

FE Week

ELECTION FEATURE: FOR AND AGAINST MANIFESTO PLEDGES

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ON THE RISE?
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COLLEGE PAYS LEARNERS TO COMPLETE ONLINE COURSES

Middlesbrough College defend promotion that says “we will actually pay you £50 for doing the [free] course, how good is that a qualification and a cash bonus as well?”

EXCLUSIVE

ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

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IS THE GOVERNMENT
PLAN FOR DEGREE
APPRENTICESHIP
GROWTH ALREADY
IN TROUBLE?

UNIVERSITIES
THINK SO

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ON PAGE 5

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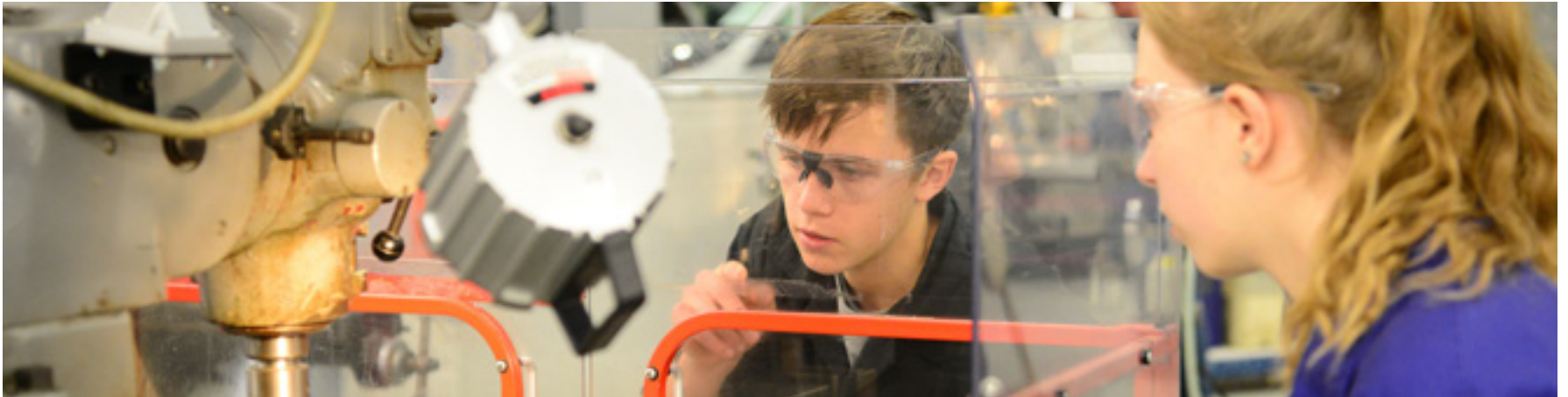


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Progressions for adult traineeships under 20%

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The proportion of adult trainees funded by the ESFA who progress onto an apprenticeship has dipped below 20 per cent, FE Week can exclusively reveal.

Traineeships were launched four years ago, as part of the government’s drive to help low-skilled unemployed people below the age of 25 onto apprenticeships.

The scheme, which funds work placements, replaced Access to Apprenticeships and before that, Programme-Led Apprenticeships.

But fears have grown on their low take-up

rate and increasingly unclear purpose.

The Department for Education’s said in March that there were 10,500 traineeship progressions in 2015/16. Of these, “7,000 were to a job, apprenticeship, further full time education or other training for those aged under 19, and 3,400 were to a job or apprenticeship for 19-24s.”

FE Week lodged a Freedom of Information request for the second year running in an effort to find out how many progressed to an apprenticeship – originally the main purpose of a traineeship.

The resulting DfE figures for the last full academic year showed that just 600 of 3,400 overall progressions for 19- to 24-year-olds

were to apprenticeships.

That’s just 17.6 per cent, down from 20 per in the previous year.

The proportion of overall progressions to apprenticeships for all age groups stood at 22 per cent for 2014/15.

Last academic year there was an improvement, to 37 per cent, or 3,800 of 10,400.

Having seen the latest figures, shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden was concerned that an overwhelming majority of traineeship learners were still not progressing to apprenticeships, including older learners.

“Anything that further devalues the traineeship brand, which is so important in our view for progression to and expansion of apprenticeships, is to be regretted,” he warned.

“This is why we have pledged to have a proper pre-apprenticeship traineeship scheme for young people.”

The 2017 Labour general election manifesto

has pledged to increase capital investment to equip colleges to run “an official pre-apprenticeship trainee programme” – which it is thought could leave traineeships obsolete.

The disappointing progression figures for 19- to 24-year-olds raised questions over whether traineeships should be geared towards younger people not in education, employment or training.

But the Workers’ Educational Association defended the scheme’s ongoing availability to older learners, telling FE Week: “While the benefits of lifelong learning may not be tangible in the short-term, adult education, including traineeships for older learners, can provide a strong foundation to help those in low-income communities break the cycle of deprivation.

“We believe it is important to invest in education and training opportunities for the least advantaged members of our society in order to stand a real chance of improving social mobility.”

Mr Marsden brought poor traineeship progression rates up on the floor of the House of Commons last July, referencing the FE Week story that exposed them for the first time.

He warned at the time that “if we don’t get a proper scheme that fills the needs of the economy and creates more apprentices, then that is no good”.

There were 19,400 traineeship starts in 2014/15, an increase of 86.3 per cent on the previous academic year, and 24,100 in 2015/16.

Age	Progression to a job, apprenticeship, further full-time education, or other training (for under 19s) and to a job or apprenticeship (for 19 to 24 year olds) in 2015/16 (final year)	Of which Progression to apprenticeship in 2015/16 (final year)
Under 19	7,000	3,200
19 to 24	3,400	600

NSAFD U-turns on mandatory vetting of apprenticeship quals

JUDE BURKE
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In an embarrassing U-turn, the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink has dropped controversial plans for mandatory vetting of apprenticeship qualifications.

The body, which leads the food and drink apprenticeship trailblazer group, recently announced that any awarding organisation wanting to develop their own versions of qualifications included in food and drink standards must submit a draft to the chair of the group for approval.

But the NSAFD was forced into a climbdown after FE Week pointed out that the policy contravened the Institute for Apprenticeships’ rules.

approach,” Ms Fosh said.

She also gave her thanks to FE Week “for identifying and helping clarify the situation”.

Four standards developed by the food and drink trailblazer group and approved for delivery include mandatory qualifications.

The qualifications for level two food and drink process operator, level three food and drink advanced process operator, food and drink maintenance engineer at level three are currently only offered by Occupational Awards Limited, which the NSAFD bought in July 2016.

Terry Fennell, the chief executive of awarding body FDQ, which plans to submit a version of the diploma mandated in the level

two food and drink process operator standard for approval by Ofqual in June, hit out at the NSAFD.

“A free and open market must come before self-interest,” he said, criticising it for attempting to “arbitrarily extend the remit of the food and drink-related trailblazer it supports with the intention of restricting or sanctioning qualifications that may offer competition to the version already offered by its own AO”.

Mr Fennell said the FDQ version of the food and drink process operations qualification would “comply with Ofqual general conditions of recognition and align with the IfA approved assessment plan”.

He continued: “With validity assured by the regulatory and responsible quality authorities it is for employers and providers to decide, on which qualification they wish to procure.”

The IfA was unable to comment on the controversy, due to the purdah, or period of silence, it is obliged to maintain during the run up to a general election.

Guidance published by the IfA makes it clear that trailblazer groups can’t limit which awarding bodies can offer mandatory qualifications.

Where a standard includes such a qualification, it “must name the qualification in terms which do not ascribe it to a specific awarding body so that any awarding body which is Ofqual regulated and offers that qualification can do so”.

“In the case of a regulated qualification, you should not specify a particular awarding organisation, as you could otherwise prevent another awarding organisation from developing a qualification for the standard.”

In March, FE Week reported that the UK’s food and drink apprenticeship frameworks could be switched off against the government’s wishes.

The NSAFD, which retains the powers of an issuing authority from its previous incarnation as a sector skills council, ran a consultation on whether or not to cancel the frameworks it administers.

Details of “any actions to be taken is expected in April”, according to its website – but nothing has yet been published.



INVESTIGATES

Horror show for degree apprenticeships

JUDE BURKE
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There’s no sign that the non-levy allocations farrago will be solved any time soon – and now higher education leaders are issuing dire warnings about the future of degree-level apprenticeships.

The FE sector reacted in horror after the Education and Skills Funding Agency announced in April that it would pause the procurement process for providers delivering apprenticeships to smaller non-levy paying employers, and would extend existing contracts instead.

To compound the sector’s woes, many universities have now been ruled out of delivering new degree-level apprenticeships to small employers from September, as these cannot be funded through the extended contracts.

It’s a situation that risks the “future growth of degree apprenticeships”, according to Nicola Dandridge, the chief executive of Universities UK, the representative body for

higher education leaders.

“Employers want degree apprentices to address key skills needs and to drive growth,” she said, adding that “any region that has many non-levy paying employers, such as the south-west, will see very few degree apprenticeships supported from this procurement, regardless of employer demand or local enterprise partnership strategy”.

The big problem is that providers’ non-levy allocations for existing contracts were worked out on the basis of their previous delivery, a situation which will apply for the eight months between May to December.

As most degree apprenticeships are new programmes starting in September, they cannot be funded by existing contracts.

The pause therefore means that these new degree apprenticeships can only be funded through levy-paying large employers, until December at least.

25 HE institutions – many of them modern universities, those that won their status after 1992 – and 20 FE colleges received funding through phase one of the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s degree



apprenticeship development fund.

The cash, which totalled £4.5 million across 18 projects, was awarded in November with the specific aim of developing “new provision to support up to 5,200 new degree apprenticeships” from this autumn.

Alan Palmer, head of policy and research at Million Plus, which represents modern universities, said the procurement pause “puts at risk” this commitment.

He said that modern universities had “been at the forefront of developing degree apprenticeships” and the procurement pause would “impact on the ability of universities to play a full part” in government skills policy.

“This demonstrates the importance for the ESFA to better understand the needs of universities, and ensure that the system of apprenticeships works for all providers,” he said.

The University of the West of England received £350,000 through the fund, in partnership with Weston College, City of Bristol College, Gloucestershire College and Bridgwater College, to develop new degree apprenticeships in nine subjects, including digital technology, aerospace and electronics.

Dr John Lanham, its assistant vice-chancellor, said the situation was “frustrating”.

The university, which successfully applied to the register of apprenticeship training providers, had been planning to deliver the new apprenticeships to both large, levy-paying employers and smaller companies.

“But we’ve now been told you can’t talk to that bit of the community [non-levy payers], and that’s the biggest bit of the community in the long term if you’re looking at where the future growth is,” he said.

Kerry Featherstone, director of the

University of Sheffield’s Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre Training Centre, said the “lack of funding for non-levy employers is a concern and could lead to disadvantaging some employers and learners”.

The university received £160,495 through the DADF to develop engineering degree apprenticeships in partnership with its neighbour, Sheffield Hallam University, with the aim of having 90 starts in September 2017.

The University of Wolverhampton was another institution to have received cash through the fund, working in partnership with Walsall College, City of Wolverhampton College, and Birmingham Metropolitan College.

Jackie Dunne, its deputy vice-chancellor for access and lifelong learning, said the university had “spent considerable time and effort raising awareness of degree apprenticeships among levy and non-levy payers” and had evidence of “clear demand” for the programmes.

“Following the recent announcement, there is a concern that the university may not have sufficient funding in place, to provide the levels of support it has been promoting as part of government’s drive to grow degree apprenticeships,” she said.

Jane Lowe, the University of Derby’s acting head of apprenticeships, told FE Week that it was still “assessing the full impact of the allocation”.

“The scale of what we had hoped to deliver will not be possible, although we are working to adapt our plans in the short term,” she added.

FE Week asked the ESFA and HEFCE to comment on the concerns, but neither could respond due to the period of purdah in the run up to the general election.

What is the degree apprenticeship development fund?

The £8.5 million fund, first announced by the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in March 2016 and managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, is designed to increase the number of degree apprenticeships on offer.

These are apprenticeships at levels six and seven, and they were launched in September 2015.

The DADF’s aims include supporting HE providers to establish new degree apprenticeship programmes, and working with employers to establish their skills need to ensure that degree apprenticeships meet their requirements.

The first phase, announced in November, awarded £4.5 million to fund 18 projects, while applications for the second phase, worth £4 million, close June 6.

Case study: University of the West of England

The University of the West of England secured £350,000 through the degree apprenticeship development fund, alongside its four college partners, to develop new programmes in nine subject areas.

Dr John Lanham, its assistant vice-chancellor, told FE Week that the university had a “portfolio of about a dozen programmes” launching in the autumn.

He described the new apprenticeships – the first the university will offer – as “an important part of our development”.

Although “levy payers are the key focus, they’re the conversations we’ve been having”, the university “would have been looking to offer to some SMEs” as well, he said.

But because it doesn’t have an existing apprenticeship contract to be extended with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, it will not be able to offer degree apprenticeships to non-levy employers from September – a situation Dr Lanham described as “frustrating”.

“As a university we work with

large and small businesses in the city region; we’ve got a range of products and services, and everything else we offer is available to everybody,” he explained.

“We’re launching this new set of products [degree apprenticeships], and we’ve now been told you can’t talk to that bit of the community [SMEs], and that’s the biggest bit of the community in the long term if you’re looking at where the future growth is,” Dr Lanham said.

Having received funding through HEFCE to develop the programmes, he said the university “had the added conundrum that we’ve been given a chunk of money in the right hand and then the left hand is telling us no, you can’t use it”.

“Effectively the ESFA ruling is looking backwards,” Dr Lanham said. “It’s based on past performance, past qualifications, so the very thing they’re trying to say they’re doing, their own practice, is not following through on the policy.”



Dr John Lanham

Website support for non-levy payers

The Department for Education updated its Find an Apprenticeship website at the beginning of May to include a feature that allows employers to select whether they are levy-paying or not.

This hides the providers without an allocation from non-levy paying employers, so they know which providers are currently able

to work with them.

The ‘find an apprenticeship’ system was launched in December 2014, with the aim of giving users a more effective way to search and apply. People using the old apprenticeship vacancy system were redirected to the new site from May 2015 and encouraged to create a new account.

NEWS

‘Patchy’ progress with work training for special needs

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

A government drive to help young people with learning difficulties and disabilities prepare for the world of work is making “patchy” progress, despite plans to make it universal.

So-called ‘supported internships’ were first introduced through a pilot in autumn 2012 with 15 FE colleges.

They are unpaid study programmes for 16- to 24-year-olds lasting around a year, based primarily at an employer and involving on-

the-job training, backed by expert job coaches and complementary college-based learning.

In the July 2016 post-16 skills plan, the government declared that “all young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans should undertake a supported internship” unless they have “good reasons not to”.

But the latest statistics released by the Department for Education show that a total of just 715 young people with statements of special educational needs and EHC plans were on a supported internship in January this year.

Overall, there were 65,742 16- to 25-year-olds with statements of special educational needs

and EHC plans in England that month.

FE Week spoke to some of the organisations involved with supported internship courses to hear more about the scheme’s progress.

A spokesperson for Rempoy, which provides employment placement services for disabled people, said supported internships are “a vital tool” in helping transition from education into employment.

However, uptake “remains patchy due to short-term funding and a lack of awareness among some colleges, local authorities and employers”.

He added: “While over 60 per cent of people with learning disabilities want to work, the learning disability employment rate remains at just six per cent.”

Rempoy is in the third year of a partnership with Gloucestershire College and Premier Inn to provide a supported internship programme which has been described as “highly effective” by Ofsted.

The college’s foundation studies school leader Maggie McCarthy said: “Many of these young people have great skills to offer employers, evidenced by the number who have successfully gained permanent jobs as a direct result of their participation in the programme.

“Our learners’ skills and potential may never have been identified without this opportunity.”

The college reported in February that of the 12 young people who took part in the its first supported internship scheme, eight have since

secured employment.

The programme was expanded in 2016/17 to include 33 interns across three colleges, who are carrying out internships at 16 employers.

Supported internships are also doing well in west London.

Luke Ward, head of growth employment and skills at the West London Alliance, a partnership between seven west London local authorities, said growth had been “rapid” in comparison with other parts of the UK.

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said that although many colleges were working with employers to provide “life-changing” supported internships, for the scheme to be fully effective “colleges and employers need to be supported appropriately”.

Mark Dawe, AELP’s chief executive, said: “Although the volumes have been limited, they have been very effective in transforming the lives of young people.”

Mark Capper, head of employment at learning disability charity Mencap, agreed that there had been “slow growth” with supported internships.

“We know more needs to be done to ensure these opportunities are available,” he said. “Without these, people with a learning disability are being pushed even further from a labour market that already excludes them.”

The Department for Education declined to comment, blaming restrictions on communications ahead of the general election.



Sixth form college principal resigns with immediate effect

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

The principal of Bolton Sixth Form College has resigned just days after reports emerged that he had been suspended.

Alex Fau-Goodwin only took the top job at the college last July, following the retirement of Steve Wetton.

But the Bolton News reported on May 27 that he had been suspended.

The college initially refused to confirm or deny the report to FE Week, but on May 30 it confirmed his permanent departure in a statement.

“Alex Fau-Goodwin has resigned from his position as principal of Bolton Sixth Form College,” said a spokesperson in an email. “The college wishes Alex every success in the future.”

She added that Stuart Merrills, previously vice principal, had been appointed acting principal.

Mr Fau-Goodwin’s suspension, which reportedly took effect on Friday, May 26, is understood to be related to his management of the college rather than financial matters, according to the story in the Bolton News.

But the college refused to be drawn on what prompted his departure, nor when recruitment would begin for a permanent replacement, before FE Week went to press.

The SFC was rated ‘good’ across the board at its most recent Ofsted inspection in February 2014, and emerged from the Greater Manchester area review with a plan to convert to academy status.

The report into the review, published November 2016, said it was looking at “exploring shared services within a multi-academy trust”.

It was also noted that “the college currently indicates it has a sound financial position”.

Prior to his move to Bolton, Mr Fau-Goodwin led Hartlepool SFC from September

2014 until July 2016.

His arrival at Hartlepool coincided with an Ofsted inspection that resulted in an ‘inadequate’ grade, published in November 2014.

But just 15 months later the SFC had bounced back to a ‘good’ rating, in February 2016.

However it was hit with a financial notice to improve by the Department for Education in February 2017, just six months after Mr Fau-Goodwin’s departure, and was subsequently visited by the SFC commissioner Peter

Mucklow in March.

His report, published in April, said its financial difficulties began at the time of the ‘inadequate’ rating in 2014 and related to declining student numbers.

It noted that the college had taken “insufficient action in relation to recommendations made” during his previous visit in February 2015.

These included “enhancing the capacity of the senior management team in relation to strategic finance”.



Conservatives accused of ‘hiding’ ministers from FE Week scrutiny

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

The Conservatives have been accused of hiding from FE Week in the run-up to the general election – and the party’s central office has persistently blocked us from grilling the skills minister on his own manifesto.

The entire sector is desperate for more detail from Robert Halfon on his party’s plans for FE.

Many, for example, want more information on how a surprise pledge that would allow employers to use their apprenticeship levy money to pay wages would work in practice.

Since taking on the brief for apprenticeships and skills last July, Mr Halfon has generally been extremely cooperative with FE Week and other media. However, he recently decreed that any pre-election requests would have to go through the party’s press office.

FE Week lodged its first request for an

interview on May 18, the day the party’s manifesto was launched, and we have faced a wall of absolute silence on this and more than 20 subsequent requests.

Gordon Marsden, the shadow skills minister, told FE Week that this was behaviour “typical” of the Conservatives’ “foggy and gloomy” election campaign.

“Unfortunately this is typical of the way that the Conservatives have been running their campaign and not producing costs from any of their policies, or indeed access to the people who might explain them,” he said.

“There are serious issues, particularly with regard to their lack of commitment to funding non-levy-payers in terms of apprenticeships, and the issue of how employers can use their levy, which people would have liked to ask them about.”

The education secretary Justine Greening has also not been made available to our sister paper Schools Week, even though in recent days she has been interviewed by the likes of BBC Radio 4.

Mr Marsden said it was all “typical of the Theresa May-centred campaign that they are running,



Robert Halfon

which means people in various sectors can’t get proper answers to questions”.

FE Week called the party’s press office at least a dozen times before going to press before this issue, just to chase up our initial interview request, while the number of emails we have sent without reply has hit double figures.

It wasn’t until Thursday June 1, two weeks after our initial request, that we received an official “no” from a party spokesperson, who apologised and said Mr Halfon would be happy to talk after the election when he was less busy.

Lack of transparency has been a common theme throughout the Conservative campaign, a theme which runs right to the top, with the party leader Theresa May coming under heavy fire for refusing to take part in TV debates with the leaders of other political parties.

Sarah Olney, the Liberal Democrat shadow education secretary, told FE Week that the Conservatives are “taking everyone for granted” by “hiding from the public, hiding from journalists, hoping that they can get away with their un-costed manifesto and mean-spirited policies”.



Justine Greening

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SPRING DATA CONFERENCE

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The Lsect Summer Data Conference has been running for 8 years, and in 2017 it returns to the beautiful etc venue conference centre by St Pauls in the heart of London.

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Taking place a few days before the ILR R11 data return, in particular this conference will help MIS staff learn from R10 [the first data return under the levy funding system].

The FE Data Conference typically brings together more than 300 ILR funding and data specialists to discuss funding, data quality, and the use of data to run efficient organisations and raise education standards. Data quality is becoming increasingly important for colleges, training providers, commissioning agencies, auditors and Ofsted. This means data needs to be accurate, complete, timely, valid, credible, reliable, consistent and relevant. These high profile conferences provide a vital opportunity to hear good practice and updates from the experts, as well as share experiences and meet other colleagues working with data in colleges and training providers.

Note: this conference will be of benefit to all apprenticeships providers returning a single ILR.

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NEWS

Demand now on the rise claims body behind UTCs

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EXCLUSIVE

The body that runs the university technical colleges has been making bold claims about a surge in demand for places for 14-year-olds.

New figures shared exclusively with FE Week by the Baker Dearing Trust indicate that applications from 14-year-olds are running at nearly “double the rate” compared with last year.

Silverstone UTC, for example, currently has 201 year 10 students applying for a place in 2017/18, despite only 86 showing interest in February. Last year the college, which is based at the famous Silverstone motor-racing track, had 149 year 10s apply in total.

Aston University Engineering Academy in Birmingham had 140 year 10s on its waiting list in 2016/17, but that figure has risen to 270 for this year. And UTC Sheffield has had 389 applications for year 10 this year compared with 218 last year.

If demand truly is on the rise, it will come as a welcome development following years of low student numbers at many UTCs, of which seven have closed or announced plans to do so.

The “trend is very encouraging”, according

to Charles Parker, the chief executive of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust.

“Applications for year 10 entry to UTCs in September 2017 are running at more than double the rate compared with this time last year,” he added.

BDT claimed this trend is being replicated with many other UTCs, but could not provide other examples.

The UTCs which revealed improved application rates have partly ascribed it to a change in the law, which now requires every local authority in England to write to parents of 13-year-old children telling them about local 14-19 institutions.

These were sent out for the first time in February and March.

Neil Patterson, the principal of Silverstone, which is rated ‘good’ by Ofsted and has 430 learners on roll, said its “unique” location meant Northamptonshire county council and a number of other local authorities wrote to parents, resulting in “a surge of applications like we have never seen before”.

Mr Patterson told FE Week he was “delighted” and that the UTC is “now significantly oversubscribed”, claiming this “shows the problems of recruiting at the age of 14 can be overcome”.

The next area that needs to be addressed, he



Silverstone UTC

said, is “decent information being provided in schools”.

Mr Patterson believes this will happen from this September, when the new Baker clause, passed with the Technical and Further Education Bill, will oblige schools to give FE providers, including UTCs, access to their pupils.

Daniel Locke-Wheaton, the principal at the 509-learner Aston University Engineering Academy, also hailed the effectiveness of the letters from local authorities.

While they resulted in more people knowing about his institution, he admitted he had received “numerous complaints” from parents because the letters went out after the application deadline in January.

“They [parents] weren’t very impressed

about that,” Mr Locke-Wheaton told FE Week. “This year it will go out in September, so that will make a big difference.”

“Parents want the choice. UTCs are not for everybody, but they want to have the option, and that was the biggest anger we’ve had, that they didn’t know about it.”

An FE Week investigation in April revealed that learner numbers dropped at around two thirds of established university technical colleges this academic year.

UTC Plymouth then announced in May that it would not be taking on any new year 10 students from this September owing to dwindling learner numbers, and two weeks ago Leigh UTC in Kent announced it would be opening a feeder school next door to ease recruitment worries.

Could recruiting 13 year-olds be solution to slow take-up at 14?

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

University technical colleges across the country are planning to recruit students a year before their standard 14 starting age, an FE Week investigation has found.

Five UTCs are consulting on taking students in from year nine, instead of year 10, in future academic years – with more expected to follow suit.

The UTC project is currently under the cosh: seven have either closed or announced their intention to do so, suffering from the requirement recruit at 14. FE Week reported two weeks ago that Leigh UTC, in Kent, was opening an 11-to-14 feeder school next door as an attempted remedy.

All five specialist technical providers looking at year 9 starts said they were considering this because of the government’s new longer and harder GCSEs, for which most traditional schools now allocate three years of preparation.

Charles Parker, chief executive of the Baker Dearing Trust, which holds responsibility for overseeing UTCs and which claims demand for learner places at 14 may be on the rise (see story above), told FE Week he “fully supports” the colleges proposing the change.

Students in year nine would still be classed as key stage four learners – the earliest stage UTCs have always been able to recruit from.

“Many schools now allocate three years

to the study of GCSEs, increasing key stage four from two to three years,” Mr Parker said. “Where this is the case in the local education landscape it is sensible for UTCs to offer the same.”

Tougher English and maths GCSEs were introduced for exams this summer.

Higher-tier maths papers, for example, previously devoted 25 per cent to questions at the A and A* level. In this year’s exams, questions relevant to grades seven, eight and nine – the new equivalent to A and A* – make up half the paper.

The five UTCs consulting on changing their admissions age to 13 are Liverpool Life Sciences UTC, London Design and Engineering UTC, UTC Cambridge, Sheffield UTC, and Aston University Engineering Academy in Birmingham.

Liverpool Life Sciences, which had 528 pupils on roll as at January last year and is rated ‘good’ by Ofsted, said in its consultation to the local community that a “significant number” of secondary schools in the area now put aside three years for students to prepare for GCSEs.

London Design and Engineering UTC, which only opened this academic year, said the new GCSEs introduced by the Department of Education “particularly in maths and English” place a “greater expectation on what students need to know and master in order to get a good grade”.

As a result, the college is proposing that from September 2018 it will have both a year nine and 10 intake, while from September 2019 it wants a year nine-only intake.

To accommodate the intake of 13-year-olds, it has had to reduce its published admissions number – the amount of students it can recruit – at year 12.

Meanwhile UTC Cambridge, which has 280 learners and is rated ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted, has had to chop its PAN for year 10 students in half to accommodate for the recruitment of year 9s.

From 2018/19 the college will take in 50 students in year 9, 50 in year 10, and 100 in year 12.

Sheffield UTC, one of the more successful institutions of its kind, with 467 students on roll and a ‘good’ Ofsted rating, and Aston University Engineering Academy, which is also rated ‘good’ and has 509 learners, are also consulting on expanding their intakes to year nine from September 2018.

Daniel Locke-Wheaton, principal of Aston, told FE Week he has received an influx of comments from parents complaining that transition at age 14 is now “too late” as a result of the new GCSEs.



Charles Parker



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EDITORIAL

Blue pill is tough to swallow



Since the snap election was called by the Conservatives seven weeks ago, it has been interesting to see the reaction to their handling of the media.

The overriding theme has been one of avoidance: stories of the press being locked out of events, being allowed to ask pre-vetted questions only and of ministers darting in and out of back doors have been frequent.

And even when interviews have been granted, journalists have been left complaining of questions going unanswered and replaced with “strong and stable” soundbites.

Most recently, Jeremy Corbyn changed his mind and decided to participate in the TV leadership debate, but Theresa May stayed away.

This prompted a cartoon in the Times in which our prime minister hides behind the sofa.

We’ve drawn up our own version, in which she is seen completing an online course in media management from the safety of her breakfast table.

And we now know, two weeks after we first asked for an interview, that the Conservatives are determined to keep FE Week away from the apprenticeships minister Robert Halfon.

The lack of opportunity to scrutinise the manifesto commitments weakens the democratic process.

Would you choose to buy a medicine from a pharmacy that refused to even make itself available to ask about potential side effects?

I’m not going to endorse one party over another, but the best way to change the behaviour of a salesperson is to refuse to buy their product.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@fefweek.co.uk

CORRECTION

In edition 209 of FE Week, as part of our ‘What now for colleges that tried and failed to merge?’, which featured 10 colleges whose mergers had been called off, we reported that Stanmore College was in administered status and had a notice of concern for inspection. We published this in good faith based on publically available information from the Department for Education and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. However, it has since been brought to our attention that the college was taken out of administered status in April, and its notice of concern was lifted following its ‘good’ Ofsted report published in March. While this information has been confirmed by both the college and the DfE, the information published by the DfE and ESFA has yet to be updated.



College pays learners to complete online courses

Alix Robertson
@ALIXROBERTSON4

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

A college in the north-east has used public funds to pay its students cash bonuses for completing online short courses.

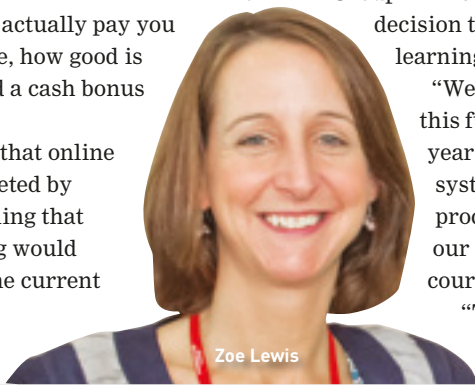
Middlesbrough College advertised a £50 “cash bonus” on its website for anyone who took up free distance learning courses in the health and care, business and customer service industries – in a move that’s previously unheard-of in FE.

Enrolment has now closed for the courses, which initially required an upfront administration fee of £50, though the site said “this will be refunded along with a further £50 bonus if you enrol onto the course before June 1”.

It added: “So we will actually pay you £50 for doing the course, how good is that a qualification and a cash bonus as well.”

The small print said that online courses must be completed by July 31 this year, meaning that all government funding would be drawn down from the current academic year.

Zoe Lewis, the



college’s principal, did not comment directly on whether the move had been designed to use up any outstanding funding from its adult education budget allocation, but said the incentive had been introduced “to expand our portfolio and to develop our own capacity and capability to serve employers and learners at more flexible times, to suit their work and home lives”.

She added: “This is a small amount of development cost, given our plans for distance learning going forward and the benefits that these courses will deliver to our employers, learners and economic community.”

After the college acquired the NECC Training company in 2016, it established its employer facing arm – the Northern Skills Group – which, she said, led to the decision to develop a “distance-learning capacity”.

“We are looking to launch this fully in the next academic year, but wanted to test our systems, processes and procedures this year, hence our decision to launch 10 courses in May this year.

“The incentive payment was for a short period,

was time limited and will amount to less than £2,000 – which was funded through our course development budget,” she claimed.

“No incentive is currently in place, nor will be in the future.”

The choice to hand public money out in this way could be seen as controversial, at a time when independent learning providers are unsure whether they will receive funding from the adult education budget because of delays to a new procurement process.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning providers, admitted he hadn’t seen incentives like these in FE before.

“Until the full 1.5 billion adult budget is properly tendered and targeted at real need, we will continue to see these perverse workarounds in an attempt to mop up unused but valuable allocations,” he said.

Bob Harrison, a former college principal and an expert in online and digital learning, told FE Week: “This is the first cash bonus scheme for free online courses I’ve heard of and am concerned about the use of public money in this way.

“A free course combined with a cash reward at the end looks a dubious practice at best. At worst it is simply a way to sign-up

people more interested in the financial gain than a need for training or a qualification.”

Shortly after our enquiries, FE Week received notification from Middlesbrough College that the reference to the £50 “cash bonus” had been removed from its free distance learning courses offer online.

Course Duration	10 Weeks
Course Start / Days and Times	This course is a distance learning course and will be undertaken at home.
Total Cost	FREE - A £50 administrative fee is payable at the start of the course. If you complete the course by the 31 July 2017, you will be refunded the £50 and we will also pay you an additional £50 as a bonus.

Example course description from Middlesbrough College website as FE Week went to press

Courses are Free, however there is an admin fee of £50.00 to pay prior to commencing the course. This will be refunded along with a further £50.00 bonus if you enrol onto the course before June 1st 2017. So we will actually pay you £50 for doing the course, how good is that a qualification and a cash bonus as well.

Description of promotion on Middlesbrough College website, which they removed after being asked about it by FE Week



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An excellent communicator, who fosters a culture of continuous improvement through working with staff and students, you will already have delivered outstanding results. With a strong customer focus, you have a passion for working with learners; delivering quality and innovation; have a commitment to build and sustain high performing teams and can translate changes in the external environment into opportunities for the Group.

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Competitive salary: based on the skills and experience of the successful candidate. For an information pack and application form, please email clerk@cornwall.ac.uk. For an informal discussion, please contact Raoul Humphreys, Principal and CE on 01726 226557 or Ian Tunbridge, Chair of the Board on 01726 226528.

Closing date: 30th June 2017

Interviews: 24/25th July 2017



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The Cornwall College Group is a disability confident employer.

Charity by statute



Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement

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You will have a proven track record in leading highly effective apprenticeship provision, employer engagement and business development in an FE college or private training provider. Highly motivated and a team player, you will provide the leadership to drive and grow our apprenticeship and commercial provision, to develop our external partnerships and to raise the College's profile locally, regionally and nationally whilst securing its brand and reputation.

Closing Date: Friday, 9th June 2017

Interviews will take place on Monday, 10th July 2017

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**Ruskin College
Oxford**

Assistant Principal Curriculum

Salary: £47,801 - £50,702

Permanent, Full-Time

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The Assistant Principal Curriculum is a new and strategically important position. The successful candidate will lead the following areas: the whole College curriculum, business development, quality assurance and improvement, and teaching and learning. The Assistant Principal will be an effective self-starter with the ability to lead a team and deliver exceptional outcomes for our student body.

Candidates may have a confidential discussion with Paul Di Felice, Principal, on 07815 707786

For an application form and further details contact Lesley Tooke by email on ltooke@ruskin.ac.uk.

Closing date: Midday on Friday 16th June

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For further details, or to arrange an informal visit, contact **Gail Stubbs** on **01889 506100** or email recruitment@jcbacademy

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references and an enhanced DBS check. The JCB Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



Ruskin College
Oxford

Programme Manager for Higher Education

Salary: £35,608 - £38,896

Permanent, Full-Time

Ruskin College is an adult residential college offering further education and higher education. The College has a strong commitment to social justice and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

The Programme Manager for Higher Education will lead a strategically vital function in the College. The successful candidate will offer a depth of experience, the ability to lead a team, provide curriculum innovation and embed exceptional practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

Candidates may have a confidential discussion with Paul Di Felice, Principal, on 07815 707786

For an application form and further details contact Lesley Tooke by email on ltooke@ruskin.ac.uk.

Closing date: Midday on Friday 16th June



Ruskin College
Oxford

Programme Manager Further Education

Salary: £35,608 - £38,896

Permanent, Full-Time

Ruskin College is an adult residential college offering further education and higher education. The College has a strong commitment to social justice and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

The Programme Manager for Further Education will lead a strategically vital function in the College. The successful candidate will offer a depth of experience, the ability to lead a team, provide curriculum innovation and embed exceptional practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

Candidates may have a confidential discussion with Paul Di Felice, Principal, on 07815 707786

For an application form and further details contact Lesley Tooke by email on ltooke@ruskin.ac.uk.

Closing date: Midday on Friday 16th June

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HEAD OF SCHOOL (Ref: 17/08)

£38,364 + Responsibility Allowance (£5,000 - £8,000) per annum
Permanent, 1.0 FTE

You will play a key role in setting and monitoring targets and be accountable for achievement, retention, attendance and student satisfaction on the specified level of programme.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT X 3 (Ref: 17/09)

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Permanent, 1.0 FTE

The successful candidate will lead strategic planning, development and management of the College's provision within a defined curriculum area.

PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR X 3 (Ref: 17/12)

£22,937 - £38,364 + Responsibility Allowance (£1,000 - £2,000) per annum
Permanent, 1.0 FTE

We are offering exciting opportunities to become part of a new team of Programme Co-ordinators. The key purpose of the role is to assure the quality of experience (especially teaching and learning) and that all students receive appropriate support.

You will need to be educated to at least degree level and must be able to enthuse and motivate students.



CURRICULUM LEADERS x 8 (Ref: 17/10)

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Permanent, 1.0 FTE

We are seeking to appoint dynamic Curriculum Leaders to lead, develop and monitor the curriculum to maximise the achievement of all students and development of staff.

QUALITY MANAGER (Ref: 17/11)

£38,364 + Responsibility Allowance £5,000 - £8,000
Permanent, 1.0 FTE

We are looking for an outstanding Quality Manager to provide effective management and co-ordination across the College for Quality Assurance. This includes the management, facilitation and evaluation of a comprehensive range of Corporate policies and processes.

The successful candidate will have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating standards and performance within the College, recommending actions for change and supporting continuous improvement activity.

Closing date: 14th June 2017
Interview date: 16th, 19th or 20th June 2017

Further details and an application pack can be obtained from www.gateway.ac.uk or by contacting, HR Assistant on **0116 2744566** or Gail Booth, HR Officer on **0116 2744505** or via e-mail hr@gateway.ac.uk.

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Post No: SF/05/17

£23.96 per hour (to include preparation and marking)

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Prior experience of teaching these areas is preferable. However, more than that, we seek individuals with the ability to engage students in these subjects, making learning accessible and enjoyable and going the extra mile to enable a diverse range of students to achieve.

The College is a fantastic place to work. We have a strong English team who actively share good practice and are committed to continual improvement. Support and on-going professional development are a significant part of our work with all English teachers. Teaching and learning in English is a real strength.

If you are passionate about English, confident in your ability to engage a range of students in learning and ready to contribute to our success, there has never been a better time to join Solihull College. You will need to hold or be prepared to work towards a relevant teaching qualification.

Please send a completed application form and covering letter detailing your availability as soon as possible by no later than Sunday 11th June 2017.

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Location: Huddersfield and Dewsbury

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Hours: Variable

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The main responsibilities of the role will be to teach English and/or maths related subjects at any of the College centres and to develop programmes of study to meet the particular needs of our diverse range of students.

Successful candidates will have an English and/or maths qualification at Level 3 or above, or be willing to work towards if required. Candidates will also need to have a teaching qualification at Level 5 or above and be able to evidence up to date relevant CPD.

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

Should you require any further information regarding these vacancies please contact Mat Harte (Curriculum Team Leader – English) – mharte@kirkleescollege.ac.uk or Matthew Knight (Curriculum Team Leader – maths) – mknights@kirkleescollege.ac.uk.

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Subject Team Leader: Maths

Salary: Packages up to £45,000

Hours: 37 hours per week, 52 weeks per year

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

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

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

If you would like to have a confidential discussion about this role, then please contact the Recruitment Team on **01908 637269** or by email to **HRCampus@mkcollege.ac.uk**

Website:

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

Email:

recruitment@mkcollege.ac.uk

Successful candidates will have the following;

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

Milton Keynes College is a general further education and training provider with campuses at Chaffron Way, Bletchley and Central Milton Keynes. The College is the largest provider of further education and training in Milton Keynes, offering a varied mix of vocational and academic courses to a diverse set of students. The College has a number of commercial outlets which are open to the public including an award winning restaurant, Hair & Beauty Salon, Personal Training Studio, Nursery and Gallery space. Milton Keynes College also has an offender learning contract, providing education within 28 prisons across the country.

We also offer a wide range of benefits to our employees, including: A multitude of training opportunities, Child Care vouchers, Car Salary Sacrifice, Cycle to Work, a number of local discounts in Milton Keynes, LGPS and TPS pensions, free parking at our main campus sites and discount at our onsite Brasserie restaurant and The Graduate Salon.

Milton Keynes College is values led organisation: Integrity, Excellence, Inspire, Respect, Innovate.

Milton Keynes College is a committed "safer recruitment" employer. We take extreme care in ensuring the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All positions therefore undergo a stringent vetting process to include DBS for all positions.

We want to develop a more diverse workforce and positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.



Teacher in Mathematics

Location: Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester

Salary: £22,356 - £33,980 per annum

Tameside College is a further education college that offers a wide range of courses including Full-Time, Part-Time, Apprenticeships and University Level.

We believe in excellence and we back that up with high standards, real working environments and great teaching. We also believe that attending college is about more than achieving a qualification, important though that is. That is why we aim to give every person the opportunity to develop their full potential in a supportive and friendly environment.

Joining us as a Teacher in Mathematics (A level), you will teach on a group of programmes with responsibility for the quality of the curriculum, in terms of the planning, preparation, tracking and monitoring of assessments and student performance.

We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic, innovative and highly motivated individual, with a relevant degree in a relevant subject (2:1 or above desirable) coupled with a thorough knowledge of the relevant curriculum. With a successful track record of teaching in a further education establishment and experience of targeting needs of learners and supporting their needs effectively, you will be able to plan curriculum flexibly and effectively with a focus of delivering outstanding teaching and learning and be a strong team player with excellent communication skills.

Closing date for applications: : 12 noon on Friday 16th June 2017

Lecturer in Maths (GCSE)

Full Time - 37 hours per week

Permanent

£24,079-£34,330 per annum



We are seeking an enthusiastic and well qualified GCSE maths lecturer to plan and deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment for learners so as to maximise achievement and support continuous improvement. You will be required to teach and assess GCSE Mathematics to the 16-19 cohort in sessions that motivate and inspire learners.

How to Apply?

Please go to our vacancies page by using the web address below, **www.latestvacancies.com/sandwell/**, where applications should be submitted online. For further information you can also find and download a copy of the job description/ person specification by clicking on the job title. We reserve the right to close this vacancy early should we receive an overwhelming response.

Closing Date: 9 June 2017

Sandwell College is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All appointments are subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks. We aim to develop a workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve and positively encourage applications from all.

If you are keen to help us drive the college forward to ensure an excellent experience for our students, then we would love to hear from you! We are able to offer you generous holidays, an excellent pension scheme and outstanding college facilities.



HOURLY PAID LECTURER – GCSE MATHS AND FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Post No: SF/05/17

£23.96 per hour (to include preparation and marking)

Solihull College is seeking teachers with a passion for maths, to add to our talented pool of part time hourly paid Lecturers of Maths. We are interested to hear from people with a passion for enabling young people to achieve at GCSE and Functional Skills in Maths.

Prior experience of teaching these areas is preferable. However, more than that, we seek individuals with the ability to engage students in these subjects, making learning accessible and enjoyable and going the extra mile to enable a diverse range of students to achieve.

The College is a fantastic place to work. We have a strong Maths team who actively share good practice and are committed to continual improvement. Support and on-going professional development are a significant part of our work with all Maths teachers. Teaching and learning in Maths is a real strength.

If you are passionate about Maths, confident in your ability to engage a range of students in learning and ready to contribute to our success, there has never been a better time to join Solihull College. You will need to hold or be prepared to work towards a relevant teaching qualification.

Please send a completed application form and covering letter detailing your availability as soon as possible by no later than Sunday 11th June 2017.

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MANIFESTO EXPERT SPECIAL

Labour manifesto pledge: Set a target that all FE teaching staff have a teaching qualification within five years



FOR
SALLY HUNT
UCU general secretary

Further education teaching must be valued

The teacher shortage problem isn't limited to schools – FE colleges are also feeling the pinch.

As well as addressing problems of low pay, endemic casualisation and mounting workloads, a key challenge for the next government will be to boost the status of further education teaching.

The government's decision in 2013 to scrap the requirement for FE teachers to gain a formal teaching qualification was deeply disappointing.

The Labour party plans to reverse this if it comes to power. This move makes a lot of sense.

First, it recognises that teachers are dual professionals – as well as being subject specialists, they must be able to support different types of students with their learning.

Second, a renewed requirement for formal teaching qualifications would send a clear message about the importance of quality in FE delivery.

Third, it would keep FE in step with wider moves to ensure that teaching professionals are well qualified. Internationally, excellent education systems like Finland's are supported by highly qualified vocational teaching workforces.

Crucially, Labour says its proposal will be backed up by additional funding. In a sector where staff have seen their pay decline by over 20 per cent in real terms since 2009, any new requirement for formal qualifications needs to be backed up with extra investment and mustn't place any additional cost burden on individual teachers.

Labour's commitment is a good start, then. But the next government's approach to professionalism in FE shouldn't stop with a formal qualification. In a fast-changing skills landscape, it's vital that teachers are supported to refresh their skills and share knowledge throughout their careers, so they can remain at the cutting edge of both industrial innovation and pedagogical developments.



AGAINST
MALCOLM TROBE
Deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders

Labour's pledge could cause supply crisis

Labour's pledge "for all FE teaching staff to have a teaching qualification within five years" is lacking in detail. Does it mean that people must have a teaching qualification within five years of starting, or that all FE teachers must be qualified by 2022?

If they mean the former, this already happens widely across the sector. If it means the latter, to maintain a system of universal qualification, it would be necessary to require FE colleges to accept only teachers who had already attained a teaching qualification, meaning the end of in-service training and potentially a teacher supply crisis.

Many college teachers come from industry backgrounds because they have technical skills and experience. They are often in their 30s, 40s and 50s and few are in a position

or have the inclination, to pay for full-time teacher training courses.

In order to avoid a collapse in the teacher supply line, the government would have to introduce grants, loans or both, to fund course fees and maintenance costs. Perhaps this is what Labour means in its manifesto when it says that its commitment would be "backed up by funding".

However, even if this pledge is unclear, the general direction of Labour's manifesto on post-16 education is welcome. It promises to "correct historic neglect of the FE sector" and says it would bring funding for 16- to 18-year-olds in line with key stage 4 baselines as well as committing to a range of other measures. We are sure that the last thing it intends is to accidentally precipitate a teacher supply crisis in a sector it wants to boost.

Conservative manifesto pledge: Replace vocational qualifications with T-levels that have 50% more teaching time



FOR
CATHERINE SEZEN
Senior policy manager for 14-19, Association of Colleges

T-levels are great, in theory

In the run up to the general election the political parties are focused on the importance of skills: both employability and technical, and Labour and the Conservatives explicitly refer to their commitment to the Skills Plan for technical education.

The plan divides the technical occupations into 15 routes, 11 of which will be predominantly college- or provider-based and four that will be delivered through work-based learning. Each route will have a common core followed by a specialisation year with an extended work placement of up to three months leading to a T-level. When students finish, they will be able to progress to work, a higher apprenticeship or higher education depending on the occupation they wish to pursue.

On paper it all seems very feasible; students

working towards clear occupational outcomes. But how will it work in practice? There needs to be a huge cultural shift for technical to be seen as prestigious as the academic route. Is additional funding enough?

The curriculum is yet to be confirmed though we do know that it is aimed at students working at level two and above and that each route will be offered by only one awarding organisation or a consortium. It will be important that the offer is attractive to both current technical students and students who might be interested in T-levels rather than taking the 'academic' route.

The outcome of the general election will be known by the early hours of 9 June; for the final version of T-levels we will have to wait a little longer. Let's hope they deliver.



AGAINST
JAMES KEWIN
Deputy chief executive, Sixth Form Colleges Association

Don't ignore academic routes

While there is unquestionably a need to strengthen technical education in England, it should not be at the expense of the academic option. Increasing investment in technical, but not academic, education is based on a flawed analysis of the country's productivity challenge. The high-skill economy envisaged in the government's industrial strategy will be driven by leaders, scientists, technicians, engineers and others that in most cases will have followed the academic path during their sixth-form studies.

The £500 million pledged for technical education is underpinned by research that concluded sixth-form education in England was "uniquely narrow and short" compared to the high-performing education systems in China, Singapore, Canada and elsewhere. Unfortunately, this investment will have no impact on the vast majority of students in sixth form colleges as they are studying academic qualifications.

The government was right to identify that students studying technical courses require additional support to succeed, but the same is true of young people studying A-levels.

After ducking the challenge of including schools in area reviews, and focusing too narrowly on technical education with the cash injection for T-levels, it is important that an incoming Conservative government gets the scope of this review right.

It must include academic, as well as technical education and can begin by asking some pretty fundamental questions. Can we justify providing 21 per cent less funding for sixth formers than younger students? Is it good for our international competitiveness for sixth formers in England to receive half the tuition time as sixth formers in Shanghai? And what does a rounded sixth-form education actually cost to deliver? The review is a golden opportunity to move away from basing funding on a notional number of annual hours and an arbitrary rate.

MANIFESTO EXPERT SPECIAL

Labour manifesto pledge: Abandon plans for Institutes of Technology and use funding for more teachers



FOR

MICK FLETCHER

Founder, Policy Consortium

Invest more in what we already have

If there is one thing that almost everyone in FE can agree on, it is to stop the turbulence. No-one is against change but too much in recent years has been ill thought-out, poorly managed and temporary. In that sense, the proposal by Labour to abandon plans to reinvent the wheel will be music to many ears.

The precise wording in Labour's manifesto is as follows: "Labour would abandon Conservative plans to once again reinvent the wheel by building new technical colleges." Clear enough, but it is symptomatic of the state of the sector that there are at least three wheels they could be referring to.

One possibility is UTCs. It's not that vocational education for some 14-19 year olds is a bad idea; it's just that it's crazy to allow a group of well-connected idealists to attempt to graft a few 14-19 institutions onto

a system that rejects a 14-19 phase.

Could they mean national colleges, which at one stage appeared to be springing up with every ministerial whim? After the new Nuclear College and the HS2 College, one half expected the National College of Brexit Negotiators.

The most likely candidates for Labour's dustbin, however, would seem to be the proposed new institutes of technology, intended to be the flagships of the new technical revolution launched by Lord Sainsbury and supported by the Industrial Strategy green paper.

Labour is absolutely right to call a halt to this nonsense. We have a perfectly good network of FE colleges, which already offer degrees, foundation degrees, HNC/D and professional qualifications. We need to invest more in what we have, rather than wheel out yet another wheeze.



AGAINST

SUE PEMBER

Director of policy and external relations, HOLEX

Don't abandon Institutes of Technology

There is nothing more fulfilling than working in an environment dedicated to a single discipline. So there is a role for Institutes of Technology, but whether they are separate institutions or share buildings with other programmes is secondary.

The Conservatives seem to have re-interpreted the previous policy, which was to establish a new network of prestigious IoTs and national colleges to deliver high standard provision at levels 3, 4 and 5. Their manifesto states the new IoTs will "provide courses at degree level and above", be backed by employers and linked to leading universities.

I am not sure this change will help the goal of ensuring more people have high skills in technology. The previous remit is still required; there is still a need for a progression route and new investment focused on level 3, 4 and 5.

While Conservative party manifesto drafters were redefining IoTs, Labour were building on a UCU call from earlier in the year for "thousands more teachers, rather than another set of gimmicks." To support this approach, Labour would abandon Conservative plans to "reinvent the wheel by building new technical colleges, redirecting the money to increase teacher numbers in the FE sector".

But whether we rebadge all or part of HE or FE institutions to become Institutes of Technology or create new ones is not the immediate issue; the important thing is that both political parties recognise that as a country we need more technically qualified people.

To fulfil that commitment, they will need to support expansion, invest in physical resources to make that possible and also increase the number of teachers.

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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

Ship-shape and Bristol fashion



Boat people: Some of the team

A team of 25 students from Goole College have created a ship-shaped plant pot for a small Yorkshire town's entry into the Britain in Bloom contest.

The welding and fabrication students were commissioned to make the ship and its accompanying crane by Associated British Ports, for Immingham town council's entry into the national horticulture competition.

The ship will house flowers and hanging displays, and represents Associated British Ports' contribution to the local economy.

William John Woods, 16, said: "I began working on the bow and the stern of the boat

and it's been great to see it expand from there. It is a good feeling to know that this will be a permanent fixture in the town."

Launched in 1963, the Britain in Bloom competition encourages communities to work together to transform communal spaces in their local area, and attracts around 3,000 groups of applicants each year.

Goole College Welding tutor Mick Grundy added: "From start to finish – including the drawings – the project has taken around 120 hours of work. The challenge was to ensure that every student involved was given an important task."



Working it: stroke survivors certificated

Certified course for Stroke Survivors

The Heart of Worcestershire College has teamed up with the Stroke Association to deliver its first certified course for stroke survivors.

The 10-week employability course is designed to help those who have suffered from the disease get back into work, through confidence building, and learning the best ways of searching and applying for jobs.

The course – which is free to anyone over 19 and claiming JSA, ESA, universal credit or other main benefit – was led by the college's learning skills and development officer Carl Whitehouse, at the Stroke Association's Life After Stroke Centre in Bromsgrove.

"The emphasis of the course is ensuring people feel able to start mixing within the group, as being out of work or experiencing a health condition such as a stroke can lead to

isolation," he said.

"It also helps people develop their functional skills, to help with maths, English and IT."

Having successfully completed the course, the survivors who took part are now actively looking for, or have already found work.

Christy Weatherby, a coordinator at the Life After Stroke Centre, added: "Around a quarter of strokes happen in people of working age. Stroke survivors looking to return back to work face specific challenges, which can be hard to overcome alone. We're thrilled with the outcome of the course and the impact in made on stroke survivors' lives."

There are plans to run the course again later this year. Those interested can contact ILfutures@howcollege.ac.uk or call 01905 743 595.



Page turners: a few of the project's participants

Human books share their stories

Creative and media students at Sunderland College invited a diverse range of guests to tell their life stories as part of a project aimed at challenging stereotypes.

A nun, a transgender woman, an alternative healer, a sufferer of bipolar disorder and a police officer with lupus were amongst the guests who visited the college and shared their experiences with students as part of the People's Pages project.

The project encourages guests to become human books, and was started by TV and radio presenter Gilly Hope, who lectures on the creative and media course at the college.

One of the contributors was 41-year-old Leo Berry, an army veteran who was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder after

serving in Bosnia and Northern Ireland.

He now runs an organisation offering counselling and therapy for people with mental health conditions.

Daniel Clarke, 18, said: "I really enjoyed the project. It was a good way for students to meet people they wouldn't necessarily meet in their everyday lives, and it was interesting to hear so many diverse stories. It's nice to think we've helped to influence people's perceptions of others for the better."

"It's quite nerve-wracking approaching members of the public and asking them to speak about personal issues, but it's something that has to be done on a regular basis if you work in TV or radio," added Ms Hope.

Racoon dog pups make history

Bishop Burton College is celebrating the first-ever litter of racoon dogs to be born at the campus.

Resident racoon dogs Ralph and Lauren welcomed the arrival of quintuplets – three female and two male pups – the first time a litter of the canid species has been born at the college.

Originally from East Asia, racoon dogs mate for life, and Ralph and Lauren have now been together for just over three years.

The pair first joined the college in August last year, after being donated by East Park animal unit courtesy of Hull City Council.

"While this is not Ralph and Lauren's first litter, it is the first time they've given birth while living on campus. They are very friendly animals but have been incredibly protective over their pups since they were born a little over three weeks ago," said Clare Reed, an animal curator at the college,

"In the last week, mum and dad have felt comfortable enough for us to meet them and check them out. We're pleased to report all five pups are healthy and growing well – we now just need to name them."



Dog days: the new pups

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

Aardman Animations get arty at Andover

FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

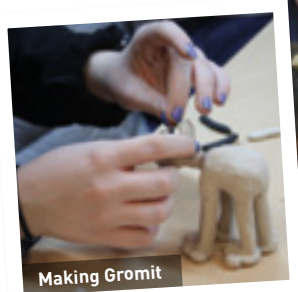
A lead animator from the studio behind blockbusters *Chicken Run*, *Wallace & Gromit* and *Shaun the Sheep* paid a visit to creative media students to give them a lesson on making one of their most famous creations: Gromit, reports Samantha King.

Jim Parkyn, a senior model-maker from the Oscar-winning studio Aardman Animations, spent a day at Andover College in Hampshire delivering stop-motion animation workshops to creative media production, media studies and film students.

The designer – who has worked at Aardman for 17 years – showed students how to recreate one half of the studio's most popular animated duo Wallace and Gromit using plasticine.

"Gromit is an interesting character to make. What seem like mistakes can often contribute to the character's demeanour and during these workshops, we see all different kinds of Gromits, from Gromit puppies to mature versions, with a vast array of emotions," he said.

Creative media lecturer Donna Hardy, who organised the day, said: "I think the students soon realised



how technical model-making is. Quite a lot of them – certainly the boys – had done a lot of stop-motion with Lego as kids, but none of them had really done any plasticine work before.

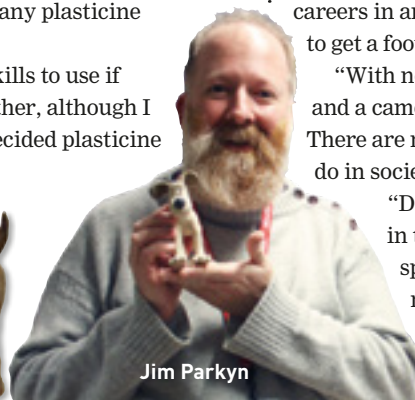
"It gave them the skills to use if they wanted to go further, although I think some of them decided plasticine

probably wasn't for them afterwards."

Jim was also on hand to give words of encouragement to those looking to pursue careers in animation, sharing advice on how to get a foot in the stop-motion door.

"With nothing more than a lump of clay and a camera phone, you can go anywhere. There are no restrictions as to what you can do in society today," he said.

"Digital skills are vitally important in the film and media industry, from specialist skills in editing stop-motion animation right down to using social media to self-promote your work. You have



There has been a senior appointment at East Coast College, which was created by a merger between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Colleges.

The college now operates from campuses in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and will formally merge over the summer in time for the new academic year.

Stuart Rimmer has been named as its new principal and CEO. He takes up the position from his previous role as principal and CEO of Great Yarmouth College, where he started in June 2014.

Mr Rimmer has worked in education for more than 15 years, holding management roles at Newcastle College Group for four years, and spending seven years as the director of quality and enterprise at Lancaster and Morecambe College.

Alongside his new role, he is currently leading a project with the Association of Colleges in the eastern region on wellbeing in FE, and comments nationally on issues relating to mental health in education.

Speaking of his ambitions for the college, he said: "As well as focusing on student progression, education and training we will nurture our students to become the responsible, resilient adults that our region and communities need. I am a firm believer in promoting wellbeing and mental health."

The principal of Prospects College of Advanced Technology, **Neil Bates**, is set to retire after leading the college for over three decades.

Movers & Shakers



STUART RIMMER



NEIL BATES



PAT CARRINGTON

The college in Essex was the first new further education college in more than 20 years.

As well as leading the college, Mr Bates has held a number of other local and national roles. He was the founding chairman of the organisations that became the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and Group Training Associations England; chair of the National Training Federation; vice chair of the Learning and Skills Improvement

Service and a governor at a secondary school, UTC and a special school. He is currently a board member of independent education charity, the Edge Foundation.

Mr Bates will step down from the role at the end of this academic year, but added he is "certainly not retiring from the sector which I love", adding "I am going to have a holiday and a break to think about what I might do next."

David Sherlock, chair of PROCAT, said

to adopt many different hats to be successful today, and things like social media, website creation and so on are a great platform to get your work out there."

Ms Hardy added: "Even the students that don't have an interest in animation – and aren't, by their own admission, creative – enjoyed the workshops. It was interesting for them to speak to someone who had quite obviously worked on things that they loved as kids, especially things like *Shaun the Sheep*.

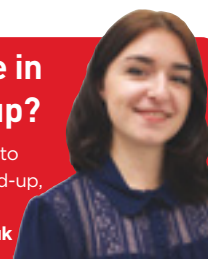
"They loved Jim, and afterwards they were tweeting him and he was replying to them, so they feel like they're all part of Aardman now in a way."

Aardman Animations was first established in 1972, and has so far had 10 Oscar nominations, winning four, and has also had many BAFTA nominations and awards.

"In a digital age, students being exposed to these fundamental and traditional making skills are a great balancing experience – understanding this initial stage of creation validates where all great ideas begin," said Martin Simmons, the deputy principal of the college.

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"Neil's departure at the end of September will mark the end of an era. He has been the seminal influence on the college's direction and successful approach to employer-led learning. It is now up to us to honour that legacy by taking PROCAT to still greater international success in the new age of the levy and Brexit."

Pat Carrington has meanwhile been appointed as the new chair of adult learning provider HOLEX.

The organisation represents more than 120 adult and community learning providers, and is the sector membership body for local authority community learning services, specialist designated institutions, and independent third sector providers.

Ms Carrington has worked in the adult and community learning sector for the past 13 years, and will take up the role alongside her current position as principal of City College Peterborough – a role she has held for six years.

Alongside her principalship, Ms Carrington is currently assistant director for skills and employment for Peterborough City Council, and also sits on the regional Ofsted Reference Group for raising standards and attainment in the Eastern region.

"I am looking forward to taking on this role in this period of change," she said. "Adult education is a vital element of British life and HOLEX members are working hard to ensure learners' lives are enhanced and local productivity is improved. Very exciting times"

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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week’s solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

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To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**
Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk.
Last Edition’s winner: Alyson Shields, New College Durham