

# FE Week

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## New institute already labelled a 'shambles'

**Just 10 weeks until Institute for Apprenticeships launch and it still lacks a permanent:**

- Chief executive
- Deputy chief executive
- Chair and board
- Headquarters

**So... what's going on?**

Exclusive

**ALIX ROBERTSON** @ALIXROBERTSON4

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Nearly 20 per cent of sixth forms in formal academy talks

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

A fifth of sixth form colleges have started formal negotiations to convert to academy status, the academies minister has revealed.

Lord Nash made the announcement in front of more than 100 delegates at the Sixth Form College Association’s conference in London on January 18.

FE Week previously reported that around 70 per cent of SFCs had registered an interest in becoming an academy, following recommendations in their area review of post-16 education.

But Lord Nash’s comments suggest that around 18 of the country’s 93 sixth form colleges are now in official negotiations with the Department for Education to academise.

However, a SFCA spokesperson explained that a ‘register of interest’ could just represent a phone call or an email.

But a formal proposal is the next step, wherein a provider fills out an official document provided by the DfE.

The peer told the conference: “As academies minister I am really pleased with the way in which sixth form colleges have responded to the opportunity of converting to an academy.

“Over half of you have expressed an interest in converting and a fifth have already started formal process to make the change.

“This will, I’m sure, bring great benefits

to you, the schools you work with and the education system as a whole.”

SFCs were first told they would get opportunity to convert during the spending review in November 2015.

Former chancellor George Osborne said at the time that becoming an academy would allow a college to avoid paying VAT – representing an average saving of £317,000 for each college.

SFCs have the option to convert either as a standalone academy, or as a multi-academy trust – either by joining an existing MAT or setting up a new one.

Sir Dan Moynihan, chief executive of the Harris Federation, an academy chain which runs 41 schools, also spoke at today’s conference and urged all SFCs to convert.

He said that while staying as a college would give leaders the “autonomy used by independent schools”, academy conversion would give them the opportunity to make a “system impact” and reduce costs during a time of declining budgets.

“Clearly there is the advantage of avoiding VAT, but there is much more than that,” Moynihan said.

“You lead powerful and high-quality organisations and in some ways you are a model for what the government ultimately wants the whole education system to look like.

“My contention is academisation, will allow you to continue what you do now, but in a way that could further strengthen your colleges by broadening your reach, strengthening your finances and capacity and allowing you to have a system impact.

“Whichever model you choose logically, you would wish to provide central services from within your group and you will be able to charge a budget top slice to do this, and if done well it is an opportunity by which you can drive economies of scale and reduce your own costs.”

He added that the latest funding agreements with the DfE allowed the budgets of members in a trust to be “pulled and reallocated” based on different criteria, which creates the “flexibility to allocate funds based on needs”.

Speaking to FE Week afterwards, Moynihan said that while he could understand some leaders of SFCs would prefer to keep their autonomy and not convert, it is “probably a good move for the country for the majority to do it”.



Lord Nash

Priestley Sixth Form College leading race to academise

ALIX ROBERTSON  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The first sixth form college set to convert to academy status has announced it aims to make the change this spring – and will save itself more than £250,000 a year in VAT.

Priestley Sixth Form College says it has had strong local support for the decision, and has set the provisional conversion date for April 1.

In its initial consolation, which ran in October and November last year, over 80 per cent of 79 respondents supported the dissolution of Priestley SFC before it transforms into an academy.

Now the college has issued a new letter to parents and other stakeholders, calling for feedback on the next stage – converting and

joining a new multi-academy trust called Challenge Academy.

If its potential member schools all agree, the new MAT will also be something of an anomaly amongst other established trusts, as it plans to include a faith school, following the results of a fresh local consultation.

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High seems set to accompany Priestley College in joining the trust, alongside Penketh High, Beamont Collegiate Academy, Bridgwater High, Penketh South Primary and Great Sankey Primary.

The latest consultation will run until February 9, with two open evenings to be held to support the process, on January 23 and 30.

Priestley’s website suggests “the sharing of good practice between schools and the college” and the “potential of an even smoother transition for young people

from school to college” as other possible advantages of the change.

“What we are finding is the more feedback we receive the more effectively we are able to dispel any myths there are surrounding becoming an academy,” said the SFC’s principal Matthew Grant.

“Becoming a MAT will enable us to be more effective and cost effective, allowing us to invest more in teaching and learning for young people.”

He added: “The ethos of each individual organisation is protected. The local governing bodies will stay so parents will still have a say in how the schools are run.”

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said his organisation was “keen” for its members to have the option to become academies, and that it was important for colleges to “choose the path that is right for them”.

He said: “Priestley College is an outstanding institution in so many respects, and has developed a compelling case for academisation – it is clear that this will help the college to drive up standards in local schools and aid the transition of young people from school to college.”

FE Week first reported Priestley College’s plans in October 2016, when the SFCA revealed that around 65 of the country’s 93 SFCs were exploring converting to an academy as “plan A or B”, following recommendations in their area reviews.



Priestley College

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# ‘Shambles’ IfA on course to launch with temporary leadership

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
**@ALIXROBERTSON4**

FROM FRONT

The Institute for Apprenticeship looks increasingly likely to launch without either a permanent chief or deputy chief executive, following yet more delays to board appointments.

With less than three months until the IfA is “fully operational”, the two top jobs haven’t even been advertised – and the

Department for Education cannot even say when that will happen.

The government is reluctant even say whether any board members have been appointed, despite first advertising the paid posts in June 2016, when it claimed that appointments would be announced in October.

Labour’s shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden has described the creation of the new Institute as “a complete shambles” and claims in an exclusive piece on page

16 that it is “in danger of becoming a huge scandal”.

He writes: “The department has repeatedly pressured stakeholders to ensure they are ready for the apprenticeship Levy and Institute in April.

“They’ve stubbornly resisted suggestions from the sector about a more phased in approach yet now appear in a state of meltdown.

“How can people have confidence in the Institute being effective from April when the Government have yet to even advertise for the key figures who will be running it?”

When FE Week asked the DfE why the hires had been delayed in light of the fact the Institute is scheduled to open in just 10 weeks – it refused to admit that the deadlines had been missed.

“The roles of permanent chief executive and deputy at the IfA will be publicly advertised in due course, following the appointment of the board members,” said a spokesperson.

“The current post-holders were appointed on an interim basis to drive forward the creation of the IfA ahead of its launch in April.”

The IfA is currently overseen by three temporary heads: Peter Lauener, its shadow chief executive, Mike Keoghan, the shadow deputy chief executive, and Antony Jenkins, who is shadow chair.

Deputy director roles were also advertised in October, but again there have been no

announcements on who will be chosen, or when.

The Institute has also lost two managers it had previously appointed last year: Rachel Sandby-Thomas and Nicola Bolton, who both acted as shadow chief operating officer.

Ms Sandby Thomas was appointed to the post in March, but left just six months later in September to join Warwick University as its registrar.


Nicola Bolton, the former managing director for trade at UK Trade and Investment, was named shadow chief operating officer in June, but only served five months in the role.

The DfE had no comment on why either person left.


Mark Dawe, the boss of the AELP, told FE Week that delays in announcing the board and a permanent chair “will inevitably delay the recruitment of the CEO”, which would put “yet further pressure on the IfA” which already “faces an incredibly challenging agenda”.

From the public’s perspective, little has changed with the leadership situation since Mr Dawe raised concerns about it more than six months ago, when he spoke at a House of Commons subcommittee hearing on education skills and the economy in June.


“Every time there’s a difficult question,” he said, “we’re told the institute will resolve it – and they haven’t got a board, or a management team or staff yet, as far as I can tell.”



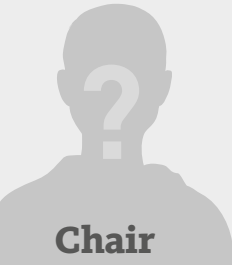
**Antony Jenkins**  
Shadow chair



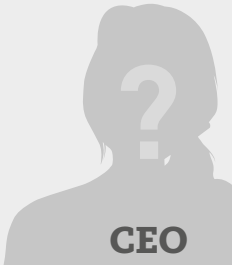
**Peter Lauener**  
Shadow CEO




**Mike Keoghan**  
Shadow Deputy CEO



**Chair**



**CEO**



**Deputy CEO**

## Dawe: Institute director to be given ‘grenade without a pin’

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A plum job at the new Institute for Apprenticeships has been compared to “a hand grenade with the pin removed”, by the head of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of AELP and former awarding organisation boss, said in an exclusive FE Week webinar he felt sorry for whoever takes on the newly created role of director of assessments, and warned the government not to “duplicate” the work done by qualifications regulator Ofqual.

In a discussion on the responsibilities of the IfA, Mr Dawe said: “I imagine anyone taking on this role will feel like they have been handed a hand grenade with the pin removed.

“But the actual leg work – we don’t understand why that isn’t given to the government agency that’s there with the expertise in assessment, and that’s Ofqual.”

He said there were still many discussions to be had on the end-point assessment of apprenticeships, around whether it will be “valid, reliable, manageable across all the standards” and whether there are “actually organisations to do it”.

“We’ve heard maybe 50 per cent – maybe

more than 50 per cent now – of standards have an EPA organisation,” he said.

“But you talk to those EPA organisations and a lot of them aren’t going to be ready for 12 months to actually deliver it.

“They [the government] could make their lives a lot easier if they just didn’t duplicate and actually commissioned Ofqual to do the work that’s needed.”

This is not the first time Mr Dawe has raised concerns about the Institute’s handling of assessment.

When the Department for Education published its draft strategic guidance for the IfA earlier this month, he argued that “big questions remain on standards and assessment” and announced that AELP would be “calling for a complete pause on the whole process”.

He said: “In our view, there would be much less cause for confusion if Ofqual were given the overarching role on assessment on behalf of the IfA.”

The DfE refused to be drawn on the reasons why Ofqual would not be taking up this responsibility.

However, a spokesperson said: “We believe that the SFA is best placed to maintain the Register of Apprenticeship Assessment Organisations and has significant experience in quality assuring organisations to deliver services.



“We continue to work with all organisations who have a role to play in assuring the quality of apprenticeships in England, and we are also consulting on how the IfA should carry out its functions.

“The consultation closes at the end of January and we will consider responses carefully.”

An Ofqual spokesperson was similarly reticent, saying: “Supporting the

development of high quality end point assessments is a priority for Ofqual in 2017.

“We are already working closely with the DfE, IfA, SFA and others to establish the optimum arrangements for maintaining standards. We will not be responding to the consultation.”

The webinar was hosted by FE Week editor Nick Linford, and conducted in partnership with NCFE.



# College forced stop recruiting apprentices from May

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN  
PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

A college hit with an ‘inadequate’ Ofsted rating won’t appeal against the resulting ban from running apprenticeships, but says it will continue recruiting learners right up to the last minute.

The Skills Funding Agency started allowing bodies to apply to join the new register of apprenticeship training providers last October, but those with the lowest Ofsted rating for apprenticeships were banned from applying.

This means that Epping Forest College, which was rated ‘inadequate’ across the board, including for its apprenticeships, in a report published on January 6, will be unable to run them from May.

But unlike Bolton College, which appealed last autumn after receiving its own ‘inadequate’ rating for apprenticeships, EFC won’t be appealing.

The college’s recently appointed principal Saboohi Famili told FE Week: “We are not going to appeal. We are going to do whatever we can to address the inadequacies with apprenticeships identified, and aim to start running them again after we are next inspected – and the grade will hopefully improve.”

Asked if the college planned to keep on recruiting new apprentices until the cut-off date on May 1, she confirmed: “We will not

take on any after May, but if there are any before we will take them on, yes.”

A spokesperson said the college, which was allocated £717,000 for apprenticeships for 2016/17 in September, said its existing apprentices would not be “adversely affected by the Ofsted inspection and their programmes continue as normal”.

Mark Dawe, the boss of the Association of Employment and Learning providers, did not like the college’s plan, and said it should be prevented from recruiting apprentices for the time being.

“The normal practice for independent training providers is to stop recruitment of new apprentices immediately after a grade four. Surely this shouldn’t be allowed to happen now for a college?” he said.

The Skills Funding Agency declined to comment, other than to say it “will continue to support existing learners under their college funding agreements”.

FE Week previously reported that Bolton had been in a similar situation to Epping Forest, after it was given a grade three ‘requires improvement’ overall rating by Ofsted in March 2015, but a grade four for



Saboohi Famili

apprenticeships.

Its principal Marie Gilluley wrote to the SFA, asking for the rules to be relaxed in its case.

She warned that “the use of the Ofsted grade alone, rather than more recent available data as an indicator of quality”, would have “serious consequences”, preventing Bolton from running apprenticeships.

“In our case the historic grade does not reflect the considerable improvement which has recently taken place,” she claimed.

When asked this week if the college, allocated just under £2 million for apprenticeships for 2016/17, had any update on the appeal, a spokesperson told FE Week: “At

this point, there has been no formal feedback from the SFA.”

However, he added: “The college is looking forward to being inspected in the near future. In March 2015, we were graded three by Ofsted and informed that a reinspection would take place within 18 to 24 months.”

The government wants the new register to work alongside the existing register of training organisations.

Its rules state that providers are ineligible if they were rated inadequate for apprenticeships within the last three years.

They can still apply if they were ranked ‘inadequate’ overall, just as long as they received a grade three or above for apprenticeships provision.

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INVESTIGATES

Are careers colleges working two and a half years on?

**Alix Robertson**  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Apprenticeships minister Robert Halfon has paid his first visit to a career college, attending London South East Colleges’ Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career College in Orpington.

He was treated to afternoon tea by students and praised the college’s work in supporting “those from disadvantaged backgrounds to get onto the ladder of opportunity”.

In light of this, FE Week has decided to revisit the concept of career colleges, to find out how they are getting along since the first one opened at Hugh Baird College in Merseyside in September 2014.

The area reviews are the reason behind the slow uptake of career colleges, according to the leader of the trust tasked with overseeing their development.

In 2013 Lord Baker, who founded the Career Colleges Trust, laid out his plans for “a new concept in further education”.

FE colleges would, he said, launch a network of 40 career colleges over the following four years, which would be designed to focus on training from 14 years old, with each one specialising in a different sector and working directly with employers.

But FE Week has found that only 12 are up and running at present, and three more are set to launch by the end of 2017.

One of these is the Greater London-based Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career College – part of London South East Colleges – which apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon visited this week (see page 18 for our report).

In an exclusive interview with FE Week, the

trust’s current chief executive Ruth Gilbert ascribed the underwhelming figures to the disruption that was caused when the post-16 area reviews were announced in September 2015.

She explained there was initially a healthy level of interest in the concept, which requires sponsorship from a lead FE college, at an average cost of around £30,000 to £40,000 for the first year – though there is no fixed annual fee as each college has different requirements.

However, providers apparently “retrenched” once their attention was diverted by major structural changes that were in many cases foisted upon them through area reviews.

“We had five [colleges] who paused any planning activity with us, pending the outcomes of their area review,” she said.

“Understandably, a lot of FE colleges stopped development activity and were very focused on immediate structure and the politics and administration of the review.”

Former education secretary Lord Baker agreed that since 2013 “the FE landscape has changed dramatically” during a “tough period”.

He said: “Funding cuts, reforms and area reviews have all put a huge amount of pressure on the sector – meaning that many colleges have not had the opportunity to innovate or invest.

“The trust has a very small team but its impact is far-reaching and I am confident that the movement will continue to flourish and grow.”

However, Ms Gilbert was more optimistic that momentum might pick up again after the last of the area reviews are completed in the spring.

The trust plans to take stock of the landscape in July, before the three new career colleges open in September.



She said the college mergers coming out of the area reviews could be a positive development for the creation of further career colleges.

“The fact that you’ve got group infrastructures now, some of them are talking to us about how career colleges might help them to differentiate themselves, some of them are hoping it will be a catalyst for wider employer engagement,” she said.

She pointed to London as a region that had failed to engage with the career colleges initiative, saying: “I’m disappointed in London because, despite being such a hotbed of employment and growth, we’ve probably

found that the hardest area.

“But we’re very mindful that London colleges have been going through their own revolution with multiple mergers and a number of quality challenges as well – and criticism nationally for having low levels of apprenticeships.”

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said it was up to individual colleges to choose whether a career college would be right for them.

He said: “Colleges will make their own decisions about the best partnerships for them to support their learners, so interest and take-up will always vary.”

The story so far

Lord Baker launched the concept of career colleges in his 2013 book ‘14-18: A New Vision for Secondary Education’.

Drawing on ideas from the US, he described career colleges as a pathway providing “general education which is common to all post-14 colleges” alongside “vocational training” to “develop skills for specific occupations”.

Initial support for career colleges was provided by two charities, the Edge

Foundation and the Helping Hands Trust.

The start of the programme was not problem-free, with one planned career college failing to open because the lead sponsor college was unable to commit to the full requirements for the project. However, no money was lost.

Since 2013, 12 career colleges have been set up across the country, and three more are planned for September this year.

What exactly is a careers college?

Each one is effectively a “college within a college”, offering practical training and education for 14- to 19-year-olds, and designed for specific industries with direct input from employers.

Their specialisms are wide-ranging and respond directly to skills shortages in the area of the FE colleges that establish them. Their work-led curriculums are developed by employers and the Career Colleges Trust charity, based on national and international best practice.

Although they were both invented by Lord Kenneth Baker, careers colleges differ from university technical colleges, which are a form of government-backed academy with a prescribed school constitution and a university sponsor.

Career colleges are not directly supported by the Department for Education, but because they are run by FE colleges, learners are funded through the usual public mechanisms available for 14- to 19-year-olds.

Sponsor	Career college specialties (year opened)	Examples of key employers / supporters	Number of students
London South East Colleges	Hospitality, Food and Enterprise (2014)	Hilton, Hyatt, Dorchester groups, Springboard	210
Hugh Baird College	Hospitality and Visitor Economy (2014)	Kenny Atkinson, North Cote Manor, Malmaison, Crown Plaza	140
Barking & Dagenham College	Digital and Creative Industries (2015)	Archant, ShoNet, BBC, Amazon	Undisclosed
Harrow College	Creative and Digital (2015) Professional Services (2015)	IBM, Oracle, BT, Cap Gemini, Amazon, Accenture Gardiner Theobald	37 19
South Tyneside College/ St Wilfred Academy	Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Computer Science (2015)	Ford Aerospace, Accenture	29
Yeovil College / NHS Trust	Health and Care (2015)	Yeovil NHS Trust	110
Birmingham Metropolitan College	Professional Services (2016) Creative and Digital (2016)	KPMG, Amazon, Deloitte, Deutsche Bank, BT, Samsung	430
Northumberland College	Land- Based Rural Tourism (2016*) Engineering and construction (2017)	Kirkey Hall Zoological Gardens, Northumberland National Park Authority	7 40-60(Provisional)
Lincoln College	Construction (2016) Air and Defence (2016)	Gelder Construction, Lindum Construction, RAF	36 18

\*Introductory year for post-16 only



# 61 MPs call on government to bring back night schools

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
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More than 60 MPs have written to the apprenticeships and skills minister, backing a campaign to bring back night schools and demanding fresh commitment to adult education.

The signatories, who included the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner and shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden, warned Robert Halfon of a “gaping skills gap” holding back the economy, which is “about to get a lot worse if we leave the single market”.

They also cautioned: “We can no longer afford to ignore the people and communities who feel ‘left behind’ – the parts of our country where many people feel trapped in low-income jobs with little prospect for change.”

The letter followed an adjournment debate called by David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, on Friday Jan 13, on the topics of adult education and the future of night schools.

Mr Lammy launched a parliamentary campaign to try and counter the savage cuts the government has been making to the adult education budget, which has seen learner numbers fall by nearly 40 per cent since his

time as skills minister.

Ahead of the debate, the MP told FE Week that he would be calling for a return to the traditional concept of night schools, which he wants provided either by local authorities or FE colleges.

According to government figures, there are around 1.5 million fewer adults aged 19 or over participating in further education than there were during Mr Lammy’s stint as minister between 2007 and 2008, when the figure stood at 3.75 million.

Mr Lammy’s stand on the issue prompted the MPs’ letter, which focused on the government’s Post-16 Skills Plan released last July, and its broken “promise to ‘say more about’ the government’s ‘approach to lifetime learning for adults’ at some point in 2016”.

terms” this will mean “a cut in real terms” which follows “40 per cent cuts to the adult skills budget between 2010 and 2015”.

It noted that “the number of adult learners fell by 10.8 per cent in just a single year between 2014 and 2015” while the number of adults achieving level four awards or above has fallen by “a staggering 75 per cent in just two years”.

The MPs concluded with a stinging rebuke to the government, saying: “When education and skills provision does not keep up with a changing economy and jobs market then inequality is exacerbated and it is those at the bottom who lose out most.”

Other key names backing the demands were Clive Lewis, shadow secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy, Kate Osamor, shadow secretary of state for international development, and Chi Onwurah, who chairs the all-party parliamentary group for adult education.



Angela Rayner

David Lammy

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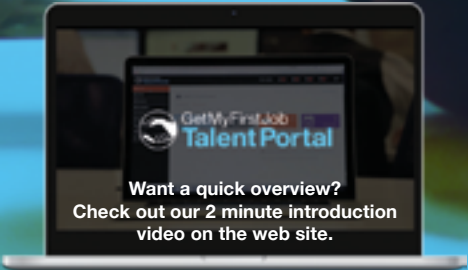
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# Ofqual to take up concerns raised over NSAFD

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Ofqual will hold talks with an awarding organisation owned by the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink, over alleged conflict of interest “issues raised” through an FE Week investigation.

The qualifications watchdog announced its plans to intervene in the wake of our report that the NSAFD was misleading providers by trying to sell them costly “industry-approved” status to run apprenticeships.

The conflict centres on a company called Occupational Awards Limited, which is wholly owned by the NSAFD, and which is the only awarding body to offer the qualifications necessary for two new apprenticeship standards – ‘food and drink process operator’ and ‘food and drink advanced process operator’.

When we checked last week, there was no mention of its relationship with the NSAFD on OAL’s website.

However, the site claimed that the two qualifications were the only ones “written by the food and drink employer Trailblazer group” and “endorsed by the NSA for Food and Drink”.

FE Week asked Ofqual whether there was any conflict of interest in OAL claiming its qualifications were endorsed by the same body that owned it, whether NSAFD’s ownership of OAL had been made clear

FE WEEK MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

INVESTIGATES

## ‘Misleading’ marketing exposed as DfE looks to new Institute for Apprenticeships for crackdown

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Providers are at risk of being duped into believing they need to pay thousands to become “industry approved” before they can deliver new apprenticeships for the food and drink industry, FE Week has learned. A body called the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink, has been accused by industry figures of “misleading” the sector with aggressive sales emails and erroneous claims of being “the skills body for UK food and drink manufacturing”.

A week ago, the government announced that the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) would crack down on “unnecessary” income generating behaviour.

The NSAFD, which no longer receives public funding as a sector skills council, appears to make a number of bold claims about its status and services. On one sales email seen by FE Week, the organisation warns that unless providers become what it calls “industry approved” – a status attained through a payment of £5,000 – they will be “less likely to win business” with a long list of prominent employers – at least one of which claims not to be aware of its inclusion on the list.

The group claims that only “industry approved” providers can deliver its “industry approved apprenticeships programmes” (IAAPs), but it appears that these are no different to existing food and drink apprenticeships standards, but with more guidance on how they should be delivered.

The NSAFD also claims that its IAAPs are supported by government.

a marketing label which is not used by any other organisation.

Similarly, the organisation’s website promotes an “industry approved specialist network”, and says that if “providers meet additional quality criteria, they will be able to offer Trailblazer Apprenticeships and other kite marked programme delivery”.

In fact, however, any organisation on the Skills Funding Agency’s register of apprenticeship training providers is able to offer apprenticeship standards, without the need to meet any “additional criteria”. Bill Jeremy, the chair of the Food and Drink Training and Education Council (PTC), accused the NSAFD of being “misleading”, and said it was attempting to create a “niche” for itself.

The NSAFD sales email also lists 30 prominent employers, including Brampton, Aunt Bessie’s, ABP Food Group, and Dunblae, and claimed that “many of these organisations” were involved with “the development of the new food and drink standards and the

Programmes (IAAPs)”.

It continued: “The IAAPs can only be delivered by industry approved providers. This means unless you are an active member of the NSAFD and have achieved industry approved status (which is signed off by members of the trailblazer development groups – food manufacturing businesses) you will be less likely to win business with any of the employers listed above.”

“They will choose to work with an industry approved provider, who has gone through the necessary quality checks and CPT, than a provider who has not.” Mr Jeremy told FE Week that “the NSAFD has been making a number of misleading claims about the IAAPs, for example saying that training providers need to be industry approved to deliver trailblazers”.

This, he said, “is simply not true”. He continued: “We very much support the IfA’s intention to crack this behaviour. It seems to be more about NSAFD making money out of a niche for

companies listed, meat producers Dunblae, did not even know it was being used in the sales drive.

Bosses at the firm were so incensed at the NSAFD’s claims that they complained in an email seen by this newspaper.

Another of the NSAFD’s claims, that “many” of the 30 employers had involved in the development of the new food and drink trailblazer standards, has also been called into question, as the SFA confirmed that less than a third – 10 of the 30 – actually had been consulted.

Justine Fosh, NSAFD’s chief executive, told FE Week that, by including the list of its business members in the email, its sales team were “highlighting the people we work with, many of whom have provided us with permission to use their logos and names on our website”.

She continued: “It is correct in asserting many of the employers we are working with will opt to use industry approved providers to deliver their apprenticeships. There are largely account

for the delivery of apprenticeships.

“We are very clear in all communication that there are no restrictions on any provider seeking to deliver apprenticeships – providing they are on the IfA register and satisfy the SFA, then they deliver.”

“Every provider is free to engage with any standard”.

However, her claims appear to be contradicted by her organisation’s own website, which clearly states that providers would need to “meet additional quality criteria” in order to be allowed “to offer trailblazer apprenticeships”.

In an attempt to justify the stiff £5,000 price tag, Ms Fosh said that the new standards only outline “in a top-level way the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for an apprentice in an occupation” and that they “provide no guidance on the type of training that is required”.

“Industry approved apprenticeship programmes fill this gap,” she said.

The claimed concept of industry approved programmes was cleared by the government, and said the NSAFD had invested £1 million into its development.

FE Week asked the Department for Education if the concept was indeed government approved, but it was unable to comment ahead of publication.

We also asked if any action would be taken against the NSAFD based on our findings.

A spokesperson said the IfA’s draft strategic guidance, published on January 4, was “clear on the need to challenge this kind of practice... [and] use only requirements (to run new standards) is for providers to secure approval to be on the register of apprenticeship training providers”.

Paragraph 14 of the guidance states that the IfA has “made efforts to discourage some ‘behaviours’ from ‘a few organisations involved in the development and delivery of reformed apprenticeships’”.

“These are largely account

trying to generate income from offering certain services which are not a necessary part of the system, or trying to secure a particular role for themselves without fair competition.”

The IfA will be expected to “discourage behaviour seeking to make a profit by delivering services that are not necessary and do not add value, and work to ensure the system as a whole is fair and consistent with the principles of the reforms”.

The example given in the guidance concerns bodies requesting for payment to include providers on a list of approved apprenticeship assessment organisations, something the SFA also administers at a national level. Ms Fosh denied that the NSAFD curated such a list.

FE Week understands the government is seriously concerned about a broad range of emerging sales techniques, but that current legislation contains no power to take any formal action.

enough in the first place.

“In light of FE Week’s articles, we will be contacting OAL and will discuss the issues raised with them,” a spokesperson confirmed.

NSAFD, which bought OAL from the now-defunct sector skills council for furniture and wood manufacturing, Proskills in July 2016, declined to comment on this latest twist in the story.

It claimed at the time that the purchase would allow it to “further support the food and drink industry through the awarding of industry-approved qualifications and focused end-point assessment products”.

FE Week’s investigation into NSAFD also found that providers were at risk of being duped into paying thousands of pounds to become “industry approved” before they could deliver new apprenticeships for the industry.

The group claimed that only providers which were “industry approved” – at a cost of £5,000 – would be entitled to deliver its “industry approved apprenticeship programmes”.

The only apparent difference between these programmes and existing apprenticeship standards – which can be delivered by any organisation on the Skills Funding Agency’s register of apprenticeship training providers – is that IAAPs have more guidance on how they should be delivered.

The NSAFD had claimed on its website that if “industry approved” providers met “additional quality criteria” they would “be able to offer Trailblazer Apprenticeships and other kite-marked programme delivery”.

Now, though, this claim has vanished from the NSAFD’s website following our investigation.

FE Week asked NSAFD if removing this key line meant it acknowledged it

was misleading providers; it declined to comment.

The NSAFD also claimed that the development of its IAAPs had been supported by the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

We asked the Department for Education, which took over responsibility for apprenticeships from BIS following changes to the machinery of government in July, if these claims were true.

“The employer ownership of skills schemes, such as those run by the NSAFD, were pilot projects, separate to the wider apprenticeship programme, that drew to a close in 2015 and are no longer funded by the department,” a spokesperson said.

“For apprenticeship training, we have been clear that as long as a provider has secured a place on the register, they will be able to deliver apprenticeships. Any activity that suggests otherwise would be misleading”.

# Digital Apprenticeship Service will go live next month

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

The new Digital Apprenticeship Service is ploughing ahead, and all levy-paying employers will be able to register next month.

Having been given a thorough “private beta assessment” by the Government Digital Service, the online service, which lets levy-payers access their accounts and make payments online, has been cleared for use, the Department for Education has said.

The next step, a DfE spokesperson told FE Week, will be to invite “some employers” to register on the system “over coming weeks”.

She said: “We will work with these employers to continue testing and improving the service, before we invite all levy-paying employers to register in February 2017.”

It is understood that levy-payers will be able to set up accounts on the DAS, choose the types of apprenticeships they want to run, the number of apprentices they take on, and appropriate training providers.

The levy will only be paid by businesses with a payroll of more than £3 million, which represents less than two per cent of employers in the country. The money will be ring-fenced, so it can only be spent on

training apprentices.

Gary Tucker, DAS’ service manager, explained the rigorous process his team went through to make sure it would meet employers’ needs before handing it over to GDS in a blog in December.

“Over the past three months, the service has been thoroughly tested from end to end by 100 employers and their provider partners.”

This testing covered, for example, registration, the process of “adding an apprentice to reflect the agreement between the employer and the provider”, and “submitting provider data to evidence training and trigger payments”.

FE Week revealed last October that the government expected to spend at least £12.5 million on delivering the DAS.

This would cover the costs both to the Skills Funding Agency and to suppliers of services such as web development and user research.

Sector leaders will be hoping the new service is more successful than the SFA’s FE Choices website, which was shut down in October 2015 after just three and a half years in operation.

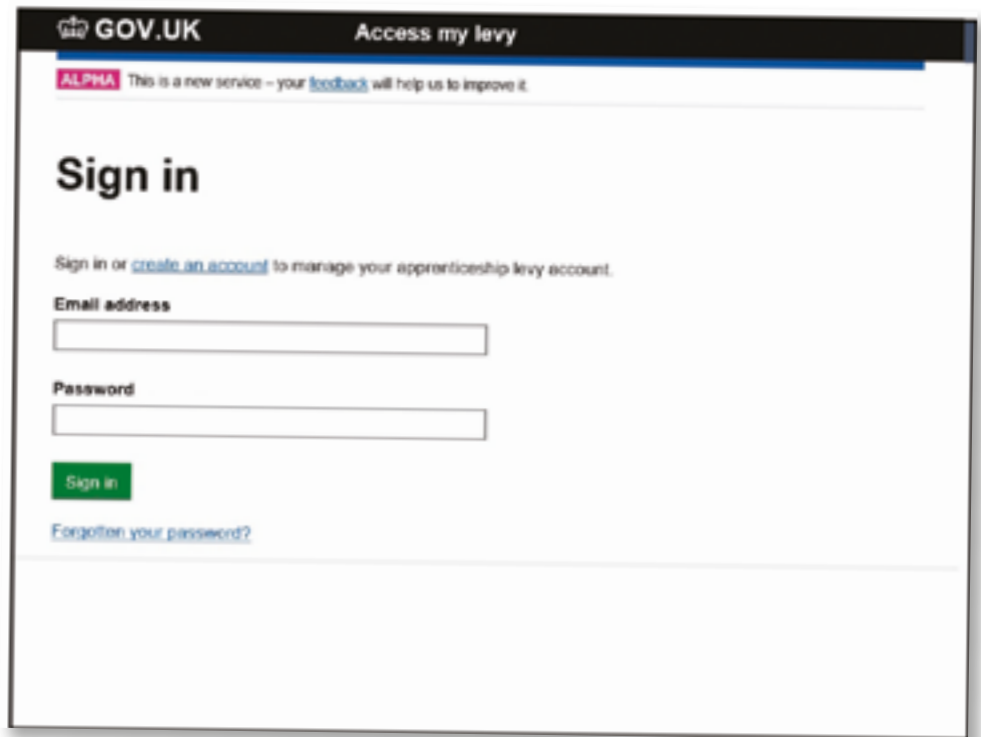
The website performed one of the DAS’ functions in allowing users to compare the performance of providers – though this was aimed towards the public, rather than as a

service specifically for employers.

An FE Week exclusive six months after it launched in January 2012 revealed that only 6,230 people had accessed it. Our Freedom of Information inquiry also revealed that FE Choices had cost the taxpayer over £2.3 million.

The website itself had cost £630,000 to build, with the remaining £1.7 million spent on gathering and producing of data.

The high cost was picked up on by Private Eye, which asked whether FE Choices “may be one of the most expensively pointless government websites yet”.



# Nominations for the National Apprenticeships Awards

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

The UK's most promising apprentices and best employers will tonight be crowned the winners of the National Apprenticeships Awards 2016 [in the print edition we will publish the results].

Nine apprentices and 18 employers will take centre-stage at the ceremony in Grosvenor House, London, after battling it out to be recognised as the country's most elite in each category.

Winners of the awards, which are now in their 13th year and are run by the National Apprenticeship Service, will be decided based on a year's worth of work demonstrating how employers can grow their own talent with apprenticeships and how apprentices have made a significant contribution to the workplace.

Skills and apprenticeships minister Robert Halfon will be speaking tonight, where he is expected to speak glowingly about how "apprenticeships work", and the pleasure it gives him to "celebrate the magnificent achievements of employers and apprentices from up and down the country".

Nominees, who this year include employers such as Mercedes-Benz and apprentices from Siemens and Rolls Royce, have had to go through a tough process to get to the national finals.

Small employer of the year	Medium employer of the year	Large employer of the year
Ebsford Environmental Ltd	Troup Bywaters + Anders	Mercedes-Benz UK
ISO Quality Services Ltd	Metalcraft	John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd
Blu Sky Tax	Michael and Margaret Naylor and Associates	Yorkshire Housing
Macro employer of the year	Newcomer SME of the Year	Newcomer Large Employer of the Year
Whitbread	Great Annual Savings Group	Pickfords Move Management Limited
Lloyds Banking Group	APTC00 - A Place To Call Our Own	Bond Dickinson LLP
Mitie Group Plc	Craggs Energy Ltd	Softcat
Intermediate Apprentice of the Year	Advanced Apprentice of the Year	Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year
Cameron Baker, Business Administration, Rentokil Initial	Becky King, Life Sciences and Chemical Science Professionals, National Physical Laboratory	Melissa Loonam, Advanced Manufacturing Engineering, Rolls-Royce plc
Charlotte Blowers, Nail Services, Exceed	Emma Goulding, Engineering, Siemens	Jack McCarthy, Supply Chain Management, Glaxosmithkline
Ashley Haslam, Vehicle Maintenance and Repair, Wilson's Autos	Adam Sharp, Advanced Engineering Construction, Sellafield Ltd	Holly Broadhurst, Engineering, J C Bamford Excavators Ltd

They had to submit applications that demonstrated how they benefited from their apprenticeship and detailed their contribution to the business objectives of their employer.

Their applications were first judged at a regional level, before a national panel then decided the country's elite apprentice and employer winners.

There will be three apprentice winners – one from each category – and one apprenticeship champion.

Six victorious employers will also be announced.

Sue Husband, the director of the National Apprenticeship Service, said: "We should congratulate everyone who has reached this

stage and been recognised as a finalist at a national level. Whatever happens on the night, each apprentice and employer deserves recognition for committing to and delivering on apprenticeships."

FE Week will be live tweeting from the awards ceremony tonight from 6pm, on Twitter at @feweek.



Digital Assess is a leading supplier of evidence based assessment product to support personalised learning at all levels of formal education, e-learning, vocational and workplace training. The delivered assessment technologies empower learners to evidence the application of their acquired knowledge through demonstrable skills, be this in the classroom or work place.

Digital Assess is addressing one of the key contemporary challenges faced by educational institutions – the ability to accurately assess learners’ application of knowledge.

Our assessment technologies delivered via the Software as a Service (SaaS) model, is used by educational institutions and provides the following benefits:

- ✓ track and assess learner progression,
- ✓ boost student motivation and engagement,
- ✓ increase assessment literacy and student attainment,
- ✓ facilitate peer assessment and peer review and
- ✓ provide contextual learner feedback.

The products are also used by centres, training providers and accreditation bodies to support the delivery, assessment and verification of vocational qualifications and apprenticeships across the UK and internationally.

Digital Assess’s product boasts five features (Manage, Capture, Annotate, Measure and Compare) and have been developed to address the demands of the 21st century economy, providing a far more reliable and valid alternative to traditional assessment through live evidence capture, digital annotation, mark up, peer-to-peer feedback and paired comparison.

Digital Assess has been, and is, an industry leader in assessment innovation capitalising regularly on Government backed initiatives. Innovation is a permanent feature of the Company, where most assessment product projects are developed in partnership with other education institutions.

We are changing learning for the better and making evidence based assessment more reliable, easier to validate, more authentic and simpler to manage.

Assess better. Engage more fully. Improve learning.

CAPTURE

Capture digital evidence of student knowledge, capability and progress

ANNOTATE

Annotate any digital file and reference rubric

COLLABORATE

Peer to peer assessment

MANAGE

E-portfolio to support assessment for learning

MEASURE

Game- changing alternative to marking that is reliable for measuring a widerange of learner work

ACCOUNTABILITY INVESTIGATES - PART 1

New 16-18 performance measures shine

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

The Association of Colleges has defended its members after key performance statistics published (January 19) by the Department for Education on Thursday revealed a worrying lack of progress in English and maths among 16- to-18-year-olds.

The progress measures, which have been included in the 2016 16-to-18 league tables for the first time, compared learners' performance at GCSE with their grade at the end of post-16 education in the two key subjects.

Figures are based solely on the achievements of learners who did not gain at least a grade C at GCSE, and who therefore must continue to study the subjects post-16.

On average, colleges scored -0.27 for English, and minus -0.29 for maths – which means that learners at FE colleges are not generally progressing.

The scores for individual colleges ranged from a high of 0.55 for English, which was achieved by Runshaw College, and 0.96 for maths, by Nelson and Colne College.

Meanwhile, West Lancashire College – part of NCG – had the lowest scores on both measures, recording -0.83 on English and -0.75 on maths.

Sixth form colleges did much better, recording an average of 0.47 for English and 0.41 for maths.

David Hughes, the chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said that the issue of English and maths was “complex” and the new figures raised “many questions”.

“It’s clear that the vast majority of students who have not achieved at least

grade C in English and maths go onto colleges, and that means for some colleges the numbers are quite staggering,” Mr Hughes said.

“This scale of need makes it very difficult to compare colleges with schools where the numbers are usually very low indeed, often less than a class-full,” he said.

While some students arrive at colleges “requiring a little extra work to achieve a grade C” others need “more intensive support, time and motivation to help them progress,” he added.

Meanwhile, Sarah Mortimer, vice-principal of Central Bedfordshire College, argued that its scores were “not representative of success rates”.

The college’s score of -0.83 on English was the second lowest of any general FE college.

“From Central Bedfordshire College’s point of view, we’ve seen an improving trend over the past three to five years in our maths and English, especially in our results this year and last which have been above the awarding body average,” she said.

Ms Mortimer also pointed out that there were “outstanding colleges on the table that are showing a dip” and “they are still outstanding in terms of their success rates”.

155,553 students were included in the English performance measure across all provider types, while 125,492 learners participated in the maths measure.

Colleges accounted for more than 77 per cent – or 120,258 – of those studying English, and almost 75 per cent – or 125,492 – of the maths learners.

Colleges with a higher proportion of their 16- to 18-year-old learners continuing to study English or maths were also more likely to have lower scores.

The average proportion across all colleges was 25 per cent for each of the two measures.

All five of the worst-performing colleges on the maths performance measure had a higher proportion than this, while four out of the five lowest scoring colleges for English had more than a quarter of their 16- to 18-year-olds included in the measure.

Simon Partington, Runshaw College’s principal, said it was “pleasing” to see that “the efforts of our students and staff are

recognised”.

Amanda Colne, the principal of Nelson and Colne, said its results were “testament to continued hard work from our brilliant staff”.

FE Week asked West Lancashire College for a comment, but it was unable to respond ahead of publication.

The DfE also declined to comment on colleges’ performance on the maths and English progress measures.

Average progress score	GFE college	Sixth form college	All provider types
Maths	-0.29	0.41	0.11
English	-0.27	0.47	0.19

How the English and maths progress measures are worked out

Each learner who entered college without at least a C in GCSE maths or English is scored on how they have advanced in these subjects by the end of post-16 education.

A college’s score is the average of all its learners’ scores; each grade better they achieve is worth one point, while a lower grade is worth minus one point.

For example, a student who got a grade D at GCSE but who achieved a C at their resit would score one point, while a learner who went down from a grade D to an E would score minus one.

No student can be given a score lower

than minus one, even if they drop more than one grade.

Students who can’t sit their exams are automatically given a score of minus one.

Guidance on the new measure from the Department for Education claimed this was because “we do not wish institutions to be disproportionately penalised where a student is unable to enter for an English or maths exam or where factors outside of an institution’s control lead to a bad result”.

But it does mean that some institutions may have scores that do not fully reflect the achievements of all their learners.

studying these subjects as part of their study programme in each academic year.

### Overview of the measures

Stage 1

Determine students in scope for the measure (English and maths separately)

Stage 2.1

Calculate student's prior attainment

Stage 2.2

Calculate student's progress

Stage 3

Calculate school or college's progress

### 16-19 Accountability Measures: Technical Guide

For measures in 2016 and 2017

January 2017

To view the full document visit:

<http://bit.ly/2jdBSID>



# a light on progress in English and maths

Five highest English progress scores (GFE Colleges)			
College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Runshaw College	0.55	363	4,789
Worthing College	0.43	138	1,546
Nelson and Colne College	0.41	269	1,750
Sussex Downs College	0.32	599	3,737
City College Brighton and Hove	0.3	561	1,854

Five lowest English progress scores (GFE Colleges)			
College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
West Lancashire College (part of NCG)	-0.83	12	29
Central Bedfordshire College	-0.82	366	1,180
Richmond Adult Community College	-0.78	9	27
Herefordshire and Ludlow College	-0.68	361	1,689
Accrington and Rossendale College	-0.63	371	895

Five highest maths progress scores (GFE Colleges)			
College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Nelson and Colne College	0.96	270	1,750
Runshaw College	0.51	460	4,789
Barnsley College	0.46	1,079	4,075
New College Swindon	0.46	383	3,262
Hartlepool College of FE	0.21	274	1,138

Five lowest maths progress scores (GFE Colleges)			
College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
West Lancashire College (part of NCG)	-0.75	12	29
Barnfield College	-0.74	431	1,305
Henley College Coventry	-0.67	418	1,259
Newham College of FE	-0.67	450	1,769
Lambeth College	-0.65	402	1,489

## Skillsfirst Awards



Skillsfirst Awards is a nationally recognised awarding organisation, offering vocationally related qualifications in a number of service related sectors.

We're working with an ever-growing number of employers, providers and colleges to support the delivery of new apprenticeship standards and end-point assessment.

We'd love to talk to you about opportunities to work in partnership.

Please come and talk to us on Stand A3 at the AAC2017. We look forward to seeing you there.



## ACCOUNTABILITY INVESTIGATES - PART 2

# Mixed picture for A-level performance at colleges

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

New accountability measures introduced this year reveal a mixed picture for A-level performance at colleges

The student progress and attainment measures are designed to show all the key indicators of performance for colleges and school sixth forms much more clearly, in tandem with the English and maths progress measures, and were first announced by the government in 2014.

The ‘student progress’ score measures learners’ progress from GCSEs to their level three qualification relative to the national average, and a score of zero means that a provider is at the national average.

‘Attainment’ simply measures the average grade achieved by learners taking a particular qualification type.

According to the new figures, general FE colleges scored -0.16 on A-level student progress, compared to an average across all provider types of -0.04.

And on A-level attainment, colleges secured an average grade of D+, compared with a C average across all providers. But there were some colleges that bucked the trend – most

notably Henley College Coventry. Its A-level progress score of 1.14 was the highest of any general FE college – and the fourth-highest across all providers.

It also had the highest A-level attainment grade of any college, at B+.

Its principal Ray Goy said: “We are delighted with the news, which reflects all the hard work that the college’s tutors have put in with our A-level students to ensure they not only succeed in their qualifications, but exceed their expectation.”

At the other end of the scale, Bolton College had the lowest A-level progress score of any FE college – although it argued that this was due to a mistake in the data.

Mark Burgoyne, its deputy principal, said: “The score is based on a small cohort of 12 learners, one of whom is mismatched to our centre due to an error with their unique learner-number. Once this anomaly is rectified, we expect the score to improve.”

Sixth form colleges scored higher on average across both A-level measures than FE colleges, with a score of -0.02 for progress and C for attainment.

However, the highest individual progress score for any SFC, achieved by Rochdale SFC, was 0.33 – lower than the top 10 highest-performing FE colleges on this measure.

Average progress score	GFE college	Sixth form college	All provider types
A-level	-0.16	-0.02	-0.04

Five highest A-level progress scores (GFE Colleges)

College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Henley College Coventry	1.14	6	1,259
South and City College Birmingham	0.89	15	3,106
Kendal College	0.72	12	939
Accrington and Rossendale College	0.71	36	895
Grimsby Institute of FE and HE	0.63	6	3,047

Five lowest A-level progress scores (GFE Colleges)

College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Bolton College	-1.69	14	1,999
West Thames College	-1.12	30	1,909
Barnfield College	-0.95	6	1,305
Kirklees College	-0.83	18	3,320
The College of North West London	-0.76	19	1,094

# SFCs come out best for vocational qualifications

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Sixth form colleges have outshone general FE colleges on general vocational qualifications, according to the performance tables.

The new accountability measures rated colleges’ and SFCs’ progress and attainment on ‘applied general qualifications’.

According to government information these are vocational qualifications which “continue general education at advanced level through applied learning” rather than specialising in a specific technical job.

SFCs scored an average of 0.15 on student progress on these qualifications – which is higher than the average across all providers of 0.1.

Meanwhile, general FE colleges achieved an average of -0.28.

SFCs also scored higher on attainment, with their average grade of ‘Dist+’ being higher than the ‘Dist’ achieved across all providers, and the ‘Dist-’ scored by general FE colleges.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said: “The specialist expertise, together with the

breadth of curriculum and the scale involved ensure that, again, sixth form colleges are outstandingly successful in securing excellent results.”

The highest-performing general FE college for student progress on applied general qualifications was Furness College, which scored 0.7.

Hugh Baird College had the lowest score, at -1.12.

“While this reflects a small cohort of college students enrolled in three subject areas, the vast majority of these students do pass their qualifications and move on to actual positive destinations,” said a spokesperson for the college.

“As an organisation, we are continuing to work towards more students in these subject areas achieving higher grades by supporting them in all aspects of their study programme.”

Level three tech level qualifications and level two applied general qualifications are not used to measure student progress, because according to DfE guidance “there is a weak relationship between students’ average Key Stage 4 results, which are mainly made up of academic subjects, and their results in these qualification types”.

Furness College was unable to comment ahead of publication.

Average progress score	GFE college	Sixth form college	All provider types
Applied general qualifications	-0.28	0.15	0.1

Five highest applied general qualifications progress scores (GFE Colleges)

College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Furness College	0.7	74	915
Runshaw College	0.55	398	4,789
Riverside College Halton	0.5	180	2,635
Truro and Penwith College	0.33	730	5,300
Bury College	0.29	582	4,334

Five lowest applied general qualifications progress scores (GFE Colleges)

College	Progress score	Students counted	Total 16-18 students
Hugh Baird College	-1.12	78	1,690
Wakefield College	-1.05	248	3,416
Newham College of FE	-1	99	1,769
Derwentside College	-1	13	707
Telford College of Arts and Technology	-0.97	109	1,402

## NEWS

# Public sector apprenticeships target set at 2.3 per cent

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

The government has confirmed that 2.3 per cent of the workforce in public sector bodies in England will have to be apprentices, in a move requiring that 200,000 more will have to be recruited by 2020.

The target was provisionally aired a year ago, as part of a consultation on how large a role public bodies should play in meeting the government's overall target of creating 3 million new apprenticeship starts by 2020.

The Department for Education has now confirmed 2.3 per cent as the minimum requirement.

Skills minister Robert Halfon announced that this would effectively mean setting the public sector a target of recruiting 200,000 more apprentices by 2020, although this won't apply to FE colleges.

"We are committed to breaking down barriers and creating a ladder of opportunity for people everywhere," he said.

"For our public sector to be the very best in the world, we need talented and ambitious people of all ages and from every background.

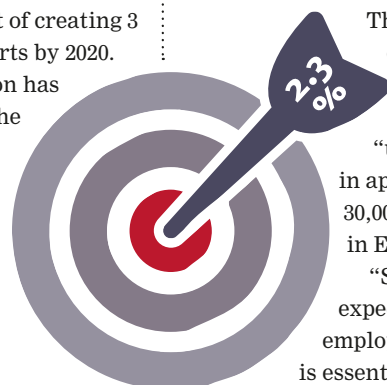
"Businesses across the country have well

and truly got behind apprenticeships.

"Now it is time to ensure the public sector reaps the benefits of apprenticeships and young people get the opportunities they deserve."

FE Week exclusively revealed last January that any public sector apprenticeship target won't apply to colleges.

The DfE confirmed it remains the case that FE colleges are not included because they are not defined by the Office for National Statistics as exclusively public.



The target is being championed by the civil service, which has pledged an "unprecedented increase" in apprentices, to achieve 30,000 apprenticeship starts in England by 2020.

"Setting these expectations for larger employers in the public sector is essential to give people the

skills they need to succeed and enable public sector employers to deliver the skilled workforce for the future," the DfE has said.

Last year's nine question consultation paper explained that "as a starting point for determining an appropriate target for public sector organisations", the government had



Robert Halfon

"taken the current proportion of public sector workers in the total workforce in England (16.2 per cent)".

"We would, therefore, expect the public sector to deliver 16.2 per cent of 3 million apprenticeship starts," it added. It explained the plan was for all but around 30 of the 354 local authorities, all police and Armed

Forces, and the vast majority of fire and rescue services would have to hit the target.

Other large bodies including Network Rail, London Underground, the BBC, Sellafield, Post Office, City of London, Bank of England, Financial Ombudsman Service, and the Financial Conduct Authority would also be covered.

## The new apprenticeship standards are ready. *Are you?*



End-point assessment



Qualifications



E-Learning



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EDITORIAL

Bring the IfA out of the shadows



Widespread concerns over whether the Institute for Apprenticeships will be ready to police the brave new world of apprenticeships post-April seem increasingly justified.

Peter Lauener is a highly experienced and respected leader, who probably understands the intricacies of the new system better than anyone.

It would be hard to argue against his role as shadow chief executive of the IfA being made permanent, if he didn't have both the nation's skills funding agencies to run at the same time.

There's a danger that launching without a long-term boss, or even a deputy, will provide encouragement to people looking for opportunities to take advantage of a system in transition.

It's creating an impression, fair or not, that things are being left to drift – and the government's reluctance to even say whether any board members have been appointed doesn't help.

This needs to be addressed fast. The new apprenticeships system needs to get off to a good start, with a powerful and respected IfA helping to build prestige from there.

Nick Linford, editor

news@feweek.co.uk

LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE BIRTHDAY TWEETS:

**SENEL @SENEL\_Europe**  
Happy birthday @LearnWorkUK! Great Work calling on UK Gov for action & hold gov to account to tackle inequality. #disability #Equality

**Commonweal Housing @Commonweal**  
@LearnWorkUK Happy Birthday! Very excited to be working with you and @QSA in 2017 on #YoungAdultCarers project Move On Up

**Tony Wilson @LWtonywilson**  
Happy birthday to us!! Hard to believe that we launched @LearnWorkUK a year ago today... and what a year it's been

**Shane Chowen @LWShane**  
A debate on adult education featuring @DavidLammy and @halfon4harlowMP on @LearnWorkUK's first birthday. What more could you want?

**Kev Campbell-Wright @togetherkev**  
@LearnWorkUK can't believe that was only a year ago!



DfE wants over 100 professional panellists to oversee new pathways

PAUL OFFORD

@PAULOFFORD

The Department for Education is looking to hire more than 100 panel members to help develop more technical qualifications – with an expected cost of more than half a million pounds.

In its advert, the DfE said it was seeking experienced industry professionals who wanted to help shape the “future technical education system”, as set out by Lord Sainsbury last summer.

They will serve on “panels of professionals” that will “develop occupational standards for new technical qualifications, as part of flagship reforms to England’s post-16-skills system”.

These professionals will serve a one-year term, unpaid, though their employers will be paid £1,000 per quarter. Panel chairs’ employers will receive £2,000 per quarter, though any self-employed panellist will receive the money themselves.

The DfE lists 11 industries, implying a similar number of panels – and therefore at least nine or 10 members per panel, assuming it actually does want to hire 100 or more panellists.

With 10 on each, the cost per panel would work out at £48,000.

And assuming there will be 11 panels, this

puts the annual cost at just under £530,000.

The sectors covered are digital, legal, finance and accounting, engineering and manufacturing, health and science, construction, childcare and education, agriculture, environmental and animal care, business and administrative, catering and hospitality, and creative and design.

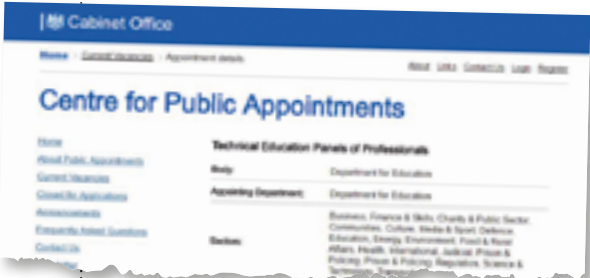
The government is gearing up for a radical overhaul of the post-16 vocational qualification system, and is on course to replace 20,000 courses with the “15 high-quality” technical qualifications recommended in the skills plan published in July, which was based on recommendations from Lord Sainsbury review.

FE Week understands that four of these routes, which will be “primarily delivered through apprenticeships”, will not be covered by the new professional panels.

The advert, posted through the Cabinet Office, revealed that the panels “will be formed in phases”, with successful applicants added to an “approved register of industry professionals”.

The DfE will aim to notify successful applicants “in the spring” of this year.

Planned payments will cover travel expenses – which could end up quite high, as the location for the new roles is listed as “nationwide”.



“These are critical roles that will require successful applicants to spend time away from their day job,” states the advert. “In recognition of this, as a panel member, your employer will receive £1,000 on a quarterly basis.

“If you are a panel chair, your employer will receive £2,000 on a quarterly basis.

“These payments will also cover any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings.

“We welcome applications from those self-employed and will receive payment directly to your company bank account for your time commitment.”

The DfE would “broadly expect” each panel to meet between once a month and every six weeks for a year, and that “panel members will undertake some additional work outside of meetings” which would be “up to one day per month”.

Applicants should complete an expression of interest form, and email this to employer. panels@education.gov.uk, by February 13.

COMMENTS

**FE pays tribute to former SFA director Kim Thornework**

This is such sad news. It was Kim who suggested to me that PROCAT seeks incorporated status and in 2014 we became the first new college since the 1992 Act. We have lost a great leader but a wonderfully warm and caring person as well.

Neil Bates

I had the pleasure of working with Kim at the LSC and SFA and can say she was a great line manager, a colleague that had time for you even when busy and someone you could turn to in or out of a work-context. It was no surprise to me that Kim advanced rapidly into the role of Chief Executive of the SFA. At a time

when government agencies are becoming more remote and by-the-book, Kim bought a quality externally and importantly internally, for those of us that worked with her, to her various roles that is now sadly lacking. Kim would provide advice, guidance and insight that was trusted and spot-on. My thoughts are with her family.

Simon Griffiths

**Adult Education budget procurement process set to launch**

Yet another example of the un-level playing field between FE Colleges and ITPs. How are ITPs supposed to compete in this market?

Karen Hodgson

Frankly I think this shows the continued ineptitude of the civil servants informing the Government of the policy for post 16 education and skills.

Jon Thompson

**Misleading marketing of ‘industry-approved’ provider schemes exposed**

The government has reduced its support for providers and, therefore, employers significantly in the last 7 years. Previous to that there may have been publicly funded support for improving and benchmarking provision in the sector. I see nothing wrong with this at all as long as all parties feel they are getting a value for money service.

Reader



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We are now looking for an experienced and enthusiastic person to join this new team and drive quality improvement forward for the new merged college. We are an ambitious team, energised by the challenge and opportunities of merger and we are determined to work together to deliver a strong future.

We have retained FE Associates to secure the best possible candidate for us. Initial enquiries should be directed to Samantha Bunn on **01454 617707**.

Further information can be found on our microsite:  
[www.eastberkshireleadership.com](http://www.eastberkshireleadership.com)

### **Key Dates:**

**Closing date for applications:**  
Noon, Monday 13th February 2017

**Interviews:**  
22/23 February 2017





# PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Following the impending retirement of our current principal, Mike Robbins OBE, we are seeking to appoint a new principal with the vision, drive and personal qualities to sustain our well established culture of continuous improvement, positive performance and meeting the needs of our community.

The College was formed recently by the merger of Bridgwater College and Somerset College in June 2016, creating one of the largest colleges in the country with a turnover of £57m, 1500 staff and 20,000 students. With 14 AoC Beacon Awards, the award of its second Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2015, and the award of TES College of the Year in 2016, the College owes much of its success to two fundamental philosophies which it is expected that anyone joining the College will share: students come first and all staff employed at the College are team players.

We are looking for an outstanding, innovative and inspirational leader who will lead the staff team, build upon the achievements and strengths of the College, and further raise its standards and reputation. He or she will be a highly experienced professional, with strong, proven leadership and management skills. He or she will also be passionate about student and organisational success, and be committed to meeting the needs of stakeholders and our

local and regional communities. Excellent communication skills and high levels of energy and stamina will be required to motivate staff and students to share a common set of values and help develop a corporate culture which encourages individuals to work effectively within teams, whilst also performing at the highest levels as individuals.

In return, we are offering a negotiable six figure salary dependent upon experience and an exceptional opportunity to work for one of the country's top colleges, with outstanding, state-of-the-art facilities and resources, supported by a professional and positive staff team who are dedicated to achieving educational excellence.

Potential applicants are welcome to have an informal confidential conversation with the current principal by contacting his PA on 01278 441203.

For more information and to apply visit <https://jobs.bridgwater.ac.uk>

Closing date: 12 noon on Friday 27 January 2017

Interview dates: Monday 27 February - Wednesday 1 March 2017



**Winner**  
FE college of the year



## An outstanding opportunity for an exceptional individual...



### Assistant Principal 16-19 study programmes and adults

Salary: c.£60,000

Situated in the heart of Yorkshire, Kirklees College is a large and vibrant, multi-site college with major centres in Huddersfield and Dewsbury, offering a broad and comprehensive curriculum.

Judged as a good college with outstanding leadership at its last inspection in 2012 and having recently completed the government's strategic area review process, Kirklees College is well positioned to play a leading role in shaping the future of Further Education across mid and West Yorkshire.

The recent opening of our state of the art Process Manufacturing centre in Huddersfield now provides a fantastic resource for employers locally, regionally and nationally and will enhance Leeds City Region's reputation as a hub for manufacturing.

The Kirklees Economic Strategy has identified the regeneration of Dewsbury town centre as a major priority. As part of this regeneration, two new Kirklees College centres (Dewsbury Learning

Quarter) are planned for a 2018 opening. The iconic Pioneer House opposite Dewsbury railway station will be transformed into a centre for higher level skills, apprenticeships and post -19 studies, specialising in creative and digital industries, media and art, healthcare and business. The centre will also have hair and beauty salons and a café open to the public.

A new centre will also be built in the heart of Dewsbury town centre for full time students aged 16-19 including foundation learning, construction and motor vehicle.

We are seeking to appoint a strong, innovative leader to champion high quality teaching, learning and assessment, deliver outstanding results and ensure a first class resource for our community for our 16-19 study, and Adult programmes.

With a strong track record in curriculum leadership and quality improvement, the successful candidate will have the ability to develop and implement holistic strategies, motivate high performing teams within a broad curriculum portfolio and leverage new opportunities.

Ideally with experience of maths and English management, and implementing effective work experience opportunities, we are looking for an individual to raise the profile of the College, be an accomplished people manager and someone who can engage with staff, students, governors, employers and the College's wider community.

**The planned selection centre will take place on 16th and 17th February 2017.**

If you are interested in applying for this role, please visit [www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs) and search under our latest vacancies page where you will find details on how to apply for this role.

For an informal discussion please contact June Durrant, Acting Principal on 01484 437014.

**Closing date: Monday 30th January 2017 at 12 noon.**

*Our senior leadership team is currently under-represented in all BME categories; we therefore particularly welcome applications from candidates within these groups.*







## Join Wigan & Leigh College on their journey to outstanding

Proud to be a Grade 2 College, Wigan & Leigh College is now embarking on its journey to become Outstanding. With over 6,500 students and a turnover of £26m, the College is in a strong position to continue to move forward and grow. The College has distinct ambitions to expand its choice of programmes and services to meet the needs of the local community and support the economic transformation of Wigan and surrounding areas. The College has created a community that encourages all students to enhance their learning through wider opportunities and support services; to maximise their achievements and secure progression onto further study and employment.

### Finance Director

**Circa £75k**

The College is looking to appoint a top class experienced finance professional to be an integral part of their vision to take the college to financially Outstanding in 2020. As well as being CCAB qualified, the right candidate will have experience of managing finance teams and developing individuals. The role would be ideal for an experienced Finance Director or a senior finance manager looking to step up.

The successful candidate will be strategically aware but not scared to get into the detail and willing to take a hands-on approach to the role. A truly exciting opportunity to make a real difference.

Closing date for applications is 9.00am on Monday 6th February

Interviews will take place at Wigan & Leigh College on Wednesday 15th February

To download the application pack visit [www.protocol.co.uk/wigan](http://www.protocol.co.uk/wigan)

For a confidential discussion about this post  
contact Ian Sackree: 07795 271559 or David Beynon: 07970 042334

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## INTERIM LEADERS AND MANAGERS

As the sector's leading provider of expert insight and specialist support we are currently looking to increase our bank of high quality and high impact interim leaders and managers.

We are open to approaches from high calibre individuals across all areas but are particularly interested in hearing from high calibre individuals across:

- Quality improvement
- Construction and Engineering
- Maths and English
- Finance

We currently have a number of opportunities at Curriculum Manager, Head of Department, Director and Assistant Principal level.

Send your CV now to: [Samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk](mailto:Samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk)

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## wakefieldcollege



## Lead, shape and inspire at Wakefield College

Wakefield College is well-led, ambitious and recognised by Ofsted as 'good', with a strong passion to achieving 'outstanding' through a clear focus on high performance. A recent area review identified the College as having both the financial strength and market position to stand alone and the College is working towards an ambitious programme of enhancing its estate.

The College is growing, delivers high quality and is looking to continue to grow its Apprenticeship and Higher Education offer, taking advantage of new opportunities.

With a turnover of c. £26 million and a clear strategic vision, Wakefield College is in a strong position to continue its success and the successful candidate will be crucial to continued growth.

### Executive Director – Finance & Resources Competitive Salary

The College is looking for an experienced finance professional with a desire to make a difference in the lives of young people and those seeking to improve their skills and employment prospects.

Your ability to provide financial leadership as the basis for sound decision making in a complex and dynamic organisation is a given. Just as important is your commitment to the College's vision and values and inclusive approach to giving students the very best life chances.

The ideal candidate will also have the experience to drive key business strategies for the estate management information and IT, including all aspects of Information Learning Technology that support teaching and learning. S/He will be a team player with the passion and commitment to improve the quality of the learning experience in addition to managing their own core portfolio.

Closing date for applications is Monday 30th January 2017 and the assessment centres will be held 9th/10th February.

To apply for this role or to download an application pack visit: [www.protocol.co.uk/wakefield](http://www.protocol.co.uk/wakefield)

For a confidential discussion about the role contact Ian Sackree 07795 271559 or David Beynon 07970 042334

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## GCSE ENGLISH LECTURER (2 Posts)

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Are you passionate about English? Are you enthusiastic about inspiring and motivating students to fulfil their potential? If so, this is an exciting opportunity to join one of the largest FE colleges in the North West.

We are seeking to appoint a dynamic and self-motivated individual to our English department who has a genuine passion for the subject and excellent subject knowledge. The successful candidate will be comfortable working with a wide range of students aged from 14 - 19 and adults.


The role will involve teaching GCSE English across the College. The successful candidate will have high expectations of both academic achievement and student engagement, and be excellent at managing the progress of learners throughout their course programme. Applications are welcome from recent Maths graduates (2:1 or above) and NQT's who wish to pursue a teaching career.

**The successful candidate will:**

- Have a Degree Level qualification in English.
- Have a Level 4/5 qualification in English.
- Hold a relevant teaching qualification (or be willing to achieve within a set period from appointment).
- Have experience at teaching in FE, including young people and adults is desirable
- Hold GCSE English & Maths (A\*-C)

**Apply here:** <http://www.sthelens.ac.uk/careers-with-st-helens-college>

**Closing date: 31st January 2017**



## Lecturer in English

(Full Time, 37 hours per week)  
Up to £32,475 + excellent benefits + generous holiday allowance

A fantastic opportunity has arisen in the English Curriculum area here at Macclesfield College. The successful post holder will be an enthusiastic team player and keen to contribute to the development of the faculty provision.

Macclesfield College are seeking to appoint a Lecturer in English to join their highly committed team. The successful applicant will be expected to teach to an outstanding standard to achieve high success rates. The post will also be involved in the marketing, effective planning, delivery and internal verification of a range of English courses.

The successful post holder will have a degree or equivalent in a related subject area with a Cert Ed/PGCE teaching qualification. Level 2 English /Mathematics /ICT qualifications are essential as is a commitment to attainment of student success.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and satisfactory references.

The College is committed to equality of opportunity. We welcome applicants from all sections of the community, particularly from members of ethnic minority groups.

**The closing date** for applications is Friday 27th January 2017.

To apply please visit [www.macclesfield.ac.uk/vacancies](http://www.macclesfield.ac.uk/vacancies) and follow the instructions to complete the application form.

# MATHS & ENGLISH LECTURERS

**Salary: £20,064 - £23,847 Per Annum**  
**Hours: Permanent, Full Time**



Sussex Downs College is located in East Sussex; providing high quality education and training for almost half of the county's young people. With East Sussex County Council we are a co-sponsor of The Eastbourne Academy - an 11-16 academy which is rapidly raising standards and improving life chances for young people in the heart of Eastbourne.

**Do you have a passion for working with and getting the best possible outcomes for learners?**

Opportunities have arisen in the Maths and English Department to teach on Functional Skills and GCSE programmes in Eastbourne and Lewes. This is an ideal role if you are an enthusiastic, experienced and innovative lecturer who has the drive and determination to achieve outstanding results for learners. You will need to demonstrate excellent communication and organisation skills as well as have a proven track record of high quality teaching.

These posts are challenging, demanding and highly rewarding as you will be enabling young people to succeed and progress at College and have greater job opportunities in the future. Applicants should have a relevant degree (or equivalent), a teaching qualification, post-qualification experience and a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning. Please specify which role and campus you are applying for.

These posts are subject to a DBS check.

**Closing date:** Tuesday 24th January 2017 (by noon).

**Interviews:** Tuesday 31st January 2017.

**Apply here:** <http://www.sussexdowns.ac.uk/about/vacancies/>



## OUTSTANDING English and maths staff WANTED!



**Location:** Huddersfield and Dewsbury

**Salary:** Up to £23.89 per hour plus opportunity of scarce skills allowance (up to £30.09 per hour depending on current salary, industrial skills and specialist skills)

**Hours:** Variable

**Do you want to begin a truly rewarding career and make a real difference by training a new generation? Then this is the career for you!**

Kirklees College is one of the biggest colleges in the country and we offer a vast range of courses and study options for applicants to choose from. Based in the heart of Yorkshire we have multiple learning centres across Kirklees, serving the local population, communities and businesses.

Nationally there is a challenge to improve young people's numeracy and literacy skills. Considering recent changes to the funding methodology, this is also a challenge for the Further Education colleges. All students who have not received a grade A to C in maths and English when leaving school now have to continue to study alongside their vocational qualification.

This is an exciting opportunity for a bright, committed and innovative individual who has the ability to work with both mature and 16-19 year old learners as part of a large, dynamic and successful team within a well-established Further Education college.

The purpose of this rewarding role is to make a significant contribution to the effective delivery of the curriculum, in line with the College's Quality Improvement Strategy and to ensure a high quality and relevant learning experience for all students on the courses.

The main responsibilities of the role will be to teach English and maths related subjects at any of the College centres and to develop programmes of study to meet the particular needs of client groups served by the College. The successful candidate will also be required to assess students in accordance with the requirements of the programme and to contribute to systems of quality and advice and assist in the effective organisation of the department by the proper establishment of such syllabuses, schemes of work and records as may be necessary from time to time.

Ideally the successful candidate will already have an English or maths qualification at Level 3 or above. The candidate will also need to have a teaching qualification at Level 5 or above.

Please visit [www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs) and search under our latest vacancies page for more information and how to apply for this role.

**If you have any queries, you can contact the HR department by telephone on 01484 437009 or by email at [jobs@kirkleescollege.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@kirkleescollege.ac.uk).**

*Kirklees College is committed to Equality & Diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community*

## Maths & English Lecturers



**Location:** Wigan

**Contract Type:** Permanent

**Hours:** Full & Part time hours

**Salary up to:** Up to £33,753

Join Wigan & Leigh College on our journey to outstanding.

Proud to be a Grade 2 College, Wigan & Leigh College is now embarking on its journey to become Outstanding. With over 6,500 students, the College is in a strong position to continue to move forward and grow. The College has distinct ambitions to expand its choice of programmes and services to meet the needs of the local community. The College has created a community that encourages all students to enhance their learning through wider opportunities and support services; to maximise their achievements and secure progression onto further study and employment.

The Department is vital to the development of our learners and integral to our drive toward outstanding. We are seeking outstanding practitioners who can motivate, enthuse and engage learners in English/maths and who have a proven track record of helping learners to succeed. The maths and English team work from a dedicated learning zone which brings together the resources and lecturers to ensure that learners have the best possible experience. Applicants will be expected to deliver on a range of courses including GCSEs, Functional Skills, Adult Awards and Level 3 Progression.

### Candidates will have:

- Excellent maths and/or English qualifications
- Proven track record of impact
- Possess outstanding subject knowledge and passion for your subject
- We will also consider recent Cert Ed/PGCE graduates

**Apply here:** <http://bit.ly/2iX4Q1Q>

**Closing Date:** 16/02/2017

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[www.wigan-leigh.ac.uk/ofsted-success](http://www.wigan-leigh.ac.uk/ofsted-success)



## Functional Skills English and Maths Tutors

**Regions:** Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex

**Basis:** Full time with flexible hours

**Salary:** £25,000 pro-rata

**Hours:** Flexible (min 3 days per week)

Due to the outstanding successes of our work to date, we are looking to expand our team of experienced Functional Skills tutors. You will be delivering English and Maths from Entry Level 3 through to Level 2. The role will be working on a peripatetic basis, delivering in your region. Willingness to travel and your own transport are essential.

Essential Criteria - please do not apply if you can't comply

- Cert Ed / PGCE / DTLLS or equivalent
- Experience in teaching English and Maths
- Outstanding personal written and verbal communication skills
- A driving licence and access to your own transportation
- Excellent ICT Skills

### How to apply:

In the first instance, please send an email outlining your recent relevant experience together with your CV to **Becky Brown** at: [becky.brown@nccprofessional.co.uk](mailto:becky.brown@nccprofessional.co.uk)

**Closing Date: 6th February 2017**

**The successful candidates will also be required to have a valid DBS clearance check.**



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Our specialist readership means your print and online job adverts will be seen by highly influential and talented individuals across the world of further education. Searching for the right candidate with the right calibre, can be both challenging and time consuming, alongside trying to work towards a budget.

FE Week offers cost effective approaches through proven advertising mediums, which are tailor-made to work in line with your budget and more importantly your expectations.

Speak to Bridget to find out how FE Week can support your recruitment needs.

**Tel: 020 3740 1577**

**Email: [bridget.stockdale@feweek.co.uk](mailto:bridget.stockdale@feweek.co.uk)**

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dinner!**

Fabienne Bailey, Stockton Learning and Skills Service  
2016 AAC delegate

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Image: BBC broadcaster & journalist Kirsty Wark chairing AAC Conference in 2015.  
Kirsty will return as conference chair in 2017.

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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.

# It's time we talked about lifetime learning

Almost a year ago George Osborne used his budget speech to commit the Government to a review that, at the time, many of us hoped would catalyse a comprehensive national conversation about the role of adult learning in modern Britain.

The signs were good, with the budget report containing this eminently sensible promise: "As working lives lengthen and jobs change, adults will need more opportunities to retrain and up-skill [...] To promote retraining and prepare people for the future labour market, the government will review the gaps in support for lifetime learning, including for flexible and part-time study."

Since then, however, with little debate on the issue in the House of Commons, and no public consultation, it appeared to be taking place behind closed doors.

Light was finally shone on the illusive review of lifetime learning last Friday, in an adjournment debate on 'Night Schools and Adult Education' called by Labour's David Lammy, who proclaimed "the Government's [post-16 skills] plan promised to outline a plan for lifetime learning by the end of 2016, but it did not appear".

In his response, the skills and apprenticeships minister, who could easily have skipped over the question without consequence, provided a little insight. Robert Halfon admitted it was very much alive, and said the government would "soon bring forward potential policy options from the current review". He also listed its priorities as "meeting our skills deficit, helping the socially disadvantaged and the community, being as widespread as possible, given the funding pressures, and being good quality."

For me, the minister's response ticks a lot of boxes so I'm looking forward to seeing what gaps and policy options have been identified. Furthermore, I see the publication of further policy options for lifetime learning to be particularly timely, now that the prime minister has announced 'hard' Brexit, which should force the government to examine the 'competitiveness' and skills need of the domestic population.

For me, the government's lifetime learning options should recognise four interlinked realities. Firstly, the skills deficits the minister talked about, and people's lifetime learning needs in modern Britain, can't be solved by apprenticeships alone. I don't expect, or want, a sudden abandonment of the three million target at all, but instead

hope that the government places value on other types of adult learning.

Secondly, far too many people don't see learning as being for them – even though these are often those who have most to gain. The Learning and Work Institute's 'Adult Participation in Learning' surveys consistently show that participation in learning is determined by, among other things, education levels. In other words, you're more likely to see adults in learning who already have qualifications than those without. This is a big challenge and will need much more policy integration between employment support programmes and the sector.

## Halfon could choose to be radical

Thirdly, 'lifetime' must mean something. The minister could choose to be radical here and publish options that move the way we organise and fund education away from a system in which you might have 'spent' all of your entitlements by the age of 19. Devolved budget holders could be empowered to do things differently and improved learning accounts could resurface, with links to savings incentives or pensions.

Finally (for now at least), the government has promised a consultation about how to make basic digital skills training free to all adults who need it, which is welcome. But there also needs to be a strategy to tackle the UK's poor performance on other basic essential skills. It is frankly embarrassing that one in five adults struggles with poor numeracy and one in six struggles with poor literacy in one of the richest countries in the world.

We must recognise that for a lot of people we want in learning, including older people, just walking into a college and enrolling on a course is not as straightforward as you might think, and that community learning is often the vital first step to gain the self-confidence and belief that learning has huge benefits for them.

I hope I am right and that it is finally time for a serious conversation about lifetime learning.



## GORDON MARSDEN

Shadow minister for higher education, further education and skills

# The IfA is about to move from farce to tragedy

**The government's handling of the Institute for Apprenticeships has descended into complete shambles. Even though it will be charged with implementing a flagship policy, it has yet to advertise for a permanent chief and deputy chief executive, and we now have less than three months before it goes live.**

The muddle has been there from day one. It wasn't even in the original Enterprise Bill, which started in the Lords in October 2015. The then-business secretary announced it almost as an afterthought at its second reading in the Commons in February 2016, when ministers failed to bring a new clause forward to set it up. So it was left to us to propose a structure to define its remit clearly and inclusively, even though the government replaced this work with a bland piece of boilerplate.

Ministers had boasted that the Institute would be business-led, but its initial shadow chief executive was a career civil servant who left after a few months. The shadow chief operating officer also left after a similarly short time. It fell to Peter Lauener, who already has two jobs corralling both the EFA and SFA, all on just two days a week.

In November, as a witness for the Technical and Further Education Bill, I pressed Peter on the process for finalising the Institute's structure and appointments. He said he expected these "before Christmas". It's now mid-January and we are still none the wiser. When will the sector know who's taking this crucial new body forward? Will it be a Valentine's Day treat, or perhaps an April Fool's surprise?

The IfA is a source of deep concern that's in danger of becoming a huge scandal. The department has repeatedly pressured stakeholders to ensure they are ready for the apprenticeship levy and the Institute in April. It has stubbornly resisted suggestions from the sector about a more phased-in approach yet now appears in a state of meltdown. How can people have confidence that the IfA will be effective from April when the government has yet to even advertise for the key figures which will run it?

This appears to be an expanding pattern across the DfE. When Theresa May became PM, the apprenticeships tsar was stood down without word, and we don't know

when or if he will be replaced. The Skills Plan proposals, to remedy the government's total neglect of adult learning, are becalmed, while the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner and I have just written to the Mr Halfon, along with the former skills minister David Lammy, and 59 other MPs.

What is paralysing the department? Is it the morass of Brexit, turf wars with the Cabinet Office, continuing problems over absorbing skills and apprenticeships into the DfE? Or is it the inadequate resources trickling into the Institute itself? Labour has repeatedly warned that the modest investments of personnel and money (60 people, £8 million) by the government will not nearly be enough to get the IfA going – especially as it will also take on the whole area of technical education within the next 12 months.

## Will it be a Valentine's Day treat, or perhaps an April Fool's surprise?

As someone once involved with setting up a major new arms-length body I find it incredible – as I am sure many in the sector do – that ministers don't even have the key people in place now. In most cases, these people need to be in post for a run-in of nine to 12 months in order to guarantee success, even part-time.

Currently, the Institute resembles a jigsaw puzzle with most of the vital pieces missing.

You only get one shot at getting this sort of change right. And if the minister does not rattle cages immediately to sort it out, it won't be just another Whitehall farce. It will be a tragedy for the stakeholders, the hundreds of large and thousands of small businesses who want to do the right thing by apprenticeships, and the hundreds of thousands of would-be apprentices, who desperately need for their life chances to see these initiatives work.



EXPERTS

Quality checking of Ofsted reports is not robust – they are far too variable in both form and content, says former Ofsted HMI Phil Hatton

Last week’s FE Week story about Ofsted backtracking on its report into Yeovil College exemplifies the way it does not pay enough attention, post-inspection, to ensuring that reports read well and accurately explain what lies behind their judgements.

Reports go through moderation, sometimes by part-time inspectors, for judgements, grades and clarity. However Ofsted does not always ensure publication readiness before the report publication button is pressed.

The now defunct Adult Learning Inspectorate, which merged with Ofsted in 2007, had professional editors in place, who as part of their professional development, went out on inspections to familiarise themselves with inspection procedure and the terminology of further education. They challenged inspectors if anything written was unclear or likely to be viewed as contentious.

The clarity of the resultant reports helped providers understand what they needed to address post-inspection in order to improve. Other interested readers could also quickly grasp what constituted a weakness and eliminate it from their own provision.

Inspectors were also taught to identify but not attribute blame for financial or quality problems. Anything wrong in an organisation is ultimately, fairly obviously, down to the leadership and management.

The quality checking of Ofsted reports is



PHIL HATTON

Lead consultant,  
Learning Improvement Service

Ofsted reports require improvement

currently not robust enough and while the shorter report format is easier for inspectors to write, less time is now allowed for lead inspectors to get their judgements right.

Front-page summary overviews for ‘good’ providers are variable – one published last week listed nothing but strengths, while another had four weaknesses after the strengths. As many readers only look at front-page findings, these two ‘good’ providers looked fairly different to casual observers.

The ends of short reports sometimes reflect the number of inspectors in the team, but other times just names the lead inspector. One report published in the last few weeks had a clear warning in the header that the report was a draft and not for sharing before publication. Others have had the same warning in a watermark across the report.

But of greater concern is the inconsistency in report judgements. In the section ‘what does the provider need to do to improve



further?’ just stating ‘improve success rates’ is not by itself sufficient, when better inspectors break down the actions required in order to achieve this.

Inspection should be done with providers, not to them

How can apprenticeships be ‘good’ if a weakness such as ‘the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned timescale remains low’ is present? How about something like ‘no staff Prevent training has occurred’, even though the judgement on safeguarding is found to be effective?

Inspection nominees need to be aware of how to effectively fight their corner by keeping thorough notes of feedback during inspection.

The sector should have reports that adhere to minimum quality standards. These reports are how the public sees providers until their next inspection. At the moment, providers are given two days, regardless of their size or the result of the inspection, to read the report and comment on the factual accuracy.

Some have had extras added, not fed back during inspection, presumably to back up a grade or moderation decision, without the chance to challenge that they would have had, were it raised during the inspection. Any provider comments are then shared with the lead inspector (or should be) to see if they agree to any suggested changes.

I suspect that at this stage, Ofsted takes the attitude that providers are trying to change the report findings, rather than bring them into line with what they were told on inspection.

Perversely, the next time the provider is inspected, the Ofsted team will base much of their planning and improvement judgements on a possibly flawed previous report. Inspection should be done with providers, not to them, right up to report publication.

Hopefully with a new chief inspector, the impact of reports on helping drive improvement will be reevaluated. I have yet to meet the leader of any college or independent provider I work with who does not think that Ofsted reports require improvement, especially when used for the purpose of identifying sector good practice.



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CAMPUS ROUND-UP

with Sam King

# Mann inspires women in STEM



One small step for Mann: Dr Phebe Mann, left, with Bradford College bigwigs

One of the country’s leading female engineers has unveiled a portrait of herself at Bradford College in the hopes it will inspire girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and maths.

Dr Phebe Mann is the first and only woman in the UK to hold six professional engineering qualifications, and was made an honorary fellow at the college three years ago.

The image was commissioned by the WISE campaign, a national organisation promoting women in STEM, which has also recognised Dr Mann as one of its ‘women of outstanding achievement’.

The photograph will go on display in the college’s David Hockney building, alongside a statue of Sir Edward Appleton, a Nobel Prize winner who pioneered in radio physics – and worked as lab technician at the college between 1909 and 1911.

“The perception that engineering is ‘not for girls’ has gradually been changed over the years,” said Dr Mann.

“We should do more to encourage young people, especially girls, to consider engineering as a very worthwhile and rewarding career.

“I sincerely hope that my portrait can encourage more young people to contemplate it as their career.”



Food for thought: Robert Halfon takes a tour of the facilities

## Mr Halfon gets a hospitable welcome

Robert Halfon, the minister of state for apprenticeships and skills, has paid an official visit to London’s first ever hospitality careers college.

The minister was taken on a tour of the Greater London-based Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career college – part of London South East colleges – and unveiled a plaque to commemorate his visit.

Mr Halfon also had a tour of the college’s specialist facilities, including the site of a forthcoming learner-led restaurant, called BR6 Bakehouse, which is due to open later this year, and enjoyed afternoon tea prepared and served by students.

There are currently 60 14- to 16-year-olds studying at the college, and around 150 post-16 students – which will expand to 300 next year.

Mr Halfon said: “The outstanding work of this career college ensures that students get jobs or apprenticeships after their technical courses finish.

“It provides significant support for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to get onto the ladder of opportunity and gain the skills they need for future careers.”

Based at London South East Colleges’ Orpington site, the career college is part of the town’s regeneration programme, contributing to the local growing economy.



Barks fizz: Designers Angel Smith and Gemma Naidoo with their products

## Students hit the sweet spot

A team of catering students from Barking and Dagenham college have designed a new fizzy drink that will go on sale in local shops this year.

‘Rapple Fizz’, a blend of apples and rosehip, will be the latest beverage to hit the shelves in the London borough, following a competition run by Company Drinks, a community drinks enterprise, to find new flavours to add to their existing range.

The students, who study at the college’s Technical Skills Academy in Barking, split into two teams for the competition, and underwent a series of drinks-making workshops in preparation, using lab-based experiments to explore the science behind flavouring.

The final creations were tested on members of the public, before the Rapple Fizz team – headed up by 17-year-old Angel Smith – announced the winners. Team ‘Grape Licious’ were the runners up, with their mix of grapes and blackcurrant.

The winning team will help decide where the drinks will go on sale, and have already overseen their product be processed, bottled and packaged.

“We encouraged them to pick and mix their own ingredients, to extract flavour and to brand and market their creations to the public, ensuring that they’ve been involved at every stage of the process,” said Cam Jarvis of Company Drinks.

## Powerchair students vs premier league players

Elite powerchair football students from Queen Alexandra college have taken on some famous faces from the footballing world to celebrate the launch of the college’s newest sport course.

The Birmingham-based college recently launched its Elite Powerchair Football programme for young people with high needs aged 16-24, who use either a powered or manual wheelchair.

Students played in a friendly match against Albion Foundation, finalists in the powerchair football Champions League, and even took on a group of West Bromwich Albion players, including Ben Foster, Claudio Yacob and Salomon Rondon, winning the game 6-0.

The new course involves 12 training hours per week – the recommended time for elite performance – plus a timetabled programme of vocational qualifications, independence, employment and functional skills.

Working in partnership with registered charity, the Albion Foundation, the course is the first collaborative powerchair football study programme of its kind in the UK.



In the hot seat: A player in action

Powerchair football students with West Bromwich Albion players



# Young developers create chart-topping PC adventure game



Three young games developers from Oxfordshire have made a splash in the online gaming world after their first ever release received worldwide support and topped an indie gaming hot list. Samantha King reports

For most people, the Christmas break is a time of eating, drinking and relaxation, but for three Banbury and Bicester college students, it was the chance to develop and launch a PC adventure game.

Matthew Hill, Lewis Taylor and Oliver Coulling-Green all study an extended diploma in games development at the college's Banbury campus, and using skills learned on their course created free-to-download PC game called 'Realm of Rulers'.

The medieval fantasy game tasks players with building a city, and managing its resources and population in order to create a world that controls itself.

The three uploaded their creation onto Game Jolt, an online community for indie games, and within just two days had topped the site's 'hot games' list, receiving 4,000 plays and nearly 7,000 views from gamers around the world – with more following on.

Matthew Hill, 17, one of the developers, said: "We began to create the game in December, as we had already completed our college assignments in the run-up to



Game boys (l-r): Lewis Taylor, Mathew Hill and Oliver Coulling-Green



Screenshots from the game

Christmas. Over the break we worked on making it as presentable and playable as possible, and uploaded it to Game Jolt just to see what kind of reaction it got.

"You can upload games with early access, which means they aren't yet complete but are open for people to try and give feedback on. We weren't expecting much but it has just exploded. Seeing the number of plays

and views go up so rapidly was amazing." Word of the new game has been spreading fast in the online world, with fans of the game recording themselves playing it, and posting it to their YouTube channels, amassing thousands of views. It has also been a particular hit with players in Russia, who make up a substantial amount of the site's fan-base.

The trio are now working on building new elements for the game in order to improve user experience and maintain interest levels. Currently, the game has an overall rating of 4.2 out of 5, making it one of the best-ranked games on the Game Jolt site, something that is more than just a personal achievement for the three students. Oliver Coulling-Green, 18, said: "We all want to go to university to continue to study games design and development, so having this as part of our portfolio is a big bonus. The most valuable thing is being able to show that you have had so much engagement from players, beyond your own friends and family, and been able to take on board feedback to make improvements."



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## & MOVERS SHAKERS Your weekly guide to who's new and who's leaving

Catherine Dixon has been appointed chief executive at Askham Bryan college, one of the largest agricultural and further education colleges in the UK.

With its main campus based in York, the college also has sites in Newcastle, Wakefield and Cumbria, offering courses in land-based skills such as agriculture, horticulture, animal management, equine and forestry.

A solicitor by profession, Ms Dixon takes up the role from her position as chief executive of the Law Society, a representative body for solicitors in England and Wales.

Prior to this, she has held roles as chief executive of the NHS Litigation Authority, general counsel and company secretary at children's charity NSPCC, and commercial director at BUPA Care Services.

Originally from Hull, Ms Dixon spent almost four years in Canada where she was a

director of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, and an outward-bound instructor.

She says she is "very excited to return to the north, particularly Yorkshire" as a result of the new appointment, and hopes to use her past experience "to assist the college during this important phase of its development".

Ms Dixon claims she is most looking forward to "meeting with the staff and

students" and finding out more about the courses and activities the college currently has on offer.

Peter Cooper has been named as principal designate of Hereford sixth-form college.

He is currently deputy principal at the college, and will take up the role in August, following the retirement of existing principal, Jonathan Godfrey.

Mr Cooper, a chemistry graduate from Nottingham University, worked in Kenilworth high school and Priestley College in Warrington prior to arriving at Hereford Sixth Form in 1998.

Speaking of his appointment, he said: "It is a real honour to be asked to be the fourth principal of this wonderful college and I would like to pay tribute to Jonathan Godfrey for his role in its development.

"I am extremely proud to have been part of this journey and I will ensure that the values and commitment that led to our success are continued. We have an impressive story and I'm looking forward to helping to shape the next chapter."

After 11 years as a governor and five years as chair at Bracknell and Wokingham College, Robin Cops has stepped down, passing the baton to incoming chair, David Cook.

The succession took place at the end of the college's full corporation meeting in December.

Speaking of his retirement from the role, Mr Cops said it had been a privilege to "see the raising of standards over the last five years so that the college now enjoys the best FE results in the whole of the Thames Valley region."

He added that he was proud of the staff at the college and all they did to "help every learner achieve their full potential".

His role as chair at the Bracknell-based college will be taken by Mr Cook, who says his passion for education for all stems from his own humble beginnings.

"Being the son of a miner, and seeing how important education was for a good start in life, I want to serve the college and continue to deliver its mission – right at the heart of our community"



CATHERINE DIXON



PETER COOPER



ROBIN COPS



DAVID COOK





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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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

**Solutions:**  
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

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Last Edition's winner: **Alyson Shields, New College Durham**