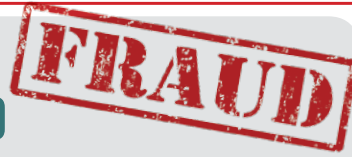


# FE Week

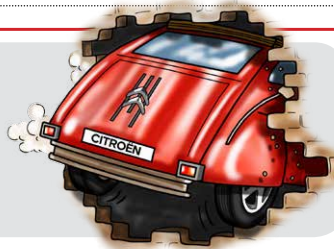
**NO BIG BANG FOR SAINSBURY**  
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**YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED**  
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**EMPLOYER HIT WITH GRADE 4**  
PAGE 12



**'SERIOUS ISSUE' SAYS HUNT AS UNION LOSES 10% OF THEIR FE MEMBERS**



General secretary tackles the tough questions in 'editor asks' on pages 8 and 9

## TRAINEESHIP PROGRESSIONS FAIL TO DELIVER

- > Government admits just one in five trainees start an apprenticeship
- > Sector leader calls for urgent review of the pre-employment programme

Exclusive PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

See page 2

## Nescot principal resigns



Exclusive ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

See page 2

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**JULY 7-8, 2016**

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# Call for review into traineeship progression

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

EXCLUSIVE FROM FRONT

The government has admitted that fewer than one in ten 19- to 24-year-olds who complete a traineeship course move on to start an apprenticeship.

Traineeships were launched three years ago, as part of the government's drive to help low-skilled young people onto apprenticeships — but publicly available statistics only provide overall “positive” progression numbers to a job, apprenticeship, further full-time education or other training.

The government has repeatedly refused to answer questions about how many progressions there were from traineeships to apprenticeships — so it took a Freedom of Information request with the Skills Funding Agency to find out.

The figures showed that just 450 (nine per cent) of 5,200 completions for 19- to 24-year-olds in 2014/15 started an apprenticeship.

The figure was slightly higher for under-19s — with 2,280 (31 per cent) of 7,400 completions progressing — but it still meant that overall progression to apprenticeships stood at just 22 per cent.

This raises serious questions about the value for money the government is getting out of the programme, as it pushes for three million apprenticeship starts by 2020.

Richard Atkins was Association of Colleges (AoC) president when the body made traineeships reform one of its key

Age	All traineeships completions in 2014/15	Positive progression (e.g. job, apprenticeship, further full-time education)	Progression to an apprenticeship	
Under 19	7,400	5,400	2,280	31%
19 to 24	5,200	2,270	450	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,600</b>	<b>7,670</b>	<b>2,730</b>	<b>22%</b>

general election manifesto pledges last year — stating they “should be converted into pre-apprenticeship training, specifically created to prepare 16- and 17-year-olds for a full apprenticeship”.

And after being presented with FE Week's findings, Atkins, who was principal at Exeter College from January 2002 to March 2016, said: “I suggest that a review of traineeships is undertaken this year, so that more young people are able to fill the employer vacancies for apprentices.”

“I believe it is critically important that a high quality pre-apprenticeship programme is developed in this country.

“Many young people are not employment-ready when they leave school or complete a level one programme at college.

“We need to equip these potential apprentices with the skills that employers want, especially the soft skills that will enable them to achieve selection by an appropriate employer. Traineeships should fill this gap.”

An AoC spokesperson told FE Week: “Our 2015 manifesto argued that the government should develop a strong pre-apprenticeship route and there is still a case for doing this.”

There were 19,400 traineeship starts in 2014/15, an increase of 86.3 per cent on the previous academic year, when concern was raised about the disappointingly low level of interest in the courses.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills declined to respond directly to Mr Atkins' call for a review, but a spokesperson told FE Week: “We will continue to expand traineeships to create opportunities up and down the country so we can help as many young people as possible to get on.”

“There is no requirement for those completing a traineeship to take up an apprenticeship — a traineeship is designed to give school leavers and young people the skills to get on the career ladder. While for some a traineeship might be a step before an apprenticeship, it can also be a step in the right direction for other employment.”

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## Britain's best-paid principal leaves her Nescot post

ALIX ROBERTSON  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

EXCLUSIVE FROM FRONT

The highest-paid college principal in the country has left her job as head of North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot), FE Week understands.

The chair of Nescot FE Corporation Professor Mark Hunt is believed to have announced the departure of Sunaina Mann in an email sent to staff at 9.42am on Thursday (June 2), which FE Week has seen.

The news comes after FE Week revealed that her husband, Jaswinder Singh Mann, was paid almost £200,000 over the course of a contract with a Saudi Arabian college subsidiary that Nescot's board of governors were unaware of for 18 months.

The college principal Ms Mann told FE Week that “robust governance arrangements... removed any conflict of interest”, but the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has since asked for a report from Nescot on the issue, a request with which it complied.

Mr Hunt then told staff in the email, which was sent on Thursday: “The college can confirm that Mrs Sunaina Mann has ceased to be principal of the Nescot Further

Education Corporation and she no longer represents it or any other Nescot entity within the Nescot Group.

“Cliff Hall [head of college] will be taking up the role as acting principal until a permanent replacement has been put in place.

“We will not be providing any further comment at this time.”

Ms Mann received a salary of £363,000 in 2014/15, making her the most well remunerated college principal in the country.

FE Week has also seen a follow-up email which was apparently sent by Ms Mann to college staff shortly after 3pm.

In it, she said: “I have been told that the chair has announced that I have left.

“Following what I felt was a serious failure by the college to support me publically, and to correct the totally untrue stories concerning the appointment of my husband, as a consultant, (with which I had no involvement whatsoever) I resigned from the college on Tuesday after 10 great years in which, together we have been responsible for its success.”

However, she continued: “I am continuing to work at the college in Jeddah [Saudi Arabia]. I wish you all a bright future and

thank you again for support.”

Her husband had been employed as a consultant to work on Nescot's controversial partnership in Saudi Arabia, the Jeddah Female College.

A representative for Ms Mann told FE Week: “In the summer of 2013 [Ms Mann] was the principal of Nescot, and a nominee director of NCL [Nescot Consortium Limited].

“There was an urgent need to address MIS systems and David Round [the company secretary and project manager at NCL] proposed the appointment of Jaswinder Mann.

“[Ms Mann] was not in support of that proposal, because she felt it better that he did not work for an organisation in which she had any involvement, but the board agreed to take forward the recommendation, noting her concern, and arrangements were put in place to ensure that there was clear independent oversight of his appointment and of his performance.

“[Ms Mann] had no involvement whatsoever in the appointment or oversight of Mr Mann nor the authorisation of his invoices.”



## NEWS

# No technical and professional education pilot until 2019/20

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

The reforms suggested by Lord Sainsbury's influential review into technical and professional education (TPE) will not be piloted by the government until 2019/20, FE Week can reveal.

It is also now understood that the peer's report — which is set to recommend the creation of 15 new "professional and technical" routes with apprenticeship or substantial work experience — will not be published until July 8.

This date is four months after the report was first supposed to be unveiled — with further delays expected as a result to the first skills white paper in a decade, which is believed to reflect the recommendations which will be made by Lord Sainsbury's independent panel.

The pilot timetable will now be unveiled just before parliamentary summer recess. The delays to the report were welcomed by sector leaders, provided it meant time had been allowed to create properly thought-out

and tested qualifications.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, told FE Week: "The TPE reform, combined with the apprenticeship changes, should see a step change providing parity of opportunity through vocational learning.

"It is vital that this is not lost, so if delay and piloting is necessary, we fully support the approach."

Mr Dawe added that good curriculum and qualification change "takes time", and insisted that the final framework needs to "ensure that vocational education is not seen as second best and demonstrates clear pathways to high levels of learning and work".

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said the delays were "unfortunate" but added that it was outcomes "that really matter here".

He added: "All over the country there are sixth form colleges achieving the highest standards in both academic and vocational curricula, sending countless young people to university or a great job.

"It is vital that they continue to offer young people the opportunity to study A-levels alongside BTECs, in a way that focuses on one or the other and often blends the two, according to the aptitudes and interests of each student.

"The sector is hoping for clarification at the earliest opportunity."

Iain Wright, chair of the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) committee, claimed that the government had been "paralysed" by the EU referendum debate — but when the TPE report and skills white paper finally arrived, they "promise a shake-up of the post-16 sector".

He added: "It is vital that the government allow time for a proper reflection on these issues so we can ensure we have a system where technical qualifications are valued as highly as academic achievement and one which is better able to meet the skills requirements of a modern economy."

FE Week reported last month that the



Department for Education (DfE) had been prevented from publishing Lord Sainsbury's report before the referendum on June 23, due to purdah rules governing the release of important information during periods of national campaigning.

The DfE said it would not comment on "speculation", when approached by FE Week about the pilot and new review release date.

## COLLEGES CHALLENGE FEWER EXAM GRADES THAN SCHOOLS - WITH LESS SUCCESS

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Colleges are significantly less likely to challenge GCSE and A-level exam grades than schools — and they are more likely to be rejected when they do.

The exams regulator Ofqual looked at the number of enquiries about students' results which were filed by schools and colleges following last summer's exams.

It found that between them, schools and colleges challenged one GCSE exam result out of every 16, and one in 13 A-levels.

But the figures were much higher just amongst FE, sixth form and tertiary colleges — which challenged just one GCSE result in 22, and one A-level grade in every 19.

Independent schools had the highest proportion of challenges, querying one GCSE in 11 and one in eight A-level exam results.

What's more, the report discovered that GCSE, FE, sixth form and tertiary colleges "have the lowest percentage of grades changed" at just 17 per cent.

In comparison, secondary selective schools had a 25 per cent success rate with grade challenges, while independent schools managed a rate of 23.1 per cent.

And for A-levels, FE, sixth form and tertiary colleges again experienced the

lowest percentage of grade changes at a mere 15.1 per cent, even though independent schools, city academies, secondary comprehensive/middle schools and 'other' schools have "similar rates of grade changes" of between 16.1 per cent and 16.6 per cent.

Ofqual said it did "not have any information which might explain these differences".

It costs institutions up to £50 to appeal each individual exam paper, although there is no charge if the appeal is successful, which can perhaps explain why the generally wealthier independent schools have more success.

Catherine Sezen, the Association of Colleges' senior policy manager for 14-19 and curriculum, said of the Ofqual figures: "Colleges always act in the best interest of their students and where they think there is a case to answer, they will suggest querying the grade."

She added: "We may see an increase in the number of exam grade queries at GCSE level over the coming years as the system adjusts to the standards that will be expected to achieve higher grades."

Julie Swan, Ofqual's executive director for general qualifications, said: "It's up to each school or college to decide the extent to which it uses the marking review provisions."

**Ofqual** Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

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## NEWS

## Employers told to stick to 'core business' after Citroën blow

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Firms taking on apprentices have been advised to stick "to their core business" — after Citroën UK became the second employer branded inadequate by Ofsted under the common inspector framework.

The education watchdog's damning verdict on the car manufacturer — published on May 27 — means that a quarter of employers inspected under the new framework launched in September have been awarded the lowest possible rating.

Questions have now been raised about government moves to encourage more employers to run their own training, with the average Ofsted rating across all eight employer providers inspected in the last nine months being a disappointing three.

In contrast, the independent training providers averaged grade two under the common inspection framework, as FE Week revealed on May 2.

And after learning of Citroën's inadequate rating, Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (pictured), warned:

"Those organisations engaging with the apprenticeship programme for the first time under the [apprenticeship] levy may be better off sticking to their core business and instead using the services of an experienced training provider."

The report on Citroën, which has a Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allocation of £1.07m for 2015/16, highlighted concerns over leadership and safeguarding arrangements.

Inspectors found leaders had failed to set their subcontractor "robust and challenging apprenticeship delivery targets".

According to the SFA's list of declared subcontractors, Calex UK has a subcontract with Citroën UK worth £750,000, as of December 15.

The report urged leaders at Citroën to "implement a more rigorous approach to challenging and monitoring" Calex UK's performance.

It added: "Safeguarding arrangements for apprentices are inadequate."

A spokesperson for Citroën and its subcontractor said: "Having reviewed this latest Ofsted report, it is clear the new overall rating is due to a much greater emphasis on



FERS report

## Citroën UK Limited

Employer provider

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outcomes for learners

Apprenticeships

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

Safeguarding arrangements for apprentices are inadequate.

The development of apprentices' understanding of fundamental British values is inadequate.

Leaders and managers have not explained that the recommendation made at the previous inspection to keep apprentices safe while online has been fully implemented.

Governance and strategic oversight of the apprenticeship provision are ineffective.

Management and quality assurance of the work of the subcontractor for the apprenticeship programme are weak.

Self-assessment does not give an accurate picture of the quality of the apprenticeship provision or support improvement.

The provider has the following strengths

Most apprentices develop the technical skills and confidence that prepare them effectively for a career in the automotive industry.

Almost all apprentices progress to employment within the Citroën dealership network, where they benefit from ongoing product training to consolidate and extend their technical skills.

Staff do not routinely use findings from the initial assessment of apprentices' prior knowledge and skills to help them progress rapidly or according to their potential.

Trainers do not routinely challenge all apprentices to improve their skills in English and mathematics above the minimum expectations required by their apprenticeship programme.

Trainers do not provide sufficiently clear and detailed written feedback for most apprentices to show them what they need to do to improve.

Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications on time.

Performance and standards have declined from the previous inspection.

Technical training resources at 'The Academy' to support apprentices to develop good work-related vocational skills are of a very high industry standard and have benefited from ongoing and sustained investment since the previous inspection.

safeguarding, which, if judged to be ineffective, automatically grades the provision as inadequate, regardless of the quality of the programme in all other areas.

"We acknowledge and accept the need to update the safeguarding elements of the programme. This is currently being actioned and will be in place, alongside further enhancements to maths and English provision, prior to a follow-up meeting with Ofsted."

He added: "It is important to note that the majority of apprentices on our programme go on to lead an exciting career within the Citroën UK dealer network."

Pearson was meanwhile slammed by Ofsted in January for its inadequate apprenticeship provision, after the inspection team found "no key strengths".

A Pearson spokesperson said in response: "We take this report very seriously and are making further improvements in our programme so that our apprentices receive the highest possible standard of learning and support."

Next Retail was also heavily criticised last year, before the common inspection

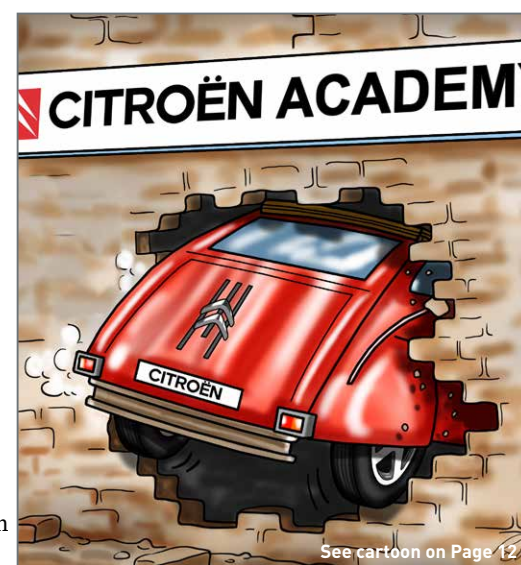
EMPLOYER	FIRST DAY OF INSPECTION	OVERALL GRADE (FULL INSPECTION)
Citroën UK Ltd	26/04/2016	4
Travis Perkins	26/04/2016	2
Halfords	05/04/2016	3
Tui UK Ltd	01/03/2016	2
Pearson PLC	08/12/2015	4
Nestor Primecare Services Ltd	16/02/2016	3
Academies Enterprise Trust	17/11/2015	3
Vision Express	17/11/2015	3
<b>AVERAGE GRADE</b>		<b>3.00</b>

framework was launched, for its apprenticeship provision.

After being branded inadequate by Ofsted following an inspection in July, the retailer was issued a notice of concern by the SFA and temporarily barred from taking on new apprentices.

A spokesperson told FE Week it "completely accepted the report's findings and recommendations, and immediately commenced a vigorous programme of improvements".

When asked by FE Week if it would be pulling funding from Citroën following the inadequate Ofsted rating, a Skills Funding Agency spokesperson said: "We are considering Citroën UK's Ofsted inspection in line with our intervention strategy."



See cartoon on Page 12

## IN THE DRIVING SEAT FOR GOVERNMENT APPRENTICE REFORMS

The government's apprenticeship reforms — which aim to put employers "in the driving seat" — are likely to see more employers delivering their own in-house apprenticeship provision.

The government said in its 'English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision' document in December that, alongside colleges "taking a greater share of the apprenticeship training market", it would expect to see "employers offering apprenticeship training directly".

And guidance published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on the apprenticeship levy, published in April, said all employers who wanted to use their levy funds to pay for

in-house provision would need to register.

It said: "We recognise that employers can be extremely successful training providers and we want to encourage those who want to take this route to deliver high-quality apprenticeships."

Asked if BIS stood by this view in light of Citroën's inadequate rating, a spokesperson said: "If an employer wants to use funds in their digital account to pay for apprenticeship training that they provide and manage, they will need to be an approved training provider."

As revealed at FE Week's Annual Apprenticeship Conference

in March, the government is consulting on a new set of criteria that training providers will need to meet to be allowed to deliver apprenticeships.

FE Week understands that one of the key issues is where to set the bar, to ensure that it is sufficiently challenging but not so challenging that employer providers can't reach it.

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe called for the criteria to be "robust" but also "easily understood by applicants".

He added: "We would expect financial health to be a consideration and also the ability to deliver high-quality apprenticeships."

## NEWS

# Unions oppose college and university merger

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Unions have rejected a proposed link-up between Bury College and the University of Bolton — warning it would be more of a takeover than a merger.

The University and College Union (UCU) and Unison have joined forces to oppose the move, which is planned for August.

In a joint response to the consultation on the proposed merger, which ran from April, they claimed the future of FE provision in Bury was being undermined.

They said: “The consultation document consistently refers to the proposal as a merger, when it seems what is proposed is a takeover. Staff are concerned about the loss of independence of Bury College even if branding remains the same.”

The unions claimed that staff, students and the public should have been properly consulted on wider options available to the college – not just the merger plans.

It added: “Why, if Bury College is an outstanding, successful, and financially robust organisation can it not continue to stand alone?”

“We understand other colleges such as Hopwood Hall and Salford City are positively considering this option.”

It also described the proposed governance arrangements as “extremely worrying”, adding that “it is our understanding that the

board of governors of Bury College will be dissolved and taken over by the university board”.

Jenny Martin, regional organiser for Unison, spoke out after the consultation response had been lodged with the college.

She said: “We are worried that any governance arrangements in the new organisation would leave the interests of Bury and FE under-represented.”

Martyn Moss, a UCU regional official, added: “Bury College rightly has a proud reputation for excellence and we do not believe serious questions about the future of education in Bury were answered in the flawed consultation process.”

Merging with the university was found to be the “most compelling” option available to the college in the Greater Manchester area review, according to the college.

Bury College was rated ‘outstanding’ across the board at its last Ofsted inspection in 2007.

But the University of Bolton was ranked 122 out of 127 UK universities in the Complete University Guide’s 2017 university league table, and 93 out of 119 universities in the Guardian newspaper’s 2017 university table.

The college’s principal, Charlie Deane, told FE Week that the plans had received 265 responses to the consultation from staff, students, parents, employers and other stakeholders.

Mr Deane said: “The governors will form



Martyn Moss



Charlie Deane

their opinion and make their decision based on careful consideration of all the responses received, in addition to legal and financial due diligence.”

A spokesperson for the university dismissed the unions’ response as “unsubstantiated conjecture and scaremongering”.

“Following a successful merger, the university is happy to publicly commit to

enhancing the educational provision in Bury and in particular strengthening the already good finances underpinning the college,” the spokesperson said.

He added: “The university wishes to assure stakeholders that the integrity of Bury college as a strong provider of further and higher education will remain and be enhanced following the proposed merger.”

## SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE STAFF TO BE BALLOTTED FOR STRIKE ACTION

ALIX ROBERTSON  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) at South Downs College are being balloted for strike action, in what the union describes as a “row over new contracts”.

UCU claims that the college has threatened to dismiss staff who refuse to sign up to new contracts, which it says “would lead to worse pay and conditions for staff”.

The ballot opens on Thursday, June 2 and will close on Monday, June 13.

The union cited a pay cut of around three per cent for lecturers, as well as reductions to annual leave and redundancy notice periods among its concerns.

The union’s regional official Moray McAuley (pictured) said: “These are deeply damaging proposals, and staff are understandably angry at plans to dismiss staff who refuse to sign away a significant chunk of their salary and annual leave entitlement.

“Staff are dismayed at the actions of a senior leadership team, including a principal

earning more than the prime minister, cutting their pay at the same time as leaving their own salaries intact.”

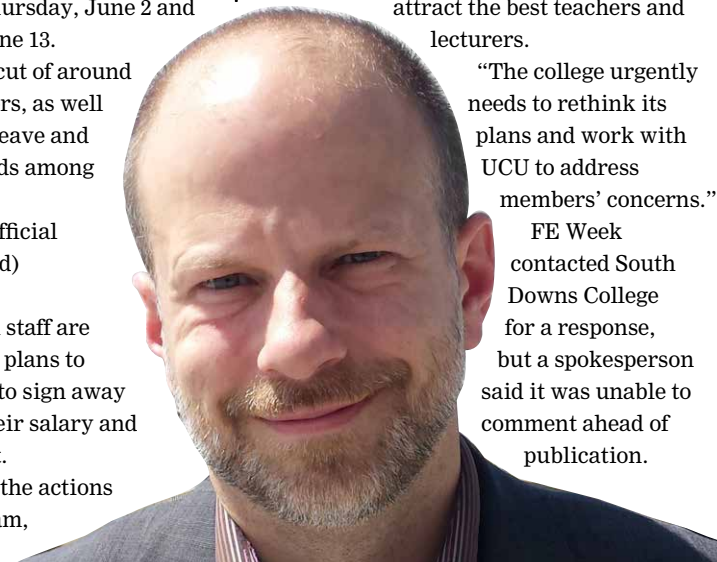
The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) College Accounts list the South Downs College principal’s salary as £149,000 in 2014/15.

Mr McAuley added: “Imposing these new contracts would be bad for staff and students alike.

“South Downs is an outstanding college but these changes will make it harder to attract the best teachers and lecturers.

“The college urgently needs to rethink its plans and work with UCU to address members’ concerns.”

FE Week contacted South Downs College for a response, but a spokesperson said it was unable to comment ahead of publication.



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## NEWS

# Concern for FE in Cheshire after principals leave

**BILLY CAMDEN** @BILLYCAMDEN  
**JUDE BURKE** @JUDEBURKE77  
**ALIX ROBERTSON** @ALIXROBERTSON4

Mid Cheshire College's principal Richard Hollywood (pictured) is standing down – after its Ofsted rating tumbled from outstanding to inadequate.

The announcement was made just a few days after West Cheshire College revealed that its principal Nigel Davies and his former deputy Adrian Humphreys had also left their posts – raising questions about the state of FE in the region.

Both colleges fall under the current Cheshire and Warrington area review, which held its first steering group meeting on January 29.

Mr Hollywood had led Mid Cheshire since February 2013, after joining in 2006 as an assistant principal.

Inspectors had previously visited the college in November 2008, when it was rated outstanding across the board.

But the March report criticised college leaders for having “allowed the quality of provision to decline to unacceptably low standards”.

It also found poor progress on 16-to-19 study programmes, which it says accounts for around two thirds of the college's 2,600 learners.



A college spokesperson told FE Week: “Richard Hollywood has decided to step down from his position as principal of Mid Cheshire College.

“The governors would like to thank him for his service and dedication to the college over the last 10 years.”

The college said there was nothing further to add, after being questioned over Mr Hollywood's reasons for leaving.

FE Week previously reported that Mr Davies and Mr Humphreys had both moved on “in order to explore new career and other professional opportunities”.

Helen Nellist, who was already a member of the college's leadership team, was subsequently appointed acting principal.

Asked by FE Week why he had left the college, Mr Davies said he had found his time at the college “very enjoyable” and his departure was “purely a professional matter”.

Brendan Hartland, retired deputy principal of Birmingham sixth form Josiah Mason College, spoke of his sadness over Mr Davies leaving and the wider issue of pressure being placed on FE senior managers.



He said: “The FE and skills sector does appear to be losing significant numbers of staff and managers.

“Over the last 12 to 18 months I have spoken to college lectures, middle managers and senior managers who have either left FE or are considering doing so.

“Many of these individuals cite the current financial pressures for their decision to leave the sector and I fear for the survival of the FE sector as we know it beyond 2020.”

His comments come after Adele Wills, principal of King George V College in Southport since 2010, also left her post.

A spokesperson informed FE Week that vice-principal Anne-Marie Francis (pictured) had taken over as acting-principal on June 1.

She added that staff and students were informed prior to the release of a statement on the college website, but the interview process for a full time replacement had yet to begin.

It was then announced on June 2 that the principal of Guernsey College, Saboohi Famili, would be leaving her post at the end of the academic year.

Ms Famili said she had been frustrated by slow progress and delays in decision making at Guernsey which led her to leave.

Guernsey College said current vice principal, Louise Misselke, will be interim principal until a successor is appointed “in the coming months”.

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# COLLEGES WARNED AS SCAMS ON THE RISE AGAIN

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
@BILLYCAMDEN

Colleges have been warned to be on their guard against “sophisticated” fraudsters, after a scam involving fake faxes was detected by staff at one provider in London.

The Mary Ward Adult Education Centre nearly fell victim to the con last week, before the college’s bank contacted them to question a suspicious payment.

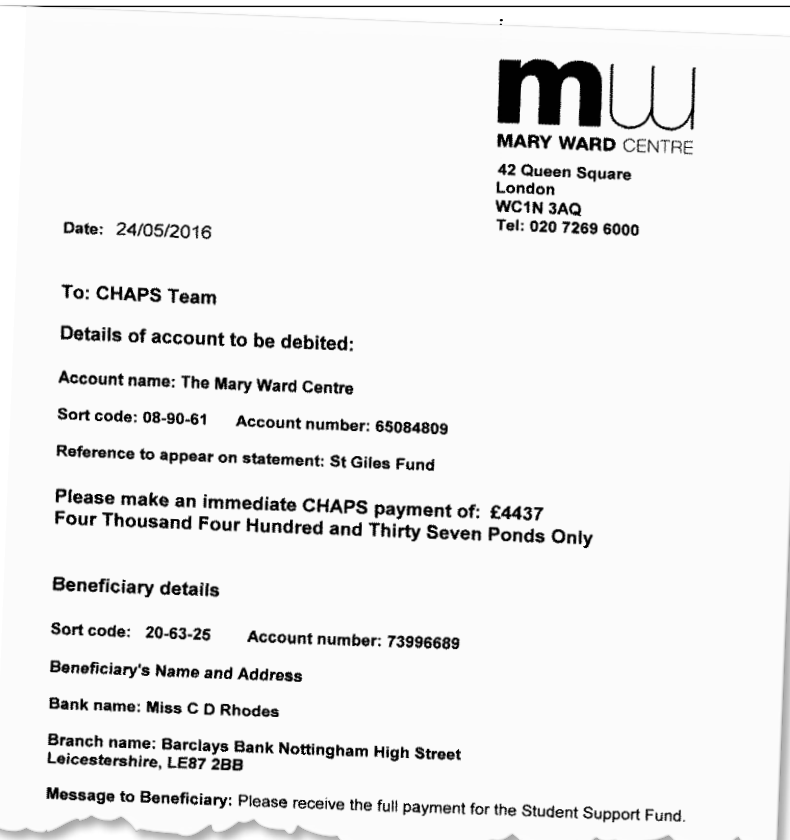
A fraudster had sent a fax requesting a £4,437 clearing house automated payment system (CHAPS) payment after researching the college’s personal bank details, which are in the public domain.

But Allister Duncan, head of finance and resources at the college (pictured), explained: “Thankfully the bank picked up on the questionable nature of the instruction and queried it with us.”

However, he warned: “It may well be that whoever is behind this may try this on with other colleges.”

Mr Duncan also told FE Week: “Clearly the sort of amount involved in this case is enough to be worthwhile, but not enough to generally cause a lot of interest. If the sum was in the tens of thousands of pounds it is likely to raise questions, so this is quite a clever and sophisticated pitch.”

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) also sent out an alert on May 26, warning that customers of an attempted scam involving Portakabin Ltd, which makes



portable buildings often used by schools and colleges.

It said: “We have been advised by Portakabin Ltd that some of their customers may have received a fraudulent letter about a change to their bank account details.

“The letter is attempting fraud and, if you have received one, you should ignore any instructions.”

Portakabin told FE Week it had been able to flag up the attempt internally and report it to the bank being used by the fraudster.

Company director James Robinson said: “As a precaution, we immediately alerted all our customers, even though the bank account no longer existed. We also reported it to the National Fraud and Cyber Crime Reporting Centre.

“We do not believe any of our customers have been affected. The letter was speculative and no data security has been breached.

“Unfortunately, fraud crime continues to rise and we all have to be extremely vigilant and highly suspicious of any unsolicited communications unless the company concerned has been contacted to check any



new payment instructions are completely genuine.”

This is not the first time colleges have been targeted by these types of scams.

In January last year FE Week reported that college finance directors had been targeted in a bailiff scam involving a series of phone calls with con artists.

Staff from at least eight colleges, including the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and City of Southampton College, were subjected to the rip-off attempt.

The fraudsters employed the same tactics on each occasion, centring their bogus story on Northampton County Court, to which a non-existent debt running into thousands of pounds was meant to be owed.

At the time it was understood no college had fallen for the scam.

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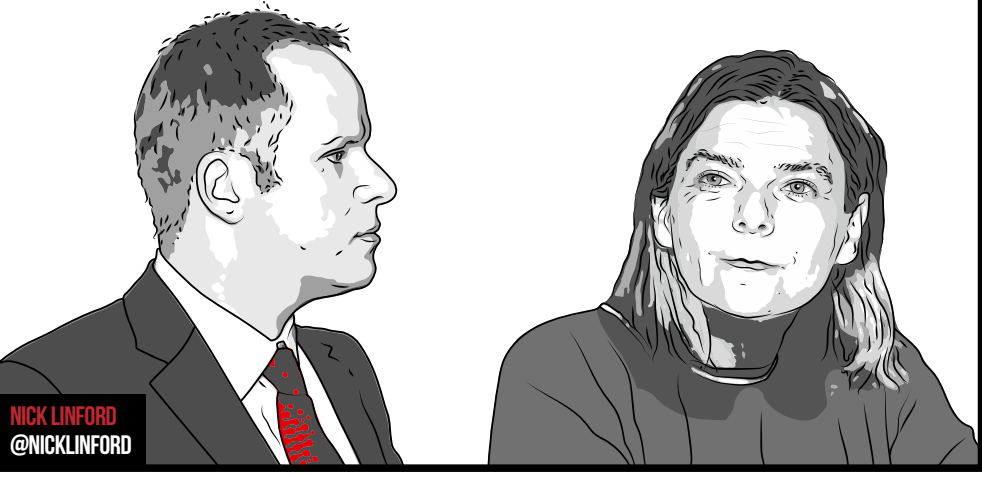
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INVESTIGATES

# UNION BOSS TACKLES THE MAJOR CHA

## EDITOR ASKS...



NICK LINFORD @NICKLINFORD

ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

Falling FE membership is an issue that has long been playing on the mind of Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU).

The union's FE membership dropped by 3,000 between April 2015 and the same month this year, almost a 10 per cent fall, whilst figures suggest that the higher education sector has seen an increase in numbers of around one per cent.

She was open about the problem when we met during the UCU general conference this week.

"I wouldn't pretend to you that it is anything other than a serious issue," she told me.

"I wanted to make it very clear to congress; I didn't want to hide behind no figures and generalities because I think sometimes you have to face up to what's taking place."

She believes that redundancies are part of the problem, and an issue that the union needs to keep on top of.

"We know that there is a huge turnover in the sector and it's very hard, with that kind

of churn, just to keep track of where people are. As a union we've just got to be a little bit tighter on it," she said.

However she conceded that the age profile of members is another serious issue — core members are older and more of them are leaving the sector, while younger members

can be harder to recruit.

She said: "You are having more of our members leaving than proportionately you might expect in terms of the sector overall, so we're taking a bigger hit there.

"But I think that there is also an issue over how we go about recruiting and how we represent ourselves to people coming into the sector."

Ms Hunt acknowledged that fewer of the younger generation are automatically joining a union when they start a job, meaning there is now more for unions to do to show what value they can offer.

Offering continuing professional development (CPD) is one thing that UCU has found helpful.

"There are a far higher number of our

younger members who are using CPD as opposed to for example who are turning up and wanting to have a debate about industrial issues. They are using their union in a different way," she said.

"Do I think we're turning it around? Well actually yes I do. I'm starting to look at figures that are saying we're starting to turn it around.

"Do I think we're doing enough? Absolutely not, I think we've got to do an awful lot more."

With the sector focused heavily on apprenticeships at present, in line with the government's target of three million for 2020, I asked her

whether this was an area where she felt the union could be more positive and engaged.

She told me: "It used to be that apprenticeships were seen as being out there and other courses were seen as more central. Now what's happening is colleges are reversing that and trying very hard to pull apprenticeships in as the centrality in order to chase the funding.

"Do I think that the union has stood in the way? No, I don't recognise that."

We went on to discuss Nick Boles' comments at the Association of Colleges (AoC) conference in November 2015, where he advised colleges not to let training providers "steal your lunch"

when it comes to securing the government's apprenticeship funding.

Ms Hunt surprised me by agreeing with Boles' message.

"One of the things that I have been just watching with interest in how much of the apprenticeship agenda, for example, is not done by core college staff," she said.

"You won't hear me say this often but I think Nick Boles asked the right question there of colleges — 'what are you doing to make sure that you're developing a really strong central brand with well-skilled people who can actually deliver?'"

Another issue that hit the headlines after the 2015 AoC conference was funding, a topic that the UCU has been heavily involved with — leading to a number of strikes in recent months over the AoC pay freeze for FE staff.

The issue clearly has riled her: "We know that they have year-on-year been reducing the proportion of spend that they have on staffing compared with other issues.

"I know that our members are already finding that they are being employed on inferior terms and conditions, on inferior pay, and on a range of salaries nationally that don't bear comparison to previous years."

She was explicit in claiming that the AoC

## Nick Boles asked the right question there of colleges

## I wouldn't pretend to you that it is anything other than a serious issue

UCU membership as at April 2015			
Sector	Full	Other	Total
FE	31,497	1,409	32,906
HE	63,065	4,276	67,341
No sector	3,195	3,401	6,596
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,757</b>	<b>9,086</b>	<b>106,843</b>

UCU membership as at April 2016			
Sector	Full	Other	Total
FE	28,388	1,538	29,926
HE	63,460	4,512	67,972
No sector	3,340	3,496	6,836
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,188</b>	<b>9,546</b>	<b>104,734</b>

UCU membership shift April 2015 - April 2016			
Sector	Full	Other	Total
FE	-3,109	129	-2,980
HE	395	236	631
No sector	145	95	240
<b>Total</b>	<b>-2,569</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>-2,109</b>

Sector	Full	Other	Total
FE	-10%	9%	-9%
HE	1%	6%	1%
No sector	5%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>-2%</b>





# CHALLENGES AT UCU ANNUAL CONGRESS

has not been pulling its weight: "I think [the AoC] has got a real serious credibility issue, I really do.

"It has struck me for many years, that the more localised funding and management has become, the less it has some kind of coherent and credible story behind it."

She believes the AoC has shown a lack of respect for FE workers in its handling of pay, saying: "I don't think that they are coherently responding to us, or that they are treating our members respectfully.

"I don't look to back away from this or to try and disguise my real concern, and frankly anger, at the way that they treat the negotiations within further education."

She wants to see the problem addressed head on.

"At the moment I think the question is: are they serious about having a negotiation and are they serious about having a national pay spine?"

"Employers are not supporting their own national body, and they really have to think about this because it makes it very difficult for us to believe that they are serious about even discussing some of the issues that we want to bring to the table," she said.

She also sees funding as an unwanted backdrop to the government's post-16 education and training area reviews.

The UCU generally supports the movement towards devolving adult funding to the combined authorities, but she believes that

there are "some major issues" with it.

She said: "Under Nick Boles what ought to be taking place is cost-cutting and stripping down provision.

"They seem to be saying that merger is the key for merger's sake."

Hunt said that from her perspective, the focus must be on what is best for the community.

"I would be more interested in how the government is translating their agenda in terms of area reviews, if I really felt we were talking about what each community needs and worked backwards from there, not start from saying 'we've got 10 and we'd like to end up with six'," she said.

"I know that there are backroom conversations taking place between principals in order to head off at the pass any imposition of merger."

Over all though, Ms Hunt was eager to emphasise that it was important for the union to highlight the positives, as well as challenge the problems.

She said: "There is a massive opportunity for the sector here. It is an opportunity that they should grab with both hands, but they should do it by articulating that they are the community college and that means skills, but also something much broader as well.

"They have got a very strong part to play in this country and I think that our members are the driving force of that."

## NEW UCU PRESIDENTS FROM FE



Vicky Knight is the new UCU vice president and a lecturer in trade union studies at Manchester College. Rob Goodfellow is the new UCU president and a lecturer at Hull College.

Mr Goodfellow told FE Week: "These are difficult times for further education; years of funding cuts have put colleges under real financial pressure, and now area reviews are acting as a catalyst for mergers and cutbacks.

"That's why it's never been more important to defend education and reinforce the integral role of local colleges in meeting different learning needs. I look forward to taking on that challenge in the year ahead and working with colleagues to protect and promote the sector."



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**DAN FOSTER**, DEPARTMENT'S POLICY LEAD FOR THE REGISTER OF ASSESSMENT ORGANISATIONS  
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## EDITORIAL

## More focus please



Traineeships definitely need to be reviewed – as they're still not really taking off with learners and aren't serving the key purpose of helping boost apprentice starts.

I know their wider aim is to help steer young people lacking basic skills away from the oblivion that is long-term unemployment.

But they were sold to the sector around the time of their launch three years ago as an important means of preparing students for apprenticeships — which simply isn't reflected in the progression figures unearthed in our story this week.

It's not good enough for the government to publish vague catch-all progression figures and I fear this reflects wider confusion at the top over what it hopes to achieve through them.

The freedom of information response figures suggest boosting apprenticeship starts is low down on the list of traineeship priorities.

But if this is the case, it calls into question whether scarce public funding could be better used elsewhere.

More focus is needed and the government could do a lot worse than looking again at the Association of Colleges' manifesto call last year for a specific pre-apprenticeship programme.

**Paul Offord, deputy editor**  
paul.offord@feweek.co.uk

**UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION (UCU) CONGRESS 2016 #UCU16**

**Shelly Asquith @ShellyAsquith**  
Delighted to hear #UCU16 voted to support @nusuk's position of sabotaging the NSS. It's used to discipline and pressure staff - it must go!

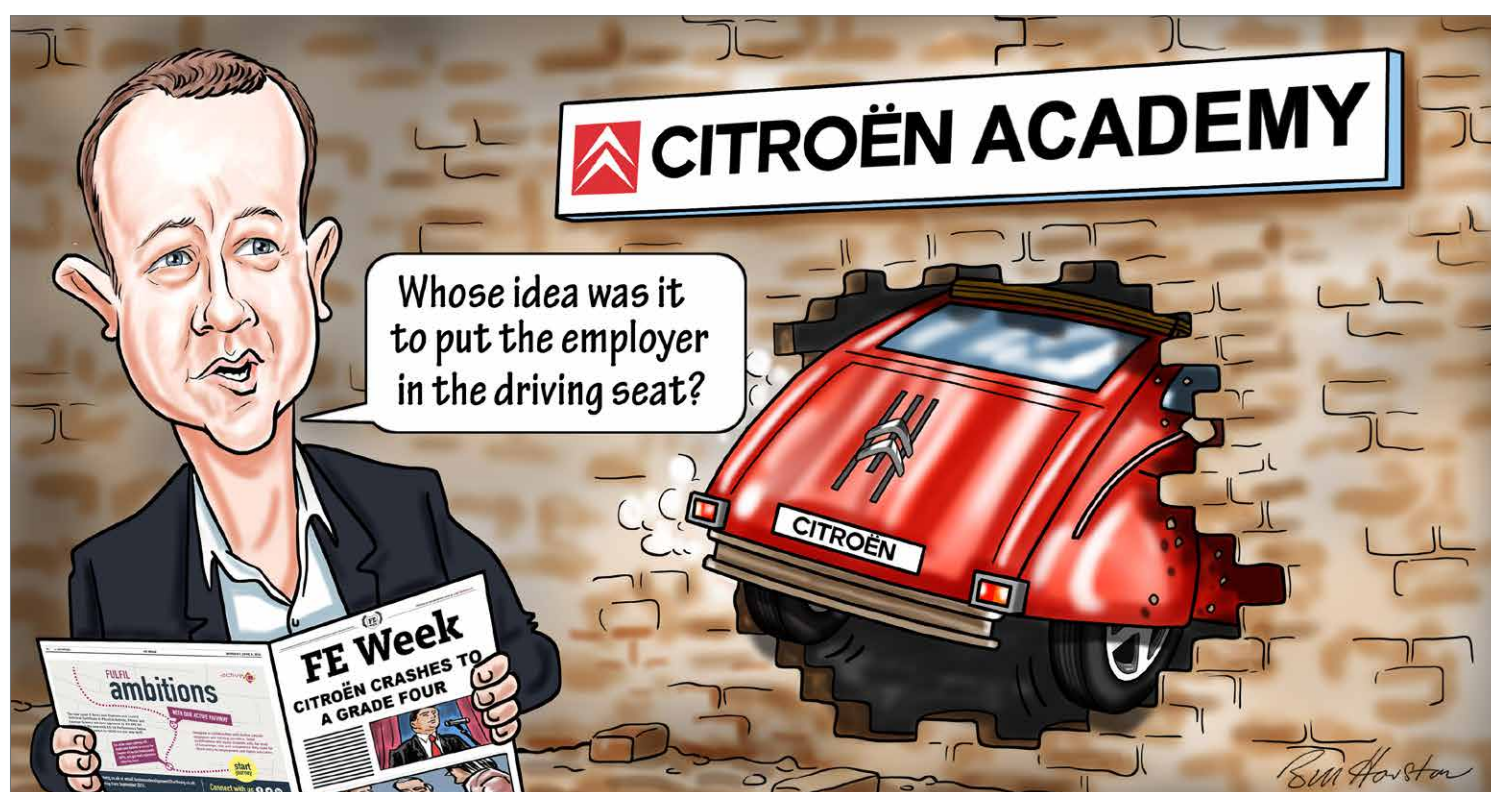
**Philippa Davey @PhilippaDavey**  
Brilliant speech from Liz Lawrence #UCU16 referencing the importance of international solidarity, universal human rights and workers' rights.

**Rhannon Lockley @illdoitanyway**  
Liz Lawrence gives final presidential address to #UCU16. Fantastic president who stood with members at every step.

**Sadie Robinson @sadero1**  
#UCU16 backed strikes and assessment boycott in autumn plus institutions choose strike day June/July - they could choose to strike with NUT

**Xanthe Whittaker @XantheWhittaker**  
@UcuLeft fringe: Huge applause for a cradle to grave strike with HE, FE & ACE over attacks on education. #UCU16 #UCULeft

**Richard @RM\_UCU**  
#uc16 Sally Hunt good speech. She talked about winning pay campaigns and UCU is formally signed up to building NUS demo: 'Save our futures'



See page 4

## David Hughes to lead the Association of Colleges

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

David Hughes, the man behind the Leaning and Work Institute, has been appointed the new chief executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC), starting in September.

He was chosen after the AoC was forced to re-advertise for the post – because it failed to find a suitable candidate from the initial applicants who were interviewed in March.

Mr Hughes told FE Week he did not apply when the vacancy was first publicised in January.

This was because he felt it would have been inappropriate as he was overseeing the launch of the Learning and Work Institute in the same month, following the merger of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion.

But FE Week reported exclusively on March 9 that no-one from the first round of applicants had been appointed to replace Martin Doel — meaning that Mr Hughes

felt the time was right to move on when the vacancy was subsequently re-advertised.

His first order of business will be fact-finding, he said.

“Part of the process will be meeting with Martin [Doel], staff, and members to make sure I understand what the colleges want and need.

“I always try to be an optimist and I said in my interview that I saw this as a time of opportunity for colleges, firstly with the apprenticeship levy.

“It will bring in more money for colleges, attract employers to apprenticeships that wouldn't have considered it otherwise.

“Other opportunities I see for colleges will, for example, come through the extension of FE loans, the Sainsbury Review and new technical and professional education routes, and it's obvious that the economy is going to need more of the higher level qualifications that colleges offer.”

Carole Stott, the chair of the AoC, said: “We are delighted to welcome David at such an important time for our members.

“The board and I are confident that his high level skills, energy and commitment will enable him to lead AoC — as it continues to represent, support, and promote our colleges.”

Mr Hughes, who started at NIACE five years ago, was previously provider services director at the Skills Funding Agency from 2010 to 2011, and worked at the Learning and Skills Council before that.

When questioned further about the timing of his move to the new post, he said: “The problem is that jobs at this level don't come up very often.

“I didn't apply the first time in January, as that would have been too soon after the launch of the Learning and Work Institute. But by this point I feel it is in a strong position with a really good team in place.”

Maggie Galliers CBE, chair of the Learning and Work Institute, said: “On behalf of the board and staff, I would like to thank David for the hard work he has put in and the leadership he has shown to help secure the future of the institute.”

## COMMENTS

### Who has joined the SFA naughty step this month?

I see the Ami and Kimi Circus is putting on a repeat of their Nottingham performance.

I wonder if Ami will also label the FE Commissioner's next report into Cornwall College as “flawed” (see FE Week July 6, 2015). There seems to have been remarkably little substance to his criticism of the Nottingham report.

I hope the Cornwall College governing body have been better informed than at Nescot.

Richard Le Corney

### Four in five apprentices studying at a level they already have

The figures are entirely predictable! They demonstrate that for a huge proportion of the population level 2/3 apprenticeships are successfully providing a huge and highly ‘value-added’ element to the limited value academic qualifications that serve less than a half of all pupils well. The majority of young people need to move quickly into a mode of learning that prepares them, and is immediately relevant to/for, the world of work. A world they are about to spend 40-50 years in. Apprenticeships have always done just that. Our academically focussed education system has for far too long been designed by academics for those

aspiring to HE. Apprenticeships – especially with the long overdue development of higher level apprenticeships – are now persuading (bright) young people to move quickly into relevant, practical skills training that will see them prosper flexibly during their work life.

Despite a clutch of good GCSEs or A-levels, they are realising that apprenticeships represent the next positive step for them. This will continue until secondary (and to some extent, primary) education embrace the need to start developing the vocational route much earlier as the best preparation for work, for the majority.

What is disappointing about the figures is that they show apprenticeships are not engaging anything like enough young people who have not gained the number of academic GCSEs still demanded by apprentice offering employers. This means that the less academically able are not entering the route many of them are best suited for, and for which many have more than sufficient latent potential. Given that they are not making a success of the academic route, what are they being constrained to do/be?

That is the urgent question that needs to be addressed as part of both the social and skills shortage agendas.

Graham Hoyle OBE

There is a fundamental difference between skills development and the achievement of qualifications. It is largely through skills development that we will fill skills gaps. It is not uncommon for apprentices to be training at the same level or below their level of prior attainment. An apprentice may have good GCSEs (or dare I say O Levels) but know nothing about engineering and few companies that I know would take them on to a Level 3 engineering apprenticeship without a thorough grounding in engineering principles. The level of apprenticeship is also constrained by the job role and, as has already been stated, a person would often have to be supervising or running a department in order to fulfil the criteria for an apprenticeship at a higher level. Where apprenticeships are run well, the apprentices gain so much more from the apprenticeship than the achievement of qualifications. This cannot be easily quantified but is very apparent at an individual level. For those looking for their next scandal, look at graduate unemployment and then come back and argue that apprenticeships are not a good thing for the economy?

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## EXPERTS



## FE INSIDER

Shane Chowen is head of policy and public affairs at the Learning and Work Institute, and a governor at Westminster Kingsway College. He is also a former Institute for Learning policy officer and ex-vice president of the National Union of Students. His exclusive FE Insider column features in the first FE Week of every month.

## Nobody wants iron curtains

Shane Chowen explains why he thinks Lord Sainsbury's review of technical and professional education should avoid old solutions to new challenges.

If FE Week's timings are correct, this ought to be my penultimate column before the publication of Lord Sainsbury's review and the government's 'continuing revolution' of technical and professional education.

I can't be the only one who is struggling with this metaphor.

Ideally, if you're going to have a revolution, you want some really clear demands and, most importantly, some kind of utopian goal for the people to get behind.

If your revolution just goes on and on and on, with a confusing message and no end in sight, it's probably the white flag rather than the red one you need to be reaching for.

If we really are about to see an end to mixed academic and vocational provision post-16, which I think is unlikely, then I would consider that more orthodox thinking than revolutionary.

Saying that, you can see how such a move could be justified.

The prime minister and skills minister have made very clear their shared vision for a future, where every young person goes to a university or does an apprenticeship.

Unrefined, that looks like a competing choice between vocational and academic.

Lord Sainsbury's review has been tasked with putting forward a technical and professional education system that rivals the best in the world.

Reintroducing some rigid structures which pit academic and vocational as polar opposites would not mirror the best in the world.

Remember John Hayes? In 2010, the then-skills minister said in a speech that "the line between further and higher education should be a permeable membrane, not an iron curtain". Nobody wants iron curtains.

Instead, I think we will see a new vision set by the Sainsbury Review, with some principles for reform, and a fairly long lead-in time, the year 2025 maybe, for targets and reforms to be met and completed.

On face value, the idea that there will be 15 'high-status and clear' routes in and up some groupings of technical and professional careers could be welcome.

In particular, it would be great to see them focus on sectors/careers which currently don't benefit from well-known undergraduate routes and where there will be good opportunities accessible to people who don't live near a Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls Royce or BT plant.

There are some examples of similar set-ups across Europe — where career routes can be mapped out through intermediate up to higher-level training spanning vocational

and academic learning against national occupational standards.

However, it is worth noting that Alison Wolf, who is advising the Sainsbury Review, was very clear in her 2011 review of vocational education that all non-academic programmes of study for 16- to 18-year-olds "should be governed by a set of principles relating primarily to content, general structure, assessment arrangements and contact time".

This could suggest the kind of TPE frameworks Lord Sainsbury will recommend. Professor Wolf also recommended against study programmes which were "entirely occupational".

The government's response to the Sainsbury Review, which I'd expect at the same time as the report, will hopefully draw parallels between what is hoped to be achieved through reforms to TPE and parallel agendas dominating learning and skills at present.

## Leaders have just cause to hold the government's feet to the fire when it comes to clarity

Provider leaders definitely have just cause to hold the government's feet to the fire when it comes to clarity over what they want from the sector in return for, albeit diminishing, taxpayer funding.

Key questions should for example include, will Sainsbury's review be a continuation of moves to more freedoms and flexibilities, or will it add further complexity to the market?

Also, how can TPE routes help open careers to people without traditional social and financial capital usually expected of people in certain professional careers?

Finally, will TPE training be limited to institutes of technical excellence following area reviews?

You can start to see how, from the government's perspective, this could all piece together. But for the benefit of leaders across the sector, I really hope I am right about the extended lead-in time before any reforms.

We also learned in the Queen's speech that there will be a life chances strategy later this year. I'd expect part of that to be about the role of TPE, FE, and higher education in helping people overcome barriers to better opportunities throughout their lives.



## ANDREW CLEAVES

Principal at Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet)

## After the levy: adapting to an employer-led landscape

Andrew Cleaves looks ahead to a post-apprenticeship levy environment, where he says colleges will have to tailor their training far more to employers.

In 10 years' time the FE landscape is going to look very different from today; the apprenticeship levy is going to be a real game-changer.

While traditional sources of funding continue to be under pressure, the apprenticeship levy represents a significant opportunity for colleges to develop and grow.

In the West Midlands alone it is estimated there will be in the region of £150m to £180m brought into skills training and because it is raised from employers, for their own use, the levy will change the way businesses think about skills and the way they relate to skills providers.

It is already clear that wise companies will invest carefully, to change the way they recruit, retain and develop talent.

I don't think it's an overstatement to say that we will see huge changes on both sides of the supply and demand for skills provision.

On the demand side, employers will become more engaged and have an active involvement in the design and content of their training, with sectors and supply chains also pulling together more effectively.

As employers get the value that they need and want from education, they will clearly identify their requirements and be willing to take an active role in skills training.

On the supply side, FE colleges will likewise have to think and act differently, and become fleet of foot in their response to the employer imperative.

We will need to design more and more training that isn't based around term times, isn't run around what we perceive to be the normal working week, and is aimed at what individual employers require.

We will also have to think more carefully about progression in work, with the potential to create new career pathways that by-pass some of the more traditional graduate entry routes and give employers a real opportunity to grow their own talent.

Increasingly, I believe colleges will not be able to offer off the shelf 'construction training' — it will have to be training that has been designed for, and in partnership with, particular employers.

And as these partnerships develop, FE colleges will be an importance source of new talent, much more involved in pre-employment activity so that we can increase the range of potential recruits that we're able to bring to the table.

Just recently, BMet launched two career colleges, an exciting step towards real employer-led education which will see the curriculum of each college being designed by employers, for employment.

Our two career colleges will provide specialist vocational education in the professional services, and the digital and creative sectors, with leading employers in the region feeding directly into the curriculum.

Both the professional services, and digital and creative, have been identified by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull local enterprise partnership as key growth sectors for the region.

So they will address the skills gap that

We will need to design more and more training that isn't based around term times

firms are experiencing, at the same time as providing our students with direct access to the world of work.

As with many colleges across the UK, this concept is not new.

The work BMet has done with Wesleyan, one of our leading local financial services firms, is a good example of an existing partnership with business.

We put young people through a really strenuous course so they get the proper qualification, but they also gain that invaluable experience in the workplace with an employer who is committed to their future career development.

For many of our students, this is increasingly a safer option than the traditional university route.

The more employers we engage with on apprenticeships, the more that other students benefit because of the knowledge and experience our tutors and assessors bring back in to the wider vocational curriculum.

At BMet, we're confident that success lies in helping more young people get the technical and professional skills they need to be effective in the workplace.

## EXPERTS

**The prison education reforms announced by Michael Gove are to be welcomed, says Nina Champion, but more investment is needed to ensure governors have enough staff to make them work.**

**A**s a committed advocate for progress in prison education, my feelings over the last fortnight have veered between elation and frustration.

I was delighted to hear, on May 18, that the government had accepted all aspects of the review into prison education led by Dame Sally Coates.

Key recommendations included prison governors being held to account for the educational progress of the people in their custody, professional development for all staff, and a more personalised approach to learning for all prisoners.

Dame Sally stressed the need to raise aspiration and help learners achieve higher-level qualifications, something that the Prisoners' Education Trust, as a provider of distance-learning courses up to degree level, is very much in favour of.

Two recommendations in particular have sparked controversy.

Dame Sally called to extend the use of technology, which she presented as crucial to deliver high-quality education.

She also advocated increasing the use of day release to allow prisoners to attend college or work placements.

This resulted in news coverage about giving "lags" "treats", in the form of iPads or "weekend jail".

In the not-so-distant past, headlines like



## NINA CHAMPION

Head of policy at the Prisoners' Education Trust

### Staff needed to make prison education reform work

this would have had politicians quickly backtracking and promising tougher regimes.

But so far justice secretary Michael Gove, who commissioned the report, has stressed his commitment to even its most controversial aspects.

In principle, the Coates Report represents the sort of radical rethink that we so desperately need. Its suggestions are in line with the sector's experts'.

But it is easy to get carried away with political promises and forget the reality of a prison system under serious strain.

This truth was brought home to me last week, when a colleague, corresponding with a staff member at a prison, was told that due to officer shortages and an overtime ban, the education department at her prison was to close for two weeks. Disastrously, this will fall over exam period.

This means the men won't have the

opportunity to obtain the qualifications they have worked hard to achieve.

The teachers who have engaged and supported them will also be sad to see their efforts come to nothing.

The cost of supplying the course is wasted. The men in this prison now have no choice now but to sit locked in their cells all day rather than doing something positive to show their families, and themselves, that they can achieve something positive and move forward in their lives.

And that prison isn't alone. John Attard at the Prison Governor's Association has said that although he sees the "potential" of Dame Sally's review, it represented a "missed opportunity" to recognise the enormous strains on the system today.

The report suggests training officers to teach basic skills, but when there aren't enough officers to even escort prisoners to

an exam room, expanding their remit is, in Attard's words, "highly aspirational".

It is harder than ever for governors to keep staff and prisoners safe and promote a culture of respect and humane treatment, let alone a culture of learning and rehabilitation.

**I sincerely hope the latest reforms are reality and not just rhetoric**

Michael Gove's recent commitment of £10m to improve security is welcome, but with so much money having been taken out of the prison system in the last few years, this represents a sticking plaster on a serious wound.

There must be a more fundamental solution to the mismatch between the resources available and the sheer numbers of people occupying our jails.

For prisoners who are unable to sit their exams this summer, and for prisoners and staff across the estate who are being routinely failed by the system, I sincerely hope the latest reforms are reality and not just rhetoric.



## DAVID ALLISON

Founder and managing director of GetMyFirstJob

### The apprenticeship levy is a real opportunity for the whole FE sector

**David Allison discusses the effects of the apprenticeship levy on business agendas and the challenge employers face in finding the right apprentices.**

**W**hether you like it or not, the apprenticeship levy continues to raise awareness of apprenticeships across a wide range of stakeholders. Some of them have been around the block with the various iterations of skills funding and agencies in the last 20 years, and some are new to the subject of apprenticeships.

Each business that will be paying into the levy is undoubtedly trying to answer one simple question: 'what does it mean for me?'

There are many answers: financial: 'how can I get more back than I put in?'; strategic 'how do I get the right skills for the next 10 years?'; or operational 'how do I deliver an

apprenticeship programme?'

The fact that one version or another of this debate is now happening across the country is a significant opportunity for the FE sector as a whole. There will be a number of employers setting up apprenticeship programmes for the first time, or significantly scaling. Alongside complaints about the apprenticeship 'tax', there is also a genuine interest, and in some cases excitement, about the opportunities that the new apprenticeship agenda will open up.

So, the 'three million apprentices' target may be wrong and could threaten standards, but to focus on this side of the debate misses the very real opportunity that now exists. It is up to the FE sector to help more employers take on more young people.

The FE, and specifically apprenticeship, sector is about to be exposed to a new and

exciting world and within this new world will come new rules. Some of them will be documented (eventually) by the funding agencies, others will be set out by our new customers.

At GetMyFirstJob, we believe that the winners in this marketplace will deliver consistently high levels of service throughout an apprenticeship programme. From the first engagement where programmes are specified and agreed, through the contracting and operational phases, it will no longer be enough simply to be an SFA contract holder. Agreeing and delivering on specific outcomes (and not simply following funding guidelines) will be essential.

All of this is happening at a time when the challenge to engage and recruit high quality candidates is also as hard as it has ever been. Changes to both sixth form and HE funding have led to increased 'competition' for learners. So, delivering an outstanding experience to candidates and companies will be needed to deliver the best outcome. It is the recruitment experience that will, after all, be the first real deliverable of the apprenticeship journey.

This experience has to go far beyond a simple communication process. Of course apprenticeship providers should get back to candidates when they apply, of course communication with employers should be accurate and timely. This is surely easy and done by all apprenticeship providers anyway, right? Wrong. Research we conducted recently with members of the Federation of Small Business, amongst others, showed that over 40% of small businesses who had

experience of an apprenticeship programme rated the communication process with their provider as unsatisfactory. How many rated it as outstanding? I'm afraid to say 0%.

**It is up to the FE sector to help more employers take on more young people.**

From working with 150 colleges, employers and training providers, GetMyFirstJob is fully aware of the challenges such establishments face in communicating apprenticeships with this generation of young people and serving up outstanding service to employers. That's why we're so pleased to be using our recent £1m investment from City & Guilds and Nesta, to put more focus on helping bridge the gap between young people, training providers and employers. Part of this strategy will include investing heavily in communicating the value of apprenticeships to young people and guiding businesses through the storm of the apprenticeship levy.

# CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Billy Camden*

## Budding skills for Chelsea



They spent weeks creating their exhibit, a reclining lady with a full skirt of flowers, complete with a floral headdress and parrot.

Floristry tutor Jo Matthews was delighted to see her students' work recognised at the world's biggest flower show with a gold medal.

She said: "It's great to see the students have the opportunity to compete. This will give them a really good grounding for their future careers."

"The students are absolutely ecstatic. It's all about precision and they worked very hard as a team. We can now call ourselves the top college for floristry in the UK."

Bath was one of

four colleges chosen to compete at the show, with judges marking exhibits on ideas, colour, composition and technique.

The silver medal was awarded to Reaseheath College in Cheshire, and bronze to Writtle College in Essex.

**B**udding gardeners from Bath College have won the prestigious title of RHS Chelsea Floristry College of the Year.

The team of floristry students joined exhibitors and world-renowned designers at the show at the end of May.

## Volunteering to feed the homeless



From left: David Owen, from HomeServe's service operations team, with apprentices Danny Brown, aged 17, Jack Woolfrey, 19, Daniel Davis, 22, Christian Farraguia, 18, Danny Belding, 22, Charles Pittman, 21, Joseph McMullen, 25, and Henry Beal, 20

**A** group of Walsall College plumbing apprentices decided to give something back to the community by volunteering to feed homeless people in Birmingham city centre.

Their kind act formed part of an enrichment project as part of their trainee plumbers' level two course.

They chose to support the work of the Midland Langer Seva Society, a Sikh organisation who have provided food for those in need for a number of years.

The students took to the streets of Birmingham in May and helped to feed more than 200 people.

Steve Humphreys, team leader for

construction and building technologies at Walsall College, said: "Previously the apprentices have opted to go go-karting and for team meals, so this was something very different that they all felt was a real eye-opener and also very humbling."

The eight apprentices are currently part way through their two-year training programme where they also train with national home assistance provider, HomeServe.

Greg Reed, chief marketing officer for HomeServe, said: "It's great to see our apprentices out in our community with the drive to help others that is part and parcel of our culture here at HomeServe."



Amber Westmoreland receiving her School or College Leaver of the Year award from Jack Denton (right), cofounder of AllAboutGroup, and Ed Dean, account executive at the AllAboutGroup

## Top apprentice employers awarded

**A**pprentice employers have been honoured at a glitzy ceremony at London's City Hall.

The fourth national AllAboutSchoolLeavers Awards were judged using employee satisfaction surveys.

Twenty-nine awards were up for grabs on the night, rewarding top UK employers who offer intermediate apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships, higher apprenticeships, school leaver programmes and sponsored degrees.

Mercedes-Benz was named top employer for school and college leavers, and Amber Westmoreland of EY (formerly Ernest and

Young) won the School or College Leaver of the Year award.

"I chose the school-leaver route because I didn't want to go to university when I left college," said 21-year-old Amber.

"When I found out there was a route to get a professional job – one that I would have thought you'd need a degree for – without having to go to university, I jumped at it."

Sharing the limelight was Peugeot Citroën Retail Group, who won the Top Intermediate Apprenticeship Employers award, and Barclays, who picked up the Top Higher Apprenticeship Employers trophy.



Sports students and staff at Uxbridge College who took part in the 24-hour football marathon

## Kickstarter for cardiac risk charity

**A** non-stop 24 hour football marathon put on by Uxbridge College students and staff has netted more than £3,000 for charity.

Players took part in a series of five-a-side matches starting at 11am and continuing all day and throughout the night – with some individuals on the pitch for 10 to 12 hours.

Around 40 sports students took turns playing across the whole 24 hours, with others taking part in one-off matches.

Sports lecturer Richard Johnson said: "This was harder than any of us expected and a massive team effort. There was blood, sweat and tears behind the scenes too when things got tough, but everyone encouraged each other to keep going."

The event, which raised money for Cardiac Risk in the Young, was co-ordinated by Mr Johnson, whose own experiences of cardiac

problems inspired the choice of charity. Mr Johnson spent the first two months of his life in hospital after being born with a hole in the heart and related issues, and as he grew up was repeatedly warned by doctors to avoid strenuous exercise.





# Team takes on the Great Manchester Run

FEATURED  
CAMPUS  
ROUND-UP

A mother whose baby boy was stillborn leaned on the caring hearts of her Nelson and Colne College friends to take on a mammoth running challenge in a bid to drive up funds for the charity that supported her, writes Billy Camden.

Rachel Cox and her husband Adam were left devastated in January 2011 when their baby Ewan was stillborn after seven months of pregnancy.

It was the support of stillbirth and neonatal death charity Sands, which helped the couple through the grieving process at the time of such heartbreak.

And now the couple have been able to give something back to the charity thanks to the help of their Nelson and Colne College (NCC) colleagues' fighting efforts.

A group of 15 staff members joined Rachel, the college's student services manager, and Adam for the gruelling 10,000-metre Great Manchester Run.

Rachel said it was a "tough" event but one that was well worth the physical pain.

"When you are struggling the crowd really push you along and they really get you going. There is a real solidarity between us as a group and the crowd, it makes for a great atmosphere.

"The generosity of staff at Nelson and Colne College has been overwhelming, and I am thrilled they chose to raise money for Sands."

Physics tutor Ste Coase, who took part in the run, said: "There was a real sense of camaraderie within team NCC, and it was an



Rachel Cox's colleagues who joined her for the gruelling 10,000m Great Manchester Run

absolute pleasure for us all to support Rachel on the day and raise money and awareness of a cause that is exceptionally close to her heart."

The run was the latest fundraising stunt put on by Rachel and Adam, who have hosted three quiz nights and promoted the work of Sands — raising more than £8,000 for the charity since 2011.

Rachel, who is also mum to Dylan, aged four, and Jude, 15 months, said that



Rachel and her daughter, Jude

losing Ewan was a "complete shock to the family", but it was the support of Sands that "helped us through our grieving process".

The charity allowed Rachel and Adam to use the serenity suite at Burnley General Hospital, and spend quality time with their baby.

Rachel said: "The stillbirth was devastating because you never think it is going to happen to

you. You think it is something that happens in Victorian times and shouldn't happen in 2011.

"Pregnancy and birth are meant to be happy times and that is what you look forward to. We went on to have two more children, but you lose your confidence a bit and you become muted and a lot more nervous because of our previous experience."

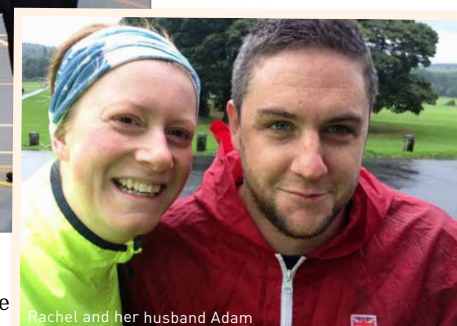
She hopes that the money raised allows the charity to continue with its research and

ultimately prevent other families from suffering in the future.

Judith Abela, acting chief executive of Sands, said: "We cannot thank Rachel

and her colleagues at NCC enough for taking on this amazing challenge, for Sands and in memory of baby Ewan."

You can still make a donation to the NCC team by visiting [www.justgiving.com/Nelson-and-Colne-College3](http://www.justgiving.com/Nelson-and-Colne-College3).



Rachel and her husband Adam

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

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

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Sam Parrett, the current Bromley and Greenwich College principal, has been chosen to lead the new South East London Colleges Group.

Bexley College will be joining the rest of the colleges which will all merge on August 1.

Ms Parrett said the move will "strengthen vocational education and apprenticeship provision" across South East London, "securing a sustainable future across the board".

She added: "I am confident that future of vocational education in south-east London is very bright and would like to thank everyone

involved for getting us to this point."

Ms Parrett started in FE as a business development manager for work-based learning at Bracknell and Wokingham College, and then became a vice-principal before heading to the Association of South Eastern Colleges. She was also a vice-principal at Plymouth College.

Her move means that Bexley College principal Danny Ridgeway will be retiring when the merger goes ahead.

Mr Ridgeway said: "After 32 years of working in the FE sector, including the last six years as principal of Bexley College, now

is the time for me to retire. I shall miss the students, my colleagues and partners, but I know that I am leaving the college in safe hands."

Meanwhile, Richard Hollywood is to stand down from his position as principal of Mid Cheshire College.

Mr Hollywood had led Mid Cheshire since February 2013, after joining in 2006 as an assistant principal.

A college spokesperson said: "Richard Hollywood has decided to step down from his position as principal of Mid Cheshire College.

"The governors would like to thank him for his service and dedication to the college over the last 10 years."

Neighbouring West Cheshire College has also revealed its principal Nigel Davies, plus his former deputy principal Adrian Humphreys, have left their posts.

FE Week previously reported that Mr Davies and Mr Humphreys had both moved on "in order to explore new career and other

professional opportunities".

Helen Nellist, who was already a member of the college's leadership team, was subsequently appointed acting principal.

King George V College in Southport has also said goodbye to its principal Adele Willis, who had led the college since 2010.

A spokesperson informed FE Week that vice-principal Anne-Marie Francis had taken over as acting principal on June 1.

It has also been announced that the principal of Guernsey College, Saboohi Famili, would be leaving her post at the end of the academic year.

Ms Famili said she had been frustrated by slow progress and delays in decision making at Guernsey which led her to leave. She will join London's Epping Forest College as principal in September.

Guernsey College said its current vice-principal, Louise Misselke, will be made interim principal until a successor is appointed "in the coming months".



SAM PARRETT



DANNY RIDGEWAY



RICHARD HOLLYWOOD



NIGEL DAVIES



ADRIAN HUMPHREYS



ADELE WILLIS



SABOOHI FAMILI

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



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and go to NCG > West Lancashire College vacancies.

For queries related to the positions, please ring Human Resources at West Lancashire College on 01695 52312.

**CLOSING DATE: 20 JUNE 2016.**



HLC have vacancies for experienced teachers at its female college and two male colleges in Gassim province. One year contracts commencing in August 2016 are available in the following subjects:

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## TOWER HAMLETS PRINCIPAL

### SALARY: COMPETITIVE

Tower Hamlets College and Hackney Community College are merging on 1st August 2016 to create a dynamic and confident FE provider serving east and central London. Both colleges are Ofsted grade 2 and the combined college will be financially secure with total income in excess of £40m. The shadow board, which is overseeing planning for the merger, have recently appointed a Group Principal & CEO and are now looking to appoint a borough based principal for Tower Hamlets. This senior position will have overall responsibility for campuses in Poplar and Stepney and will lead the previous Tower Hamlets College provision in a devolved group structure. The postholder will have a strong curriculum track record in a good or outstanding college and be able to contribute to the development of the merged college as a leading further education provider for London.

Serving diverse London boroughs the merged College (which is currently consulting on an overarching new Group name) is uniquely located in the heart of an exciting region. We have built strong relationships with significant organisations in Canary Wharf and on the Olympic Park; in Tech City – the fastest-growing tech-hub in Europe – and within the creative environment of Shoreditch and Hoxton. We are passionate about developing further partnerships and collaborations which create opportunities for local people to get the skills, qualifications and experience they need to succeed in the dynamic sectors across the area.

It will be important that the recent pace and trajectory of change are maintained; but looking ahead our focus is on ensuring that we provide a distinctive offering which meets the needs of local learners, partners and stakeholders.

As an experienced senior leader, you'll bring a sophisticated understanding of the distinctive challenges and opportunities of an inner city college. You should have a proven track record as a leader in Further Education with substantial experience of managing the curriculum at a senior level. With experience of setting and achieving challenging targets, you should be an excellent communicator who is able to work with people at all levels to bring about change.

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**If you would like to arrange an informal discussion with the Group Principal & CEO, please call 0207 510 7720.**

**CLOSING DATE: TUESDAY 14TH JUNE 2016**

**INTERVIEWS WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY 4TH JULY 2016**



## JOBS


**FASHION RETAIL  
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**THE FASHION RETAIL ACADEMY HAVE 4 NEW POSTS TO FILL,  
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Level 3, Full time, 37 hours per week, Salary £31,764 - £34,442 DEO

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Level 4 Visual Merchandising, Thursday 3pm - 5pm (27th July 2017) 72 hours, £37.58 p/h

**ASSOCIATE LECTURER - FASHION CONTEXTUAL STUDIES**

Wednesdays 2pm - 4pm 7th September - 16th November AND 1st March - 3rd May 2017  
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Please visit [www.fra.ac.uk](http://www.fra.ac.uk) for more information about the roles and to apply.

**CLOSING DATE: FRIDAY 10TH JUNE 2016**

**INTERVIEWS: provisionally arranged for July 5 - Fashion Retail Lecturer  
July 4/6 - Contextual Studies/PPD/Branding**



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# FE Week

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*Tracy Roser, executive assistant to the group chief executive, EMFEC Group*

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*Gosia Seaman, HR assistant, Richmond upon Thames College*

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*Jakub Pylat, account manager, Lighthouse Adcomms LLP*

**For more information, please contact Hannah on:**

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## JOBS



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Northampton College is one of the larger regional providers of Further Education. Our close proximity to local communities puts us in a unique position to meet both the learning and training needs of individuals and employers throughout the south and west of Northamptonshire.

We offer apprenticeships and other work based learning initiatives which are funded by the skills funding agency. The post primarily concentrates on developing the relevant functional skills to enable students on work based learning programmes to achieve their functional skills component of their apprenticeship framework.

This post is to deliver Functional Skills at all levels across all sites and in offsite locations. To provide a supportive and progressive learning environment for work based students that enables them to achieve and make positive progress towards their apprenticeship.

**Closing date: (12.00 Noon), Friday 10 June 2016. Interview date: Friday 24 June 2016.**

**For further information and an application form, please go to [www.northamptoncollege.ac.uk](http://www.northamptoncollege.ac.uk)**

**This post will require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.**

We strive to achieve diversity in our staff to reflect the community we serve.



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

## Learning Curve Group is expanding nationally...

### JOIN OUR FANTASTIC FUNCTIONAL SKILLS TEAM

Do you have a **passion for teaching**? We have an excellent opportunity for those wanting an exciting career move that will be both rewarding and challenging.

We are currently embarking on our largest ever national recruitment campaign and we are looking for **Functional Skills Tutors** to join our successful and supportive team here at LCG.

As one of our Functional Skills Tutors your goal will be to ensure that learners gain the new skills and knowledge needed in order to be successful in their apprenticeships. The role is home-based but requires travel to locations throughout the country.

We are dedicated to providing our staff with **job satisfaction, long-term benefits and a competitive salary**. Some of our benefits include:

- 25 days paid holiday excluding bank holidays
- Mileage rate at 45p
- Staff Development Days
- Career development opportunities
- London Weighting (where applicable)
- Workplace Pension Scheme



# FULFIL ambitions



The new Level 3 Tech Level Diploma and Level 2 Technical Certificate in Physical Activity, Fitness and Exercise Science are now approved by the DfE for inclusion in the new look 16-19 Performance Tables with Level 3 accepted by UCAS for the new tariff.

WITH OUR ACTIVE PATHWAY

Designed in collaboration with Active Leisure employers and training providers, these qualifications will equip students with the level of knowledge, skill and competence they need for direct entry to employment and higher education.

Our active career pathway will enable your students to access the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs), and gain work experience whilst they learn.

start journey

Visit [www.activeiq.co.uk](http://www.activeiq.co.uk) or email [businessdevelopment@activeiq.co.uk](mailto:businessdevelopment@activeiq.co.uk) to start delivering from September 2016.

Connect with us   

## FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next edition

## Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference to WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug. Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk). Last Edition's winner was Mark Batey, Student Support Technician, Hull College.