

FE Week

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SIR MICHAEL'S PARTING SHOT

- Outgoing Ofsted boss blasts 'Cinderella' colleges again
- He blames FE for resit failures, contradicting own report
- AoC boss hits back, labelling him 'ignorant'

JUDE BURKE @JUDEBURKE77

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NEWS



WILSHAW CONTRADICTS OWN REPORT WITH 'PERSONAL' ENGLISH AND MATHS ATTACK

JUDE BURKE
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Sir Michael Wilshaw has provoked outrage across the FE sector once again, with a series of “personal and ignorant remarks” that contradict Ofsted’s official views on post-16 English and maths failures.

The education watchdog’s annual report, launched in Westminster on December 1, blamed government policy for the sharp increase in 16- to 18-year-olds failing their GCSE resits in the two subjects.

However, during a Q&A at his final launch event, the outgoing chief inspector once more pointed the finger at FE colleges, in a scathing response to a question from Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

“There’s simply no excuse for a college letting down large numbers of students who just narrowly missed getting those benchmark grades,” he said in remarks that are being seen as a parting shot before he retires at the end of the month, to be replaced by Amanda Spielman.

“We can’t go on, as I intimated in my report, seeing two thirds of youngsters who just failed their GCSEs, got a D grade, continue to fail two years later. We can’t let FE off the hook.”

Sir Michael, who wrote off the sector as “inadequate at best” in a now-notorious speech to the CentreForum in January, stuck to his guns when FE Week challenged him about his new comments.

“What percentage of youngsters that get D grades go to FE? Why shouldn’t they after two years get English and maths?” he said. “The statistics speak for themselves.”

Asked whether everyone should resit poor GCSEs, he diverged from the government’s view, that Functional Skills are more suitable to less academic learners, by simply



asking “why not?”.

Sir Michael’s remarks, which came after he described the sector as “the Cinderella arm of the education service” during his speech, drew an angry reaction from Association of Colleges chief executive David Hughes.

“It’s surely wrong that the chief inspector can make what look like personal and ignorant remarks about FE in public,” he said.

“The chief inspector rightly says colleges are operating in an environment of turmoil and then uses the hackneyed phrase, the ‘Cinderella sector’, once again.”

Any 16- to 18-year-old student who does not already have a grade C in both GCSE English and maths has had to continue studying these subjects since 2013.

In 2015, this requirement was tightened, requiring those who managed a grade D to sit GCSEs rather than alternatives.

Ofsted’s annual report runs counter to its chief inspector’s comments.

It said: “While the policy’s intention to improve literacy and numeracy levels is well intentioned, implementation of the policy is not having the desired impact in practice.

“Just over a quarter of students by age 19 are not achieving grade C or higher in GCSE

mathematics and more still in English.”

Figures released in August showed just 34,486 – or 26.9 per cent – of the 128,201 learners aged 17 and above who sat English GCSE got at least a C.

And of the 173,628 learners from the same age group who sat maths, only 51,220 – or 29.5 per cent – achieved C or above.

These results were down from 35.1 and 35.8 per cent respectively the previous year.

Paul Joyce, the inspectorate’s deputy director for FE and skills, would not comment on whether Sir Michael’s remarks matched his organisation’s official view, but a yawning gap between the report and the man was clear.

Ofsted’s media team also refused to be drawn.

Other key findings in the report included a drop in the proportion of colleges rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’, down from 77 per cent last year to 71 per cent this year.

“Schools and colleges show continued weakness in providing a technical and vocational curriculum appropriate to meet the needs of the economy,” warned the report.

But on a more positive note, it found that 63 per cent of apprenticeships this year “were found to be ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’, an increase of 12 percentage points compared with last year”.



EDITOR ASKS... OFSTED'S PAUL JOYCE: 'GCSE MIGHT NOT BE RIGHT FOR EVERYONE'

There was quite a task awaiting Paul Joyce, Ofsted's deputy director for FE and skills, when I met him after chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw gave his speech on the watchdog's 2015/16 annual report in Westminster.

The report was welcome for FE, as it firmly pinned the blame for the controversial English and maths policy on the government, taking the spotlight off colleges.

The current rules, which oblige students to resit if they do not achieve grades of A* to C in GCSE English and maths at level four, come in for heavy criticism in the report.

But the Ofsted boss was less sympathetic in the speech on his fifth and final annual report, at Church House, Westminster, on December 1. Answering a question from Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Sir Michael returned some the blame back to FE providers, insisting that they cannot be "let off the hook".

I raised Sir Michael's criticisms with Mr Joyce when we sat down to discuss the implications of the new report.

First of all, does Ofsted think the problem lies with government policy or the FE sector?

The watchdog, he told me is raising questions about "whether GCSE for everybody is the right policy".

He continued: "Undoubtedly for some it will be, but we're asking the question, particularly given the difficulties that the sector is having implementing the policy and the outcomes that those learners have, whether that is the

right policy."

He insisted that for the 12 struggling colleges rated 'inadequate' between August 2015 and July 2016, English and maths had not been "the sole determining factor".

"I'd go so far as to say that even if English and maths provision was 'good' in those 12 colleges, they would have been rated 'inadequate' overall regardless."

Does this mean Ofsted does see the root of the problems with English and maths resits as a failure of government policy, rather than colleges letting their learners down?

"Absolutely," he replied. "When we inspect English and maths, we look at qualification achievement rates, but inspectors give far more weight to the development of maths and English skills in those lessons."

Why, then, has Sir Michael taken a contradictory stance, I asked – after all, it wouldn't be the first time he has bashed colleges. In March, for example, he made waves by telling the Education Committee that 16- to 19-year-olds should only be educated in schools.

"I think it's a bit harsh to say the chief inspector is blaming FE," said Mr Joyce.

"He described it as a Cinderella sector – that to me makes very clear that this sector has been neglected and does need some investment; it does need looking at the policies that enable this to happen."

"What he is absolutely not saying is that GCSE would be the right qualification for everybody."

However, I had raised this very question with Sir Michael immediately after he gave his

speech, and he told me that he saw no reason why the required qualification shouldn't be a GCSE.

Mr Joyce clarified: "Michael is of the view that students that have a grade D, that are able to achieve a grade C, should be given that opportunity to do so. That's not saying that everybody with a D needs to do so."

We moved on to discuss the variety of providers in the FE sector, as the report covered success amongst independent training providers and sixth form colleges.

Mr Joyce acknowledged direct comparison is tricky, particularly with the area review process changing the landscape.

Ofsted is talking with the DfE, he said, about potential changes to the inspection process now so many colleges are merging.

"Given that inspection is risk-proportionate and some of our colleges are very large and are facing some significant challenges, it's not too surprising that a lot of our focus has been on colleges and we have found some to be struggling," he added.

The Institute for Apprenticeships is another topic under Ofsted's microscope at present. He confirmed that the inspectorate is working closely with Peter Lauener, chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency, and interim chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships, and is keen to monitor the IfA's progress.

Mr Joyce added that the education watchdog wants to ensure "that apprenticeships are properly monitored", but is still "very clear" what its responsibilities will be when the apprenticeship reforms kick in, in May 2017.

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Delayed area reviews outcomes bring limited change

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Most colleges involved in the first two waves of the area reviews will neither change nor merge, it has been revealed.

This lack of change was laid bare in the long overdue reports into the first 13 areas, which were finally published on Tuesday (November 29).

Just 21 mergers involving 45 colleges are proposed – while 45 institutions plan to stay as they are, and a further 29 sixth form colleges are looking to convert to an academy.

A number of failing colleges will remain alone, even though the stated aim of the reviews was to “create strong and financially resilient colleges”.

These include City of Bristol College, which was rated ‘inadequate’ during its most recent Ofsted inspection in January, and which has notices of concern from the Skills Funding Agency for financial health, financial control and inspection.

Despite this, the main recommendation for the college to emerge from the West of England area review was that it should “continue to stand alone whilst managing sustainable recovery within a ‘fresh start’ approach that will deliver financial resilience and substantial quality improvement”.

The financially troubled Central Sussex

College was another to come out of the review process without finding a partner – although it has subsequently announced a plan to link up with Chichester College.

The cash-strapped provider announced earlier this year that it would close a campus due to sky-high debt, and Ofsted inspectors have since warned its future “remains uncertain”.

Relatively few colleges are making non-structural changes as a result of the area reviews, too.

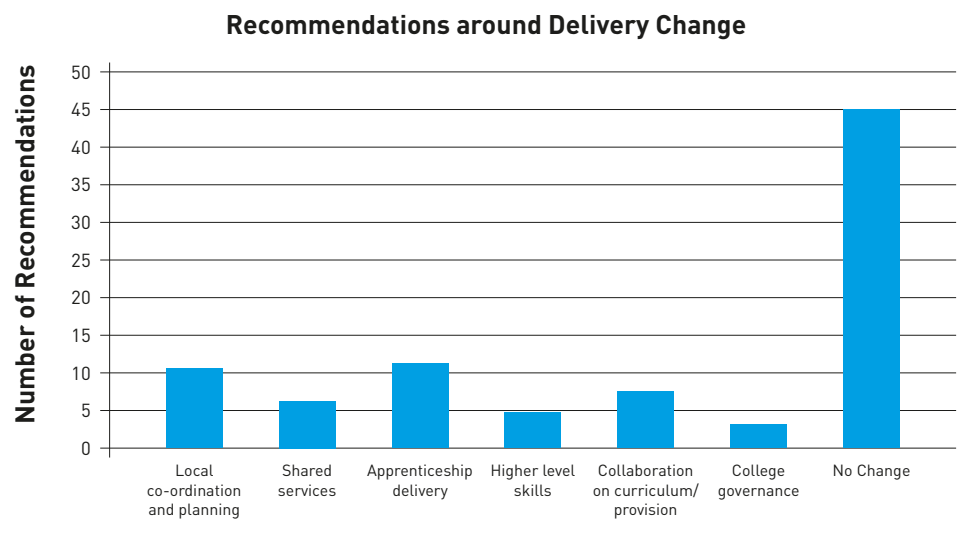
According to a graph charting the various change recommendations, the most common recommendation made in the area reviews was for colleges to alter their apprenticeship delivery.

The graph, published in the November progress report sent to the national area review steering group, and seen by FE Week, suggested “the development of local ‘apprenticeship companies’ by colleges working together”.

The document also noted that most of the reviews included “at least one recommendation” setting out how to maintain the “collaborative working arrangements that had been established during the process”.

The reports were originally expected to appear in July, but it is understood they were held up following Brexit.

They cover 13 of the 15 reviews in wave one



and two, missing London (west) and London (central).

It is understood that these have been delayed “to ensure the recommendations and outcomes of the four London reviews are coordinated during wave three”.

The apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon said that the country needed “an education system that works for everyone”. “That’s why we asked

colleges, employers and other local representatives to review the FE on offer in their area and come up with recommendations to ensure employers and young people get the skills and training they need,” he said. “I’d like to thank all of those that took part.”

Ofsted also criticised the narrow approach taken by the area reviews in its annual report, published December 1.

It said: “The outcomes of area reviews have focused primarily on proposed mergers to support financial sustainability or tackle inadequate provision. So far they have not focused on an objective rationalisation or re-alignment of curriculum provision.”



SFA steps up campaign against topslicing management fees

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The crackdown on providers who fail to disclose how much they topslice from subcontracting contracts has stepped up a gear, after the Skills Funding Agency said it wanted to make the information publicly available.

Colleges and independent training providers have been required to specify their subcontracting management fees since August 2013 - but FE Week found four months later the rules were being ignored by a number of providers, including the country’s biggest SFA contractor Learndirect.

The SFA later threatened to suspend cash if providers didn’t publish a breakdown of the amount of government cash they withhold for themselves before paying subcontractors to run training for them on their websites.

Now, however, the SFA has had its hand forced by the continued lack of compliance, and introduced an aggressive new measure requiring every provider to submit a new form revealing their figures.

The new guidance is very clear, stating: “You must tell us the actual level of funding paid and retained for each of your subcontractors in 2016 to 2017.

A76. You must also tell us the actual level of funding paid and retained for each of your subcontractors in 2016 to 2017. You must email this information to your Central Delivery Service Adviser using a template we will supply to you. We will let you know the date by when you must do this. We will publish the information on our website.

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A spokesperson told FE Week that “providers will be given three months after the end of the financial year [April]” to submit their details.

The templates will also be “sent out in good time” to allow for them to be accurately filled out.

FE Week, which has campaigned to curb topslicing since 2011, found that just two of the top 10 biggest SFA subcontractors hadn’t yet published fees as of August.

The culprits were the Army, which said it was exempt from the SFA rules despite holding contracts worth £22,230,972, and the Construction Industry Training Board, with contacts valued at £20,601,396, which it said it did not publish because it doesn’t charge management fees.

Funding rules for the last academic year ordered lead providers to make “the actual level of funding paid and retained for each of your subcontractors” publicly available within 30 days of October 20, the closing date for submission of final 2015/16 individual learner records.

The latest figures available on Learndirect’s website, which is still the nation’s biggest subcontractor, showed that it kept £19,831,208 from its 64 subcontractors, 36

per cent of its £55,321,135 total SFA funding.

This was the same proportion as in 2014/15.

Asked by FE Week to justify why its management fees remain so high, a spokesperson said: “We work in partnership with an extensive range of suppliers, each providing contract-specific services, which complement those we provide directly.

“We offer a range of added-value services to our partners including data management, training, funder management, access to growth opportunities including regional and national employer relationships and inclusion in bids.”

While Learndirect has met the SFA requirement to publish management fees, the figure itself is uncomfortably close to the 40 per cent that SFA chief executive Peter Lauener has said he would find unjustifiable.

Mr Lauener told FE Week two years ago that he would find it “quite hard to see a set of arrangements that would justify a 40 per cent management fee, because it’s kind of obvious that what is taken as a management fee is not going to frontline education or training”.

DFE TAKES BACK £3M FOR ENGLISH AND MATHS FAILURE

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Colleges across the country have lost almost £3 million in Education Funding Agency cash through failure to comply with the notorious maths and English condition of funding rule.

The combined figure includes City of Liverpool College, which was hardest hit through losing almost £500,000.

It was originally stated by the government that any 16 to 18-year-old student that did not have at least a grade C in English and maths, and failed to enrol in the subjects as part of a post-16 course, would be removed in-full from allocations for the next-but-one academic year.

The rule was subsequently relaxed for 2016/17, with the penalty halved and only applied to providers where more than five per cent of relevant students did not comply.

But despite this, the EFA's 2016/17 allocations published in November still revealed heavy financial 'adjustments' inflicted on colleges, in what is the first year such deductions have come into force.

A total of £2,842,016 was deducted across 26 general FE colleges.

FE Week analysis showed the biggest



losers, with City of Liverpool College down £479,188, after it failed to meet funding conditions for 458 of its learners.

The college declined to comment on why this had happened.

Westminster Kingsway had the largest number of non-compliant learners – 592 – leading to a loss of £321,483.

A college spokesperson blamed this funding loss on a “misinterpretation of the EFA's guidance requiring students to study for both a maths and English qualification”.

But she added: “We had a very successful year so this had no impact on the student experience, and this matter was also rectified for 2015-16 enrolments.”

According to DfE data, compliance with the condition of funding rule stood at 97 per cent across the sector in June 2015.

This means that around three per cent of those who should have been studying English or maths were not enrolled on relevant courses.

FE Week estimated last year that this non-compliance would have cost colleges up to £150 million had it been applied in full.

Other large losses include £327,174 from City of Bristol College, £288,463 from Newham College and a £254,872 reduction for Cornwall College.

Di Gowland, Newham College principal,

said the college had faced “many complex issues” around 2014/15 enrolments, which had now been “tightened up”.

Other factors including greater investment in specialist resources, attendance monitoring and parental involvement had “brought about significant improvement”, she added.

A spokesperson for City of Bristol College said it was “anticipating a significantly improved condition of funding picture in the future”, while a Cornwall College spokesperson said it had reviewed its processes and “our systems and monitoring will ensure higher levels of compliance in the future”.

Peter Mucklow (pictured), the EFA's director for young people, announced at the Association of Colleges annual conference in November that the five per cent threshold of tolerance would also apply to 2017/18, based on enrolments in 2015/16.

He said: “We said we would keep that under review, and ministers have decided to extend for 17/18 that threshold of tolerance, so that it applies in exactly the same way in that year.”

He continued: “The level of compliance across the whole of the English and maths condition of funding remains at 97 per cent, in terms of that 15/16 performance.

EFA funding falls by over 20% for three colleges

JUDE BURKE
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Three colleges have seen the funding they receive for 16- to 19-year-old learners drop by more than 20 per cent since last year, according to the latest figures.

The Education Funding Agency 2016/17 allocations, published in November, shows that funding has fallen by 2.2 per cent across the sector as a whole compared with 2015/16.

However, for more than a dozen colleges, the picture is rather more stark, with drops of 10 per cent or more.

FE Week analysis of EFA stats show that the worst-hit college is Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, which suffered a year-on-year drop in its EFA cash of a whopping 26 per cent – alongside a similar drop in learner numbers.

It was allocated £11,985,965 in 2016/17, £4,262,210 less than it received last year.

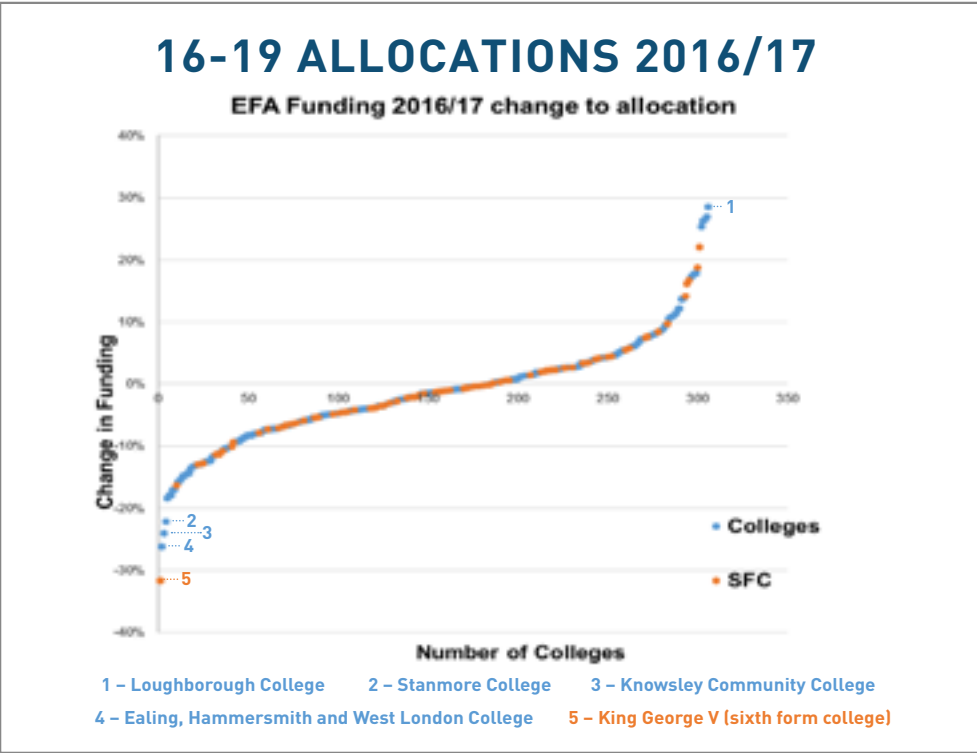
At the same time, the number of 16- to 19-year-old learners fell 29 per cent, from 3,122 to 2,230.

A college spokesperson said the fall was a result of “consolidating and improving the quality of provision and financial sustainability”, which had “been essential for future growth”.

The college declined to elaborate on what it meant by “consolidating”, in light of this massive drop in funding.

For some colleges, however, EFA funding has skyrocketed.

At the other end of the scale, Loughborough



College has seen its allocation grow by a massive 29 per cent – rising from £9.6 million in 2015/16 to almost £12.4 million in 2016/17 – while student numbers have also increased by 21 per cent.

A spokesperson for the college said the rise was due to the growth of its sixth form.

“Loughborough College is the largest A-level provider of its kind in Leicestershire, offering a wide range of academic subjects to young people in a new, multi-million pound development with the very latest teaching and learning facilities,” she said.

Other colleges losing out on large amounts of EFA funding include Knowsley Community College and Stanmore College.

Knowsley's current allocation is 24 per cent lower than last year's, and its learner numbers have fallen by 27 per cent, while Stanmore's allocation and student numbers have dropped by 22 per cent and 19 per cent respectively.

A Knowsley spokesperson said its fall in EFA funding and learners was “attributable to the college taking a decision to reduce its 16-to-18 subcontracting arrangements in 15/16”.

Meanwhile, a Stanmore spokesperson

blamed its current administered status along with the increasing number of local schools offering sixth forms for the fall in 16- to 19-year-old learners.

She insisted that recent improvements at the college are “already generating a substantial upturn in 16-to-18 learner applications for 2017/18”.

Student numbers across the country are down by around 36,000 – or 2.8 per cent – while programme funding was down by £119 million or 2.2 per cent.

FE Week's analysis was extrapolated from a presentation made by Peter Mucklow, the director for young people at the EFA, who told delegates at the Association of Colleges conference in November that “pretty much everything is two per cent down” in terms of funding for 16 to 19-year-olds for 2016/17.

Mr Mucklow said the cash drop reflected the “correlation between programme funding and student numbers”.

In addition, some institutions have had their allocations reduced for not fully meeting the condition of funding rule.

This rule, which was introduced in 2014/15 and is being applied to allocations for this first time this year, saw 26 general FE colleges lose a combined total of more than £2.8 million.

The planned removal of formula protection funding, worth £54 million, was another factor cited by Mr Mucklow.

King George V College, a sixth form in Merseyside, had the worst funding change of all, with a cut of 32 per cent.

Its allocation fell from £4,006,447 in 2015/16 to £2,739,055 this year.

NEWS

New nursing apprenticeship attracts massive interest

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A new degree-level nursing apprenticeship will attract around 1,000 learners each year, enticed by the offer of free training.

The first cohort of apprentice nurses could even start working on wards from September, while the programme has attracted such significant interest that Health Education England has expanded the number of training places on the pilot scheme from 1,000 to 2,000.

However, while wannabe nurses will no doubt welcome the chance not to have to pay to train, as it will be funded by the new levy, various senior members of the sector have voiced reservations about the scheme, suggesting it could be unfair on those who've paid to attend university.

Janet Davies, the chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing, backed the new apprenticeships route – with qualifications.

“With almost 24,000 nursing vacancies across the UK, it is very positive that the government recognises the need to increase the number of nurses.”

However, she added: “We have yet to see the result of the decision to remove the funding for undergraduate nurse education and nursing bursaries [which happened over the summer], expecting student nurses to pay for their education with loans.

“Whilst this new apprenticeship model will provide a different opportunity, we need to be careful they have access to graduate level education to gain the knowledge and skills required for 21st century health care.”

Heather McClelland, head of nursing for workforce and education at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “We hope that this will help bring in more nurses. As knowledge of the apprenticeship route widens across the country, it will become a really viable option.”

She believes it will “reduce the number of nurses who train” through the traditional academic route, but, she said, “I have no doubt we will continue to attract people training through both routes”.

Aspiring nurses will start the apprenticeship at different stages depending on their qualifications and experience, though the course will not require GCSE English and maths.

Before they start training, apprentices will have their numeracy and literacy skills assessed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council Approved Education Institution to ensure they meet a minimum of level two.

The standard for a registered nurse was developed by a range of organisations, including Barts Health NHS Trust, Ramsay UK Healthcare group and Hallmark Care Homes.

“Nurses are the lifeblood of our NHS, but the routes to a nursing degree currently shut out



some of the most caring, compassionate staff in our country,” said the health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

“By creating hundreds of new apprentice nurses, we can help healthcare assistants and others reach their potential as a fully trained nurse.”

A new nursing associate role will also be introduced, and people who complete the nursing associate apprenticeship will be able to count it as training towards a nursing degree.

They will work alongside healthcare support workers to deliver care, with the aim of freeing up existing nurses to focus on clinical duties and take a lead in decisions on patients’

treatment.

Former health minister Ben Gummer published the original proposals for training nursing associates through the apprenticeship route on December 17, 2015.

There are currently around 20,000 apprentices working in the NHS, and earlier this year the government pledged to create a further 100,000 apprenticeships in the sector by 2020.

A range of roles are expected to be established, such as pharmacy services assistants and associate ambulance practitioners, as well as in areas including IT, hospitality and facilities.

UTCs fare best in report on work-related learning failings

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Two university technical colleges have come out on top in an Ofsted report which found the majority of England’s schools are failing to effectively deliver work-related learning.

Ofsted inspectors carried out 40 thematic inspection visits in the spring term this year, to interview staff and pupils about the delivery of what the education watchdog referred to as “enterprise education”.

Two UTCs - Aston University Engineering Academy and UTC Reading - were among the cohort inspected, and both were found to be “positive for enterprise education”, according to an Ofsted spokesperson.

The final report, entitled ‘Getting ready for work’, said: “In successful UTCs, business involvement is an essential element of the curriculum.”

AUEA, which is rated ‘good’, was singled out for its work with “subject experts from local businesses”, who are engaged to “teach elements of the technical and vocational courses”.

The Ofsted report, released on November 24, gave the example of a project with National Rail, in which a team of six Year 12 boys from the UTC made a presentation to business executives on improving the safety of workers on the railway.

The team had developed their plans at the

sponsoring university, using a 3D printer.

The report said the presentation was “very confident” and “professional”, with “a clear explanation”.

It added: “They had developed, from scratch, a system that was very similar to the one the company actually uses.”

The feedback given, the report said, was that the project “could be developed into the next generation of safety equipment”, and the team was offered the opportunity to test their product on the business’ own test track.

Daniel Locke-Wheaton, principal at AUEA, said: “Continued feedback from our employers confirms that one of the most important aspects of a student’s education must be focused work related learning and innovative enterprise opportunities directly linking students with industry.

“This is an integral part of what makes studying at a UTC different.”

In comparison to the good practice at the UTCs, only four of the secondary schools visited by inspectors were found to be demonstrating an effective approach to this aspect of the curriculum.

Ofsted’s survey provided a summary of the key elements needed in promoting successful enterprise education.

These included: a common understanding of what enterprise



education is; training to develop teachers’ understanding of the subject and how to deliver it; and senior staff leaders who are committed to championing enterprise education.

Other factors were: a coherent programme that includes all pupils; systems for assessing the progress of pupils’ knowledge and skills; and effective links with employers.

Joanne Harper, principal of UTC Reading, which is rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, said: “Students at UTCs will work directly with employers on projects throughout the curriculum and therefore be very well prepared for the next stage beyond education, whether that is at 16, 18 or in their

twenties.”

She added: “We also work much more closely with the local economic partnerships to ensure we are preparing students for the jobs that will exist when they are ready to progress; this relationship has been further cemented by working with the Careers and Enterprise Company.”

Charles Parker, chief executive officer of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, which oversees the development of UTCs, said: “Because UTCs forge close partnerships with local employers, they are able to offer high quality employer engagement opportunities for their students.

“Whether it’s working on projects set by employers, talks or work experience, it not only makes learning more meaningful and relevant to the world of work, it means students are developing the skills employers need, like communication and team work.”



Daniel Locke-Wheaton

Careers company coverage a postcode lottery?

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

A government-backed careers company does not cater to every college around the country, including the whole of London, FE Week has learned.

We have repeatedly pressed the Careers and Enterprise Company, which was set up in July 2015 to connect young people with the world of work, for details of the colleges that it works with.

After being told three months ago that we couldn't have the information for "data protection" reasons, we were this week finally given a list of the colleges and local enterprise partnerships in its "enterprise adviser network".

It revealed a postcode lottery for FE coverage, with 15 LEPs not covered – and London completely absent.

Claudia Harris, CEC's chief executive, confirmed that the company did not work with any of the capital's 44 FE and sixth form colleges.

During an exclusive interview with FE Week, she



Claudia Harris

blamed the lack of coverage on "ramp-up", and "the fact that we are only 18 months in". "The offer will be made available to all schools and colleges over the coming years," she said.

Ms Harris said the CEC was working with "nearly all" local enterprise partnerships across the country, but the list of colleges that FE Week saw listed just 24 of the 39 LEPs.

And despite being titled 'list of colleges in the EAN', the document also included around 35 schools alongside 44 FE colleges and 21 sixth form colleges.

It's not clear if the CEC is working with any of colleges in the 15 uncovered LEPs.

Ms Harris told FE Week the list was not complete and "the missing LEPs are areas we're waiting for returns from".

She added: "To be honest, we needed to get permission from each of the LEPs to share the data, which takes a bit of time, so it's basically that we haven't done that yet in all of the LEPs".

She admitted that "we're not working with colleges" in some of these LEPs, as the CEC's enterprise coordinators had only "been in post for a few weeks".

"We're really pleased

we've got 80 coordinators. We're pleased that we've got so many schools and colleges signed up, but it's very early days," Ms Harris said.

Her organisation, which is thought to have been backed by more than £70 million of government funding, boasted of working with over 700 schools and colleges in July.

Its enterprise adviser network was described by former education secretary Nicky Morgan as the "cornerstone of the company's work" during a speech at CEC's conference in May this year.

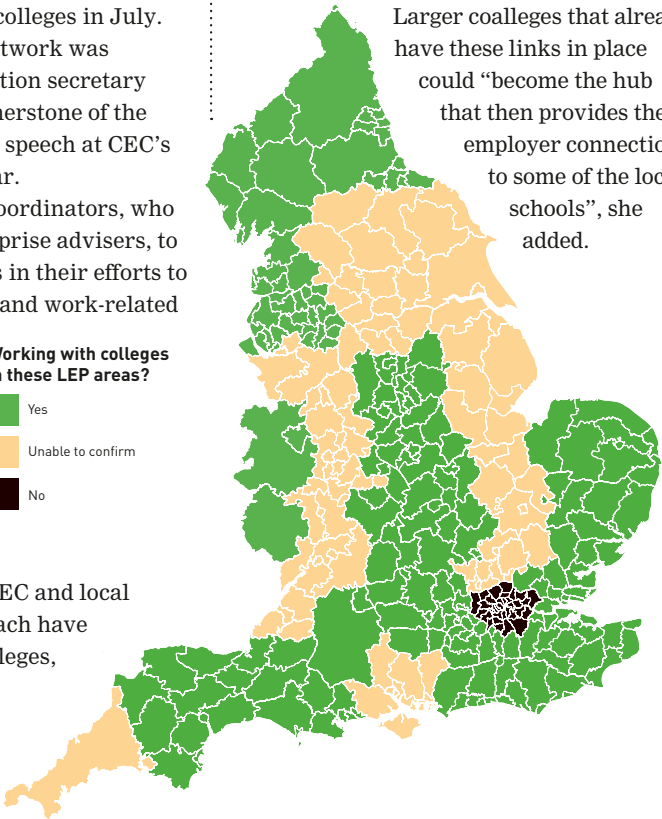
It uses paid enterprise coordinators, who work with volunteer enterprise advisers, to support schools or colleges in their efforts to improve careers guidance and work-related education.

The aim is to help them "connect better" with local businesses and develop an employer engagement strategy.

The coordinators, who are cofunded by the CEC and local enterprise partnerships, each have a patch of 20 schools or colleges, while the volunteers work with an individual school or college, Ms Harris said.

"There are a whole bunch of colleges that clearly benefit from the offer – they're colleges which are smaller, or which don't have very strong employer links, and they therefore need this coordinator and work with our enterprise advisers," Ms Harris said.

Larger colleges that already have these links in place could "become the hub that then provides the employer connection to some of the local schools", she added.



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A team of the country’s most talented apprentices and learners landed in Sweden this week to take on Europe’s best when it comes to vocational skills.

Team UK, made up of 22 competitors, are taking part in EuroSkills – one of two major international competitions for young people starting trade professions.

Often referred to as a “preparation” event to WorldSkills, which is dubbed as the ‘Olympics of skills’, it is still one of significant prestige to everyone involved.

Competitors, who must be under the age of 25, come from more than 30 European countries in more than 35 different skill areas ranging from landscape gardening and stonemasonry to hairdressing and game design.

This year’s competition is taking place from December 1 to 3 in Gothenburg, Sweden, with FE Week reporting on-location.

“Being in a European final is a massive achievement and should be celebrated accordingly,” said Ben Blackledge, director of education at WorldSkills UK, the organisation that oversees the selection process for the British WorldSkills team.

The team will be looking to better the haul of three golds, six silvers and three



Danielle Scandone, Florstry



Team UK at EuroSkills 2016 opening ceremony

medallions for excellence they picked up at EuroSkills 2014 in Lille.

Neil Bentley, chief executive of WorldSkills UK, said: “Our measure of success will be compared for how we do in Lille so obviously we would like to do better than that.”

Team UK travelled a distance of more than 650 miles from London Heathrow to Gothenburg, but their journey to EuroSkills 2016 started over a year ago.

More than 3,000 apprentices and learners were whittled down during regional heats to around 500 who could appear at the national finals at the

Skills Show in 2015.

Standout competitors in those national finals were then put into a longer squad of just 85 competitors, with 22 of them being chosen to represent their country at EuroSkills.

Since the team selection in May, Team UK has taken part in an intensive training programme, supported by their trainers, employers and training providers.

It prepared them for a step up in class expected when they take to the stage in Gothenburg, as while the UK finals operate at a level three standard, WorldSkills operates a level six, and EuroSkills is “somewhere in between”.

A final send-off event was then held in parliament on November 28th where they were bid farewell by family and given messages of good luck from government

officials.

This included Robert Halfon, the minister for apprenticeships and skills, who said the competitors were helping to “change the prestige and national culture” around apprenticeships.

FE Week spoke to some of the competitors before they headed out to Gothenburg and they could not hide their excitement.

“It means the world to me to get this far,” said game design competitor Dan McCabe, aged 20. “It is such an honour to represent the country and I can’t wait to get out there in Gothenburg.”

Betsy Crosbie, aged 20, Team UK competitor in mechanical engineering CAD, said: “I’m really excited but a bit nervous at the same time, as we don’t know what the competition will be like but I’m sure it will be a really

MEET THE TEAM

PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL MEDIA PARTNER
OF WORLDSKILLS UK



Plumbing and Heating
Daniel Martins, 19

Employer: Briggs and Forrester
Provider: EAS Mechanical
Trainer: Paul Dodds, Skills, Educational Training (SET) Ltd



Architectural Stonemasonry
Toby Brook, 20

Employer: Wells Cathedral Stonemasons
Provider: Bath College
Trainer: Kevin Calpin, Calpin Associates



Heavy Vehicle Maintenance
Dale Hamilton, 20

Employer: Volvo
Provider: Volvo
Trainer: Chris Carter, Stephenson College



Game Design
Daniel McCabe, 20

Employer: West Cheshire College
Provider: N/A
Trainer: Mike Spence, South Thames College



Cabinet Making
Angus Bruce-Gardner, 21

Employer: Waters and Acland
Provider: Waters and Acland
Trainer: Christian Notley, Chichester College



Cooking
Ruth Hansom, 21

Employer: The Ritz
Provider: Westminster Kingsway.
Trainer: Michael Godfrey, Mitchells & Butlers



Beauty Therapy
Isla McLarty, 19

Employer: Experience Health and Beauty
Provider: City of Glasgow College
Trainer: Jenna Bailey, Ashton Community Science College



Landscape Gardening
Will Burberry, 18

Employer: Gardenscapes
Provider: Merrist Wood College
Trainer: Colin McKnight, CAFRE



Mechatronics
Sam Hillier, 23

Employer: Toyota Manufacturing UK
Provider: Toyota Manufacturing UK
Trainer: David Russell, Northern Regional College



Plastering and Drywall
Harrison Moy, 20

Employer: British Gypsum
Provider: H&R Property Development
Trainer: David Kehoe, British Gypsum

glory at EuroSkills



Tom Revell, Mechatronics

good experience.

“My training has been going really well and I’m now as prepared as I can be so bring it on.”

Beauty Therapy competitor Isla McLarty, aged 20, said: “I’m obviously really proud of getting this far so I’m just going to take each day as it comes and do the best I can then hopefully have some great success.”

After the Euros, the competitors will go on to compete for a place at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017.

Last year, the UK team took home three gold medals, as well as four silver and two bronze, from WorldSkills in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



From (L-R) Conor Wilmott, Joinery, Betsy Crosbie, Mechanical Engineering CAD and Jordan Jeffers,Painting and Descorating



Mechanical Engineering CAD
Betsy Crosbie, 20
Employer: N/A
Provider: New College Lanarkshire
Trainer: Barry Skea, New College Lanarkshire



CNC Milling
Ethan Davies, 21
Employer: Electroimpact UK Ltd
Provider: Coleg Cambria
Trainer: Wyn Rowlands



Landscape Gardening
Adam Ferguson, 20
Employer: Grassmaster NI
Provider: CAFRE
Trainer: Colin McKnight, CAFRE



Automotive Technology
Seamus Goodfellow, 20
Employer: Ballinamullan Auto Repair
Provider: South West College
Trainer: Willie McIlwraith, Warwickshire College



Bricklaying
Josh Hunter, 20
Employer: Geo Houlton & Sons Ltd
Provider: Hull College
Trainer: Mike Burdett, York College



Painting and Decorating
Jordan Jeffers, 21
Employer: Self-employed
Provider: Southern Regional College
Trainer: Peter Walters, Stoke-on-Trent College



Web Design
Nathan Jones, 20
Employer: N/A
Provider: Neath Port Talbot College
Trainer: Mike David, Coleg Sir Gar



Hairdressing
Lucy Knight, 21
Employer: Owner of Hair by Knight
Provider: City of Bristol College
Trainer: Linzi Weare, Reds Hair Company



Welding
Josh Peek, 20
Employer: L&G Skilled Engineering
Provider: Great Yarmouth College
Trainer: Clive Bell, Lakes College



Mechatronics
Tom Revell, 24
Employer: Toyota Manufacturing UK
Provider: Toyota Manufacturing UK
Trainer: David Russell, Northern Regional College



Floristry
Danielle Scandone, 21
Employer: Moonflower.
Provider: Merrist Wood College
Trainer: Laura Owen, Self-employed



Joinery
Conor Willmott, 21
Employer: Precision carpentry and joinery
Provider: West Suffolk College
Trainer: Andrew Pengelly, Didac Ltd

Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Performance and Innovation

£70k plus benefits

BCoT has achieved so much, help us do more.



Under exceptional leadership, BCoT has an unambiguous commitment to excellence and is on its way to being outstanding. With a new strategic plan focusing on technical education and skills training, the college has an ambitious vision for the future. Growing the college and high quality delivery are the key aims.

The role

Building on the outstanding progress already achieved, the role of the Deputy Principal will be to ensure further enhancement of quality and curriculum innovation. The Deputy Principal will provide transformational leadership across all curriculum provision, ensuring college-wide engagement and consistency. Our expectation is always excellence. This role has a proven track record of direct progression to Principal positions.

The person

You will be in a leading and highly visible curriculum role in a college or similar environment and will have demonstrated successful engagement with curriculum

development and improvement, including both FE and HE, as well as innovation in learning and teaching.

You will have experience of motivating and leading staff to deliver at consistently high levels of quality, will be influential amongst peers and have credibility and presence in external contexts.

To apply for this role or if you would like more information around the position, please contact Shahin Mossavat on the Morgan Hunt Senior Appointments team by email at shahin.mossavat@morganhunt.com or call 0207 419 8910. All conversations will be confidential.

BCoT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its learners and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake appropriate checks, including an enhanced DBS disclosure as well as providing proof of right to work in the UK.

BCoT is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome enquiries from everyone and value diversity in our workforce.



The closing date for applications is
5th January 2017.

Assessment days will be held on
11th & 12th January 2017.



Placement Co-ordinator for Community Development and Youth Work

(0.4)

Point 29, £30, 738 pro-rata

Ruskin College Oxford wishes to appoint a Placement Co-ordinator to support placements across the College and directly support the programme team on its highly popular and successful BA Community Development and Youth Work.

You will hold a good honours degree and a teaching qualification relating to the relevant subject area. You will have extensive teaching experience, good communication (oral and written) and interpersonal skills with an ability to work effectively as part of a team. Details of the programme can be found on the website www.ruskin.ac.uk

Please contact Laura Cozier for an application form and job details lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk
Closing date: 9th December 2016
Interviews are likely to take place by the 16th of December 2016.

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hr@havering-college.ac.uk
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Hours: **18.5 hours per week**
Reference: SLAC1A
Interviews will be held on Friday 6 January 2017.

Department: People's Services
Closing date: **18 December 2016**

In this challenging and stimulating post, you will help to lead a small management team responsible for delivering a high quality community learning environment in the Merseyside borough of St Helens.

With a keen awareness of the national agendas for Adult Learning, you will be a qualified Teacher, ideally with a level 4/5 adult literacy or numeracy subject specialist qualification. You will have excellent oral and written communication skills, be experienced at data analysis and proficient in target setting.

You will also have demonstrable experience of staff management and a track record of developing the scope of Adult Learning. You will understand the relevance of partnership working in an educational context and we would like to see evidence of business management and fundraising skills. Having a keen understanding of the current funding situation, you will be able to rise to the challenges posed by the current national funding arrangements.

For an informal discussion about this opportunity, please contact Sue Williamson, Head of Library Services on: 01744 677493.

For further details and to apply, visit www.sthelens.gov.uk/jobs or contact Jenny Bridge via recruitment @sthelens.gov.uk or on **01744 676781** or **Human Resources, Town Hall, Victoria Square, St. Helens WA10 1HP.**



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Hours: Various Opportunities, Full Time & Part Time (Including Maternity Cover)

We have an exciting opportunity for talented, highly motivated and enthusiastic GCSE English and Maths Subject Team Leaders, to contribute to the delivery of our ambitious vision. The successful candidate will have the ability and drive to inspire diverse groups of young people to achieve their full potential.

We are seeking values based staff, who are committed to our ethos of working in partnership with individual students to ensure each achieves their full potential. In support of this you will plan and deliver inspirational, engaging lessons to ensure our students participate and develop their skills to enable them to progress and achieve.

Candidates should have a relevant professional qualification and experience of teaching in a classroom setting. You will be able to demonstrate the ability to motivate students through the use of varied teaching and learning strategies with an emphasis on student progression and differentiation.

If you would like to have a confidential discussion about this role, then please contact Karen Brown on **01908 637006** or by email Karen.Brown@mkcollege.ac.uk

Website:

<http://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/joblist/campus-based-vacancies>

Email:

recruitment@mkcollege.ac.uk

Successful candidates will have the following;

- A strong track record of good or better teaching and learning delivery across a range of levels, attaining high quality student outcomes
- A degree or equivalent qualification in related subject
- A recognised higher level teaching qualification
- Strong curriculum knowledge, subject leadership and team working that delivers multiple and diverse teaching methods
- An ability to engage and motivate students to deliver high performance outcomes in a further education environment

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Please contact Laura Cozier for an application form and job details lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk
Closing date: 9th December 2016



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Please contact Patrick Geary, Director of Quality Improvement via patrick.geary@solihull.ac.uk to discuss any queries regarding this opportunity.

Closing date: 8th December 2016 at Midday (12.00pm)
Interviews are being held on Thursday 15th December 2016.



Tutor: English GCSE (Full-time, permanent role)

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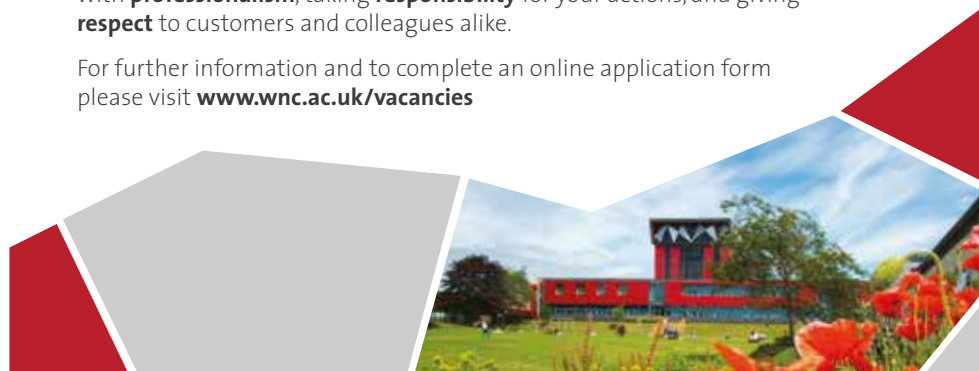
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The working pattern for this post is Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm with a 30 minute unpaid lunch break each day. The vacancy is for a 0.81 FTE position. However, applications will also be considered from candidates who wish to work less than 0.81 FTE. If this is the case please outline the hours/working pattern that you are seeking in your application form.

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Hours: Various

These posts provide the opportunity to plan and teach engaging Maths and English classes to students from our various College vocational areas and to contribute to the department's journey to Outstanding.

We are looking for professionals who are results focused with the drive to achieve excellence. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to:

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- Contribute to the planning, development and review of activities, including course reviews, self-assessment and other college QI activity
- To promote high levels of retention, achievement and attendance within the learner population

The ideal candidate will have the ability to deliver a diverse range of Maths/English qualifications, ranging from entry level, through to GCSE and above. Ideally you will be qualified to degree level in Maths/English, or will have an equivalent industry or professional qualification, and will hold a full teaching qualification (or working towards this). Candidates will have an innovative approach to teaching and will ensure that lessons are designed to not only develop skills but that they connect to the industry which the students aspire to work in.

Successful candidates will join our “bank” of hourly paid staff and will be allocated work on a flexible basis.

For full vacancy details and to apply visit our website <https://careers.esc.ac.uk> or contact the Human Resources department on 01737 772611 (option 3).

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MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

Full time Functional Skills Tutor

Location: West Midlands

Salary: £25k - £30k

(depending on qualifications and experience)

We are a well-established, expanding training provider looking for an outstanding, dynamic and self-motivated individual to deliver Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT to individuals working towards vocational programmes from Entry level 1 to Level 2 within our work based learning provision. High achievement rates, learner satisfaction and progression are key responsibilities of this role. The successful applicant will understand the Functional Skills programmes and how to best enable our learners to achieve well. You will be sensitive to your learners' needs and enable and encourage them to express and reach their true potential. You'll also know how to monitor each step of their progress through development of their learning plan and the review process and celebrate their successes.

If you can help to inspire and support our learners to progress and achieve their qualifications, and want to be part of our successful team please submit your CV to Sarbjit Bahia, HR Manager, [email address: sarb.bahia@gbtraining.org.uk](mailto:sarb.bahia@gbtraining.org.uk) or post, to be received by 5.00pm Friday 9th December 2016. 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.

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EDITORIAL



Oh yes Wilshaw did, again

Sir Michael Wilshaw couldn't resist another high profile opportunity to bash colleges. It's clear that his support team, including his FE deputy Paul Joyce, had helped produce an annual report designed to support a college sector struggling to implement an English and maths resit policy that "was not having the desired impact in practice".

The Ofsted report says: "Inspection evidence shows that, for some students, having to retake their GCSE can be demotivating" and goes on to suggest "an alternative level two qualification may be more appropriate."

But Sir Michael couldn't help himself when questioned about the policy after his speech. He blamed colleges, who are forced by the government to deliver the GCSE to some students. Instead of questioning the policy, as per his report, he said there was "simply no excuse for a college letting down large numbers of students."


I then challenged him, pointing out "the policy is that they must have a GCSE" and asking "is your opinion that it should be the GCSE?" to which he said: "Why not?"

It shows yet again that he says what he thinks, with little to no thought for the evidence his organisation gathers at inspection.

I'm confident the incoming chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, will give the FE sector the respect it deserves.

So fairwell Sir Michael, the Cinderella sector will happily go to the ball without you.

Nick Linford, editor
news@feweek.co.uk



OFSTED ANNUAL REPORT TWEETS:

Rob Brooks @RobBrooks2
Our eng & maths coordinator was marking work of 16 yr old who has a D yday: spells "writer" as "wrighter" - tell me that's the fault of FE

Chris Jones @ChrisJones_CEO
Chris Jones Retweeted David Hughes And sadly FE carries the burden to right the wrongs with less resource!

Marches SPN @marches_skills
Is Ofsted/Mr Wilshaw part of the solution OR The Problem?

Daisy Norfolk @daisynorfolk
FE HAS been starved to DEATH. So short sighted. England faces widening skills gap, says outgoing Ofsted chief

Disappointment over further delay to decision on FE maintenance loans

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Sector leaders have been left "disappointed" after the government delayed its decision on whether to provide maintenance loans for higher level learners studying technical education in FE.

On September 9, FE Week reported that the Department for Education had stalled on the issue, but promised to "make a statement in the autumn".

With the season drawing to a close, FE Week followed up with the DfE, asking if they would be announcing the decision by the end of November.

The answer was non-committal, with a spokesperson only prepared to say: "We will set out our next steps on FE maintenance loans in due course."

The department was unable to give any firm details on the date of any future announcement, meaning there has been a further delay.

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: "It's disappointing to see that the DfE has pushed back the announcement of its decision on providing maintenance loans for those studying at higher levels."

"With the current economic uncertainty, there's demand for people with high-level skills."

He added: "It is important to ensure there is access to the loan scheme so that people



Julian Gravatt

can use it to gain the necessary skills for the workplace."

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: "We're a little disappointed that there is no news yet on this."

"We're hoping that the announcement will have something to say on loans being available for higher level and degree apprenticeships."

In September, when it published the outcome of a consultation on whether to introduce maintenance loans, the DfE concluded that it would "take time to consider the responses" and scheduled a full announcement of its plans for November.

A DfE spokesperson said at the time: "We are going to take time to consider the responses to the consultation in light of the report by Lord Sainsbury, which has implications for higher level technical

learning and how it should be delivered in the future.

"We will need to consider the value for money case and fiscal position before taking any decision on the case for FE maintenance loans."

"We expect to make a statement in the autumn."

The consultation, which was carried out by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills between March 24, and June 16, 2016, aimed to test whether support for the introduction of maintenance loans in FE was on a par with the level of support available in higher education.

It also looked at whether this support should only be made available to 19+ learners studying level four to six technical courses at specialist providers, and whether part-time learners should be supported as well.

The DfE found that "respondents felt that the introduction of a loans package would help achieve the objective of increasing the number of learners undertaking technical and professional learning in key sectors that are important to the economy".

The consultation outcome report said: "When taking the written responses and the strength of feeling in the focus groups, the majority believed that this offer should be made on the basis of the qualification studied rather than the institution where the learning took place."

Nearly three quarters of respondents thought that maintenance loans in FE should also be available to part-time learners.

Apprenticeship tender for small employers rejected by quarter of providers

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

A quarter of apprenticeship providers have declined the opportunity to compete for an Skills Funding Agency contract to deliver training to small and medium sized businesses from next May.

The new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, which providers have to be on if they want to deliver apprenticeship starts from May next year, closed for applications on November 25.

There were 2,327 applications in total.

The vast majority, 1,753, went down what the government described as the "main route" – applying for permission to deliver training directly, or as a sub-contractor, to large, levy-paying employers.

Of these, just 1,310 – or 75 per cent – also applied to deliver training to smaller employers.

This meant 25 per cent turned down the chance to deliver apprenticeships to companies that won't be subject to the levy – despite them making up the overwhelming majority of businesses in England.

It reflected widespread concern that the government is



Carl Rhymer

not doing enough to engage small and medium sized enterprises.

Carl Rhymer, delivery and customer engagement director at the Construction Industry Training Board, said: "It would be a concern if training providers become too focused on large employers to the detriment of smaller businesses."

But he added: "CITB is committed to ensuring construction SMEs, which dominate our sector, get the training they need."

"We were one of the bidders for this provision, and it is possible that some training providers who haven't bid will be procured by CITB to provide these services."

This reflected wider hope that providers who just want to be subcontractors, could engage more with SMEs.

It would be possible because those on the register can still be a subcontractor without an SFA contact.

Association of Employment and Learning Providers boss Mark Dawe said: "The numbers suggest that we were right to press successfully in the summer consultation for a recalibration of the government's original subcontracting proposals [for a subcontracting ban] to meet the needs of employers and safeguard specialist provision."

Providers were able to

apply to be on the new apprenticeship training register via three routes.

The main one was for all colleges and independent training providers who wanted to deliver training to levy-paying employers, either directly or as a sub-contractor.

The second was a supporting "entry route to the apprenticeship market for organisations that offer a specialism, and providers who only want to deliver as a subcontractor", which saw 336 applications.

A third employer-provider route, which saw 238 applications, was for companies wanting to deliver the training to their own staff.

Currently, 798 lead apprenticeship providers are on the existing register of training organisations.

There are also 3,815 ROTO providers who can subcontract apprenticeships.

Peter Lauener, head of the SFA and the Education Funding Agency and shadow chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships, told FE Week's Annual Apprenticeship Conference in March the new register should "make sure any provider available for an employer to use meets the right standards".

A DfE spokesperson said: "The apprenticeship register is central to the broader reforms being introduced to drive up the quality and quantity of apprenticeships."

"We welcome the strong interest from training providers and are pleased they are fully engaging with the process."



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FE INSIDER

Shane Chown 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 an ex-vice president of the National Union of Students. His exclusive FE Insider column features once a month.

Let’s keep pushing to make TFE bill better

The end of 2016 will feel like a much bigger occasion than other years. It’s been a relentless rollercoaster of emotions. So much so that I now hesitate before checking my phone when a news alert goes off, wondering what 2016 could possibly throw at us next. I’ve also seen people blaming their own clumsy mishaps on the calendar. “I knocked my coffee over and it went all over my interview papers. Typical 2016.”

Without a doubt, this year has been disruptive culturally and politically – even in the world of FE and skills. The skills minister Robert Halfon, and his shadow Gordon Marsden, will be finishing the year seeing through the Technical and Further Education Bill which should by then have made its way through the House of Commons.

To recap, the TFE bill enacts technical education and training proposals in the Skills Plan for defined occupational groups; provides a broad remit for the Institute for Apprenticeships (and adds ‘and Technical Education’ to its title); introduces an insolvency regime as an exceptional last resort for financially struggling colleges; and ensures that devolved holders of the adult education budget will share information with the government.

For the last two weeks, the bill has been in committee stage in the House of Commons, when a group of MPs gather evidence and debate each line. They have until December 6 to agree the wording of the bill to pass back to the whole House of Commons for third reading before it goes to the House of Lords.

Fourteen witnesses have provided evidence to the committee in person, including me. Eleven written evidence submissions have been submitted; 10 from organisations and one from a college governor. For a crude comparison, 30 witnesses were asked to provide evidence and more than 60 submissions of written evidence were received by the bill committee for the current Higher Education and Research Bill also making its way through parliament.

One area that has been of interest in discussions about the bill so far is the role of the new Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

The Skills Plan gives the Institute several important roles: overseeing training routes within occupational groupings; keeping standards and qualifications up to date; and enshrining it as a sort-of-quasi-regulator for quality in the sector.

However, the Labour Party, AoC and others have highlighted concerns about timescales and the capacity of the institute to deliver its substantial new responsibilities.

Without a doubt, this year has been disruptive

The bill committee heard from Peter Lauener, shadow chief executive of the new Institute, that it will have only 60 members of staff to begin with, despite the TFE bill adding new technical education responsibilities to its existing role with apprenticeships.

A lot of the evidence to the committee points to the importance of proper engagement with employers, learners and providers in developing technical education routes and apprenticeship standards, yet significant concern remains over whether the new institute will be adequately resourced to do this properly.

Several evidence submissions have highlighted points that are in the Skills Plan but not in the bill. City and Guilds, NCFE and LSE highlight the lack of provisions over exclusive licensing arrangements for technical education qualifications, which was proposed in the Skills Plan.

The Learning and Work Institute has meanwhile said the new institute should have a remit to promote access to apprenticeships for under-represented and disadvantaged students, similar to the role that the Office for Students will have in higher education.

While sector campaigners may be disappointed in the government’s apparent lack of interest in changing the TFE bill at this stage, this is normal behaviour. In debates, the minister has publicly recognised the issues raised and has been broadly positive so far about taking action in ways other than through primary legislation.

That said, the sector doesn’t often have the opportunity to push for good quality legislation, so it’s really important to continue raising issues and ideas to improve the TFE bill as it progresses through the House of Lords in the New Year.



SHAKIRA MARTIN

Vice president for FE at the National Union of Students

Apprenticeships not cheap labour

When some apprentices are not even given quality training, the 10p increase to the apprentice wage is a sham, says Shakira Martin

Based on the last few months, you’d think the government was gearing up to put some of the money that’s been taken from further education back in.

We’ve had the introduction of the Post-16 Skills Plan, a bill on Technical and FE, a fundamental reshuffling of colleges in England through area reviews and finally an autumn statement that claimed to be all about productivity.

But the increase of 10p an hour for apprentices is a sham. The apprentice national minimum wage, at £3.50 per hour, is less than half of the government’s own proposed national ‘living wage’ of £7.50 per hour, and still lower than the real Living Wage of £8.45.

How is an increase of just 10p an hour to a group of already underpaid people an attractive offer? And with the national living wage only applying to those aged 25 and over, it’s just another sure sign we have a government making policies that are not going to enable young people, but make sure they get the hardest possible start to their working career.

Since apprenticeships are not ‘approved education or training’ for the purpose of child benefits or council tax, it’s not just low pay that’s a problem for many apprentices. If the wages are not attractive or viable and families are penalised through changes to benefits and exemptions, grand targets of three million starts and all the slick advertising in the world are still not going to make an apprenticeship a viable offer for many.

In our submission to the Low Pay Commission this year, the NUS recommended the equalisation of the national minimum wage so all workers, including apprentices and regardless of age, receive the same rate and that rate is set at the national living wage.

‘Forget Me Not’, our report on the state of apprentice funding and support, outlined the financial struggles of apprentices on the last apprentice minimum wage rate, including stories of reliance on commercial credit.

Other NUS research indicated almost half of apprentices are making choices about what apprenticeship to do based on where they could afford to get to, not on the basis of any

information and guidance they might have received or their own career aspirations. I imagine this will only increase for some as colleges merge and travelling to providers may become a longer journey.

In particular, apprentices struggle with very low pay, not only because the apprenticeship rate is set so low, but because there are high levels of noncompliance, especially for those aged 18 to 20 and in certain occupations.

The LPC has previously stated there may be a ‘culture of non-compliance’ in relation to hairdressing in particular. This noncompliance entrenches gendered inequality in wages. We all know it’s predominantly women training and working in the lowest-paid areas, from hair and beauty to social care.

It’s time to get serious about what makes a quality apprenticeship

Although I’m encouraged to see the government promise in the Skills Plan to get more women onto STEM courses and into the top-paid jobs, this does nothing to solve staggering inequality at the bottom of the wage scale.

And it’s time to get serious about what makes a quality apprenticeship. Even where apprentices are paid the correct rate, they may not be receiving the training that ostensibly justifies their lower pay.

Many apprentices I’ve spoken to through the National Society of Apprentices said they received neither on- nor off-the-job training, and BIS research suggests the reason behind this is ‘lack of interest and support from employers’. In some cases employers have apprentices so they can pay young people less without ever wishing to invest in training.

My membership deserves better. They deserve to train, learn and work in an environment that provides an education for a career – not just training for a job – in a role that is paid fairly, supports their progression and where their status allows them and their families the same benefits their peers in college or university are entitled to.

While devolution of the adult skills budget will lead to better use of public funds, an overall strategy to guide spending is sorely lacking, says Sue Pember

Much to the surprise of many, in his autumn statement the chancellor said that the government remains committed to devolving powers to help local areas address productivity barriers.

He also announced that London would join the other major cities and be given (subject to readiness conditions) devolved access to the adult education budget from 2019. It will also be allowed to explore further devolution of powers over the coming months.

I hope this signals a genuine green light and that rapid progress will be made to get everything ready for 2018 (for London from 2019). If we are doing it, then can we please just get on and do it? The uncertainty makes it difficult to plan and is stopping investment and innovation in adult education.

Devolution will change the way local decisions are made and how skills provision is funded. It should bring new life to adult learning by providing greater freedoms and flexibilities. At local level it should result in more effective, better targeted provision, as well as greater growth, stronger collaborations, and perhaps even partnerships between employers, communities, education leaders and students.

However, because of uncertainties about the scope of the deals, the size of the AEB



SUE PEMBER

HOLEX Director of Policy and External Relations

The adult education budget is on the move

allocations, who the learner beneficiaries should be and how new priorities will work with national entitlements and commissioning, it is hard to plan, or predict the benefits.

Can we please just get on and do it?

For the devolution agenda to be successful, it has to be managed alongside the wider post-19 education change programme, including the Sainsbury Review, changes to vocational courses, the new FE student loans system, apprenticeship reform and the levy.

The list goes on...

It is hard to see how all these changes are being overseen – does anyone have a crystal ball so we can peer into 2020?

Although I believe that decisions about individual need should be made locally and will lead to better use of public funds, there is a policy vacuum at the top and no overall strategy to direct the future use of the adult education budget.

For many, it is piecemeal, with the risk that the country will not be covered adequately by 2018. As it stands, currently around half the population and half the AEB will be covered by devolution, so the SFA will need to run a dual system for the rest of the country.

I do wonder whether there would have been such a push to devolve if we had known back in 2007 that the budget for devolution

would not be the £3 billion we had then, but would only be half that amount and that it would not include apprenticeships.

We have well-documented productivity and wellbeing issues, and part of the solution lies in adult education and skills development. However the nation's financial situation is tight and future demand for adult learning will be greater than the funding available. The combined authorities will therefore have to make some difficult decisions and may end up as the fall guys, when decision-making moves from the government to the deal areas.

Most of those who will be expected to deliver on these changes over the next two years have yet to be touched by change. Is everyone ready to deliver? Are the combined authorities which are delivering on their deals adequately resourced to manage a new planning and funding system? Are providers ready to build relationships with the new commissioner?

Lastly, who is doing local assessment of future need? I don't mean revisiting the old type of manpower planning models – we are entering a new world in which we all need good English, maths and digital skills, where we may have to work into our 70s, and will probably need to retrain several times in our lives. We need to improve wellbeing by ensuring there are programmes designed to improve integration. The need for more education and skills development for adults will continue to grow. We need to put in place innovative local solutions and embrace devolution to make it work.

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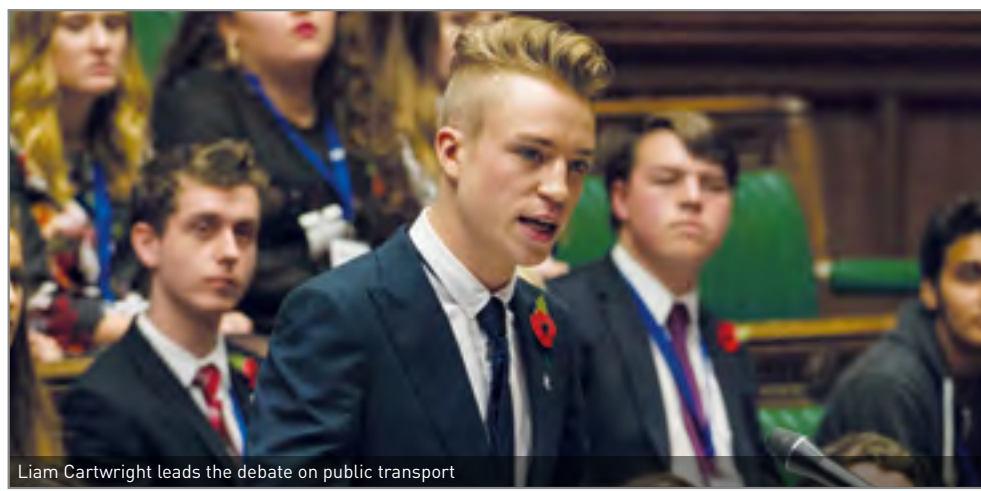
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Student puts the wheels in motion in Parliament



Liam Cartwright leads the debate on public transport

Two students from Newcastle Sixth Form College joined over 250 other young people to take part in a televised debate in the Houses of Parliament.

A-level students Liam Cartwright and Kate Palmer were representing the UK Youth Parliament at the biannual event, which gives young people aged 11 to 18 a chance to get their voices heard, and the opportunity to bring about social change.

Sixteen-year-old Liam led the debate on the issues surrounding public transport, with other topics discussed including the need for a curriculum that teaches more life skills, and tackling racial and religious discrimination.

He said: “The current issues surrounding public transport have been affecting young people in Newcastle for a long time, so I was pleased to be able to debate the matter with over 250 of my peers.”

A government and politics teacher at Newcastle Sixth Form college, said: “I’m delighted with Liam and Kate. They represent the very high levels of interest and enthusiasm that many of our students have in political issues and our democratic system.”

UK Youth Parliament is an initiative run by the British Youth Council, and currently has over 600 members who are elected through annual youth elections or through local youth councils.



Darlington College IT student Olivia Reynolds

Tech student designs app to help people battle shyness

A computer hardware student has designed an app that helps people who struggle to socialize access help and advice, as well as communicate.

Olivia Reynolds, an IT student at Darlington college, came up with Socialmoda to help those who suffer with anxiety and shyness access virtual help, advice and support.

The app also has voice synthesis, meaning users can hold a conversation with it, alongside an interactive mood board.

17-year-old Olivia is currently developing the app further with the help of tutors at Darlington college, and has already been shortlisted for the Federation of Small

Businesses Student Awards with the idea.

The concept for the app came from Olivia’s own personal experience with shyness, and witnessing others who have fallen prey to bullies.

Speaking of her creation, she said: “If you haven’t got a human friend then you can have a virtual one. I have struggled with shyness since primary school and being at Darlington college has really helped me socially.”

Enterprise tutor at the college, Josh Spears, added: “IT is an incredible tool which can help with a host of issues. It’s great to see Olivia using her skills in designing an app to help others deal with an area she feels passionately about.”



(L-R) Students Tung Le, Jordan Williamson, Aisha Pittie, Andrea Baki and Rushelle Angus at Play Space in Wood Green.

Learners come to the rescue of community centre playground

Five students enrolled on the 12-week Prince’s Trust programme have given a community centre playground a new lease of life.

The group from the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London spent one week working at Play Space, a voluntary-run under-fives community centre playgroup that has served families in North London since 1992.

The students repainted the building, doors and gates, renovated benches and also did a spot of gardening, removing weeds and tidying up plant troughs.

Part of the Prince’s Trust programme

required students to take part in a community project and, after searching for a worthy cause, they decided to support the Play Space centre.

They raised money for equipment they needed for the project by setting up a stall and selling tea hampers and Fair Trade chocolates.

Centre Manager and Trustee Nisha Morgan said: “When I saw what the students had done I couldn’t believe how much it had changed. Now we have a very special place for the children to go out and play, which is a much brighter, safer and cleaner environment for them to enjoy.”

College is battling for Kevin

A college’s resident bat is facing homelessness following site clearance work on the building in which it lives.

Affectionately named Kevin, the bat currently lives in the roof of Bridgwater and Taunton College’s Montgomery House, which is being cleared to make way for the new National College for Nuclear.

Workers on the site have been careful to dismantle the roof tile-by-tile during the clearance process in order to minimise disruption to Kevin’s daily life and, after a successful application to Natural England, a number of bat boxes have now been installed across the area to offer alternative accommodation.

Kevin’s presence was discovered during an ecological survey of the site, which demonstrated evidence of bat feeding, and then the existence of a single long-eared bat living in the roof.

It is hoped that Kevin will take up residence in one of the new bat boxes following the demolition of his current home, with students on the college’s land-based programmes keeping a watchful eye on his future progress and welfare.

The new National College for Nuclear will be one of two hubs across the UK providing high-tech, specialist training to meet the skills needs of the nuclear industry employers.



One of the bat boxes ready for Kevin

Students become Archbishop of Canterbury’s personal paparazzi



Two students have undertaken an unusual photography project, becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury’s personal paparazzi during his recent trip to Bath. Samantha King reports.

Two level three photography students at Bath College, Sebastian Roberts and Louise Wakeham, have jumped at the chance to add a high-profile name to their photography portfolios, volunteering to document a visit from the Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury during his visit to the spectacular Bath Abbey.

The pair were invited to join the ranks of press photographers from high-profile magazines and newspapers in order to snap the archbishop from every angle, as he delivered a talk on a new project at the Abbey.

Accompanied by college photo technician Joseph Woollorton, who was on hand to give tips and advice to the budding photographers, the students were let loose with their lenses.

The pair soon got a



Images by Sebastian and Louise at the Abbey



Sebastian and Louise with their cameras

flavour of the professional photography business, networking with other photographers, and learning the importance of framing a shot quickly in order to capture all the key moments.

Seventeen-year-old Louise from Wiltshire, said: “Quite a few people were taking photographs, including the Times Magazine, so it gave us a chance to talk to them. We soon learned that you really have

to be quick to take a shot, especially when you’re shooting in manual mode. You don’t get second chances.

“Joe came down with us for the day to give us some pointers. It was a busy day, but a great learning experience. It gave us an insight into what the photography business is like.”

The reason for the archbishop’s visit was to discuss the Footprint Project, a £19.3 million initiative to stabilise the ground beneath the Abbey and heat it using energy from Bath’s famous hot springs; as part of the project there are also plans to renovate the interior of the Abbey to make it more inviting for worship.

Following the talk, the archbishop met with the key players in the project and led

a Eucharist service which was attended by 800 people from the area, with songs performed by the abbey’s choir, as well as local schoolchildren.

Speaking of the experience, 18-year-old Sebastian, from Somerset, said: “It was quite nerve-wracking and it was a very big responsibility. I enjoy anything photography-related, and being a photographer makes you appreciate everything that’s around you.

“I really like the practical side of the course and going out to experiment, because experiments are the things you learn from.”

The visit concluded the archbishop’s three-day tour of Taunton, Wells and Bath, which gave him the opportunity to meet and pray with individuals in the area. He also conducted a discussion on faith with students from across Bath’s two local universities at the Students’ Union.

Arran Hodgson, the photography course leader at Bath College said: “We have lots of live experiences on the photography course.

“Opportunities such as these give our students a taste of what it’s like to work as photographers and pick up tips from the professionals.”

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& MOVERS SHAKERS

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

Frances Rutter has been appointed chief executive officer and principal at North East Surrey College of Technology.

She’s currently the chief executive at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, and will take up the role in spring, overseeing everything from courses to commercial ventures. She will also be responsible for building relationships with employers, civic and voluntary organisations, and the public.

It isn’t her first experience of working with the college, as she has previously served as a board member, stepping down in 2013.

Speaking of her new role, she said: “This is a really exciting time for post-16 education, with plenty of opportunities for Nescot. I am looking forward to working with governors, staff and students to help it become even stronger.”

Ms Rutter, who is a qualified solicitor, has held her position at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for eight years, and prior to this spent 13 years at Elmbridge Borough Council, with two years as an assistant chief executive.

Cliff Hall will stay on at Nescot as CEO and principal until Ms Rutter takes up her new role in early 2017.

Peter McCann has joined North Shropshire college as interim principal.

The college based in Shropshire comprises of two main campuses in Walford and Oswestry, with smaller centres used throughout the county.

As interim principal, Mr McCann hopes to develop technical training at the college.

He said of his new role: “I look forward to working with the staff and our partners to ensure that we provide the creative and responsive technical training, skills development and progression our students, community and employers deserve.”

Mr McCann has a wealth of experience in the FE sector, and has previously turned around a college with a grade four Ofsted rating to a grade two within 18 months. At his last college, he led an employer engagement strategy, which increased the volumes of young adults taking up apprenticeships from 400 to 2,250.

He has been chair of both the Leeds City Region LEP Skills Network and West

Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, and has also sat on the board of the Education Training Forum since its inception.

Nick Burnham has been elected chair of the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association.

The SFCA represents, supports and promotes sixth form colleges, and often leads national negotiations with trade unions on the pay and conditions of staff.

The new role will see Mr Burnham chair the SFCA council, which supports and guides the work of the association.

He takes up the role of chair alongside his position as principal at Cardinal Newman college in Preston, and will replace Eddie Playfair, the principal of Newham Sixth Form, who steps down after a successful three-year term.

Mr Burnham has 24 years of experience in the FE sector, and began his career as an economics teacher at Peter Symonds College in Winchester.

He then spent nine years working as a deputy principal at Carmel College St Helens, before being appointed as principal of Cardinal Newman in 2012.

Commenting on his new role, he said: “I firmly believe in this sector and its power to effect the lives of students – it is often deservedly referred to as the jewel in the crown of education. We will be working hard to influence the major issues affecting the sector and how best the association can work to meet the needs of the member colleges.”



FRANCES RUTTER



PETER MCCANN



NICK BURNHAM

Apprentice Assessments

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- Public Service Operational Delivery Officer - Level 3
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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next
edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: Alyson Shields , New College Durham.