

FE Week



**EDITOR ASKS
HALFON - PART 1**
PAGE 6



**LEGAL BATTLE
COMMENCES**
PAGE 2



**REASON FOR LOAN
GROWTH DELAYS**
PAGE 5



A Billy Camden exclusive on page 10

FUNDING 'U-TURN' BUT HOW FAR DOES IT REALLY GO?

➤ **FE Week #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign wins DfE backtrack but deep cuts remain**

**NEW ANALYSIS PROVES GOVERNMENT
FUNDING PROMISES INADEQUATE**

Three most popular	Before		After	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Business Administration L2	-30%	-52%	-20%	-36%
Construction Skills L2	-27%	-50%	-14%	-37%
Hairdressing L2	-44%	-62%	-36%	-51%

PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

EXCLUSIVE

Full investigation on pages 6 and 7



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NEWS

Rise in SFA contracts for small providers

Alix Robertson
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Plans to cut the number of recipients of Skills Funding Agency cash have been shelved in an attempt to increase the provider base for degree and higher-level apprenticeships, and advanced learner loans.

A total of 1,023 providers received direct SFA funding this academic year, up from 984 at the start of 2015/16.

The SFA first attempted to introduce a minimum contract threshold of £500,000 five years ago, designed to cut the number of providers it funded directly.

FE Week understands that more than 200 providers lost their agency business when this policy was introduced, because they were unable or unwilling to increase their contracts to the half-million mark.

The SFA previously told FE Week that this minimum contract policy had “allowed efficiencies to be realised within the sector through a reduced agency role, economies of scale, and more opportunities for shared services between training organisations”.

But advanced learner loan contracts were introduced in August 2013, and they were this year expanded to include 19-23 year olds.

This year’s data shows a clear jump in the number of contracts – surprisingly a quarter (255) of these were providers with total

allocations of under £500,000.

FE Week analysis also shows that 87 contracts (nine per cent) were for under £100,000, while a further 63 (16 per cent) fell below £250,000.

When asked to explain this, an SFA spokesperson told FE Week that “the number of contracts has risen” because it was “expanding the provider base for delivering degree and higher level apprenticeships”.

The agency had “completed a series of expression-of-interest exercises to expand the provider base” ahead of 2016/17, she added.

And this year’s contracting process had been “more efficient for providers and the SFA”, because all contracts for the year were issued through the digital skills funding service.

Paul Warner, policy director at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, was sceptical about this apparent change in approach by the SFA, and claimed that the department is facing “capacity challenges”.

“The number of providers under the £500,000 contract value threshold has gone up quite significantly, which supports our view that the

changes made in August 2011 were misguided and not properly thought through,” he said.

“Given the government’s views on subcontracting, and the capacity challenges facing the SFA, it will be interesting to see how the final proposals for the new register for apprenticeship training providers will impact on the numbers.”

This is not the first time the SFA’s minimum contract-level policy has been called into question.

In May 2013, FE Week reported that 50 providers had been given total allocations of less than £500,000 – the smallest of which was for just £11,274.

The total amount allocated to the 50 providers was over £7 million, raising concerns that the SFA had abandoned the policy.

But, despite the number of allocations coming in below the minimum, the SFA said at the time that it would “continue to apply the principles of minimum-contract values”, and that “the level at which these are set for individual procurement exercises is driven by the ability of providers to meet the needs of their communities and the provision procured.”



HUGHES GETS HIS DAY IN COURT WITH GREENING OVER SMALL SIXTH FORM

Paul Offord
@PAULOFFORD

The date has been set for the Association of College’s legal clash with the government over a controversial decision to approve of a small sixth form.

The AoC announced a month ago that it was launching a judicial review over the Department for Education’s decision to fund a new sixth form at Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College, in Hornchurch.

The hearing has now been set for Tuesday (November 1).

The AoC, which is jointly launching the action with nearby Havering Sixth Form College, claims the DfE didn’t follow its own rules when its regional schools commissioner approved the Abbs Cross request, which was made by the Loxford School Trust.

These rules state, for example, that sixth forms should only be created in schools graded ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ by Ofsted – and only in schools which expect to enrol 200 students or more, a number which the AoC doesn’t believe Abbs Cross is capable of reaching.

The academy lost its ‘good’ Ofsted rating

in June 2015, falling to ‘inadequate’, and has since been subject to three section eight special measures monitoring inspections, in December 2015, March this year, and with a third published this month.

The outcome of the review is expected to have a significant influence on the way that future school sixth forms are approved – a process which many in FE feel is not strict enough compared to that for colleges, many of which are currently under pressure to merge as a result of the post-16 area reviews.

While the venue had not been confirmed by the time FE Week went to press, it is expected to be held at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

Last month, David Hughes, AoC’s chief executive, told FE Week: “We will have invested over £50,000 on this process – an investment we felt was necessary at this stage because we wanted to secure clarity on such an important issue.”

The confrontation will follow publication of the Sixth Form College Association’s annual funding impact survey findings, which has forced chief executive Bill Watkin to demand more funding from the chancellor ahead of his autumn statement on November 23.

The SFCA received responses from 80 of the 90 SFCs, 70 of which (90 per

cent) admitted they were either ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘concerned’ about the financial health of their college.

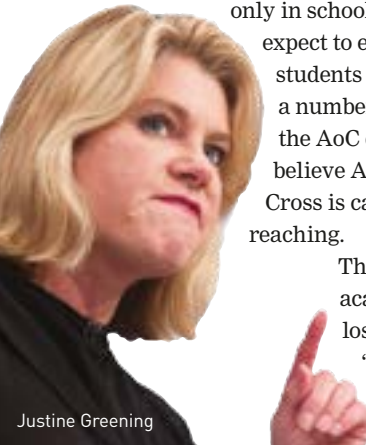
Mr Watkin said: “The message from the most effective and efficient providers of sixth form education is clear – more investment from government is essential.”

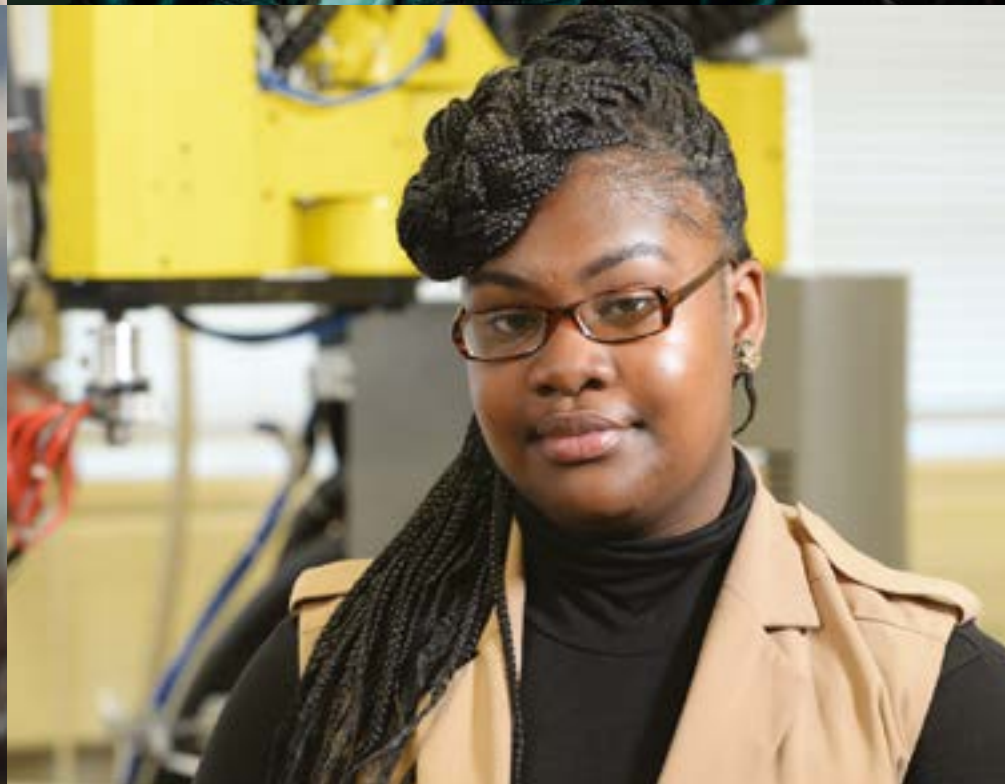
Sir David Collins, the FE commissioner, has meanwhile told MPs during a special evidence session for the House of Commons education select committee that the post-16 area reviews should include school sixth-forms.

He said: “A general post-16 review of sixth forms would be very interesting nationally and I’m sure the college sector would welcome it.”

The evidence from any such review would “show very clearly the kind of changes that might be needed”, he added, in response to Labour MP Ian Mearns, who asked whether the government should conduct a separate review into sixth form provision outside of FE seeing as school sixth forms had been excluded from the current area review process.

Sir David said that sixth forms had been encouraged as they “give people greater choice”, but pointed out that there was pressure on schools to maintain and develop their sixth forms “almost at any cost in some areas”, leading to “inefficiencies” and “serious weaknesses in quality”.





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Undergraduates and former BTEC students pictured from top left:

Joey Mangwi-Smith, Nursing undergraduate at London Southbank University, Connor Thomas, Motion Graphics undergraduate at The University of South Wales, Hayley Simpson, Sports Coaching undergraduate at Leeds Beckett University, Yasmin Harris-Boady, Engineering undergraduate at London Southbank University.



NEWS

Jaguar Land Rover red-faced by ‘poor’ Ofsted rating

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE

Jaguar Land Rover, the British car manufacturer regularly lauded by ministers for its apprenticeship scheme, has been hit with a shock grade three rating after an Ofsted inspection.

The Indian-owned firm received a ‘requires improvement’ score across the board for its dealership apprenticeship programme, for which it is an employer provider.

The report will raise eyebrows in Westminster, as the government has often praised the firm’s apprenticeship provision.

Prime Minister Theresa May, for example, spoke glowingly of a visit to its Coventry headquarters, during a parliamentary exchange on apprenticeships on September 14.

She said: “We’re committed as a government to ensuring more apprenticeships are being created – that’s giving young people opportunities, like the young people I met when I went to Jaguar Land Rover, to learn a skill, get into a job, get into the workplace, and get on where their talents take them.”

However, it was the apprentices’ performance, as well as poor oversight for subcontractors, that the Ofsted report published on October 17 said had brought Jaguar Land Rover down to earth from its previous rating of ‘good’ overall.

Inspectors found that “too many apprentices complete their portfolios too slowly”, even though “the large majority” completed their programmes successfully.

The report also warned that senior leaders “entrusted the subcontractors with delivering good-quality provision, with insufficient challenge and insufficiently clear specifications of the quality expected”.



Prime minister Theresa May and chancellor Philip Hammond visiting Jaguar Land Rover

According to the SFA’s list, Jaguar Land Rover Holdings Ltd has two subcontractors – Calex UK Ltd, worth £1,048,961, and Babcock Training Ltd, worth £77,828, as of August 31.

Jaguar Land Rover’s disappointment follows another inadequate rating for an employer-provider car manufacturer in late May.

Ofsted inspectors blamed the flaws in Citroen’s apprenticeship provision on poor management of the same subcontractor, Calex.

Paul Joyce, Ofsted’s deputy director for FE and skills, warned the government about declining standards at employer providers during a parliamentary committee hearing on October 19, and the issue is likely to arise again in the outgoing Ofsted chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw’s final annual inspection, which is due in the coming weeks.

Nevertheless, the Skills Funding Agency

has gone ahead with its new employer-provider register, to help encourage more employers to run their own training.

It hasn’t all been bad news for employer-providers though: Siemens was rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in August.

The report said: “Through highly effective training, apprentices emerge as self-confident and able engineers who can lead teams, manage large projects and provide innovative solutions.”

In addition to its dealership apprenticeship programme, Jaguar Land Rover also runs apprenticeships in manufacturing, automotive, and engineering through a separate programme in its manufacturing division.

It does not operate as the employer-provider for this programme, however, so it is not therefore subject to Ofsted inspection.

“We are aware of the outcome of the recent

inspection of Jaguar Land Rover Holdings and will be working with the company to ensure that robust plans for improvement are in place to ensure apprentices develop the skills they need to build successful careers,” said an SFA spokesperson.

A spokesperson for Jaguar Land Rover told FE Week that the firm was “clearly disappointed” with Ofsted’s findings.

“Our management team had undertaken a review of the programme just prior to Ofsted’s review that recognised improvements were required – as has been referenced in the Ofsted report,” he said.

“We are working hard with our team to ensure that our high success rates for the programme are supported by high-quality reporting and management of the programme metrics.”

Calex UK Ltd was unavailable to comment, despite repeated requests.

New rules could see DfE bailing out colleges over and again

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE

The government has announced new rules which will allow it to repeatedly bail out failing colleges that go bust, reneging on a previous commitment.

The new Technical and Further Education Bill announced on Thursday last week includes provisions to apply a ‘special administration regime’ to insolvent colleges and sixth forms in order to put the interests of learners ahead of the interests of creditors.

When it first announced the proposals in March, the Department for Education said it would not provide financial support to failing colleges once area review recommendations had been implemented – and that they would be allowed to go bust.

However, the DfE has now U-turned on that promise, and



Mark Dawe

confirmed that extra cash would be made available if needed.

“The Secretary of State would of course want any special administration to be successful and will have wide powers to provide funding if necessary to achieve this,” it has now said, in a response to a consultation on the insolvency regime plans.

“Our intention is that these powers will allow funding to be provided by grant or loan as well as guarantee or indemnity”.

However, it did warn that colleges shouldn’t feel entitled to repeated bailouts, adding: “While the special administration regime will provide a necessary safety net for colleges and their learners, its use will be exceptional.”

The DfE’s volte-face was met with scorn by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, which represents non-college FE providers.

“Observers might be forgiven for thinking that no matter how incompetently an institution is

managed, the government will always bail it out,” said its chief executive Mark Dawe.

He reiterated AELP’s long-standing call for a level playing-field between the different types of provider, and urged the SFA to allow other providers to bid for ownership of failing colleges.

David Hughes, meanwhile, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, welcomed the government’s focus on protecting the interests of learners – but didn’t comment directly on the U-turn.

FE Week asked the DfE why it was backtracking on its earlier position, but a response was not forthcoming by the time we went to press.

The outgoing FE commissioner, Sir David Collins, told the education select committee last week that the area review process could produce “benefits of £200 million plus per year going forward”, for an upfront cost of



David Hughes

between £2 million and £3 million.

According to the DfE, these savings will be based on the sector as a whole meeting “an operating surplus of three to five per cent of turnover”.

This, it said, would enable colleges “to invest between £200 million and £360 million more per year in high-quality technical education”.

Additionally, the DfE finally published a number of key area review documents in October, three months later than expected.

The implementation guidance, due diligence framework, and guidance for local authorities and local enterprise partnerships were all originally expected in July.

However they were finally released on October 19, alongside updated guidance and application forms for the restructuring facility, and for sixth form colleges to convert to academy status, as well as full details of the areas and colleges involved in waves four and five of the area reviews.

Dip in higher-level courses holding up loan growth requests

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

The delay in advance learner loans is not down to a lack of resources, but has come about because the Skills Funding Agency is trying to build funding for higher-level qualifications, according to a senior civil servant.

Janet Ryland, the SFA’s head of technical and professional education, said that growth requests had been halted by the government for the first time while the agency investigated “opportunity to build higher level qualifications and loans”.

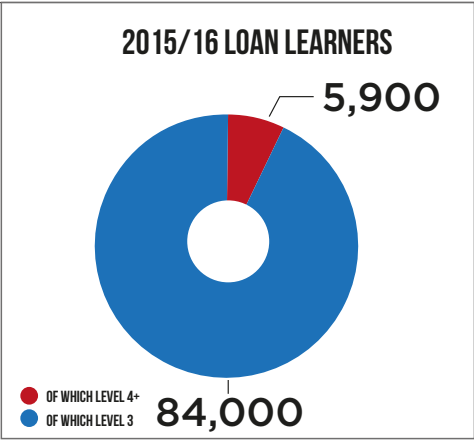
The SFA reluctantly announced a month ago that it would pause growth requests until further notice, after FE Week exposed lengthy delays with processing.

Ms Ryland made her comments during a workshop at the Federation of Awarding Bodies conference last week, confirming that while the SFA doesn’t mind that it mainly receives loan requests for level three courses, “part of the challenge” that it faces was not having a “critical mass” of qualifications at



levels five and six coming through. Latest government figures show that numbers of learners aged 19 and over taking courses at level four and above appear to have been cut in half since loans were introduced in 2013 (see table). Worryingly, just seven per cent of all learners accessing loans last year were taking level four and above qualifications (see pie chart). “We are taking stock of growth requests, just making sure that if we are to respond

to them we can respond to them in the right way in the interest of learners and those providers,” Ms Ryland told the workshop. “It would be great if we had higher levels there. I’m not saying it is wrong that we got nearly all level three; I think part of the challenge is we haven’t got that critical mass of levels five and six qualifications coming through in the last few months.” FE Week revealed on September 23 that multiple providers had been waiting as long as four months for a response from the SFA on loan growth requests – which they had made as far back as June and July. The government was understood at the time to be struggling to cope with extra demand for new 19-to-23 loans. However Ms Ryland insisted the delay was not – as has been suspected – due to a lack of resources at the agency.



“I don’t think it is lack of resource or anything like that; I just think it is taking stock and I think we can anticipate that there will be movement on that shortly,” she said. However, she deflected questions from FE Week on whether the Treasury was delaying fulfilment because it expected to get a better return on investment from loan requests for higher-level courses, reiterating that she believed the loans system had negatively impacted on the higher levels. “I think part of this is reclaiming what used to be a real strength in the FE sector, which was the delivery of what we used to call ‘non-prescribed high-level skills’,” she said. “There used to be a lot of level four, five and six provision. “We have the opportunity to build higher-level qualifications and loans, and it is a question of how we can do that.”

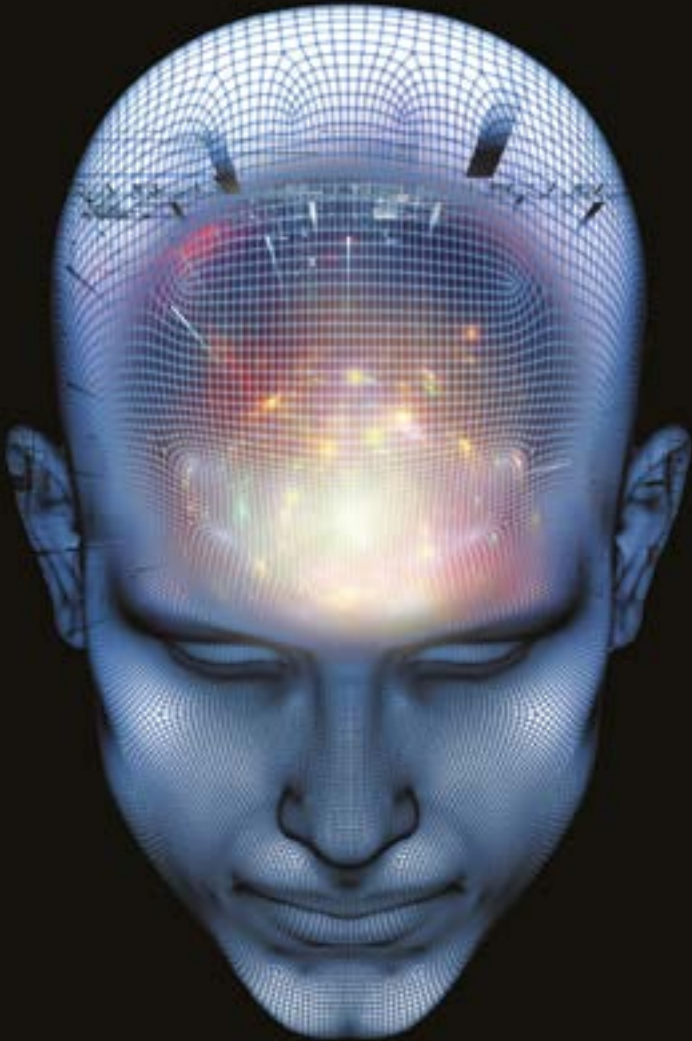
ACADEMIC YEAR	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total 19+ L4+	34,500	18,300	16,700	17,500
of which non-loans	34,500	15,600	11,900	11,600
of which loans (24+)	0	2,700	4,800	5,900



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INVESTIGATES

APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING ‘U-TURN’

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EXCLUSIVE FROM FRONT

Despite the very public “U-turn” the government made on proposed apprenticeship cuts last Tuesday, funding is still due to be cut from key frameworks by up to 50 per cent, exclusive analysis by FE Week has shown.

In August, this newspaper discovered that cuts proposed by the Department for Education would cause framework funding rates for 16- to 18-year-olds to tumble by more than half, and would disproportionately fall in some of the nation’s most deprived areas.

And following the extreme pressure brought to bear by our #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign, the DfE announced on Tuesday that it would introduce two measures to arrest the decline – by paying an extra 20 per cent on the funding band limit for 16-18 year-olds, and promising £60 million of “additional support in areas of disadvantage”.

However, FE Week has crunched the numbers again – and found that while the cuts aren’t quite as steep as before, many frameworks will still feel cuts of 20 per cent or more.

For instance, before the U-turn, we calculated cuts of between 27 and 50 per cent to construction skills at level two. After it, the cuts range from 14 to 37 per cent – figures which could still devastate the sector.

In other popular sectors such as hairdressing and engineering, our analysis revealed that



David Lammy MP

at levels two and three respectively, there could still be a maximum drop of 49 to 51 per cent.

David Lammy, the Labour MP who helped FE Week spearhead its campaign, has reacted with fury to our calculations, and has promised to raise the matter in a special parliamentary backbench debate on Tuesday (November 1).

He said: “The government has to explain why – even after this U-turn – its updated funding proposals will still result in cuts of 50 per cent.

“Whilst the government has reinstated the additional support for disadvantaged young people, it has only committed to maintaining this funding for one year and offered no further guarantees.

“I am pleased to have secured a backbench debate on the issue to enable MPs from all sides to make their voices heard.”

The DfE would not comment directly on FE Week’s figures. Instead, its spokesperson said: “Through the new levy, £2.5 billion will be invested in apprenticeships by 2019-20 – twice what was spent in 2010-11.

“What we need is a simple system that works for all, which is why we have confirmed that the cost an employer will pay for an apprenticeship is the same, regardless of age.

“This week, we confirmed that to help market transition, providers will get an extra 20 per cent for training a young person on a framework. This is on top of the £1,000 paid per 16- to 18-year-old apprentice to both the employer and training provider.”

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, echoed Mr Lammy’s sentiment,

saying: “There are still cases where the funding for frameworks is dramatically lower.

“We need to understand these specific cases and demonstrate to the government the concern about the ability to deliver these and the consequences, if there are no further changes.”

Robert Halfon, the apprenticeships and skills minister who will preside over these cuts, confirmed in an interview with FE Week’s editor Nick Linford (see below) that neither of the DfE’s new measures would be permanent – and that the extra £60 million would only last for 12 months.

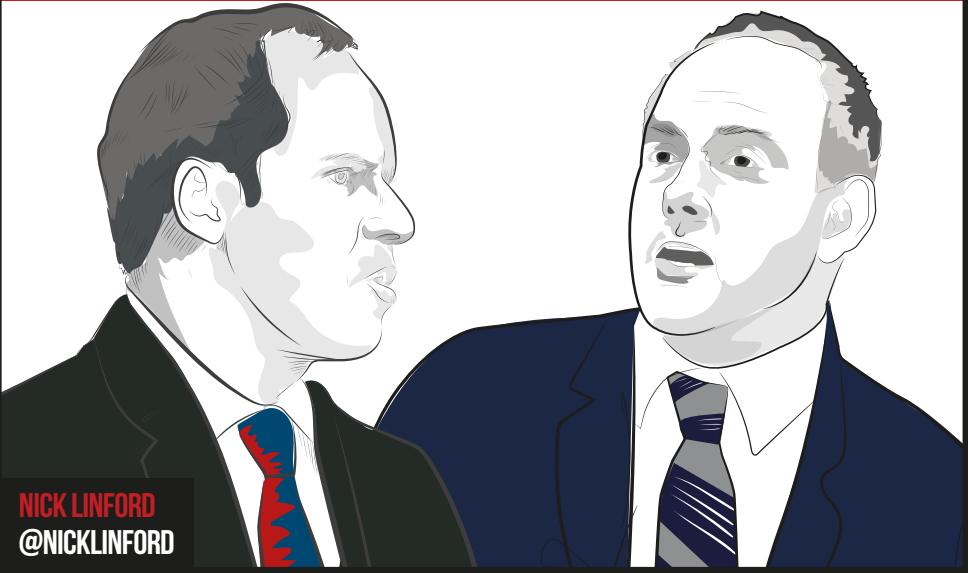
He will answer Mr Lammy’s questions during Tuesday’s debate, while he is also likely to face tough questions on the funding changes surrounding the new apprenticeship levy launching in April at a Commons sub-committee on education, skills and the economy hearing the following day.

At last month’s #SaveOurApprenticeships launch, Mr Halfon conceded that “we need to look at all of those apprenticeship funding figures – and we are”.

Jonathan Slater, the top civil servant at the DfE, also claimed during a recent meeting of the public accounts committee that getting the funding rate right for young people from deprived areas “is one of the most active debates we’ve been working through”.



EDITOR ASKS... part one



NICK LINFORD
@NICKLINFORD

As it turned out, my exclusive interview with the new apprenticeships minister Robert Halfon was conducted just hours after the Independent, Guardian and Mirror had all reported a major government U-turn on apprenticeship rates.

“People are saying this is a U-turn, but actually I would describe it as listening with elephant-sized ears,” he volunteered – before the questions had even begun.

“I made it clear to you when you had the big

[FE Week] event in parliament. I made it clear at party conference. I made it publicly clear in articles that we have listened – and that’s what my job is to do. The whole purpose of it was that it was a survey and a consultation, and so we’ve responded,” he said. “FE Week, given what you’ve been up to, has been an incredibly important part of that consultation.”

That morning the government had announced that massive proposed cuts to the 16-18 apprenticeship framework rates would be softened by two measures: by increasing

the £1,000 provider incentive with cash worth 20 per cent of the relevant funding band, and by adding £60 million to funding for providers for apprentices who live in a deprived area, or up to £600 per apprentice.

The minister, who appears uncomfortable with formalities, insisting I call him Rob, argued that when he “kept going on about social justice”, it wasn’t just warm words, and that this rethink shows he “really meant it”.

Could he provide any reassurances that these new measures won’t be scrapped after 12 months? Not quite: “The framework 20 per cent is a transitional measure and the idea is to help the providers adapt,” he said. “It will reduce over time as the new standards come through.”

As for the disadvantage funding, this £60 million is “for one year”, he said, adding: “I am doing, again as part of my agenda on social justice, a serious review which will report sometime next year on what is genuinely the best way to incentivise, encourage and help disadvantaged people to do apprenticeships.”

Moving on to the apprenticeship levy, I asked him whether he thought large employers would look to use their whole levy pot, as was suggested in DfE research published the same day – a situation which

would leave precious little funding available for smaller employers.

He was quick to dismiss the DfE’s research, saying: “I completely utterly reject that proposition, because I meet employers when I go all over the country. Some large employers say they love it, and they’re going to have apprenticeship; others just say they won’t.

“The treasury and others did serious studies to make sure the money was available. You know about all the incentives there are for smaller businesses to take on apprentices, which are guaranteed by the government, so I don’t think there is any evidence to say that this money won’t be there for smaller employers.”

He continued: “Obviously we always keep everything under review, and we’d work out what to do if that occurred, but I completely reject that it is going to happen, because there are many employers who don’t want to take up apprentices and many who do – and that is the whole purpose of the levy.”

In part two of this column next week, we tackle whether employer ownership of apprenticeships is compatible with social justice, the lack of assessment organisations, subcontracting, and whether the CBI is right to be concerned about timescales.

I would describe it as listening with elephant-sized ears

BUT HOW FAR DOES IT REALLY GO?

Funding for framework starts currently		
10 most popular frameworks for 16-18 year olds*	16-18 full-funding (min)	16-18 full-funding (max)
Business Administration L2	£4,272	£6,258
Construction Skills L2	£9,574	£14,027
Hairdressing L2	£7,201	£10,550
Engineering L3	£8,525	£12,490
Children's Care Learning and Development L2	£4,687	£6,867
Hospitality and Catering L2	£4,240	£6,211
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair L2	£9,976	£14,616
IT and Telecoms Professionals L3**	£8,471	£12,410
Customer Service L2	£3,595	£5,267
Business Administration L3	£5,651	£8,279

Apprenticeship ‘u-turn’ details

Higher provider incentive for recruiting 16-18 year-olds onto frameworks

Key points:

- 20 per cent of relevant upper-limit band added to the £1,000 provider incentive
- A “transitional measure designed to support stability whilst providers adjust to the reforms”
- Also applies to 19-24 year olds formerly in care or have an Education and Health Care plan
- Funded from national levy budget but not deducted from an employer’s own levy account

£60m of “additional support in areas of disadvantage” for frameworks (all ages)

Key points:

- Providers will receive an additional £600 for training an apprentice who lives in the top 10 per cent of deprived areas, £300 in next 10-20 per cent and £200 in the next 7 per cent (the 20-27 per cent range)
- “In place for the first year while we review the best ways of ensuring apprenticeships provide equal opportunity to all, regardless of their circumstances”
- Funded from national levy budget but not deducted from an employer’s own levy account

Analysis on this page

Key points:

- Both the above have been included in the bottom table on this page
- The £1000 16-18 employer incentive has not been included as it’s not spent on delivery plus some employers already recieve a £1500 Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE)
- The complete analysis, with workings, can be downloaded from www.feweek.co.uk

Funding for framework starts from 1 May before 'U-turn' (at the funding band upper-limit)						
10 most popular frameworks for 16-18 year olds*	16-18 full-funding (min)	16-18 full-funding (max)	Impact £ (min)	Impact £ (max)	Impact % (min)	Impact % (max)
Business Administration L2	£3,000	£3,000	-£1,272	-£3,258	-30%	-52%
Construction Skills L2	£7,000	£7,000	-£2,574	-£7,027	-27%	-50%
Hairdressing L2	£4,000	£4,000	-£3,201	-£6,550	-44%	-62%
Engineering L3	£5,000	£5,000	-£3,525	-£7,490	-41%	-60%
Children's Care Learning and Development L2	£3,000	£3,000	-£1,687	-£3,867	-36%	-56%
Hospitality and Catering L2	£2,500	£2,500	-£1,740	-£3,711	-41%	-60%
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair L2	£6,000	£6,000	-£3,976	-£8,616	-40%	-59%
IT and Telecoms Professionals L3**	£10,000	£10,000	£1,529	-£2,410	18%	-19%
Customer Service L2	£2,500	£2,500	-£1,095	-£2,767	-30%	-53%
Business Administration L3	£3,500	£3,500	-£2,151	-£4,779	-38%	-58%

Funding for framework starts from 1 May after 'U-turn' (at the funding band upper-limit)						
10 most popular frameworks for 16-18 year olds*	16-18 full-funding (min)	16-18 full-funding (max)	Impact £ (min)	Impact £ (max)	Impact % (min)	Impact % (max)
Business Administration L2	£3,400	£4,000	-£872	-£2,258	-20%	-36%
Construction Skills L2	£8,200	£8,800	-£1,374	-£5,227	-14%	-37%
Hairdressing L2	£4,600	£5,200	-£2,601	-£5,350	-36%	-51%
Engineering L3	£5,800	£6,400	-£2,725	-£6,090	-32%	-49%
Children's Care Learning and Development L2	£3,400	£4,000	-£1,287	-£2,867	-27%	-42%
Hospitality and Catering L2	£2,800	£3,400	-£1,440	-£2,811	-34%	-45%
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair L2	£7,000	£7,600	-£2,976	-£7,016	-30%	-48%
IT and Telecoms Professionals L3**	£11,800	£12,400	£3,329	-£10	39%	0%
Customer Service L2	£2,800	£3,400	-£795	-£1,867	-22%	-35%
Business Administration L3	£4,000	£4,600	-£1,651	-£3,679	-29%	-44%

* Based on the October Statistical First Release Aug-April, and selecting one pathway to compare funding

** Impact is an increase because this frameworks attracts the 80% STEM uplift. It seems odd to increase the fJunding given the SFA said in February the IT level 3 framework was being over-funded

Analysis by Nick Linford, author of the Complete Guide to Funding Apprenticeships and editor at FE Week

INVESTIGATES

Colleges warned on overseas ventures following collapse of AoC India after just four years

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Colleges should be wary of betting the farm on big overseas ventures and learn the lesson from AoC India, which is to close after just four years, industry experts have warned.

AoC India was established in 2012 as a partnership of 33 FE colleges to provide UK-standard vocational education and training programmes to India.

Each of the colleges invested £20,000 for a two-year membership, but only eight members chose to continue with the project after this initial period.

However, as FE Week reported last week, AoC India and its remaining partners agreed to “wind down the partnership from July 2016”.

A spokesperson for the group blamed the lack of enthusiasm on member colleges’ desire to focus on the area review process back in Britain.

Tom Bewick, the managing director at New Work Training Ltd and a former chief executive of the International Skills Standards Organisation, told FE Week that colleges entering markets like India is “high-risk, by definition”, but claimed that AoC India had “done its job”.

“I do think the AoC was pretty upfront about what it was trying to achieve, in that it was a two-year sort of incubator-style approach to working internationally,” he said. “I think they have come under some unfair criticism.”

Despite the colleges’ significant total investment in the project of £660,000, Mr Bewick insisted that the AoC’s involvement was likely to have offered some protection.

“I would argue that the colleges chipping in some money and doing it via the AoC actually lowered the risk for all of them,” he said.

Mr Bewick also said that government policy was largely responsible for sparking the interest in promoting UK FE overseas.

“In 2012/13 there was a lot of ministerial



The AoC delegation at the launch event in Delhi in January 2013



Matthew Hancock, former UK FE minister, cutting the ribbon to mark the official opening of NILA

frenzy around the notion of our colleges getting on planes, getting out to Saudi, getting out to India as well. Governing bodies and college leaders were put under quite a lot of political pressure,” he said.

Mr Bewick added that in his own consultancy work abroad he has pulled back from areas such as India or Saudi Arabia to focus solely on North America, because he believes “it’s far better to do proper business and commercial relationships with very like-

minded cultures and economies”.

Mr Bewick’s comments were echoed by Mick Fletcher, a founding member of the Policy Consortium, a director of RCU Ltd, and a senior research associate at the Institute of Education.

“From what I see, it [AoC India] was a well organised attempt to develop a substantial overseas business for English FE,” he said. “There have been numerous scandals in the past involving overseas work, but this is not

one of them.”

He continued: “The fact that it failed is therefore a serious warning to FE to ‘stick to the knitting’.

“Overseas work would be difficult at any time but with the current prime minister’s almost pathological aversion to foreign students, the opportunity for colleges to diversify their income in this way is shrinking fast.”

FE Week asked the last eight remaining members of AoC India what they felt they had got out of the project.

“The college’s experience with the project was very positive and the leverage provided by AoC India has put it on the right trajectory to set up successful projects and training services for the Indian market,” said City and Islington College.

Dudley College told FE Week that “we hope to continue our work through the support of the UK-India Education and Research Initiative as we have built up considerable expertise which we want to develop further.”

And Exeter College said: “Exeter College is using what it learnt from being involved with the project by focusing on the recruitment of international students and its existing partnership in Shanghai.”

Vision West Nottinghamshire College, Burton and South Derbyshire College, Coleg y Cymoedd, Highbury College and Walsall College all declined to comment.

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL VENTURE ABANDONED

New College Nottingham International Lifestyle Academy was launched in Gurgaon, New Delhi, in January 2013.

Set up in collaboration with the Batra Group, it offered courses in hospitality management, interactive media, retail management and fashion management.

The NILA courses were developed to meet the training priorities set out by the Indian government through the Indian National Skill Development Corporation.

Nick Whitehouse, NCN’s director of HE and international development, told FE Week in

January 2013 that “our agreement with our partners is to develop up to 10 academies over the next 10 years”, but when FE Week asked about the project’s progress, NCN revealed that it had withdrawn its involvement last year.

A spokesperson said: “New College Nottingham made the decision to end its involvement with NILA in the summer of 2015 and this process was completed in August 2016.

“The decision was made in order to focus completely on supporting students, apprentices and employers within Nottingham and its surrounding communities.”

TOM BEWICK’S TOP TIPS FOR WORKING INTERNATIONALLY

- Understand exactly what your own value proposition is before you start
- Understand the market that you’re taking that product into
- Get the right joint venture/local partnership set up – particularly in developing markets
- Put your long-lens glasses on when you make any kind of pitch into an international market – it takes time to get a significant return



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EDITORIAL

Heading in the right direction

I was of course pleased when the government listened to mounting calls through our #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign for a rethink on apprenticeship funding cuts.

Credit should go to FE's new minister Robert Halfon for taking on board the findings of our initial analysis showing how younger learners in deprived areas would have been worst hit, and by all accounts making it a personal crusade to pressure stubborn civil servants into taking action.

The resulting funding announcement of an extra 20 per cent on the band limit for 16-18 year-olds, and £60 million of "additional support in areas of disadvantage", was a big step in the right direction.

But to use a well-worn cliché, our subsequent number crunching showed that while the campaign may have triumphed in the first battle, the war for truly fair funding still has to be won.

We all want reformed apprenticeships to break down class barriers.

They won't do that if younger people, especially those in deprived areas, miss out on what should be life enhancing opportunities.

Nick Linford, editor
news@feweek.co.uk

SAVE OUR APPRENTICESHIPS CAMPAIGN

Smart Assessor @smartassessor
Congratulations to @FEWeek @NickLinford on their successful #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign

Ruth Smeeth MP @RuthSmeeth
Victory for the #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign as Government U-Turns on funding cuts

David Lammy @DavidLammy
Tories cynically try to bury U-turn on apprenticeship cuts as Heathrow dominates headlines #SaveOurApprenticeships

NYA @natyouthagency
Good that @halfon4harlowMP listened to #SaveOurApprenticeships and pushed for 16-18 yr old funding uplift @FEWeek

NOCN @NOCN1
Improved #apprenticeship funding revealed by @FEWeek today, the #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign worked! Great news.

Steve Hewitt @SteveHewittMIS
Not to deny all the good work done by #saveourapprenticeships campaign, but this is a battle won, not the war...



YOU'RE FIRED! LORD SUGAR COULD CUT TIES WITH DFE OVER APPRENTICE CHAMPION ROLE

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

The entrepreneur Lord Alan Sugar could be about to quit his role as the country's apprenticeships champion after receiving no contact from government officials after six months on the job, FE Week can reveal.

The businessman, best known for his role in the hit TV show The Apprentice, was appointed "enterprise tsar" by former prime minister David Cameron back in May.

But in the wake of the turmoil in the Conservative government following Brexit, Lord Sugar believes he has been neglected by officials and says he will now "rethink" his position, according his spokesperson.

The Department for Education first appointed Lord Sugar to the role amid much fanfare, and said he would "be undertaking a series of roadshow events across England", speaking to local school leavers and businesses "championing enterprise and apprenticeships", and encouraging "businesses to take on apprentices themselves."

But he has not been on any roadshows since the appointment was made, and none are scheduled for the rest of 2016.

Speaking exclusively to FE Week, the former Labour peer's spokesperson said: "The appointment was made by David Cameron prior to Brexit. Since the total reshuffle of the government post-Brexit, this role seems

to have taken a low priority with the various government officials.

"Lord Sugar has not done any road shows and there are none scheduled for 2016.

"He has had no contact with the new government regime and he will rethink his acceptance to the role if and when he is contacted by the relevant government officials."

The Department for Education refused to comment on Lord Sugar's involvement in the enterprise tsar role, insisting that more information would be given "in due course".

"There is nothing to add at this stage," a spokesperson told FE Week. "Nothing has changed with his role and to say otherwise would be speculation."

If he does quit the role, Lord Sugar would be the second high-profile figure to leave a government apprenticeship position this year, following Nadhim Zahawi's departure as the prime minister's apprenticeship advisor in August.

Mr Zahawi was first appointed to the position by Mr Cameron in November last year to support the Conservative manifesto pledge to deliver three million apprenticeship starts by 2020.

But his spokesperson told FE Week that Mr Zahawi no longer held the role following Mr Cameron's sudden fall from grace in July. No one has been appointed to fill the position.

This has been Lord Sugar's second stint as a government enterprise champion, after he

served in the role for Labour in 2009, when he was made a life peer under the then-prime minister Gordon Brown.

But he quit the Labour party last May, blaming what he described as "negative business policies and the general anti-enterprise concepts" under Ed Miliband's leadership.

Lord Sugar was knighted in 2000, and reportedly joined the billionaire's club in 2015, with his estimated fortune currently standing at £1.15bn. He founded his most famous business enterprise, the computer and electronics firm Amstrad, in 1968.

He was chairman of Tottenham Hotspur football club from 1991 to 2001, and is now best-known for following in the US presidential hopeful Donald Trump's footsteps, by fronting the UK spinoff of his TV series The Apprentice on the BBC.

At the time of his appointment to the enterprise tsar role, Lord Sugar said he was "delighted" to be taking on the challenge.

He said he would be "travelling the length and breadth of this country to tell young people why apprenticeships are a great way for them to build their skills – and talking about the opportunities for starting their own business, hopefully instilling some entrepreneurial spirit".

Nick Boles, who was skills minister at the time, said he was delighted that Lord Sugar had agreed to help the government "bang the drum for apprenticeships and enterprise".

COMMENTS

SFA approve just 13% of apprentice assessment organisation applications

In the old days the end point assessment for an apprentice was to create a Masterpiece. If it was passed the apprentice became a Master craftsman, and the Masterpiece was then destroyed to avoid it coming on to the market. Some lessons there for Ofqual?

Mike Farmer

All private training providers told current adult education contract will terminate next July

The SFA could be in trouble here. They've created a legal precedent with their treatment of Apprenticeship contracts – making all providers (including employers and colleges) re-tender for funding through RoATP. They're wide open to challenge if they treat the AEB differently. EU procurement legislation means contract

Terry Bentley

holders have to be treated fairly and equitably at contract entry and contract exit. The SFA have abided by this rule with Apprenticeships but not with AEB.

To avoid lengthy and costly legal battles, the SFA have got two options:

1) Put all providers' AEB into one pot (including colleges and ITPs) and run a comprehensive open and competitive tendering process like they intend to do with RoATP.

2) Find an exemption for ITPs, similar to the one they appear to have found for colleges.

This is a mess that could easily spill over into EFA contracts too.

Adrian Johnson

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The Association of Colleges is delighted to announce that **Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education** will be speaking at its annual conference, held at the ICC in Birmingham from 15-17 November.



Justine Greening MP joins the newly appointed Further Education Commissioner, Richard Atkins CBE, recently appointed Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, plus 14 more speakers from the world of government, business and education.

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Introducing

BILL WATKIN

CEO, Sixth Form Colleges' Association

Sitting before me in smart suit and tie, Bill Watkin, the chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association chief executive looks the epitome of respectability. But that wasn't always the case for this self-confessed former troublemaker, who rebelled at school during a largely unhappy stint as a boarder.

Watkin recalls one incident when, egged on by a friend, he set off a banger in his school's cavernous dining room – which, thanks to “the widest unsupported dome of any building in the country at the time” tended to amplify noise.

“So I lit it and rolled it a few tables away from me, and it went off. The huge noise was followed by this deathly silence and a plume of smoke going up to the ceiling,” he says, smiling at the memory.

Watkin, born in 1958 in Middlesbrough, was just seven when he was packed off to boarding school, where his older brother John was already a pupil.

He describes being taken to Paddington Station by his parents, who “put me on the train and gave the trunk to the porter and waved goodbye – and that was it. I was sent off to a boarding school in Shropshire and didn't see my parents for quite a long time after that.”

It was a strict school, where “corporal punishment was a regular thing” and by the sounds of things, neither boy enjoyed it.

“We used to have these dreadful end-of-holiday scenes where we knew it was about time to be packed off to school again and we'd be wailing about how awful it was and not wanting to go back,” he says.

Although he “got through it absolutely fine” in the end, the experience clearly had a lasting effect.

“As a concept it's not a good one. It's not something that I would ever, ever consider doing to myself or to anybody else,” he acknowledges.

Despite his mischief-making tendencies, Watkin managed to knuckle down and pass both his O-levels and A-levels. At the same time, his future career began to take shape.

Around the age of 15, he'd started doing some holiday work coaching people in French – a subject that came easily to him – and realised he really enjoyed it.

“So I decided at about the age of 16 that I was going to be a teacher, and I was going to be a teacher of French,” he says.

After a gap year working as a teaching assistant, Watkin headed off to study French at Bristol University. His time there included a year abroad in France, where he taught English to 14- to 18-year-olds in a small town near the Swiss and German borders.

It was during Watkin's teacher training, which he began a year after finishing his studies, that his professional life “took a very definite course”, with a work experience placement in a school in a deprived area of Bristol, serving a “very disadvantaged community”.

“I found my metier, my niche, there,” he says.

Watkin says he was inspired by the school's head of modern languages, Richard Eon, who taught him how to teach French to pupils “for whom the relevance wasn't always immediately obvious”.

This stood him in good stead for his first job as a fully qualified teacher, at Rock Hills School in south London, which served a “difficult group of students”.

He describes an incident involving a girl coming into class

with her arm covered in “badly put on bandages”. On closer inspection, it transpired there was a sharpened screwdriver tucked into the bandages, which she was planning to use later in the day.

The job was so challenging that he came close to quitting after less than a year, until a supportive colleague told him, “Bill, if you can cope with this, you can cope with anything.”

Despite these challenges, Watkin went to great lengths to engage the pupils in their education.

“Relationships with the young people were at the heart of everything,” he says.

He was involved in careers advice, sports clubs and a number of extra-curricular activities – which included writing, directing and appearing in a staff pantomime every Christmas, as well as dressing up as Michael Jackson.

“It was all about trying to make their experience of schooling very positive, a lot of fun, and I always believed that learning would happen best when young people were happy to be there,” he says.

After three years in this job, the school closed down and Watkin was redeployed to another school.

There followed a series of roles teaching modern languages, including a stint at St John Rigby School in Bromley – at a time when the school's headteacher, Colleen McCabe, was secretly embezzling huge sums of money.

The huge noise was followed by this deathly silence and a plume of smoke

She was convicted of theft and deception in July 2003 and the case was later turned into a BBC docu-drama starring Pauline Quirke, called *The Thieving Headmistress*.

When I ask Watkin if he knew what was going on, he recalls that he and the other staff accepted McCabe's claims about lack of money – for example, that the school couldn't afford to fix the broken boiler, or to pay for cleaners – because they had no way of knowing otherwise.

It was during Watkin's next position, as vice-principal at Leigh City Technology College, that he made the move from teaching to management.

This led to 10 years at the education organisation SSAT (then the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, now relaunched as the Schools, Students and Teachers network) where he was heavily involved in the early days of the academy programme.

Watkin is evangelical about the transformative power of those early academies, which he says were “able to make a real difference to the lives of the young people they were teaching”.

“I met lots of young people who were disengaged from schooling. Persistent absenteeism was a problem, and on subsequent visits I would go back to an academy and see happy, healthy, productive environments,” he says.



1963 – Young Bill (right) with his father and older brother John



1964 – Aged six in a school primary school



1965 – Bill aged seven, just before he was sent to boarding school



Bill was a keen tennis player, and won the school singles competition

This focus on academies was good preparation for his current role heading up the Sixth Form Colleges' Association. He took over from former chief executive David Igoe in April this year, just as sixth form colleges were digesting government guidance on converting to academy status and says he's “absolutely loving” his new job.

“It's an extraordinary sector,” he says. Sixth form colleges “get better value for money, they get better grades with more needy young people, and they deserve a lot of recognition and should be celebrated.”

With the first sixth form colleges starting on the road to become academies, and many more considering it, Watkin is keen to stress that the SFCA will continue to support all its members – whether they become academies or not.

“I have no doubt at all in my mind that sixth form colleges will go on being a very important part of government thinking, of the educational landscape, and they will go on being an invaluable family supporting each other,” he says.

As if getting to grips with a new job and a new sector weren't enough, Watkin tells me he's recently taken up a new hobby – he and his partner Sally have started to learn the ukulele.

When I ask if he'll be up on stage with his ukulele at the next SFCA conference in November, he says he'd need a bit more practice, but “it's a possibility”.

If there's an auditorium involved, however, it might be an idea to hide the bangers.



It’s a personal thing

Is life a comedy or tragedy?

This is going to sound really cheesy, but life is a wonderful tapestry of adventures and it has elements of comedy and tragedy running through it. The important thing is to make sure that whatever comes your way you find the time for some stillness, for some humour and for some love, and that you value the here and now without investing too much in the past and the future.

Who do you most admire – living or dead – and why?

I was going to say Sir Dave Brailsford, who was the person who steered British cycling to where it is now, and Team Sky. And I’m really sad to read at the moment that there is some doubt about how Team Sky has achieved what it has achieved. The other person that I want to mention is Michelle Obama, just because the speech that she gave last week when she was talking about human decency and the place of women in society I thought was just a fantastic, impassioned and completely honourable.

Who do you turn to in times of crisis?

Even at my age I have to say my parents have always been there for me, and are still a wonderful source of support, advice, encouragement and wisdom.

What are your three most treasured possessions and why?

My first one is my bicycle – I cycle everywhere. It’s vital to me and I’m on it all the time. My second one is my passport. I really love travelling. My third thing is my Kindle. I love reading and I read all the time.


Do you prefer films or music?

I love both. I do very much like going to the cinema. I’ve seen a brilliant film recently which I made everyone who I know watch – Wild Tales. It’s an Almodovar film, and it’s six short stories about revenge and it’s just so funny – but darkly funny. And clever, incredibly clever.

Curriculum vitae

1958	Born in Middlesbrough
1963	Starts primary school in Hertfordshire
1965	Sent to boarding school
1971 – 76	Attends Haileybury boarding school in Hertfordshire
1977 – 81	Studies French at University of Bristol
1983	Completes PGCE
1983 – 86	Teacher of modern languages at a number of different schools
1986 – 88	Modern languages teacher, Hayes School, Bromley
1988 – 90	Deputy head of modern languages, Beaverwood School, Bromley
1990 – 99	Head of modern languages, St John Rigby School, Bromley
1999 – 06	Vice principal, Leigh City Technology College
2006 – 16	Operational director, SSAT
2016	Chief executive, SFCA

EXPERTS



THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Graham Taylor is principal and chief executive at New College Swindon. He has more than 25 years' experience in further and higher education across six colleges and writes exclusively for FE Week once a month.

The GCSE English and Maths retake are a policy car crash

The new mandatory post-16 resit policy for GCSE English and maths is setting young people up to fail, and government should allow other progression routes, says Graham Taylor.

Mandatory English and maths aren't going away. They are vital and underpin most things we do. But any way you slice it, this year's GCSE resit results were awful.

It's shocking that 31,038 more people sat GCSE English this year, but only 382 more passed nationally. Crudely, for a grade-D school leaver, the probability of gaining a C for English was 27 per cent and for maths, 30 per cent. For those who left school with an E or below, it was just one per cent.

Frankly, we're setting young people up to fail. And 'failing' can demotivate learners in other subjects, too.

Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw has blamed FE colleges for these poor outcomes, saying the quality of English and mathematics provision in colleges was so poor, it would be preferable that all 16-to-19-year-olds be educated in schools. But unless the success rates for all providers are published, there is no way we can verify this.

Colleges can certainly do better, but how many retries do we attempt? Maths is particularly tough; in one survey only 44 per cent of MPs knew the probability of getting both heads from two coin tosses! And even if you argue that a 30 per cent pass-rate is a great achievement after missing out at school, Ofsted will no doubt lambast colleges for 'failing' so many.

The FE sector excels in giving learners a second chance and provision that is different to school. We must keep trying. However, perhaps it is also time for government to accept that some will never 'get' whatever it is we are trying to measure at GCSE.

For learners' benefit – which surely is ultimately what this is all about – we need the government to agree to different progression routes.

Employers are pleading for this. Take early years, for example, where the English and maths requirement has blown recruitment to pieces: more jobs are available because of the 30-hour childcare entitlement rule but they can't get the qualified staff. Yet these employers are

happy with functional skills and have worked with them for years.

Fundamentally, what is wrong with offering learners different routes? The core maths syllabus is a good applied alternative to the standard maths A-level. Why not have an employer-approved, real-world alternative level two syllabus – keeping the same standard and rigour as the GCSE?

The nearest thing, functional skills level two, counts towards the new level two English and maths measure in post-16 performance tables, but should count as a full level two. A similar option could be found in English, combining communication and writing styles.

Frankly, we're setting young people up to fail

Colleges face significant challenges in trying to deliver the GCSE resit policy in England, and sector leaders are pleading with the government to scrap it.

Dame Sally Coates in her report, 'Unlocking Potential: A Review of Education in Prison', seems sympathetic, arguing for a "core basic skills curriculum" that includes new adult modular GCSEs in English and mathematics, "because the GCSE brand is more familiar to employers".

The government accepted all of Coates' recommendations but schools minister Nick Gibb said he wouldn't approve any new GCSE qualifications because he was "concerned that introducing an adult GCSE would lead to two tiers, with one not as prestigious as the other". Likewise, Ofqual have said they have no plans to change the linear structure of GCSEs, with examinations taken at the end of the course.

One ray of hope in all this is Robert Halfon, the minister for FE and skills, who remains "open-minded" about the idea of an adult GCSE, with the proviso he would "need to look at it and take advice".

All in all, it doesn't look likely we will win this battle any time soon, but for the benefit of learners, we need to keep trying.



CATHERINE SEZEN

Senior policy manager for 14-19 and curriculum, Association of Colleges

How will the government implement its Skills Plan?

The government welcomed the Sainsbury Review recommendations, but will they deliver on implementation, asks Catherine Sezen?

From a college perspective, there is a lot to be positive about in the Sainsbury Review of Technical Education, and the government's response to it in the Skills Plan.

These documents, published in early July, outline a new structure for technical education centred on 15 occupational routes leading to higher apprenticeships or higher technical education at levels four and five. There is a welcome focus on the crucial importance of skills to the economy, and college-based routes into employment. Schools will be required to allow other education providers access to young people as part of information, advice and guidance.

There is also a glimmer of hope that the current arrangements for English and maths will be reviewed. Could this be an opportunity to consider contextualisation and employment-related content?

But there are questions. Perhaps the most fundamental is funding. In his introduction to the Skills Plan, the then-minister for skills, Nick Boles, outlined the unequivocal support for Lord Sainsbury's recommendations "within current budget constraints".

The panel recommended a review of funding for technical education in light of evidence from European and international models, where students study at least twice as many hours a week as they do in England.

Messaging about the technical option is important. The concept of 15 occupational routes provides much-needed clarity for parents, carers, students and employers. There must also be a cultural shift in the way technical education is perceived in the country; we must demonstrate that the combination of GCSE, A-level and university is not the only route available.

There will be more detail on the routes themselves in the government's implementation plan, which is due to be published before the end of the year. What will the common core at the current levels two and three leading to a specialist option look like?

We still require information about what the transition year will consist of and at whom it's aimed. We need to know how courses at levels four and five will work in practice and where the study will take place. Will it only be in career colleges or in FE colleges

with specialisms? Some of the 15 routes are apprenticeship-only, but few 16-year-olds get apprenticeships; there is a particular question over how this will work for protective service apprenticeships in the police and fire service.

Oversight of technical education will sit with the Institute for Apprenticeships, but how will that work in practice? Who will sit on the expert panels that will oversee the technical standards?

Perhaps the most fundamental question is funding

The Skills Plan refers to a review of applied general qualifications in art and design, business, and performing arts, among others. These applied 'academic' subjects sit alongside A-levels in the future plans, rather than within the technical route. They meet the needs of young people with a particular vocational passion, but who might wish to go onto higher education and/or work in these areas. These qualifications cater for over 140,000 young people a year and we await the outcome of the review with interest.

There is an emphasis on more substantial work placements rather than work experience, but some colleges are already struggling to meet the requirements for study programme placements in areas such as construction and health-related occupations for reasons of health and safety and confidentiality.

Finally, possibly the most contentious issue is the concept of a single awarding organisation or consortium for each technical qualification. This could lead to greater consistency and transferability and support understanding of the qualifications, but how and when will these crucial decisions be made? We should know by the end of the year when we see the implementation plan. For the next couple of months, however, it is a waiting game; after that it will be all hands on the college deck.

Lord Sainsbury of Turville, chair of the Independent Panel on Technical Education, will be speaking at the Association of Colleges' Annual Conference and Exhibition (15-17 November 2016)

While change is always unsettling, the apprenticeship reforms will do the sector a world of good, says Graham Howe.

Change is unsettling, significant change is scary, and apprenticeships are going through significant change.

It is worrying that the sector is being forced to move to new standards for which the end assessment is unknown, and in many cases there is no body allocated to deliver the assessment – on top of the fact that to date only 15 learners have achieved a new apprenticeship standard.

It is also far from ideal that the funding landscape is not clear: if subcontracting is to eventually end, will providers have sufficient access to direct funding?

There are concerns about the reforms hurting young people on apprenticeships, if employers use the funds to train an existing, more mature workforce.

However, this has been the case since Train to Gain replaced the budget for training adults in the workplace, and was itself replaced by apprenticeships in 2009. Providers have used apprenticeship budgets for adult workplace training for several years now, often very successfully, not least improving English and maths for many workers who would previously have avoided these subjects.

So I find it hard to understand why the sector isn't more positive about the reforms. At last we will be paid properly for the work we do, across all age ranges.

When apprenticeship funding replaced



GRAHAM HOWE
Managing director,
College of Apprenticeship Training

Why isn't the sector more positive about the reforms?

Train to Gain, we had to deliver three extra qualifications for an additional several hundred pounds – unless you could agree a course fee with the employer (where the market rate was often nil, due to employer expectations from Train to Gain and European Social Fund projects). This has without doubt led to unprofitable and poor-quality programmes, so why, when reforms are suggesting higher rates, would we not embrace the change?

We are entering a new landscape where we are paid the same set amount for apprentice learners – irrespective of age – and where larger businesses are often funding this themselves through a levy, which will mean greater employer involvement and buy-in.

I see great opportunity in the reforms, the

funding rates, and the new relationships with employers. Though it grabs headlines to question whether apprenticeship funding should be spent on adults, it is an important area of lifelong learning.

As unemployment levels fall, retraining employees for new roles is a perfectly sensible use of employers' and public funding and it should come as no surprise to see an increase in management apprenticeships.

The announcements this month have allowed prime providers and subcontractors to choose a path that best suits their circumstances, rather than forcing the end of subcontracting. Importantly, it allows market access for those subcontractors wishing to get all (or the majority) of their funding directly, which has previously been too often denied.

The sector responds well to change; my team has been on excellent AELP and ETF workshops to help us prepare.

My only wish would be that awarding bodies were at the forefront, if they are serious about being end-point assessment organisations.

At last we will be paid properly for the work we do

I don't believe the reforms will see a reduction in 16-18 apprenticeship numbers (though it's entirely possible it might drop as an overall percentage), as providers will be delivering full workforce-development programmes and will find it difficult to pick and choose learners from any employer.

I have evidence for this; it's what businesses are telling me, describing their apprenticeship strategy as a mixture of new workforce recruitment and existing employee training.

There are challenges ahead in implementing new delivery models without disadvantaging learners, which are always our priority. However the upside outweighs the downside and I wholeheartedly believe that the future looks bright.

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CAMPUS ROUND-UP

with Sam King

Student builds up a solid reputation



Paul Ferris with his olive ash cabinet

Five students from Chichester College had the opportunity to showcase their furniture-making skills at a special exhibition in London, with one student even receiving special recognition.

The Young Furniture Makers' Exhibition, organised by charity The Furniture Makers' Company, gave talented youngsters the chance to show off their creations to liverymen and the public.

Student Paul Ferris (pictured), was 'highly commended' in the Young Furniture Makers Bespoke Award for his television cabinet made from olive ash.

The level three apprentice is currently employed by Rolls Royce, and splits his time

between working for the manufacturing company and studying at the college.

Chichester College lecturer Christian Notley accompanied students to the event, and said: "This is a great opportunity for students to show their work and allow them a chance to make connections with employers in the industry.

"We were delighted to be able to take several pieces to the Furniture Makers' Hall and the icing on the cake was Paul's award.

"He was up against university students and graduates – all of the highest standard – so to be highly commended is a fantastic achievement."



A make-over or a make-under?

Students set to terrify with specialist make-up

Hair and media make-up students will be using their specialist skills to transform themselves and terrify members of the public during special Halloween boat trips.

The level two and three students from Walsall College in the West Midlands will use their specialist make-up skills to turn into ghosts and vampires, and scare guests at the Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust's annual Halloween event.

Their spooky looks will form part of an assessed unit on their course, alongside providing makeovers for the college's travel

and tourism students, who will also be frightening guests at the attraction.

The tunnels, which date back to the late 1700s, attract over 80,000 guests a year.

Rebecca Cooper-Sayer, volunteer coordinator at Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust said: "We're very excited about working with Walsall College and its talented students. They will be integral in helping us to ensure our guests have a unique Halloween experience."

Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust's Halloween boat trips will take place from October 28-31 on Birmingham New Road.



Alumni can be an invaluable resource

The benefits of alumni networks

Lambeth College is gathering a database of former students to inspire the current crop of learners to further academic and career success.

The London-based college hopes to build up an alumni network made up both of people in established careers and vocations and of recent leavers.

The college has become one of 400 secondary schools and colleges across the UK to get involved with education charity Future First, which assists in building up alumni communities to benefit students.

Fiona Whitewood, the head of marketing and communications at Lambeth College, said: "The scheme will enable us to capture learner destinations and strengthen the ties between past learners, employers and the college."

The charity encourages alumni to sign up online and get in touch with their old school or college. Applicants can also offer work experience opportunities or elect to mentor a current student.

Christine Gilbert, the executive chair of Future First and a former Ofsted chief inspector, said: "If students see people like them have succeeded, they are more likely to believe they can too. They work harder and have higher expectations of success."

Aspiring pilot is on the flight path to his dream career

An aspiring pilot and former Nelson and Colne College (NCC) student is on his way to his dream job after six months of intensive training in New Zealand.

Hassan Imtiaz, aged 21, secured a place on a competitive cadet scheme with Qatar Airways last year, and is half way to becoming a fully qualified second officer.

Hassan gained his initial flying licence while studying business, economics and maths at NCC in Lancashire, and has since undergone intensive exams and tests in order to demonstrate his potential to be a pilot.

Hassan praised the college for the support he received during his time there, saying: "The workload I had in my A-levels helped me to prepare for ground school. The teachers at NCC were very supportive and gave me the help I needed in class, and at additional workshops."

His biggest challenge will come in the next six to 12 months, as he undergoes his final training, which will involve 12 take-offs and

landings on an Airbus A320 in Qatar, in order to qualify fully.

Hassan said: "New Zealand is one of the best countries in the world. There are amazing views, and the scenery is spectacular. I have six months of training left, so it is all about keeping focused now."



Hassan Imtiaz in training

Bog standard toilet gets a loo lease of life



Travellers using the facilities at a Shropshire train station could be forgiven for thinking they’ve taken a wrong turn, after the its toilet was transformed to resemble an African savannah, reports Samantha King.

Station toilets generally don’t have the best reputation, but thanks to students at Derwen College, the toilet at Gobowen train station has had a dramatic makeover – and won an award in the process.

Visitors can spend a penny on the African plains, surrounded by giraffes, zebras, elephants, an orangutan and a lion – all in mural form, of course.

The quirky project came about as part of celebrations for Gobowen station’s 20th anniversary, which included the redecoration of the station’s office and waiting room.

When it came to the toilet, however, Severn Dee Travel, which runs the station on behalf of travel company Arriva Trains, decided to draft in students from the neighbouring college to do something a little bit different.

The college provides residential FE for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and has run the station’s café for the past four years, allowing students to practice real-life skills to prepare



The newly decorated loo at Gobowen station (Shropshire Star)

Showing off Derwen’s two community rail awards, below



them for the world of work.

Creative arts teacher Jane Carrington oversaw the project and guided students with the mural. Explaining the process, she said:

“There was just one group of four students

working on the mural. We spent four weeks designing it in the classroom, and then for two hours a week over 10 weeks, we were actually in the station painting.”

The somewhat unusual African savannah theme was suggested by a student, who was inspired by Jane’s time as an arts teacher in Botswana.

Jane said: “We were even going to plumb music into the loo as well, like an African choir – so you’re totally transported on this loo with a view. We wanted to buy a toilet seat with lions on it, and we talked about painting the floor – but we never got that far. Severn Dee were thrilled with any idea we’d come up with, it was just whether legally or health and safety-wise we could do it, really.”

The project, aptly named the ‘Loo with a View’, clearly impressed, scooping second place for the ‘community art project’ category

in the annual Community Rail Awards. The station’s café was also recognised in the awards, taking first place in the ‘involving diverse groups’ section.

The Community Rail Awards, which began in 2005, aim to recognise the unsung heroes of the community rail world, and have their work and achievements recognised and rewarded. Awards on offer include everything from ‘best floral displays’ and ‘small projects award’ to ‘most enhanced station buildings’.

Passengers have been quick to praise the new facilities at Gobowen station, with people who weren’t even travelling going out of their way to take a peek at the impressive mural.

Martin Evans, finance director at Severn Dee Travel, said: “The toilet was basic. It was immaculately clean and well decorated, but we thought we’d do something different and see how we could improve it for our passengers.

“We thought it would be a good idea if we could involve the students from Derwen, and now passengers that use the loo think it’s very impressive.”

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

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

Paul Eeles has been appointed as chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies.

Eeles will be the fourth chair at FAB since its inception in 2002, and will take up the role alongside his current position as chief executive of the Skills and Education group, where he is responsible for the strategic direction of the company.

The FAB is a membership organisation for vocational awarding bodies in the UK, with current members including City and Guilds, the Prince’s Trust and McDonald’s.

In his role as chair, he is most looking forward to “supporting members as they navigate change in policy”, helping FAB to “raise its voice as a membership body” and perhaps most crucially, “promoting the value of vocational, technical and professional assessment and qualifications”.

With an extensive career in FE sector spanning almost 30 years, Eeles has held positions at AELP, Ofsted, and City and Guilds; beginning his career as a lecturer in food service at Walsall College.

Speaking of his passion for learning, Eeles said: “I left school with nothing, not

an O-level to my name, and FE made a huge difference for me.

“I’ve been lucky enough to work in the sector over the last 30 years in roles that enable me to contribute back into the FE and skills sectors. For me, FE is part of who I am and what I do.”

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College has made two senior appointments,

with a new deputy principal and assistant principal.

Matthew Marshall will take on the role of deputy principal at the college, which teaches around 1,800 pupils.

Previously, he worked as a senior examiner for OCR and has held roles at three other sixth form colleges, most recently as an assistant principal in Solihull.

Speaking of his new role, Marshall said: “What attracted me to the City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College is the culture of community here, both inside and outside of the college.

“There is a good level of communication between the college, local universities, local council and schools, with everyone working in partnership to genuinely make a

difference to the lives of young people.”

Marshall has aspirations to take the college from its current Ofsted rating of ‘good’ to ‘outstanding’ in his new role, and plans to develop a “culture of learning” which will allow pupils to progress professionally beyond the college, whether through work, further training or university.

Rachel Jablonski will take up the position as assistant principal of the college, a role that has been newly created this year.

The position will involve curriculum planning and leading the college’s ‘future programme’, which ensures students develop essential employability skills.

Jablonski has worked at the college for nine years, starting out as a curriculum coordinator in BTEC Sport and working her way up the ranks before taking up her new role as assistant principal.

She hopes her knowledge of the college’s course pathways will stand her in good stead in her new position, as well as her experience navigating the changes from modular to linear A-levels, and how the college delivers its BTEC qualifications.

Speaking of her new role, Jablonski said: “My main goal is that when students leave us, they will leave with confidence, experiences and skills which will help them to flourish in their chosen careers.”



PAUL EELES



MATTHEW MARSHALL



RACHEL JABLONSKI



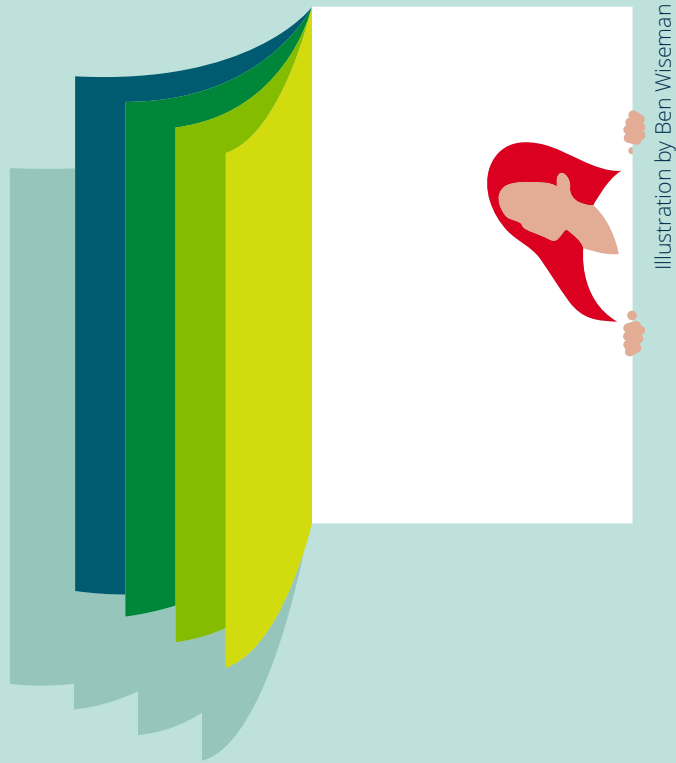
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We are looking for a flexible and positive team leader with significant experience of working with FE funding regulations, systems and audit compliance. Expert knowledge of preparing and returning funding claims will be essential. You will demonstrate the ability and experience of quickly interpreting and identifying the implications of issues affecting the College, using data wherever possible.

In addition you will have a proven track record of developing team members together with the ability to influence, negotiate and build effective working relationships, both within the College and with external stakeholders.

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Interview date: 15 November 2016

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Interviews for Director of Finance is Tuesday 22nd November.
Interviews for Deputy Chief Executive Wednesday 23rd November.

CVs will not be accepted.

For further details on how to apply please contact either emma.johnsen@blueoctopus.co.uk or lorna.goodwin@blueoctopus.co.uk from Blue Octopus who will send you more information on the role including a copy of the application form via email.

For an informal discussion with the CEO, please contact the CEO's PA

Patricia Thistlewood-Thomson on **01482 598702** or email patricia.thistlewood-thomson@hull-college.ac.uk who will arrange this for you.



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Job share applicants welcomed

City College Norwich is seeking a Lecturer in English. This is a full time fixed term position within a large and ever-growing innovative and proactive team.

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You will be required to teach functional skills and GCSE English to predominantly 16 – 19 year olds alongside their vocational qualifications.

Teaching groups typically have approximately 20 students and the majority have three hours of classes per week.

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Closing date: Friday 4 November 2016, 12noon

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36 hours per week, Fixed term until 31 July 2017

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The post

You will be required to teach functional skills and GCSE Mathematics to predominantly 16 – 19 year olds alongside their vocational qualifications. Some experience of teaching students with additional needs would be an advantage.

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 - Outstanding personal written and verbal communication skills
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The successful candidate will be educated to Level 4 e.g. Degree or equivalent in relevant subject area and hold a relevant teaching qualification.

You must have the ability to manage your own time effectively by planning and prioritising own work load and reacting positively to changes as they occur.

The City of Liverpool College is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified persons regardless of their race, sex, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and adhering to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Further details and an application pack can be accessed under 'The College' 'College Jobs' at: www.liv-coll.ac.uk where you can complete your application online.

Closing Date:
3rd November 2016



MidKent College - a great place to work and learn

Lecturers in Maths

Location: Medway & Maidstone, full-time

£23,871, £37,291 (depending on qualifications and experience)

With a college priority in developing the Maths skills of our learners, we have significantly invested in our new Maths centre. Due to recent growth in the department, we are looking for more teachers to join our team.

Do you have a firm belief in the potential of all learners?

Do you reflect and develop new approaches to learning?

Our college has high expectations in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Working with a dedicated team of specialist teachers, we will support you in your professional development. You will also have the resources to innovate and create an exciting learning environment. We are also offering a Golden Hello of up to £20,000; subject to qualifications and experience. In addition, there is a generous benefits package and pension.

If you are a Maths teacher or have aspirations to become one, we are keen to hear from you. You should be suitably skilled and qualified in Maths (or a closely related subject). You may be experienced in teaching, be recently qualified or have experience that demonstrates your potential.

Find out more and apply online at www.midkent.ac.uk/jobs/

FE Week



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**Jakub Pylat, account manager,
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**For more information, please contact FE Week on:
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NOT TO BE MISSED

APPRENTICESHIP REFORM WITH
SFA – FINAL FUNDING AND
PROVIDER REGISTER

The final apprenticeship funding reform details and provider register applications have now been unveiled, so be the first to have them explained by the SFA.

Kicking in for all framework and standard apprenticeship starts from 1st May 2017, it will be vital that training providers, colleges and employers become registered providers and quickly understand the changes and model the impact.

Join Nick Linford and Una Bennet*, Funding Mechanism Deputy Director and Kirsty Evans*, Director of Funding and Programmes at the SFA, for these technical and in depth practical workshops.

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BOOK NOW AT LSECT.COM

*Una Bennet at London and Birmingham events, Kirsty Evans at Liverpool.

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FE Week **Sudoku challenge**

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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.
Last Edition's winner Norman Floyd, Grimsby Institute