act was designed to simplify existing statutory arrangements and allow employers to design Trailblazer apprenticeship standards, with the post of Business Secretary responsible for issuing certificates — a responsibility that can be delegated.

Mark Froud, managing director of Fisss, said: “We remain committed to ensuring high quality standards and certification with minimal bureaucracy in both the current and the new system.

“We have been discussing how to achieve this going forwards with BIS and a number of Trailblazer groups, the Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and



Mark Froud and Teresa Frith

Learning Providers, Federation of Awarding Bodies and a number of large awarding organisations over the last year.

“In terms of the future we await decisions from the Minister.”

Teresa Frith, senior skills policy manager for the AoC, said: “We are pleased with Fisss taking a collaborative approach to the development of a new issuing system for apprenticeship certificates that will fit with the reforms and will work for colleges and other providers.”

The work of Fisss is funded through charging providers for the issue of certificates and Mr Froud said Fisss had been working to achieve efficiencies.

“We charge £22 per apprenticeship certificate issued under the current framework system,” he said.

“This is a 25 per cent reduction on the previous fee and saved the system and training providers over £7m in the last two and a half years.”

Concern at ‘tight’ 18-month ESF delivery timescale

FE WEEK REPORTER
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Sector leaders have reacted with concern to a “tight” Skills Funding Agency (SFA) timetable for handing out £650m of delayed European Social Fund (ESF) cash — with delivery completed in just 18 months.

It was exclusively revealed on feweek.co.uk that the SFA was planning to run a “sequence of procurement” that must be finished by the end of September next year at the very latest to allow a minimum delivery period of 18 months.

The delivery period, up to March 2018, was determined with ministers unable to say the SFA would oversee anything other than apprenticeships beyond then.

It follows a summer in which ESF-funded providers were forced to lay off staff amid delays in issuing 2014-202 contracts as the government sought to iron out regional devolution issues with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs).

Stewart Segal, Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive, said: “These further delays will mean that the gaps in provision for those people who need the most help continue.

“The shortening of the timescales also means that these complex and often expensive tendering processes need to be managed effectively.

“The SFA, DWP and the LEPs need to work closely with the sector to make sure the tender process is clear, simple and transparent.”

He added: “We now need a clear timetable from the funding agencies to allow providers to put their bidding plans together.”

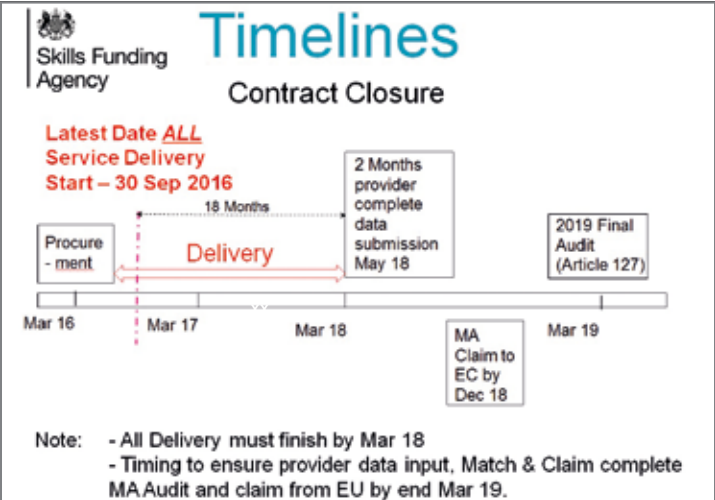
An Association of Colleges spokesperson

said: “It took longer than expected to get EU sign-off for the UK ESF programme so there’s a good case for pushing ahead with procurement.

“Ideally, the government would consult on its devolution plans via a green paper so issues like this can be properly discussed in advance.”

Details of the timetable featured in a letter, leaked to FE Week, to LEP and European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) committees from Mike Bell, SFA deputy director for localism policy implementation.

“The attached timeline shows the tight deadlines we will have to meet so that all contracts are at least 18 months long,” he



Timescale sent out by SFA official Mike Bell

FE WEEK NEWS IN BRIEF

Journo awards honour

Apprenticeships coverage earned FE Week reporter Freddie Whittaker runner-up spot at the 2015 CIPR education journalism awards.

They took place on Thursday (November 12) and saw Freddie handed the award in the apprenticeship and skills category.

John Dickens and Sophie Scott, reporters at sister title Schools Week, were named winner and runner-up most promising education journalism newcomer, respectively. Sophie also won the data education category. Shane Mann, managing director of publisher Lsect, said: “It’s great to see the Lsect team’s achievements recognised.”

Wolf to give Lords evidence

Professor Lady Alison Wolf is the next witness to give evidence to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee following an appearance from Ofsted boss Sir Michael Wilshaw.

She is expected to speak about data gathering on Wednesday (November 18) from 10.35am, along with Professor Sandra McNally, director of the Centre for Vocational Education Research, among others. It follows Sir Michael’s appearance on November 11 when he said government should say more about how it would “promote a strong vocational offer”.

See feweek.co.uk for more.

Area review question

Skills Minister Nick Boles has reaffirmed how post-16 area reviews incorporate the role of providers outside the college sector.

He told Conservative MP for Worthing East and Shoreham Tim Loughton his view of how regional school commissioners should be involved in the process.

Mr Boles, during business questions in the House of Commons on Tuesday (November 10), said: “They [RSCs] are employed by the Department for Education and are required to be part of those area reviews.”

wrote.

He said the SFA would, however, introduce a “simplified procurement initiation document which will capture the required local input to be inserted into themed specification frameworks”.

“We will work ... to ensure the local input fully reflects requirements as we draft the specifications so that they can be finalised and approved without any undue delay,” he wrote.

“We believe this approach enables us to ensure minimal disruption in the transition of skills budgets to localities.”

An SFA spokesperson said it had nothing to add to Mr Bell’s letter in response to timescale concerns.

NEWS

'Re-inspect us' — principal's fury over inadequate rating

FE WEEK REPORTER
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Cash-strapped West Cheshire College has lodged a formal complaint over its inadequate Ofsted rating and called on the education watchdog to send inspectors back in to look again.

Inspectors said teachers at the college, which has a Skills Funding Agency allocation of £6.8m, did not expect enough of learners, who were also not given enough advice to improve.

They were among a host of other issues identified at the college, including finances with inspectors reporting that its “financial future is not currently sustainable”.

But principal Nigel Davies hit back, claiming the college had achieved an operating surplus in 2014/15 for the first time in four years and that inspection so early into the academic year meant it was “not practicable or realistic” to produce evidence of standards. “Everyone at the college, including myself, is extremely disappointed by the outcome of the inspection which does not accurately reflect our achievements to date and our current position today,” he said.

“In light of this, we have significant concerns relating to the inspection and have already submitted a formal complaint to Ofsted, including an invitation to re-inspect the college.”

The result, which was down a grade from a previous inspection in April last year, comes



just over a year after FE Commissioner Dr David Collins visited in light of the Skills Funding Agency rating the college’s financial health as inadequate. He reported how a series of blunders over the “size, location and financing” of two college builds, costing a total of £68m, left it with crippling debt as he told Skills Minister Nick Boles “it makes sense” that one — its Handbridge site — be sold off. However, the college still has both sites and recently even put up new signs at Handbridge.

A Department for Business, Innovation and Skills spokesperson told *FE Week* that Dr Collins’ work with the college had not concluded and would continue taking into account Ofsted’s findings. The education watchdog dished out five inadequate grades among the headline field ratings, with two ‘requires improvement’ and one ‘good’ — for apprenticeships. “Senior leaders and governors acknowledge that the college’s financial position is precarious,” it said in the report.

“Senior leaders have been



managing a considerable period of upheaval, trying to resolve the financial problems which have beset the college since before their arrival, including overspends on significant capital projects and poor financial control. Although expenditure has reduced, they have not yet taken actions to secure long-term financial sustainability.”

But Mr Davies disagreed and said his leadership team had indeed “taken action to secure the college’s long-term financial sustainability”. “However, this remains unresolved as we are working with a number of external agencies,” he said.

Mr Davies said: “While we have always welcomed and encouraged critical evaluation as part of our overarching strategy to positively change and move forward, we believe that during the inspection there were inconsistencies in standards applied which will form the basis of our formal complaint.”

He added: “The terminology used by Ofsted within the report does not truly reflect the college’s position and we do not agree with some of the analysis and conclusions in it. The style and language used within the report is confusing and misleading. Although it is valid to highlight poor provision we feel that the report does not give judgements on the College’s significant success and achievements.”

An Ofsted spokesperson said it did not comment on individual inspections.

MERGER PROPOSALS

Two further mergers have been proposed for the college sector.

Shrewsbury College, Shrewsbury Sixth Form College and New College in Telford have announced plans to discuss a proposal to merge, creating a single sixth form college group.

In a joint statement, the principals of all three — Steve Wain, Martin Ward and Fiona O’Brien, respectively — said: “If a merger goes ahead we are looking at a date from August 1, 2016, and internal and external consultations will commence in early 2016.”

Meanwhile Tower Hamlets College, in East London, is exploring mergers with Redbridge College and also Hackney Community College.

Gerry McDonald, principal of Tower Hamlets, said: “Government policy now clearly supports the creation of larger institutions that are both financially viable and able to adapt to address the country’s skills needs.”

A Tower Hamlets spokesperson said: “It is envisaged that any merger with Redbridge would take place in advance of organisational links between Hackney Community College and Tower Hamlets College.”

He added that the Redbridge merger, if agreed, would be formally completed by August.

It comes with the post-16 education area reviews expected to result in a number of mergers.

Such moves are already on the cards for New College Nottingham and Central College Nottingham, and Greenwich Community College and Bromley College of Further and Higher Education to name but two.

Colleges face threat of further strike action as UCU looks to ‘next steps’

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PAUL.OFFORD@FEWEEK.CO.UK



a request for £1 per hour extra for staff. Marc Whitworth, the AoC’s director of employment policy and services said before Tuesday’s strike, which the UCU claimed almost 20,000 people took part in nationwide, that its pay offer reflected the “stringent financial circumstances in the sector” and “significant external pressures” on colleges.

The proposal had also been based on feedback from AoC members, he added. “Strikes are very disruptive for colleges and more importantly for students. We would encourage UCU to consider how we might better work together to represent our respective members collectively,” he said.

“There is a willingness from the employers’ side to work together to protect the prospects of FE, its skilled workforce and the students it serves,” he added.

The UCU held rallies on Tuesday to coincide with the strike at the Emmanuel Centre, Westminster, and the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham, with speakers including Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell.

The AoC declined to comment on how many people took part in Tuesday’s strike or how many colleges were involved.

Protocol

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Come and join us for a coffee and a chat at the AoC Annual Conference
17-19 Nov at the ICC, Birmingham
to see how we can help.

‘Remarkable how colleges have kept going’

Ahead of the Association of Colleges (AoC) 2015 conference, chief executive Martin Doel tells *FE Week* reporter Alix Robertson how his members have a fundamental place in delivering government goals.

With the government spending review on the horizon, and post-16 education and training area reviews sweeping across the country, attendees at this year’s AoC conference may be feeling anxious about the future.

And Martin Doel, chief executive of the AoC, is all too aware of the rocky landscape ahead for colleges.

“With the funding cuts that have occurred, the sector is beginning to show frailties and difficulty, which is inevitable ... I think it’s remarkable that the colleges have kept going,” he said in an interview at AoC’s London HQ ahead of its three-day conference from November 17.

“My big worry, of course, as we go into the spending review, is that there will be even further cuts,” he added.

Although funding troubles and the prospect of a visit from the FE Commissioner may be dominating discussions at present, Mr Doel was determined that the AoC conference would be primarily about “colleges, and by inference their students, the communities that they come from and the employers that they support”.

The theme of the conference, at The ICC Birmingham, is Powering the Economy.

“It’s about the essential role that colleges have in building a recovery that’s sustainable and balanced, that everyone can have the opportunity to share in and share the benefits from,” said Mr Doel.

Alongside the speeches at the event, from figures such as Skills Minister Nick Boles, Mr Doel said he hoped the debates on offer would challenge people’s thinking about the role of colleges.

“I will be sharing with members, particularly in some of the sessions, some of the thinking we did immediately after the election, which I think is still valid,” he said.

It involves understanding how colleges will be integral to delivering the government’s key objectives.

“We work back from what we think government’s core and key intentions are, which I’d put down clearly as the statement of 3m apprenticeships and growth — 3m high quality apprenticeships by 2020,” he said.

Alongside meeting this target, other focuses are a delivering a good standard of English and maths for all young people; promoting higher technical and professional education; and filling the technician gap, particularly where large numbers of workers are retiring in key industries.

The conference must address “growing into that space which traditional universities have neglected over a number of years,” said Mr Doel.

The final goal was reaching the long-term unemployed and providing an alternative to continuing on benefits.

“If you look at those four elements of core government policy, my suggestion is you



Martin Doel and, inset, with Alix Robertson

won’t achieve those four policies without a pattern of locally responsive colleges that meet local economic needs,” said Mr Doel.

“That’s why the conference theme is ‘Powering the Economy’ — you won’t power the economy if you don’t have a pattern of colleges that provides that pathway into

level three, four and five and responds to the local economic community — those are the distinctive things that colleges can do.”

Doel on... area reviews

Are area reviews simply college finance and stability plans?

The motivation towards having area reviews is financial. The cuts that have been sustained so far mean an increasing number of colleges will become financially inadequate. The fact the sector delivered a net deficit ... that’s the reason behind area reviews.

Will area reviews succeed in making college finances more stable?

It’s dependent on how well the reviews are carried out, and also it’s one thing carrying out the reviews and another thing to carry through the recommendations.

If the government wants colleges to take on new structures, new groupings, and actually to collaborate as well as compete, then that’s a significant transition — and for a group of businesses that don’t have much spare cash around, there ought to be a restructuring or transition fund to assist them. Mergers in the short term cost money. Reshaping your provision, even if you don’t merge, means moving resources, staff, from one place to another, concentrating on facilities here rather than there.

Do you think University Technical Colleges (UTCs) should have been part of the process?

Yes, and especially because they’re aiming to offer technical and professional provision, which is the core role of FE colleges. I can see how involving every school in the country in a review of 16 to 18 education would have made it an exceptionally complicated exercise. That’s not to say though, in some areas, it wouldn’t be very helpful and useful to have schools involved.

Is it right that area reviews are designed within Local Enterprise Partnership (Lep) boundaries?

My recommendation to the department has been to think in smaller groups, which might be sub-Lep areas. I also think the Leps are not a good match for travel-to-learn patterns. I think we need to be much more organic about this, and understand where the viable groupings or the most likely groupings are.

Are the right people chairing area review boards?

I’m hoping that the steering committee in BIS and DfE, who are overseeing the area review areas, are learning as they go. I also don’t think Leps are particularly equipped to lead reviews; therefore I’m very pleased that the FE Commissioner, or the Sixth Form College Commissioner, are chairing and doing work for them, informed by the Leps.

How many colleges might be lost during the area review process and how many might be merged?

You hear stories about 100 colleges disappearing, but history just doesn’t bear that out. We’ve done some recent analysis of colleges, which looks at the period since 1992, and the process by which over 400 colleges reduced down to just over 300 colleges. The greatest number of mergers in any one year in that process was 10 and there was substantial financial support to enable those to take place. Maybe we might do more than 10 mergers in one year, but I find it very hard to see we will do 100 a year. Financially I think it will be closer to 10, and if there is consolidation after the area reviews this will be a three to four-year process, and as likely as full mergers will be situations where colleges collaborate in order to deliver complementary provision across an area.

NEWS

Ten-point plan for apprenticeship success

@REBECCAJONES932
REBECCA.JONES@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A ten-point plan to help deliver the government’s 3m apprenticeships target has been issued by senior apprenticeship official Jennifer Coupland.

Ms Coupland, head of the Department for Business, Skills and Innovation (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE) apprenticeship unit, reeled off the points at a seminar themed ‘Where next for apprenticeships’ on Wednesday (November 11).

An audience of more than 300 delegates at the Westminster Employment Forum event listened to her discuss hitting the “huge” 3m target, but little detail was given on the apprenticeship levy with the spending review looming.

She said: “It [the target] actually means having more than one apprentice starting an apprenticeship every minute for the next five years — so that is quite a sobering thought.”

To tackle the target, Ms Coupland revealed her ten-point strategy to grow apprenticeship starts from “2.4m in the previous five years” to 3m by the end of this Parliament.

She said: “The first round of the strategy is all about quality.

“The key here is that we ought to take forward that we have started trailblazers — so putting employers in control of designing the standards that apprentices train against and the assessment plans that they will be assessed against to insure that they really are competent to do the job that they have been training to do.”

She then said the second was “employer-routed funding”, the third focused on “the public sector”, to encourage more apprenticeship, and the fourth strand was helping “small businesses”.

It was followed by the fifth strand which will be focused on engaging with “large businesses”.

The other strategy points listed were



Jennifer Coupland



Jeremy Benson



“marketing and communications”, “careers advice and guidance”, and “delivery of training and working with providers”.

She said: “This bit of the strategy is around the supply and delivery of training and working with providers, and getting FE colleges and training providers geared up so that they’re in a good position to offer the training that employers will want.”

A “steady state system of apprenticeship governance” and, having more focus on “degree and higher level apprenticeships” were the final points.

She said: “If it works and we have come on the right track, I think we should have taken on 20 apprentices in the time that I have been speaking”.

Following Ms Coupland’s talk, Ofqual executive director for vocational qualifications Jeremy Benson discussed, among other issues, the “life cycle of qualifications”.

He said: “For a qualification to work effectively it needs to do more than to be well designed — it has to be delivered and it has to be kept under review.”

Mr Benson said: “Ofqual looks at what

awarding organisations are doing and how they regulate.

“We don’t just look at the qualification, we look at all the other things as well.”

He added: “People often think our focus is up front on checking the qualification process, but we don’t rely on that being the only thing that is important.”

See feweek.co.uk for more on Ms Coupland’s ten-point plan

Continued from front...

Comprehensive Spending Review this month, as it has from other funding cuts this year, leaving the remainder of the ASB on the chopping block.

There are, according to the information supplied to *FE Week*, 25 general FE colleges whose 19+ apprenticeship allocation represents less than 10 per cent of their 2015/16 ASB allocation.

Ten of these, six of which are in London, have a combined 16 to 18 and 19+ apprenticeship allocation of less than £500,000 for 2015/16.

Ms Frith said: “Colleges take their roles very seriously and are working very hard to keep up with and respond to the significant changes that are being made at national policy level around apprenticeships, devolution and funding.

“Colleges have always been about more than apprenticeships and we know that colleges deliver a higher percentage

of the Stem subjects and higher level apprenticeships than other providers.

“A college’s response to apprenticeship reform has to be made within the context of the full mix of the education and training they provide and so it is not surprising to see no direct results as yet.

“The precise detail of some of the more significant elements of the reform is not yet known, so colleges should not be expected to be implementing plans. However, colleges should start planning their strategic response to the reforms that impact on their provision, including apprenticeships.

“While colleges did not set the target of

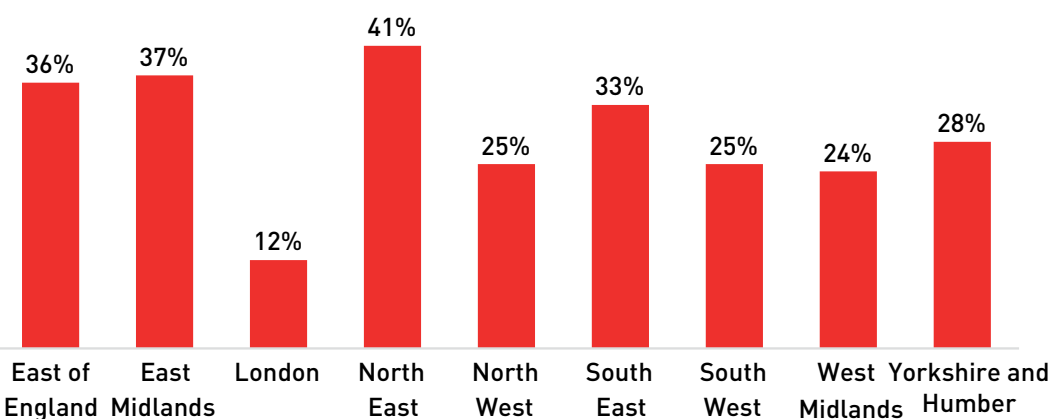
3m apprenticeship starts, they do see a significant role for themselves in supporting its achievement, but they must balance this against the needs of their local business communities and students.”

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills said:

“Colleges play an important role in the delivery of apprenticeships and we continue to work with them to reach our ambition of 3m apprenticeships by 2020.”

See the next edition of *FE Week* for more analysis

Percentage of total GFE colleges 2015/16 adult skills budget allocation to be used for 19+ apprenticeships, by region



FE WEEK COMMENT

Apprenticeships or bust

It is widely feared the Adult Skills Budget (ASB), which includes apprenticeships, will be slashed by at least 40 per cent in the upcoming budget.

Apprenticeships will be protected, so on current allocations it would require a 68 per cent cut to the non-apprenticeship delivery to find the 40 per cent saving.

Let me rephrase that.

Colleges doing little or no apprenticeships would see their ASB cut by a whopping 68 per cent.

These colleges must surely quickly expand their provision and take advantage of the new bi-annual Skills Funding Agency apprenticeship growth requests?

Time will tell if the apprenticeship reforms help, but it may also be running out as the cuts and area reviews close in.

Act now colleges, before it's too late.

Chris Henwood
chris.henwood@feweek.co.uk

TOP #WESTMINSTER FORUM TWEETS

- @JacCanton
Great to speak about apprenticeships this morning. Challenges ahead, for sure, but lots of opportunities too #WEmFEvents
- @davidharbourne
We don't really learn from other countries' apprenticeship systems. If we did, we'd be talking about Scotland. #wemfevents
- @hannahgsimpkins
Concern about #apprenticeship policy voiced at #wemfevents - balance between depth & breadth, support for SMEs and quality of the 3 million
- @G_Gathercole
Parity of esteem is wrong ambition, places the bar too low, apprenticeships need 2 b high quality & highly desired route (2/2) #WEmFEvents
- @JamPond
@JenniferCouplan Love the 10 point strategy. Let's talk about how @SharonWalpole + @notgoingtouni can help deliver this! #wemfevents



College chairs' bid to prevent Chancellor raid

@ALIXROBERTSON4
ALIX.ROBERTSON@FEWEEK.CO.UK

More than 100 college governors' board chairs put on a united front to Prime Minister David Cameron in a desperate bid to defend FE funding from Chancellor George Osborne and the impending Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

They wrote to Mr Cameron outlining the sector's "parlous financial state that has been caused by the impact of an accumulation of funding changes that have uniquely hit colleges".

The letter outlined the effect of cuts this year of 24 per cent and then a further 3.9 per cent, along with the 17.5 per cent reduction in funding for full-time 18-year-olds, among other issues affecting colleges.

It was signed by 127 chairs of colleges across the country and comes ahead of the CSR, which is expected on November 25.

It said in the letter: "The National Audit Office study into the sector expressed concern about its financial health, and the Education Secretary has also said the sector is financially "fragile". Professor

Alison Wolf, in her most recent research paper, commented that the sector was heading for the precipice in financial terms."

It added: "There is a real fear that further funding cuts in the next CSR round will indeed tip us "over the precipice". Moreover, there is an even greater fear that this could happen by accident or a lack of detailed understanding of the impact of recent decisions.

"The CSR offers an opportunity to ensure colleges can help government deliver what it aims to achieve."

The chairs went on to issue five requests of Mr Cameron. They said they wanted "no further reduction in the quantum of adult funding" and "consistent and equitable funding for all 16 to 18-year-olds at college".

They also said they wanted "more certainty and predictability of funding over a reasonable period of time, ideally three years" and a "re-examination of the current thinking relating to post 16 provision" along with all current and proposed post 16 providers to be included in post-16 education area reviews.

The final request was for "recognition that effective delivery of the maths and English agenda requires new and adequate resources, sufficient funding and long-term support to help recruit qualified specialist staff".

The letter, dated October 31, concluded: "Colleges have a vital role in helping your government achieve its ambitions with regard to social cohesion, social mobility and economic success.

"We are unique and responsive institutions that share these same ambitions and care deeply about our communities.

"We hope this letter clearly explains our fears and frustrations that we cannot do this as effectively as we would like and hope you will consider our concerns and our proposals which we believe will better deliver your government's agenda."

The Association of Colleges said it supported the letter.

Number 10 declined to comment, but confirmed the letter had been received and said that a response would be given in due course.

COMMENTS

Demise of the two-year college course

The need is for many more apprenticeships – the managed linking of theoretical input with sustained work place learning to achieve industry (not government) designed standards. The recent clamour for more and better careers advice, especially at school, is well placed and overdue, but will lead to greater frustration on the part of young people who will continue to demand full-time off the job courses if they cannot find a suitable local apprenticeship. The urgent need is for many, many more apprenticeship offers from employers. That is the immediate priority.

Graham Hoyle OBE

Two-year study programmes are essential for the learner with learning difficulties especially if they

have to retake maths and English-remember a more mature 18-year-old emerges ready to take on the full spectrum of responsibilities of an apprentice. Nowhere is the independent training provider mentioned who can provide apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships for those young people who do not want to go to a college but are already feeling the financial pressure of the RPA – further cuts would render some Independent Training Providers unable to continue. Let's think this out again – supporting all sectors of the World of Education including the young person. University starting age is 18 years are you encouraging the young person away from university as well by encouraging apprenticeships at 17.

Chris Pritchard

Sadly yet another ill thought through plan to increase apprenticeship numbers. Many of our learners in the FE Sector are with us because they need additional time to grow and develop as young adults. To achieve this in one year is not going to happen for the vast majority of those from vulnerable backgrounds and those requiring English and Maths qualifications.

I am concerned the sector will receive yet more criticism from employers as they try to work with youngsters who we know are not ready for the apprenticeship route at 17.

Sue Martin

NEWS

Sixth Form College Commissioner shares area review load with new advisers

@BILLYCAMDEN
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

These are some of the faces in Sixth Form College Commissioner Peter Mucklow’s new team as he shares the growing work load of post-16 area reviews.

They include an academy trust chief executive, a former sixth form college umbrella organisation executive director, an ex-Ofsted inspector and, of course, some old sixth form college principals.

The six new advisers were appointed by the Department for Education on two-year contracts paying up to £600 a-day.

An Education Funding Agency spokesperson said: “The team of six will support Mr Mucklow with both the early and formal intervention process to tackle poor performance, either in terms of financial management or quality. They will also support the series of area-based reviews of provision.”

The posts were advertised in September in a joint recruitment drive with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which was looking for deputies at £700 a-day, and advisers, at £600 a-day, for FE Commissioner Dr David Collins.

The application process for all posts ended on September 30, but a BIS spokesperson said it had not made any appointments to Dr Collins team of 11 advisers yet.

Both commissioners have chair roles in area reviews and so far seven have been

announced for 83 general FE colleges and sixth form colleges across seven regions.

More reviews are expected to be announced soon and Mr Mucklow will be able to call on the help of Neil Hopkins, Felicity Greeves, Daphne King, Josephine Nowacki, along with John Boyle and Mike Southworth, whose appointments in August were previously reported by *FE Week*.

Mr Hopkins, a governor at Sparsholt College, was principal of Peter Symonds College for 20 years until 2013. He was then executive director of the Maple Group of sixth form colleges from 2013 to 2015.

Ms Greeves is chief executive of the Fylde Coast Academy Trust and the Fylde Coast Teaching School. She was previously principal of Blackpool Sixth Form College from 2004 to 2014.

Ms King is the former principal of East Norfolk Sixth Form College from 2012 to August 2015. She is a trustee for the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.

And former Ofsted FE and skills inspector Ms Nowacki completes the new appointments. She worked for the education watchdog from 2003 until 2015.

She was a senior inspector for North East, Yorkshire and the Humber in her last two years at Ofsted.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association, said: “We welcome the appointment of the new sixth form college advisers. All are highly regarded individuals with significant experience in the



Daphne King



Felicity Greeves



Neil Hopkins



Peter Mucklow



FE Week cartoon from edition 147, dated September 21 about the commissioners’ recruitment drive

sixth form college sector.
“Although we have major concerns about the rushed implementation of the ill-conceived area review policy, we hope these advisers will help to ensure the distinct identity and ethos of sixth form colleges is not lost through the process.”
Mark Bramwell, associate director of

sixth form colleges at the Association of Colleges, said: “We welcome these additional commissioners as they all have recent and extensive experience of the work of sixth form colleges.
“We are pleased to see the distinctive interests of sixth form colleges being reflected in the make-up of the area review teams.”

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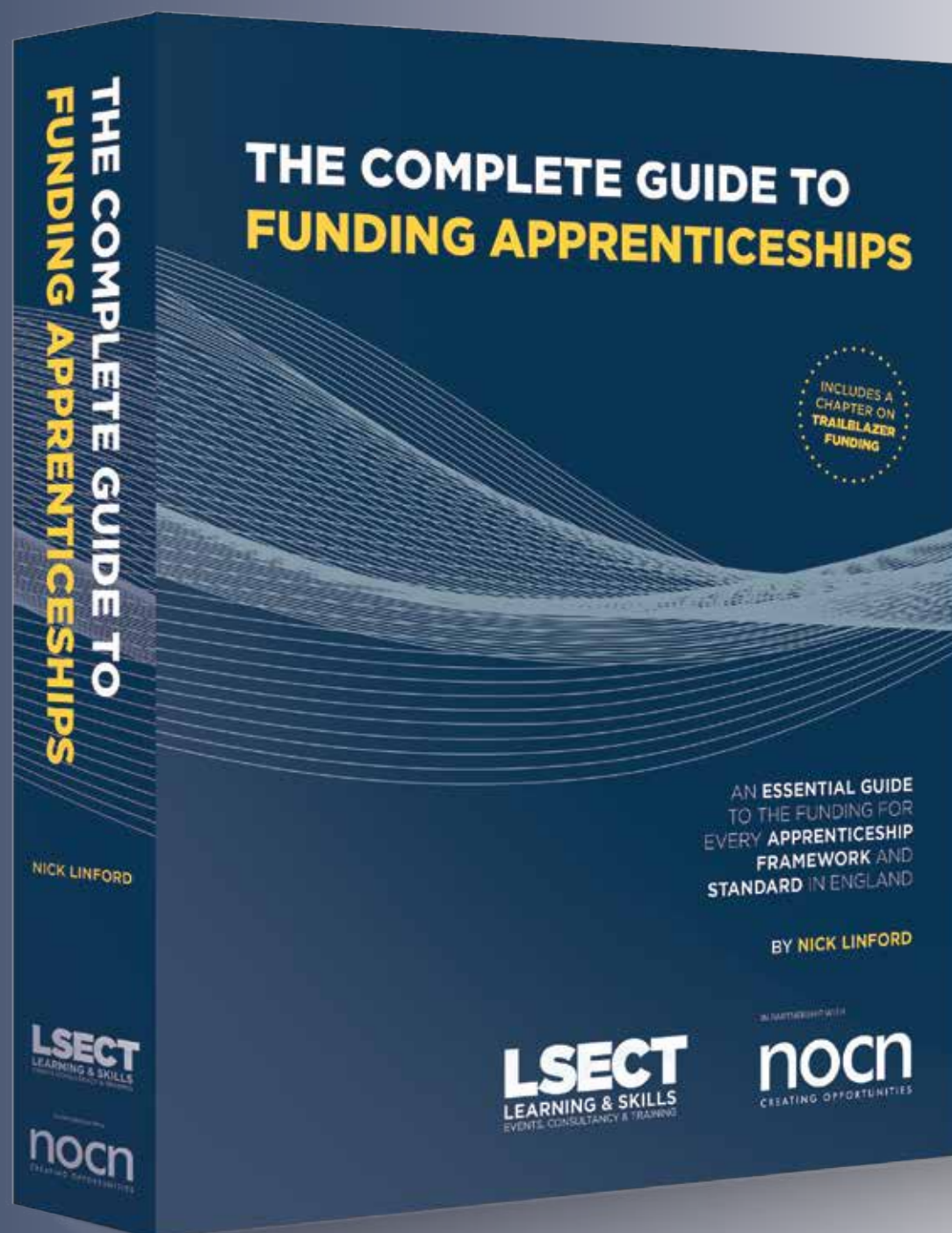
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Dear Dr Sue

On the third Monday of every month Dr Sue, Hoxex director of policy and external relations, answers your questions, backed by the experience of almost a decade as principal of Canterbury College, in addition to time served in senior civil service posts at central government departments covering education and skills.

CURRICULUM CHANGES

I have been a college governor for almost six years now and it seems that as soon as we get an understanding of how courses and programmes are working it all changes again. I am not sure how we are supposed to oversee quality when the goal posts of content and format keep changing. We now hear Lord Sainsbury is going to undertake a review of content and establish “up to 20 specific new professional and technical routes”. It takes a long time to establish a quality brand and I just don’t see what is gained from constantly changing the landscape.

You are right in that constantly changing the content and format of programmes doesn’t help providers and learners and, it certainly doesn’t assist employers when they are recruiting new staff. Just defining new routes alone is not enough.

There are three essential elements which do not change; the content needs to be relevant, the programmes on offer need to be responsive to employers’ current and projected needs, and the qualifications gained should be a passport to a job and/or progression into higher education.

Getting started on the ladder is just as important as having a ladder to climb. We should not forget that those who had a bad start in education, or need to retrain in later life, must have access to basic education and skills provision to set them on their way.

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE ACADEMY CONVERSION

I am a sixth form college governor and we recently reviewed our mission and intend to concentrate on our strengths. We do very little with those aged over 21 and, although the budget is tight, we are managing well and our student experience, reputation and results are very good. However, when we look for support for our staff and for management development, we find ourselves looking towards the schools sector and the training offered there. Also, we recruit mainly from schools and so we are thinking we should apply to become a Free School or an Academy, but every time we suggest it we are knocked back.

First of all, well done for reviewing your mission and for the analysis of your current position. This should put you in a good place when your college is considered under an area review. I have always thought that good sixth form colleges were ‘education gems’ because

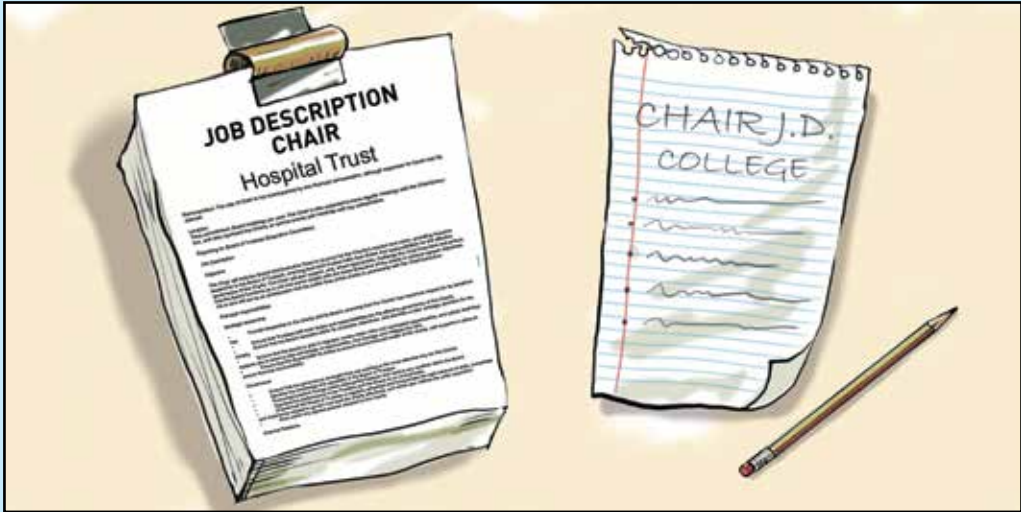
CHAIR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

I am the chair of a college and also a hospital trust. For the hospital board, I have a lengthy and detailed job description (JD) but, at the college, I have just a brief note given to me by the previous clerk with very little detail. I would like to ask the new clerk to prepare a more detailed description — is that acceptable?

Yes, it is. A modern JD for chairs normally covers what a board member needs to do plus extra detail on the chair role, which is to provide strategic leadership, foster a supportive and constructively challenging working environment between the chair, principal, board and clerk, the need to ensure effective communication and make provision to evaluate overall governance performance. The JD can be used to monitor and appraise the performance of the chair.

Boards often have search committees (or similar working groups) for recruiting new governors. They can help the clerk with the preparatory work. Note, it is good practice to have similar JDs for the vice-chair and for the chairs of sub-committees.

The presentation and approval of the new JDs by the board might be an opportunity to make sure that all governors are clear about roles and responsibilities. These are set out in the Code of Good Governance for Colleges.



the model works so well.

On your question of possibly becoming an Academy, DfE is still considering its position. I share your frustration that anyone can apply to set up a Free School or an Academy but, as an existing sixth form college, you are denied this opportunity. However, it is complicated. Unravelling the existing legal status of the institution, and the way that VAT, pensions and debt must be handled, is no easy task. But, having said that, it all could be sorted if there is a will to do so.

DfE is expecting to come to a decision on this matter sometime soon. My advice would be to wait and not let this be a distraction from focusing on the running of the college at the moment. Just be ready to apply if there is a positive response from DfE.

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PROFILE



I've had a lot of discussion with government on things like funding of reformed apprenticeships and the co-investment side of things



FLYING THE FLAG FOR SMALL BUSIN

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Like father like son is a fitting phrase to sum up the first career step of David Pollard who followed the footsteps of dad Bert into the Royal Air Force.

At the age of 18, Pollard found himself applying for numerous jobs after leaving King James's Grammar School in Huddersfield, but what he wanted most was a job that filled him with adrenaline.

The current Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) chair for education, skills and business support says: "My ambition when I was younger was to become a fighter pilot — which was the big thing at the time."

He begins to smile and adds: "However they [RAF] said: 'You're slightly short-sighted, so you can't be a pilot — but will you be an engineer?' and, like a fool, I said yes."

The aspiration to become a fighter pilot runs in the family and 68-year-old Pollard

explains his father "would have loved to be a pilot also, but he lost an eye as a four-year-old".

So while Pollard senior compromised because of his eye sight and became a motor mechanic, Pollard junior's career path ventured from engineering and lecturing to the FSB.

"My FSB chair post is not an elected one — for the more junior roles like this, we apply and go through a selection process and they appoint the appropriate people with the advice of the team. It's voluntary and it's unpaid," explains Pollard, who got the chair job two years ago.

He had joined the RAF in 1964 and carried out a degree in aeronautical engineering and management at the RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire.

Then he worked as an engineer for the RAF for six years where he served at a range of locations across the country. During this time he started to develop an interest in FE.

He says: "One of the things I remember as an 11-year-old was that my father started evening classes at the local technical college because he was a motor mechanic and he wanted to do something more."

His father completed a higher national certificate in mechanical engineering to develop his career and Pollard also remembers one of his sergeants doing the same course when he was in the Air Force.

"The Air Force was very big on the training development of people, so that became a feature of my life and the jobs that I did," says Pollard.

He then worked in Algeria for the construction company Bectel on a gas refraction plant and helped train the locals to be able to operate and maintain the plant.

Pollard says: "They were coming from a low education level and I worked closely with a lot of the young Algerian technicians and engineers who hadn't got much experience.

"It was also good working on the development and educational side of things."

Pollard's interest in training and FE began to grow and he had a variety of roles managing engineering companies, working as an assistant lecturer in higher education and FE providers, and being a consultant to numerous growing businesses.

The grandfather-of-one today "represents the interests and aspirations of small businesses" via the FSB.

He carries out a combination of responsibilities which include working with young people through Young Enterprise as a business ambassador.

"The first part of the role is to lobby government to try and make sure that government policies in the education, skills and business support arena work for small businesses," explains Pollard.

"I have been very active on the apprenticeship front, first with the steering group on the Jason Holt report on

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?

I get things I get interested in and then I move on. But I like reading, I have done for years, and I like reading anything that's really interesting and challenging. I am in the process of reading Keith Devlin's book called Introduction to Mathematical Thinking

What do you do to switch off from work?

I pick up a book, get a glass of whisky and sit down, which is a nice way of relaxing. If it's [wife] Jane and myself, then we will watch television together, like a murder mystery or a drama of some sort, and discuss it and spend an evening together

What's your pet hate?

That people equate qualifications with skills, and competency, and we use this word 'skills' in a very loose way to mean several different things, which is confusing, because sometimes when politicians talk about skills, they mean qualifications and other times they mean competency

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

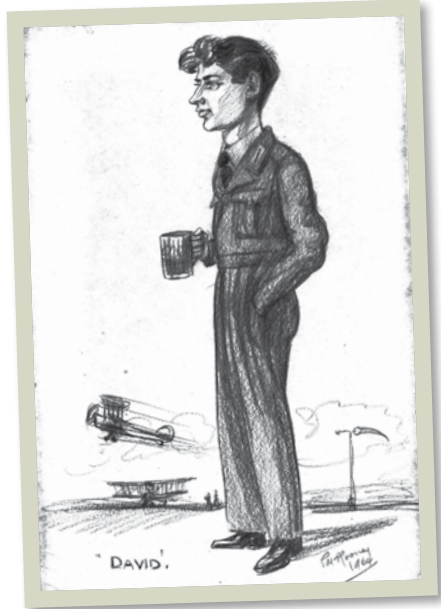
Douglas Bader, an ex Cranwell cadet like me, who lost both legs in a flying accident and left the RAF but returned at the start of the Second World War and was a fighter pilot during the Battle of Britain.
The second one, on the same theme, is a guy called Captain Eric Winkle-Brown, who is a test pilot.
The third person is Angus Deaton, the economist who has won the Nobel Memorial Prize for Economics. He's very interesting, because he's done a lot of work on economics, which is something I got into when I was in the Air Force

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

When I was a 16-year-old I wanted to be a fighter pilot, then a test pilot, then an astronaut. That was the dream career path



Pollard (front row, second from left aged 17) with members of the Rodney Watch at Outward Bound Sea School



A drawing of Pollard, by artist Pat Rooney, when he was in the Royal Air Force in 1964



Pollard aged four in 1950



From left: Pollard's wife Jane, sons Sebastian and Nicholas and Pollard at a wedding in 2010



Pollard holding grandson Corrin two years ago

apprenticeships and SMEs, and then the Richard Review.

“I was in there with lots of other people, but standing up for small businesses and the reality of the world of small businesses, and being involved with the review of the trailblazer apprenticeship standards, and I'm on the apprenticeship stakeholder board, representing the interests of small businesses.

“So I've had a lot of discussion with government on things like funding of reformed apprenticeships and the co-investment side of things, and particularly when they were looking at all sorts of different routes for finance for collecting the co-investment bits.

“We put in a strong case of various routes were really going to be extremely disadvantageous to small businesses, and one of the consequences of that in government would quite likely be that a lot of small businesses would say: ‘This is a step

too far – we can't do it. We can't pay out the full cost of the training and then hope that the bureaucracy or HMRC's systems will deliver us the two-thirds that we're entitled to before we have to pay all the bills'.”

Pollard also works as the director of a company in Hampshire called Southern Business Growth Network which is “trying to set up a network and create facilities to help people, to help businesses, and support people starting up a business”.

Pollard then draws attention to the City & Guilds 'rich list' that has named the wealthiest people who have done their apprenticeships.

The list includes a range of billionaires and millionaires like vacuum tycoon James Dyson (net worth £2.5bn) and TV chef and restaurateur Jamie Oliver (net worth £240m).

He explains that promoting the City & Guilds qualifications through the list was a great mechanism for gaining the attention of

a range of people debating whether to study FE.

“Because it shows you can have a dream, have a job, build a business and grow it — and we need a similar sort of campaign now so people can see why, by doing an apprenticeship, they can get to the top,” he says.

Apprenticeships are key for Pollard, but he believes there is room for improvement.

Pollard says: “A footballer told me at a Referees' Association meeting that ‘the difference between the continental players and the British players is the continental players go to the training ground on a Monday morning to train, but the British players go to be trained’.

“There's a subtle difference there — a different mental attitude — and I think we've created that mental attitude in people.”

Pollard recalls an unspecified meeting at which an ex-RAF sergeant made a comment

about the high standard of staff in German banks, some of who had done financial service industry apprenticeships.

Pollard explains this could be down to the German apprenticeship being three years long and the English equivalent being one year long.

He says: “By the time you've had three years you have seen 70 per cent of what you are likely to get in the actual role — so you're very competent at doing that job and you can be left alone to do it.

“Whereas we've got the idea that as long as we can throw a little bit at them [apprentices] and they can then quickly tell us that they've remembered what we've told them, then we're competent.

“And it's this difference between doing something because you've got a qualification and actually having the time to embed it and learn from some of your mistakes, to discover that you are really good and competent at the job.”

EXPERTS



DAME ASHA
KHEMKA

Principal of West
Nottinghamshire College

Colleges can meet new policy for young apprenticeships — but are the jobs there?

The Department for Education’s plans to get 16-year-old classroom-based vocational learners into apprenticeships after a year are assessed by Dame Asha Khemka.

Skills Minister Nick Boles’ announcement of a “ground-breaking” overhaul of technical and professional education last week represented the latest in a long line of reforms to the FE and skills sector.

The proposed reforms provide us with some interesting questions, perhaps some opportunities and almost certainly several challenges – not just for the sector but for government in its implementation.

The cynical view is that this is yet another erosion of colleges; that this policy is a way of diverting funding from the full-time study programme to achieve the 3m apprenticeship target, which will be challenging to meet and even harder to fund.

Apprenticeships are not inherently ‘cheaper’ in funding terms, yet around 70 per cent are currently not delivered within colleges.

Take this to its ultimate conclusion and there is a risk that college funding will be reduced — particularly if we lose our 16 to 18-year-olds to other providers from the age of 17.

Some of our young people already progress from a one-year level two course onto an apprenticeship, or leave their study programme early to pursue one — so having a system that recognises this as a valid and intentional route is no bad thing.

If the policy works as it should, then colleges will be best placed to offer that progression route. It will also enable us to extend our provision of directly-delivered apprenticeships and create opportunities for strategic relationships with more employers, providing the pipeline for their future workforce in a structured way.

Who knows, this may redress the balance and see more apprenticeships delivered by colleges within this parliament which, in turn, may well enhance the sector’s reputation with government as we become a key leader in meeting this major priority for skills. This could finally be an opportunity to create a vocational pathway that is as highly-valued as the academic.

There are, however, pitfalls. The major issue with this policy agenda rests with the availability of high-quality apprenticeship places for 16 to 18-year-olds that lead to real jobs. There seems to be an assumption that if young people want and are ready for an apprenticeship, they will be able to access

one. Yet this ignores the essential ingredient — an actual vacancy.

We already know that the number of apprenticeship vacancies is the single biggest limiting factor in young people following this pathway. What will be different under these reforms to change that?

The risk is we create a two-tier system whereby the brightest progress and the rest are left behind. If the government uses some kind of financial ‘bribe’ to encourage employers to take on an apprentice, there becomes a real danger that no sustainable and long-term employment is available for them once they complete their training — potentially leaving us with a cadre of young people without a job at the end of their apprenticeship.

How will these latest reforms affect the viability of courses within colleges?

If only half of students can progress, then surely the second year of a full-time study programme suddenly looks a lot less viable than before. What about the readiness of young people to progress?

The major issue with this policy agenda rests with the availability of high-quality apprenticeship places for 16 to 18-year-olds that lead to real jobs

We all know that not all 17-year-olds are the same. Some are more than ready to take on the challenge of work while others need more time learning the softer skills needed to be a great employee. What will the 20 vocational routes look like? And where do ‘hybrid’ subjects like creative media sit?

If all this seems as though there are far more questions than answers, it’s because there are.

However, one thing is certain. The sector that emerges from the current reforms will be very different to the one we know. Will it be stronger? If the vision being set out is realised and we take the opportunities on offer, then yes — I believe it will be.



STEWART
SEGAL

Chief executive of the
Association of Employment and
Learning Providers (AELP)

‘We hope the DfE-appointed group will have an open mind to solutions’

If the Department for Education (DfE) wants to get more 17-year-olds onto apprenticeships then it will need to consider the role that the independent learning provider sector can play, says Stewart Segal.

In placing a focus on the development of technical and professional skills, it is good that the DfE review is of a wider set of skills than just technical skills and it should include the IT, finance, legal and managerial skills which are required across many different sectors.

In AELP’s view, the biggest skill shortage in the UK is managerial skills.

We hope the review will look carefully at the existing delivery systems and not jump to a conclusion that we need a ‘new system’.

Clearly there are improvements we can make to the current system and we know we need to encourage more people to take new routes to higher level skills but everyone in our sector knows that constant change can confuse our customers, so we need to be careful about the implementation of any ‘ground breaking reforms’. We are certainly not against change but it has to build on what works.

High quality technical and professional training is the key for both young people looking at job and career options as well as older people looking at career development.

Everyone will have a different entry point and that may be at all levels in the qualifications system. We need to ensure everyone has a chance to climb the ladder of opportunities including apprentices to give them a route to higher level skills.

For young people the routes into the world of work look complex and AELP has long proposed a stop to the constant changes to work preparation programmes and instead much more of a focus on traineeships and apprenticeships as the key routes, but not the only routes into work.

We are not sure about the target to create ‘up to 20 new specific routes’ into work or education because it sounds like a pre-conceived solution before we know what the problem is.

We hope that the DfE-appointed group will have an open mind to the solutions and that they will be customer focused and not focused on particular structures or institutions. Many different types of providers are involved in delivering technical and professional training and

the solution must recognise that choice for learners and employers.

We support the option of apprenticeships as an important choice for young people and older workers looking to get the higher level skills that will move them into sustained employment.

Many young people in particular will need the support of the traineeship programme to get them their first step on the ladder.

As the DfE press release says, only 6.9 per cent of 17-year-olds take an apprenticeship which could be a lot higher if young people were given better information about their options at school.

There are many of those young people in jobs who are not apprentices and we need to ensure more of them participate in the programme.

The focus on getting more people on to an apprenticeship applies to all providers. Independent learning providers and colleges can deliver more apprenticeships, but it takes time and effort to get more employers to make the big commitment to employ an apprentice. We welcome the support of the Confederation of British Industry

The focus on getting more people on to an apprenticeship applies to all providers

and the Federation of Small Businesses in doing this, but we must have a responsive contracting and funding system that supports that growth.

Many technical and professional apprenticeship programmes are delivered by partnerships of private and college providers where the college might provide some of the technical training.

These partnerships need to be recognised by the review and we will therefore want to work closely with the review group to ensure they consider all of the issues across the sector.

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EXPERTS



GRAHAM
HASTING-EVANS

Managing director of awarding
organisation NOCN

Big changes are coming for the
FE sector, are you ready?

It might be a busy few days at Association of Colleges (AoC) conference, but that is set to continue with an extensive programme of reforms hitting the sector, as Graham Hasting-Evans explains.

Many will be focused on their post-16 area reviews or looking forward to their ‘turn’ with apprehension.

FE Commissioner Dr David Collins has already revealed early findings from the first wave of these reviews.

Speaking at this year’s Higher and Further Education Show following he said during the next 18 months he and a team of advisers would be travelling the country “endeavouring and encouraging marriages, federations and divorces between colleges to try and set up a sustainable FE sector”.

But this is not the only major policy change happening. Arguably we have change overload.

Let’s start with funding — always a good place to begin.

Budgets are being cut. Everyone is expecting the November 25 autumn statement will tell us how bad it will be.

There is also likely to be a major shift in the funding mechanism. We are expecting this to probably include a de-centralisation of whatever is left of the Adult Skills Budget and a move to funding on the basis of outcome performance statistics. In other words a lot less money cut up differently.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have a place in all of this but not all the country has a LEP in place and many are still trying to work out what they should be doing and how to do it.

For many, funding will be seen as the major and immediate challenge — but that is only the start.

The whole focus for the curriculum will be changing. There will be more focus on improving English and maths, through GCSEs and an upgrading of Functional Skills (reform of Functional Skills is likely to happen in 2016).

There will be an increase in professional and

technical courses and qualifications from now; and there will be courses and qualifications aimed at getting people into a job in a certain sector as well as into a specific job role or apprenticeship.

There will be a ramping up of the apprenticeship numbers to achieve the 3m target; and root and branch reform of apprenticeships with the ‘old’ SASE frameworks frozen and all ‘new’ apprenticeships modelled on the Trailblazer approach complete for delivery by September 2017.

For many, funding will be seen as the major and immediate challenge — but that is only the start

There will be changes to the funding of apprenticeships from this year as a transition to the introduction of full employer funding through the new planned HMRC-administered levy from September 2017; and major changes on how apprentices are regulated and governed by Government and employers.

There will also be replacement of the QCF with the RQF by Ofqual; new EU procurement rules with the AoC initiative already underway; and support for the unemployed and those with learning difficulties.

All of which is a very ambitious programme of change for 2016-17 and much of these policy changes lack the necessary detail.

There is a complete lack of clarity over how much of this will work, despite the fact that much of the change is due to happen over the next nine to ten months.

People are also questioning how the current Trailblazer process can ramp up from some 400 apprenticeship registrations against the 50 completed Trailblazer standards to 3m in this Parliament. The concern is it will only be achieved by cutting the quality which is in direct conflict with the objective of the reforms.

And all of this policy change is happening as the area reviews and fundamental restructuring of provision is being carried out leaving the area review teams facing some challenge.

They have to first review the present provision against current known demands. Then (using perhaps a crystal ball) they have to decide what will be the impact of all the policy changes in their area, many of which are still not clear.

Mr Hasting-Evans is due to chair a one-hour AoC conference fringe session, *Delivering innovative routes to employment with Local Enterprise Partnerships*, on Thursday (November 19) from 9am.

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EXPERTS



SAM PARRETT

Principal of Bromley College of Further and Higher Education

Filling the vocational void

Sam Parrett outlines her view of the role of colleges in delivering careers education to as young an audience as possible.

The conversation about careers education is a long running one. However, there is little doubt that young people need more guidance at a much earlier stage.

For me, this must begin at primary school. Children should be presented with a balanced view of what ‘success’ means and the understanding that there are a huge number of equally valid ways to reach hundreds of exciting and rewarding careers.

The importance of academic success is highlighted very early on in a young person’s educational journey, with little mention of vocational and employability skills. The result? Employers bemoaning the fact that school leavers are not fit for work despite being armed with an array of academic qualifications.

We need to work together, as a society, to

dispel the myth that academic achievement is the only marker of success that matters. Going to university is a fantastic option for many people but by no means the only one and certainly not ‘the best’ route for everyone.

I talk to students at my college who have embarked on several pathways before finding the right one. Although not irreversible, much damage can be done to a person’s confidence and self-belief when their chosen educational route doesn’t ‘work out’.

Recent research by think tank Demos revealed that as children get older, they get unhappier. Final year students are half as likely to be happy in their lives as 14-year-olds and much less likely to think parents or teachers believe in them.

I believe this is a direct result of an education system that is constantly narrowing to focus solely on academic achievement. Little room is available in the curriculum to work on building confidence, practical skills and team building —

ultimately essential employability skills.

FE colleges must step in here. Our establishments are unique in that we provide people with many options to upskill, re-train and follow career ambitions. With a huge range of flexible learning programmes, people can fit study around existing jobs and commitments, re-focusing and ultimately achieving their true aspirations.

But are there ways for FE colleges to get involved at an earlier stage? Can we reach and influence young people before they feel compelled to pursue a route that is not right for them?

We are doing all we can to help provide people with guidance and options from a younger age

I believe the answer is very much ‘yes’. FE colleges are the hub of communities and in Bromley we are doing all we can to help provide people with guidance and options from a younger age.

From our Children’s University, which

encourages 5 to 14-year-olds to develop new skills outside of the classroom, to our pioneering, employer-led Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career College for 14 to 19-year-olds — we have been breaking new ground for some time.

We are also currently undertaking a Growth Mind-Set pilot project with our Year 10 students. Research has shown that young people who are encouraged to adopt a growth mind-set as opposed to a fixed mind-set are more likely to persist in the face of failure and achieve their full potential.

Rewarding effort and avoiding praise that focuses solely on intelligence or talent is key. This type of approach can be implemented easily within an FE environment and helps both staff and students to recognise the many elements of success.

Going forward, 2017 will see the opening of our new University Technical College for 13 to 18-year-olds, specialising in Health and Wellbeing sciences in partnership with Kings College Hospital and other key employers.

All these initiatives will provide young people with new and exciting pathways to fulfilling careers — as well as helping employers secure a skilled and ambitious future workforce.

Times are tough right now and diversifying within the FE sector is not for the faint-hearted.

However, we must be bold and pick up where the rest of the education system is failing by opening up opportunity and filling the vocational void.

Changes to the handling of physical currency, paper-based invoicing and unpaid fees could just be key to financial survival as FE colleges look for savings in every area of business, explains Holger Bollman.

The government has taken every opportunity to affirm and reaffirm its overriding economic goal — to eliminate the nation’s budgetary deficit.

Whether this is a worthy or unworthy cause is ultimately a matter of opinion, but as those working in FE know all too well, that it has caused some collateral damage is not.

In 2015, FE colleges have to contend with some brutal realities. They face a 20 per cent decrease to overall spending, and the Skills Funding Agency has stated that, in-year, public sector financing will diminish by 3.9 per cent.

Already, the damage has been felt in educational institutions across the country, and as the Conservatives are only a few months into a five-year parliament, there is every possibility that there will be more to come.

Barring a sudden and inexplicable change of heart, the only option available is to adapt to these new circumstances. Happily enough, there are certain areas in which FE colleges can make significant savings without compromising academic integrity.

Firstly, physical currency. In the UK, using cash for payments is no longer the norm — not only is ‘plastic’ ubiquitous, but with the advent of contactless technology and increasingly seamless authentication methods, it’s more convenient to use than



HOLGER BOLLMANN

Director at FE/higher education payments specialist WPM Education

Taking out insurance against further cuts

ever.

Despite this, cash offices are still prominent in FE colleges throughout the country, and even in smaller organisations, they can still accumulate around £1m per year.

Handling this cash always proves burdensome in the extreme. Firstly, it has to be counted more than once to ensure there are no discrepancies — and if the cash is present in quantities exceeding a certain amount you’ll often need at least two staff members available to avoid any potential loss. And the money needs to be protected — this involves either investing in on-site safes (which need to be monitored), or organising secure collections.

It’s a time and labour-intensive process, but it can be avoided. If you remove your college’s cash office and instead take payments online you could save up to £30,000 per year.

Secondly, paper-based invoicing. Paper invoices are a pain for educational institutions in many different respects. They always require a substantial amount of effort to process.

In many cases, time expended in their

pursuit can exceed the value of money owed in the first place; it’s estimated that the average paper invoice costs £37 to pursue, so when it comes to lower-value transactions, colleges are almost always losing money.

Because they cannot charge students for these administration costs, paper invoices put colleges in an uncomfortable position — they can either enjoy the insignificant victory of recouping these minor debts, or not pursue them at all — and therefore encourage this behaviour (and possible further losses). By ditching paper invoices in favour of real-time online payments, colleges will save time and money. It’s as simple as that.

Third, unpaid fees. While these minor sums are certainly an inconvenience, they pale in comparison to the cost of outstanding debt on graduation. This is something of an epidemic across further and higher education. It is rarely purposeful — students tend to compartmentalise their time in education, and once they move on, they tend to move on in all respects.

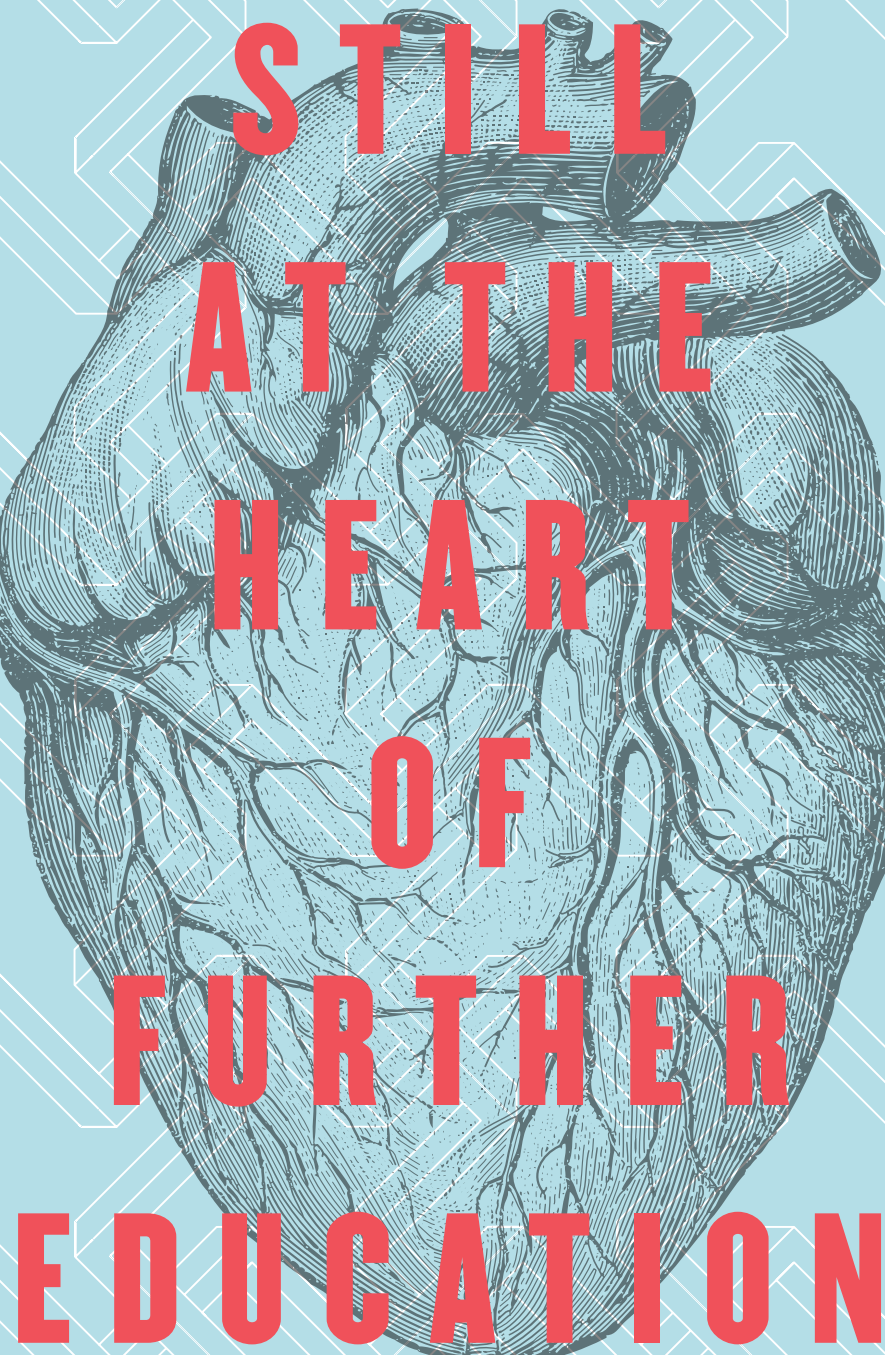
That said, whether it occurs because of

forgetfulness or intentional non-payment, it causes problems for FE colleges. Again they are presented with an awkward choice — to assume a giant administrative burden chasing debtors, or to allow them to default. There are ways to automate both the process of payment and its pursuit — and FE colleges would be well-advised to take advantage of them.

There are certain areas in which FE colleges can make significant savings without compromising academic integrity

The current political climate means that financial pressure will be a part of colleges’ reality for at least the next few years. But where they may not be able to influence policy, they can influence processes.

By increasing efficiency (whether that comes in the form of reducing paper invoices, getting rid of cash payments or automating debt collection), FE colleges are not just mitigating the damage of cuts that have already happened — they’re insuring themselves against the cuts of the future.

An anatomical illustration of a human heart, rendered in a detailed, etched style. The heart is positioned centrally and is overlaid with large, bold, red capital letters. The background is a light blue color with a repeating geometric pattern of white lines forming a series of interlocking 'W' or 'M' shapes.

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EXPERTS



ANDY WILSON
Principal of Westminster Kingsway College

‘Marketing for a college also promotes the wider FE cause’

Competitive marketing between neighbouring colleges was criticised by FE Commissioner Dr David Collins when he wrote to principals and chairs with his view of a collaborative future. However, Andy Wilson explains how marketing has played its part in his college success story.

Even by the Alice in Wonderland standards the sector has become accustomed to, the FE Commissioner’s recent letter [see feweek.co.uk] was particularly noteworthy.

I only knew the October 30 letter existed through an *FE Week* tweet on November 10. Yet its main wisdom, apart from that large class sizes are more efficient, is that FE colleges spend too much money on individual marketing rather than taking a collective approach.

Following the commissioner’s practice it seems we should all post on a Department for Business, Innovation and Skills website and hope the press pick the message up.

The effectiveness and efficiency of marketing or, more specifically, publicity are an area of regular soul searching at Westminster Kingsway.

We sit at the centre of London and maintain a comprehensive offer for local students by attracting others from all 32 London boroughs and beyond.

We were a regional specialist centre for hospitality long before it was fashionable. However, young people not in education, employment or training (Neet) escaping postcode wars and A-level students wanting to feel close to prestige universities travel considerable distances to us.

Maintaining this wide reach requires buying in the most expensive advertising market in the country.

We use the Evening Standard and commercial radio, albeit sparingly, because it is more cost-effective than the alternative network of local outlets.

Our strategy has helped us grow 16 to 18 numbers by 50 per cent in six years, hit almost all our funding targets and maintain financial reserves which provide some hope of continuing survival. Oh yes, and we have an average class size around 19.

Nobody wants to spend large sums on marketing and everybody believes they are an expert in marketing.

Course marketing is always guaranteed to generate lively debate at meetings of teaching staff. Westminster Kingsway has a small team of well-regarded marketing professionals who regularly contribute to sector events and win awards.

My prejudice is that most of our students initially select us following word of mouth

recommendations. However, our research is clear that these tentative decisions are reinforced through publicity be it open days, school liaison or radio adverts.

More than ever, FE is required to create its own markets. We have been at the forefront in reducing Neet numbers and widening access to higher education.

We must now encourage more people in to science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem) subjects, apprenticeships and routes to employment.

We can all learn and benefit from the more successful college brands

Even the government acknowledges the ‘Green Cross Code Man / Clunk Click / AIDS iceberg’ approach to advertising no longer works. Today brands and identities matter.

The successful promotion of a brand increases sales across competitors as well as for the brand itself. Where would tablet computing be without the iPad?

We know that FE itself lacks that strong identity but we can all learn and benefit from the more successful college brands. The challenge I now pose our marketing team is to understand how to promote Westminster Kingsway to employers as successfully as they have done to 17-year-olds.

Last month’s survey of FE marketing activities by Carthy Communications found an average spend of 1.8 per cent of turnover, a drop in the ocean compared with the cuts we are suffering, or even the public sector ‘rule of thumb’ of 3 per cent. In the private service sector a spend closer to 10 per cent is common.

My biggest beef with the commissioner is his willingness to pick a soft target when the issues we face are so much greater.

Like many others, Westminster Kingsway has seized the challenge to develop a commercial mindset and adopted business strategies to succeed in a difficult market place with uncertain trading conditions.

Am I the only one to detect a nudge away from this back to an old-fashioned, public-sector view of deferential colleges? As the Mad Hatter said: ‘Why is it you’re always too small or too tall?’



CHARLOTTE BOSWORTH

Director of skills and employment at awarding organisation OCR

Nordic fairy tales and learning the lessons of the past

The Department for Education’s new panel tasked looking at a new framework for technical and professional education needs to look at domestic evidence of past attempts to revise the system, says Charlotte Bosworth.

Shortly after the election in 2010, the government asked Professor Alison Wolf to lead a review of vocational education for 14 to 19-year-olds.

The 27 recommendations that came from that report led to the review and revision of funding and accountability regimes and changes to qualifications.

Fast forward to 2015 and following another election a further review of vocational qualifications is announced.

Any external commentator would probably assume that the previous review didn’t work. When the reality is the reform agenda hasn’t matured enough for us to know its relative success or failure.

Fortunately (or unfortunately) as a country we have a number of attempts to revise vocational education to look back on.

There is something to be said for relative stability in educational systems, the often-cited German vocational system has in fact changed very little over the course of the last two (or even more) decades, whereas our own system has been subject to much reform.

One of the difficulties of explaining the education system to anyone who is not immersed in it is that there has been so much change that employers would need to work hard to keep up.

This has been exacerbated by a lack of consistency around names and types of qualifications so employers do not know what the right choice is for them.

In ‘Avoiding the same old mistakes’ the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) warned about the tendency for reforms in England to focus ‘excessively’ on qualifications rather than on the wider system. This is something the review panel needs to consider.

In the recent past, attempts to develop a new system of composite qualifications that blended general and vocational education, the 14-19 diploma, have left scars on those of us who were involved.

Not just in terms of the loss of time and significant investment that was wasted on developments for programmes that were only available for a limited amount of time, but also the wasted enthusiasm of employers and the lost promise to the young people. But I

could cite other examples, NVQs, GNVQs — the list goes on.

I have before called for a more comprehensive review than this one. I think we need a once-in-a-lifetime review of the whole education and skills system and clarity on which institutions deliver what.

There has been so much change that employers would need to work hard to keep up

A review of only one side risks creating imbalance in the system and perpetuating the disparity of understanding of the different pathways that already exist.

While there is much to learn from international comparisons, we must look at the history and context for those reforms and successes, rather than a snapshot of how they are currently constructed. At a seminar run by the Cambridge Assessment Network recently, Tim Oates, group research director of Cambridge Assessment, and Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, founding director of the Centre for the Study of Market Reform of Education, spoke about the research they did into the sudden rise of Finland to the top of PISA tables.

Their analysis into the time-lag effect and taking a historical view of Finland’s education system and cultural development shows the potential pit-falls of ‘education tourism’.

When Finland’s success in the PISA results came about, visitors came to see what about the system in Finland was producing such exceptional results. But the immediate perception was to forget the time-lag effect.

The esteemed panel completing this review will no doubt look for evidence and analysis in order to make their recommendations.

We hope that they look broadly, deeply and with historical and cultural sensitivity to ensure that, even though this review is not as broad in scope as we have called for, it does become an once-in-a-lifetime review we don’t have to revisit after another election.

The Skills Show gets under way on Thursday (November 19) at NEC Birmingham and celebrity entrepreneur Theo Paphitis wants to see as many FE providers as possible.

Vocational education and careers are hot right now. Open any newspaper or magazine, watch TV or listen to the radio, and the talk is all about apprenticeships, traineeships and suitable careers for young people which involve earning while they learn — all music to my ears.

I have always been passionate about skills. Leaving school without any meaningful qualifications can make you really appreciate the learning that you do in the workplace and the skills that you pick up.

I was lucky, I know, to discover the retail sector early in my working life — it inspired me, and motivated me to make the best of myself that I could. So how can we provide similar inspiration for young people to ensure they can make a meaningful contribution to the economy when they are actually out there working?

The government's call to establish 3m apprenticeships during the life of this Parliament has shone a light on the sector, and is providing a great opportunity to showcase how varied and interesting FE is. It should also be a great chance for educators to link up with employers and provide a real link to the workplace for young people. So how can colleges take full advantage and change the perceptions of



THEO PAPHITIS
Skills Show patron, owner of Ryman, Robert Dyas and Boux Avenue, former chair of Millwall Football Club and ex-Dragons' Den investor

Skills Show challenge laid down by former Dragon Theo

some parents that the sector is not for their children?

This month sees the fourth annual Skills Show at the NEC in Birmingham. I am delighted to be patron of this event, which showcases the very best in skills, apprenticeships and careers to more than 75,000 young people, their parents, teachers and other educators. I always make time to fit in a visit to the event, however busy my diary, because it inspires me and I find out new things — so how much more exciting must that be for a young person seeking a future career?

Every year, the college personnel that I talk to at the event say how inspiring it is for them to see so many young people finding their own passions — whether that be in manufacturing, engineering, accountancy, floristry or one of the other many different careers on show at the event. Seeing their peers demonstrate their skills in WorldSkills UK competitions, or hearing the successful Team UK representatives

from WorldSkills São Paulo talk about their experiences earlier this year can only be motivational for visitors.

Of course it is a great opportunity to sign up new students. One college principal last year told me he filled an entire intake for one subject simply by staging a Have-a-Go at the event — that's what I call a marketing budget well spent.

For 2015, event organisers at Find a Future have established a Future Skills zone, showcasing some of the careers which will be vital to sustained economic growth in the future. When I started work, mobile phones were like bricks, and about as agile — technology has moved the world of work to new heights since then.

But careers of the future are not just about space-age technology — the way we live our lives is constantly changing, with new opportunities in all sorts of traditional areas from engineering and manufacturing through to catering and design, and this will undoubtedly create new careers and

training opportunities for all.

Working together at The Skills Show, FE colleges have the chance to change the way people think about skills and vocational education as a whole.


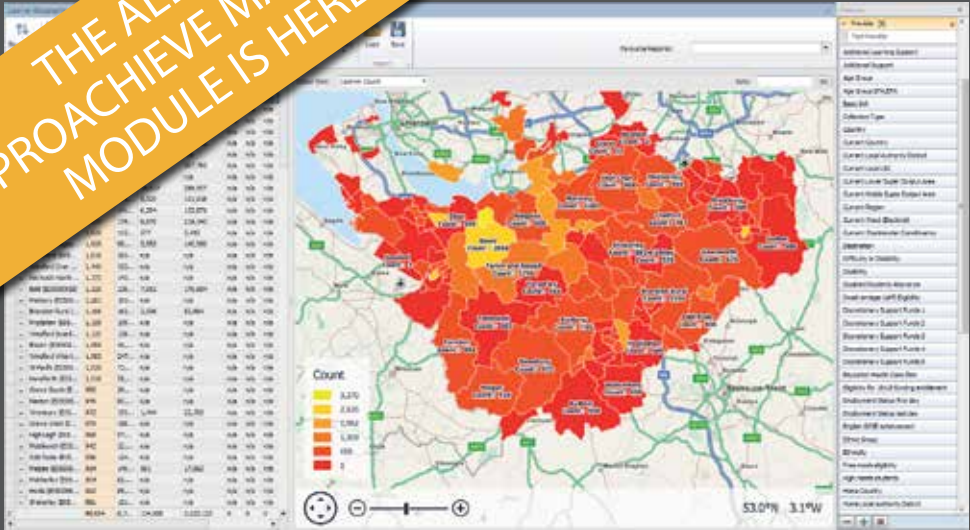
As a collective, the Premier Colleges group has shown how collaborative working can raise the profile not only of their individual colleges but of FE as a whole.


Make sure that you get involved with The Skills Show in some way to keep spreading the inspiration

The event showcases the next generation of talented young people, who will be the backbone of our future workforce, and it is up to all of us to give them the inspiration they need.

My challenge to the FE sector is to make sure that you get involved with The Skills Show in some way to keep spreading the inspiration — I look forward to seeing you there.


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CAMPUS ROUND-UP

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From left: vice principal Saf Arfan with learners Brogan Carter, aged 16, Lauren Kaye, Liz Couser, Tatiana Resende, Sophie Leah, Chloe Harte, Alysia Kavanagh, all aged 17, and principal John Spindler

Learners in rubbish effort

Donning their high-vis jackets and litter pickers, a taskforce of staff and learners from Salford City College kicked off a volunteering campaign to help clean-up the local community.

Following a number of meetings between the college and local residents, it was decided that students should engage more with the community.

The team will carry out a variety of projects including litter picking neighbouring streets and fundraising for the college's chosen charity, St Ann's

Hospice.

"This project is a fantastic way for both the staff and students to give something back to the local community, and to thank them for their ongoing support for the college," said Salford City College's principal, John Spindler. "I'm looking forward to donning my pink high-vis along with my fellow volunteers."

At the end of the year, the learners who take part will be presented with a special award of thanks at the college's student awards.



From left: Emma Bull, Connie Critcher, Emma Taylor and Amanda McCracken with their awards and Bichon Frise, Alfie

Grooming great day

Grimbsby Institute's animal care team proved they were a cut above at the British Dog Grooming Championships where they were awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in their categories.

The team included staff members Emma Taylor, Connie Critcher and Amanda McCracken as well as current level three dog grooming learner 23-year-old Emma Bull, who travelled to Warwickshire Exhibition Centre to compete against industry experts.

Connie placed 2nd in the advanced class with Amanda placing 3rd and Emma Bull was

placed 2nd in the hand stripping competition.

Topping their success however was Emma Taylor who placed first in both of her classes to ultimately compete for and win the title of British Dog Groomer of the Year 2015.

Ms Taylor said: "It is an almighty privilege and accomplishment for any groomer to win this title as it's one of the things we all work towards. I am still in shock that I won and I have so many people to thank for helping me get to where I am today."

Tongues will be wagging...

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CAMPUS ROUND-UP

Pogoing hamsters? It must be a maths question



A City College Norwich lecturer is aiming to take the fear out of maths with a series of random challenges he has created over a 30-year teaching career, writes Billy Camden.

From pogoing hamsters to tomato ketchup-filled canals, Phil Gulliver is hoping to take the fear out of maths for students with a set of Grand Random Challenges he has noted down over the last 30 years.

After gaining funding from the Ernest Cook Trust and the London Mathematical Society, the maths teacher at City College Norwich developed the range of weird and wonderful puzzles to target vocational-style learners.

He is currently training staff in schools and training centres to use his unique approach and his current further maths learners are also using the techniques.

The questions focus on the process of solving maths problems, while deliberately allowing for there to be no “right answer” to the problem itself.

Mr Gulliver said: “The problem with maths is that if you give somebody a page of sums, and say ‘there you are Fred, do that’, they will know that there is one right answer. And if they think they are not very good at maths they will be intimidated by that and they will say ‘I can’t do it’.

“Whereas if you give them something for which there is no one right answer — there is no one right answer to how big a cow is, or whatever — then for some they suddenly realise that ‘actually I can have a go at this’.”

Hundreds of Norfolk pupils have also



Phil Gulliver

experienced Mr Gulliver’s alternative to “traditional maths” by taking part in a Grand Random Challenge Week this month.

They took on puzzlers including, “a hamster jumps on a suitably sized pogo stick and bounces continuously for 99 years. Would the total distance travelled be greater than 99 trips up the Eiffel Tower?”

And, “it takes 100 tomatoes to make five standard bottles of ketchup. How many tomatoes would you need to make sufficient ketchup to fill the 127-mile long Leeds-Liverpool canal?”

The questions that

feature in the Grand Random Challenges vary in their difficulty, so maths teachers can use differentiated learning within their classes.

Over the years Mr Gulliver has progressively been turning his challenges into attractive and engaging resources for students and teachers, including packs of cards, workbooks and short videos.

Students from City College Norwich, including



Mr Gulliver with, from left: Lewis Wright, aged 17, Nikita Kuznecov, Olly Clarke, and Liam Foster, all aged 16

photographers, graphic designers and media students, have helped in producing images, illustrations and animations for the questions.

Performing arts level one learner Rutendo Mukuya, aged 17, uses the method during his GCSE maths lessons, which he takes alongside his vocational course.

He said: “I think the fact that he [Mr Gulliver] takes weird situations and puts them in questions makes it much more fun, even though I don’t actually enjoy maths that much. The challenge made it much easier with those questions because it’s weird and you really want to know what the answer is.”

Next in the pipeline for Mr Gulliver is the Grand Random Challenge board game. He is also looking at ways of using the Grand Random Challenge concept to “bridge the gap” between literacy and maths teaching.

Mr Gulliver said: “I am hoping staff will appreciate that the process skills involved in answering these bizarre questions are really, really valuable and will help in the more traditional mainstream mathematics.”

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN CAMPUS ROUND-UP?

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

& MOVERS SHAKERS

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

City College Brighton and Hove will be hoping for a period of stability following the completion of its senior management team revamp with Sharon Collett joining as principal.

She joins chief executive Nick Juba and chief operating officer Jon Rollings who have been in post since September.

The new appointments come after FE Commissioner Dr David Collins was sent in with the college, rated by Ofsted as good in 2011, having been issued a Skills Funding

Agency notice of concern about finances.

Dr Collins pointed out in February, following the departure of principal Lynn Thackway, how “financial difficulties have coincided with a period of extensive instability in its executive team”.

Prior to her new role, Ms Collett was vice principal of curriculum, quality and student experience at Bournemouth & Poole College.

“I’ve received a wonderful welcome from staff working in all parts of the college and can see that there’s a deep commitment to

providing the best learning experience for our students,” said Ms Collett.

“I’m most looking forward to ensuring that City College Brighton and Hove is outstanding in the broadest sense of the word and for the college to be the preferred choice for vocational education in Sussex.”

Mr Juba said: “It’s a great feeling to have a permanent team in place. Sharon’s skills, experience and personality will bring a new energy to the college.”

Meanwhile, Blackburn College has welcomed Tracy Stuart and Jennifer Eastham as its two new vice principals.

Ms Stuart will lead the corporate decisions impacting on the academic areas of the college in her role as vice principal for curriculum and quality.

“My main responsibility is to make sure the curriculum we have at Blackburn

College gives students an outstanding experience,” said Ms Stuart, who was previously vice principal of quality and standards at Leeds City College and head of quality performance at Newcastle College.

“I’m reviewing everything we offer at Blackburn College as I also believe in giving people a more rounded experience by pushing digital literacy skills so students don’t leave with just one qualification.”

Ms Eastham returns to her roots having previously studied an accountancy qualification with Blackburn College.

In her role as vice principal for finance and corporate services, her focus will be on improving resource efficiency to “ensure Blackburn College’s financial stability for the future”.

She was previously deputy principal for finance and funding at Myerscough College, responsible for finance, administration and commercial areas.

Ms Eastham said: “Blackburn College has given me the foundations for my career and I am thrilled to now return here as vice principal.

“I have undertaken qualifications which Blackburn College runs and have studied here myself, which is something I hope our students can relate to.”



Sharon Collett



Nick Juba



Jon Rollings



Tracy Stuart



Jennifer Eastham



LCG needs you!

Come and join an outstanding team

There are great opportunities for talented and hard-working individuals to join Learning Curve Group, an ambitious and successful company whose team of over 500 staff and associates work to help people across the country gain vital career qualifications and training.

We are recruiting for the following roles

- **Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism Tutors**
North East.

- **Business Sales Manager**
£45,000 - £50,000 DOE per annum, plus bonus. Nationwide.

- **Apprenticeship Academies Manager**
£45,000 per annum. Academy-based.

- **Apprenticeship Assessors**

We also require apprenticeship assessors in health and social care, administration, management, customer service and functional skills.



Supporting organisations who we work with:



To apply, send your CV and covering letter to:

hr@learningcurvegroup.co.uk

www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

We are looking to recruit two outstanding teachers in Engineering to join the existing team at Welwyn Garden City. You should have a strong commitment to high standards of classroom practice and experience of teaching, or working with young people. You will have a genuine regard for young people and want to work with us to ensure that all our students aspire to do well. You will demonstrate and professional standards in your area of work. The ability to work in a team is essential, sharing good practice and working collaboratively with colleagues are qualities that we will be looking for.

The College is a friendly environment, which offers excellent support, placing strong emphasis on continuous professional development. It is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We welcome applications from candidates from the Engineering industry who are new to teaching. This is a growing area and the knowledge and experience of professional Engineers is essential to the development of the industry. If you have thought about giving something back this may be the ideal opportunity for you. The College offers extensive support for new teachers by experienced specialist practitioners and there are options for full teacher training for the right candidate.

The role will also involve participation in the quality assurance process for part of the Engineering provision. An assessor qualification is desirable but not essential.

PERMANENT, FULL TIME LECTURER IN ENGINEERING
£23,961 – £26,959 per annum, plus a Market Supplement of £4,500 - £5,000 per annum (dependant on experience)

Our largest provision is BTEC Diploma and HNC/D and we also run an extended degree programme with Hertfordshire University. We have a large number of apprentices who attend on a full time and day release programme. The ideal candidate will teach on a range of Engineering programmes from Level 2 and 5 (and a range of subjects), have excellent Mechanical Engineering skills (as this will be a major part of the role), and having knowledge of Maths and Engineering Science would be desirable.

STAFF BANK - LECTURER IN CIVIL ENGINEERING
Approximately 12 hours per week
£23.76 - £26.74 per hour – depending on experience

The successful candidate would be required to teach on a range of Construction Management and Civil Engineering programmes at Level 3, 4 and 5 and a range of subjects. Our largest provision is BTEC Diploma and HNC/D and we also run an extended degree programme with Hertfordshire University. We have a large number of apprentices who attend on a full time and day release programme. The ideal candidate will have excellent understanding of surveying, particularly land surveying and geology and soils.

CLOSING DATE: SUNDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2015

INTERVIEW DATES: MONDAY 7TH AND TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2015, WELWYN GARDEN CITY CAMPUS

ALL APPLICANTS CAN APPLY THROUGH WWW.OAKLANDS.AC.UK/THE-COLLEGE/JOBS-AT-OAKLANDS/ WE REGRET DUE TO A HIGH VOLUME OF APPLICATIONS WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT CVS BY EMAIL OR POST.

JOBS


www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

Maths and English Tutor

We are recruiting across Yorkshire for permanent and self employed English and maths Tutors.

Salary:
Competitive

Role:

Learning Curve Group require Tutors in maths and English to deliver a range of qualifications within our flexible learning portfolio at Level 1 and Level 2. All qualifications are nationally accredited through NCFE and include Level 1 certificates and functional skills at Level 2.

Are you:

A candidate who holds a degree, a teaching qualification and has a subject specialisation at Level 5?

We are also looking for an individual who is:

- Experienced in teaching and assessing in a post-16 environment
- Self-managing and flexible in their working approach
- Passionate about maths and/or English and experienced at delivering flexible learning programmes
- Proficient in IT
- Able to work on a self-employed, flexible basis



For more information, or to apply, please contact
hr@learningcurvegroup.co.uk

Or call:
01388 777 129

Lecturer in Maths Tonbridge, Kent

**Salary up to £32,157 per annum,
plus a Golden Hello payment of £3,000**



We are seeking an outstanding classroom practitioner who can demonstrate inspirational teaching, learning and assessment leading to successful outcomes for learners.

You would deliver GCSE Maths to a variety of students, from retake classes to adult classes and some functional skills maths as part of a progression to GCSE course, liaising with staff across the department to ensure parity of provision across the College.

You will be required to have a teaching qualification and be qualified to Degree level or professional equivalent in maths or a closely related subject area.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our users and expects all staff to share this commitment, in order for all to achieve their full potential.

To find out more information about the College and to apply for the role, please visit
westkent.ac.uk/vacancies

West Kent College is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity.



BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

AT SUSSEX COAST COLLEGE HASTINGS



Sussex
Coast
College
Hastings

Mathematics Lecturer
Permanent, full-time
£28,998 - £33,559, plus a Golden Hello payment of £4,000
Sussex Coast College Hastings
Start January 2016

We are looking for an enthusiastic Maths Lecturer to join our professional Sixth Form team in Hastings, East Sussex. Whether you're a newly qualified or an experienced teacher, we'll give you all the induction and support you need to succeed. However, you'll require bags of innovation, a clear vision and the determination to transform futures, including your own.

We also operate a sponsorship licence, so we can provide a working visa if you do not have an automatic right to work in the UK.

Golden Hello Scheme

Sussex Coast College want to attract and retain talented staff to develop and continue their careers with us. As part of a developing employee benefits package, we are introducing a Golden Hello Scheme and will pay the newly appointed Maths Lecturer a Golden Hello payment of £4,000*.

To be eligible for the Golden Hello payment you need to hold a:

- Degree level qualification in Maths
- At least a level 2 qualification in English
- A teaching qualification (PGCE or Cert Ed)

You must also be able to teach across a range of levels including GCSE, AS and A2.

Sussex Coast College Hastings is an equal opportunities employer.

For further information and to apply, please visit: www.sussexcoast.ac.uk/jobs

or call the HR team on **01424 458305**

Closing date: 23rd November 2015

*terms and conditions apply.



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

LOCATION: ENGLAND

Due to the outstanding successes of our work to date, we are looking to recruit a new team of 15 experienced Skills for Life tutors.

You will be delivering English and Maths from Entry Level through to Level 2, contextualised with a vocational award. Some delivery will be in the Health and Social Care sector, and therefore any experience in the H&SC sector would be an advantage but not essential. The role will be working on a peripatetic basis, delivering in your region. Willingness to travel and your own transport are essential.

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

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

HIGHLY DESIRED CRITERIA

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

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

No agencies please jobs@nccskills.co.uk

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The only newspaper dedicated to further education and skills

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**PRINCIPAL & CEO** (Competitive salary)

Brooklands College

Brooklands College, a multi-site, General Further Education College, is proud to be one of Surrey's largest providers of vocational training and further and higher education. With an income of \$22million, 6,000 learners and main campuses in Weybridge (Surrey) and Ashford (Middlesex), we are ideally positioned to fulfil our ambitions to be an outstanding and innovative provider of learning for our communities.

Following the retirement of our current Principal in spring 2016, we are looking for a new Principal to lead the College on its journey to be an outstanding College. We are continuing to develop an ambitious range of courses offered on both campuses and have a forward-looking programme with a focus on STEM, as well as high quality HE and vocational provision. We are proactive in securing opportunities for the college, and our new Principal will be instrumental in shaping a successful, aspirational and high achieving organisation.

You will take responsibility for the strategic management of the College's Finance so you will bring with you a strong knowledge of the Further Education sector and lots of commercial acumen. Strong team leadership skills and the ability to inspire and develop staff are of paramount importance. Whether you are a Senior Manager looking for your first Principal role, or an experienced Principal looking for a new challenge, we would love to hear from you.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 30 November 2015.
Interviews will be held on Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 December 2015.

For further details and an application form, visit our website www.brooklands.ac.uk/jobs or contact jobs@brooklands.ac.uk

PEARSON

ALWAYS LEARNING

Pearson are looking to recruit and train BTEC practitioners for the role of BTEC Standards Verifier (SV) and have vacancies for all sectors during 2015/16, including:

- **Applied Science**
- **Music**


External Verifiers (known within Pearson as Standards Verifiers) undertake sampling of centres' assessment and internal verification decisions in order to confirm that national standards have been met. They provide support to centres during the sampling process and produce targeted actions for centres where national standards are not being upheld. Requirements:

- Experience of delivering and assessing Vocational qualifications. (BTEC, Higher Nationals, Work based learning, NVQ etc)
- A commitment to quality assurance.
- Good working knowledge of the specifications for the subject area

Please email: aaresourcing@pearson.com with any queries you have regarding the role.

To apply see here: <http://ow.ly/TG3Qb>

PEARSON



Vice Principal (Learning and Achievement)

Salary: Circa £70,000 per annum

We are looking forward to the future with confidence and with high ambitions for students, apprentices and our local community.

With a new Principal, a good Ofsted Inspection report, sound finances and a total commitment towards raising student achievement, we are now seeking to appoint a Vice Principal who will be responsible for driving forward the quality of teaching and learning in the heart of Calderdale.

We are...

- Creating an innovative and responsive curriculum aligned to the skills needs of the local and regional economy.
- Remodelling our estate to support growth in key curriculum areas.
- Building partnerships with local and national employers.

All of which will allow our students to succeed in life and in work.

You will:

- Be an ambassador for the College and be able to influence in a range of partnerships settings.


- Be the driving force behind our Quality and Curriculum agendas.
- Have an outstanding track record as a leader.
- Have considerable drive and be positive about change and innovation.
- Demonstrate a passion for education, and for working with students and staff to achieve their maximum potential.

If you like what you see and want to have a major role in the College's journey to become outstanding, further information is available on the College website: www.calderdale.ac.uk

For an initial confidential discussion please contact John Rees, Principal & Chief Executive, on 01422 359303 or email johnr@calderdale.ac.uk

Closing Date - 6th December 2015
Interviews will take place in January 2016

CALDERDALE COLLEGE


INSPIRING LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN LIFE & IN WORK



Programme Leader GCSE English – Ref: 15/292
£25,118 - £31,593 per annum
Full Time
Fixed Term (for approximately 10 months or return of the substantive postholder)

The Grimsby Institute Group is a large, innovative, dynamic and financially sound organisation. We are officially “good” and aim to be an “outstanding” educational provider in the next two years.

We are now looking for a Programme Leader to teach GCSE English. Applicants should ideally have a teaching qualification, a relevant degree or equivalent professional qualification, and a Level 4 subject specialist qualification.

In return for your experience and skills, we can offer you a good salary, pension membership (TPS), access to a wide range of other Group benefits and opportunities for career and personal development progression.

For job description and details on how to apply, please visit:
<http://www.grimsbyinstitutegroup.co.uk/grimsby-institute-vacancies.php>

Closing Date: 23rd November 2015

www.grimsby.ac.uk



www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

Maths and English Tutor

We are recruiting across London for English and maths Tutors.

Salary:
27k per annum

Role:
Learning Curve Group require Tutors in maths and English to deliver a range of qualifications within our flexible learning portfolio at Level 1 and Level 2. All qualifications are nationally accredited through NCFE and include Level 1 certificates and functional skills at Level 2.



Are you:
A candidate who holds a degree, a teaching qualification and has a subject specialisation at Level 5?

We are also looking for an individual who is:

- Experienced in teaching and assessing in a post-16 environment
- Self-managing and flexible in their working approach
- Passionate about maths and/or English and experienced at delivering flexible learning programmes
- Proficient in IT
- Able to work on a self-employed, flexible basis

For more information, or to apply, please contact hr@learningcurvegroup.co.uk Or call: **01388 777 129**

Hadlow College is Kent’s premier land-based College and one of the top such Colleges in the United Kingdom, having been confirmed as ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.

LECTURER, MATHS

£23,903 - £32,157 per annum (pro rata)
Part-time, 2 days a week



We are looking to recruit a motivational and innovative Lecturer to join our experienced team. You will be fundamental in inspiring our post 16 learners to continually develop and improve their maths skills. You will deliver a range of qualifications, including GCSE and Functional skills.

Ideally you will need a teaching qualification, or the willingness to work towards one, as well as excellent communication skills and the ability to work as part of an expanding team. Flexibility is required as a willingness to work at our Canterbury, Mottingham and Greenwich sites is a necessity although you will primarily be based at our Hadlow site.

Ideally, you will be an experienced teacher with practical knowledge of delivery and assessment of a range of maths qualifications, committed to the holistic development of students within an inclusive environment. Alternatively you will have a passion for maths and be qualified to a minimum of Level 3, possess the drive to make a career in teaching and dedicated to ensuring students are successful in improving their maths skills. Full training opportunities are available.

Full training opportunities are available and the College also offers a golden hello payment of £3,000 (pro rata) to new staff who already hold a degree in English or maths and a teaching qualification, or will enrol into initial teacher training at the College upon commencement of this employment - £1,500 will be paid when the new recruit starts in post and the balance will be paid on completion of the first year of teaching. The College will also support new unqualified lecturers with a

reduced teaching commitment in their first year. In addition those staff will receive a bonus of £600.00 in the third year and £750.00 in their fourth year providing they have successfully gained their full teaching qualification at Hadlow College.

As well as a contributory pension scheme, Health Cash Plan and free car parking, this post also attracts 7 weeks holiday each year, pro rata (excluding Bank Holidays).

The successful candidate will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) and provide proof of their right to work in the UK. Where applicable, a prohibition check will be carried out.

The job description and application form can be requested by emailing jobs@hadlow.ac.uk or telephoning 01732 850551.

The closing date for applications is **Monday 23rd November 2015**

Visit Hadlow College at www.hadlow.ac.uk

Hadlow College is a committed equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding; promoting the welfare of all learners, commitments we expect all staff to share.

OCR SUPPORTS LEARNERS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Our Cambridge Progression qualifications are the stepping stones to help plug the gaps in core skills, allowing learners to concentrate on the building blocks before moving on to Functional Skills or GCSEs. We have now introduced NEW units in Algebra, Geometry and English language.

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A Level
AS Level
Core Maths
GCSE
Functional Skills
Cambridge Progression



To step up your support visit ocr.org.uk/cambridgeprogression



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next week

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

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



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

Last week's spot the difference winner was Newcastle College Group interim funding director and FE Associates consultant Louie Jones.

