

**WHICH COLLEGES
TOPPED THE
NICDEX IN 2018?**

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**WORLD SKILLS
UK LIVE WINNERS
CELEBRATED**

Free supplement inside



**3AAA OFSTED
BONUS SPENT
ON SCHOOL FEES**

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FEWEEK

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EDITION 262

HUGHES: OFSTED 'QUITE RIGHT' ON ARTS AND MEDIA CRITICISM



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- › New principal planning third deficit budget in a row defends decision
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Exclusive

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ED Week

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Petroc comes top in *FE Week's* college league table for 2018

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Petroc has been crowned the best college in the country in *FE Week's* exclusive league table for 2018.

This year's NICDEX gave 186 colleges a score of up to 40, with 10 marks available in four categories: learner satisfaction, employer satisfaction, 16-to-18 positive progression and adults into employment.

The league table was first devised in 2016 by Nick Linford, *FE Week's* editor and a former director of performance at Lewisham College, based on key and official criteria published by the Department for Education.

Petroc topped this year's leader board and was celebrated at a drinks reception, hosted by *FE Week* in partnership with Pearson, at the Association of Colleges conference this week.

Exeter College was knocked off the top spot after winning the previous two league tables.

Petroc scored an impressive 36 points overall, scooping a perfect 10 for both employer satisfaction and 16-to-18 progressions. The college scored 8 points for learner satisfaction and 8 for adults into employment.



From left: Lsect MD and *FE Week* publisher Shane Mann, Petroc principal Diane Dimond, Petroc vice principal Bill Blythe and *FE Week* editor Nick Linford

Second place was shared by Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group, and Weston College, which both scored 34 points.

In joint third with 33 points each were Barnsley College, Middlesbrough College and West Suffolk College.

"We're absolutely delighted to be top of this highly regarded league table, improving on last year's second place," said Petroc principal Diane Dimond.

"My thanks go to all our amazing staff and hardworking students, as well as employers and partners in the area who work so closely with us."

She continued: "At Petroc, success at every level is promoted as a positive driver for continuing in education and gaining employment, and every

year our students go on to the best universities in the country, higher and degree apprenticeships as well as skilled careers.

"We pride ourselves on our strong links with employers, ensuring our learners have great work opportunities available to them, and I truly believe this is why we have such success with student progression into employment.

"We work closely with organisations across a wide range of sectors, and value their feedback to shape our curriculum and ensure we're meeting the needs of our communities. The fact that over 93 per cent of employers would recommend us as a training provider is fantastic and makes me extremely proud."

NHS targeted in progress update

Overall progress towards the public-sector apprenticeship target stands at 1.4 per cent so far, according to newly published Department for Education statistics.

Skills minister Anne Milton said she was "particularly pleased to see that vital services like the

NHS are doing well" – even though the number of apprentices it has recruited over the past two years has dropped by a third.

The NHS progress towards the target stood at 1.2 per cent with 13,800 apprenticeship starts in 2017/18, down from 19,820 in 2015/16.

CEC criticised for conference spend

The Careers and Enterprise Company has defended spending more than £150,000 of its own cash on its annual conference in July.

Its chief executive and chair came under fire over the spend during a select committee hearing this week, as MPs demanded to know why they hadn't sought private sponsorship.

A CEC spokesperson justified

the cost saying that it "brought together our country-wide network" and "provided opportunities for delegates to learn and build their networks", which included "hearing from more than 70 speakers across 14 breakout sessions and 2 plenaries".

In addition, he said 50 young people gained work experience through the conference.

Delay to DfE apprenticeship figures

Apprenticeship statistics that were due to be released on Thursday have been delayed by a full fortnight because of a software issue.

The November 2018 apprenticeship and levy statistics will now not be released until December 6, rather than on November 22 as scheduled.

A post on the Department

for Education's website said the release date was changed to "allow additional time to resolve issues identified in final data returns for the 2017 to 2018 academic year, and to allow subsequent quality assurance".

A spokesperson for the DfE confirmed that there was a software issue when providers submitted their data.

3aaa paid school fees for its managing director's child

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Exclusive

Defunct apprenticeship firm Aspire Achieve Advance paid for its former managing director's child's school fees as part of a "generous bonus", *FE Week* can reveal.

Andy Palmer worked at the provider, better known as 3aaa, from September 2013 to October 2015 before becoming managing director of another disgraced FE giant – Learndirect – in October 2016.

In an email to co-founder Peter Marples, seen by *FE Week*, Mr Palmer requests a payment is made to the school.

"When you and Di [McEvoy-Robinson] gave me the generous bonus a couple of months ago you kindly said that I could look to take it as 'product'," the email, sent December 31, 2014, says.

"We discussed the payment of school

fees for the year and I have spoken to [the] school and they are happy to accept a year's payment in advance.

"If you're still happy to do this then would it be possible to pay £9,300 into the account below using the reference below?"

He added: "Hope this is ok and really appreciate both the bonus and the offer to work it in this way.

"With the remaining £700 I had hoped to buy a camera. Maybe this is something that we can discuss in the New Year?"

"Again, thanks Pete."

In reply and with 3aaa's commercial director Lee Marples copied in, Peter Marples said: "I am happy for this to be processed but I didn't get the original email.

"Lee – please make the payment when the direct contract comes in and charge to payroll so it is lost."

FE Week asked Mr Palmer if paying the fees direct to the school was a way of avoiding paying tax, but he categorically denied this and said all tax

was paid.

When asked why he requested the unusual payment arrangement he refused to comment any further.

Mr Palmer describes in the December email the request of "school fees as part of the generous bonus that you and Di gave me in November", the same month Ofsted published a grade-one report for 3aaa.

At the time of inspection, Mr Palmer was a non-executive board member for Ofsted, a role he held from August 2011 to December 2014, which the inspectorate has confirmed.

The school-fees revelation follows last week's *FE Week* front-page investigation which exposed the truth behind the government and police investigations into 3aaa.

The company, which had 4,500 learners and 500 staff before it went bust last month when the ESFA pulled its £16.5 million skills contract, allegedly manipulated Individualised Learner Records, to artificially inflate achievement rates by a huge amount,

and misused employer-incentive grants.

Lee Marples, the nephew of Peter, is understood to be central to the data-manipulation part of the investigations.

3aaa received nearly all of its income from the ESFA. Its most recent accounts show that the company recorded a £2.5 million post-tax loss in the 18 months to January 2018.

Despite this, Peter Marples and Ms McEvoy-Robinson took out huge directors' loans totalling more than £4 million between them.

At the end of 2015, both owners purchased multi-million pound properties.

3aaa also splashed its cash on £1.6 million sport-club sponsorships, an Elton John concert and Tesla supercars.

Learndirect was England's biggest FE provider before the ESFA pulled its skills contract earlier this year following a grade-four report from Ofsted.

Under Mr Palmer's leadership the company tried to suppress the report



Andy Palmer

by taking Ofsted to the High Court, unsuccessfully, and imposing an injunction on reporting the case, until *FE Week* overturned it in August 2017.

He was later the subject of scrutiny from the Public Accounts Committee and National Audit Office following an outcry that the government offered Learndirect special treatment by keeping its contracts running until the end of 2017/18 instead of terminating them within the usual three months.

Awards for inspirational lifelong learners and tutors

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A former boxer who overcame alcohol and substance abuse to get back into the ring as a coach has been crowned outstanding student of the year by the Workers' Educational Association.

Now in their sixth year, the awards celebrate the people – including learners, tutors and WEA staff – who have transformed their own lives and the lives of those around them through lifelong learning.

These include ex-professional fighter Kevin McCann, from Liverpool, who managed to turn his life around after taking part in the WEA's Endurance programme specifically for people with addiction problems.

As a result he's been able to reconnect with his boxing past and is now both a coach and a judge, and he's also a mentor on the Endurance programme, helping other former

addicts.

The judges chose Kevin as the winner because of his "incredible achievements".

"His story is a powerful example of how one small step into education can lead to a whole world of new opportunities," they said.

"Kevin has used learning to enhance his life, and he is inspiring others to follow in his footsteps, and for this his award is richly deserved."

Ruth Spellman, the WEA's chief executive, offered her "heartfelt congratulations" to Kevin and all the other award-winners and nominees, and said they were "an inspiration to us all".

"The WEA Awards event is our way of recognising the impact of adult education," she said.

"Every winner has demonstrated this impact, and it's our privilege to celebrate their success."

Other winners include a group of six Syrian refugees who won the award

for outstanding student group.

The six men arrived in the UK with their families, unable to speak, read or write English, but thanks to a WEA pre-English for speakers of other languages course, run in partnership with JobCentre Plus, they were able to

"Every winner has demonstrated this impact, and it's our privilege to celebrate their success"

improve their language skills and gain confidence to support themselves and their families.

The judges said "their story really highlights the power of education and the difference it can make especially to

those facing hardship".

Language barriers were the start of another award-winner's journey through learning.

Tulay Cenik Akfirat won the Olive Cordell foundation student award, which honours those who have demonstrated indefatigable self-motivation and hard work.

Originally from Turkey, she came to the UK unable to speak English – but her efforts to learn were stymied by her immigration status.

Nevertheless she persisted, thanks to the WEA, and Tulay is now a Turkish-language teacher, as well as a language adviser for Ofqual and an examiner for the International Baccalaureate.

The Olive Cordell foundation tutor award went to Maria Crimmins, who teaches ESOL for the WEA in Bradford.

Other award winners include New Routes Integration, a grassroots organisation supporting refugees and asylum-seekers, which won the social

impact award.

Sharon "Ronnie" Stuart was named outstanding volunteer of the year, for her work with the WEA's north east region's history and heritage branch, while Vivien Vernede, who teaches the schools and parenting pathway in Oxford, won the outstanding tutor award.

WEA Reading branch won the impact in your local community award, while the Enfield Town Schools Partnership was crowned outstanding regional partner.

The outstanding staff member/team award was shared between two WEA education co-ordinators – Ross Weatherby, in Aberdeen, and Deborah Walsh, in the East Midlands.

A number of regional winners also received awards at the event, while stage and screenwriter Jimmy McGovern and Baroness McGregor-Smith CBE were both named fellows of the WEA for their commitment to the WEA's ethos.



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AoC conference: Seven takeaway points from the chief inspector's speech

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Ofsted's chief inspector (HMCI) delivered a keynote speech to bring this year's Association of Colleges conference to a close.

Amanda Spielman talked delegates through the new common inspection framework (CIF) and what it means for FE, a crackdown on "teaching to the test", and the inspectorate's new level 2 report, among other things.

FE Week has pulled out her seven main takeaway points.

1. HMCI questions if colleges are chasing income over students' best interests

The chief inspector said Ofsted's level 2 report found that some subjects, namely arts and media, "stand-out" as areas where there is "mismatch between the numbers of students taking courses and their future employment in the industry".

She said "these colleges risk giving false hope to students" and it "raises the question: are they putting the financial imperative of headcount in the classroom ahead of the best

interests of the young people taking up their courses?"

"If so, this isn't acceptable," Ms Spielman added.

"Inspectors will want to see that the decisions that are being made are in the best interests of learners, rather than in the interests of performance tables or for financial gain."

2. Crackdown on 'teaching to the test'

Ofsted wants to send a "clear message" that "teaching to the test to achieve high achievement rates is not good practice, and that there is no need to continually assess learners to predict likely achievement grades," Ms Spielman said.

She added that time is "far better spent" making sure learners "accumulate all the required knowledge, skills and behaviours".

3. Changes to grades under the new CIF

Ms Spielman spoke delegates through the three main proposed changes in the new CIF, which will be piloted early next year ahead of its introduction in September 2019.

"The first change is losing outcomes as a stand-alone judgment," she said.

"The second change is broadening the existing quality of teaching, learning and assessment judgment into a quality-of-education judgment. This one will include curriculum alongside teaching, learning and assessment, and will also reflect outcomes. There will be no separate outcomes judgment.

"Then thirdly, we propose splitting the current judgment of personal development, behaviour and welfare into two separate judgments: one for behaviour and attitudes, and the other for personal development."

4. Provision types to be halved to three

Ms Spielman said Ofsted wants to "make it easier for people, particularly employers, parents and students", to find the information they need from inspection reports.

Therefore, the inspectorate is "planning to simplify the classification of provision types that we inspect".

"We will consult on reducing this from the current six categories down to three," she said.

"The working titles are: education programmes for young people; apprenticeships; and adult-learning programmes."



5. Revived emphasis on the 'appropriateness' of the curriculum

Ms Spielman said that inspectors in FE have "always considered the appropriateness of the curriculum" when arriving at inspection judgements.

But in the new framework, there will be a "stronger emphasis".

"The content of the curriculum and the way that this content is taught and assessed will be a bigger part of inspection activity," she explained.

6. Level 2 students need strong personal skills

The chief inspector said one "common strength" of good level 2 provision is "success in developing personal, social and employability skills".

"For many level 2 students, not reaching a good pass in any GCSEs can generate a sense of failure and dent their self-belief and confidence," she told delegates.

"A relatively high proportion of these students are likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers' priorities were to get students to experience success, as well as address habits and attitudes to secure a positive next step."

7. Praise for college improvement

Confirming what FE Week revealed last week, Ms Spielman commended colleges for improving their performance last year, including a "nine-point rise in the proportion of general FE colleges rated 'good' or 'outstanding'".

"It has been particularly pleasing to see a number of colleges, who had been either 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' for extended periods, break that cycle and get to 'good'," she said, and gave "well done" shout-outs to Waltham Forest and The City of Liverpool College among others.

Hughes accepts Ofsted's concern over courses with poor job prospects

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From front

The boss of the Association of Colleges has told his members Ofsted is "quite right", after the inspectorate found some colleges risk giving students "false hope" by putting them on courses where there are slim job prospects.

Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector, drew gasps from delegates at the AoC conference this week when she questioned whether some colleges are chasing income over students' best interests.

She was referring to the inspectorate's new report on level-two qualifications which found some subjects, namely arts and media, "stand out" as areas where there is a "mismatch between the numbers of students taking courses

and their future employment in the industry".

"Some students get a bit deflated and lose that momentum they built when they discover it is an impossible dream for most of them," she said.

There was push back from the audience during a question-and-answer session, in which Grimsby Institute principal Debra Gray pointed out that the arts and creative industries contribute "£92 billion to the UK economy, two million people work directly in creative industries and three million work in allied professions where people are creative in non-creative businesses".

"That doesn't sound like an impossible dream to me, and it isn't one that we sell to our students," she told the chief inspector, before receiving a round of applause from the audience.

AoC chief executive David Hughes stepped in on the debate and said that

colleges need to "face up to the facts".

"I think the report is very helpful. I had the immediate defensive reaction to it and it's very easy to get into that," he said.

"I think the response from Ofsted is proportionate and quite right. We need to face up to the fact that sometimes we're not challenging learners enough to make sure they are understanding the courses they go in because it does happen in some places, not everywhere.

"The problem whenever you say that is that two thirds of the room will say 'well we don't do that' and that's true, but it does happen and we just need to face up to it"

He continued: "As a sector we need to face up to what I call the dispassionate evidence that gets presented to us and come back and show actually what we are doing and how we can up our game. It's an interesting case study for us."

Clarifying her point again during

the question-and-answer session, Ms Spielman said: "This isn't a report which says everyone should be marching towards a job that has been designated for the same sector, but the college sector does perform that role of creating some level of match between supply and demand, and where that goes a long way adrift we're not necessarily doing the best thing for students.

"This is absolutely not to say these are bad courses in themselves, just that when so many people opt for them with little or no prospect there is a risk of setting up problems."

Ms Gray wasn't alone in feeling aggrieved by the chief inspector's comments.

Tim Chaundy, curriculum leader in performing arts at City and Islington College, part of the Capital City College Group, told FE Week: "To assume that a level-two arts course must translate into a job in an arts field misses the fundamental reason why many learners opt for a level-two arts subject.

"In our experience, level-two arts subjects are seldom a direct route into work in their own right, but are a stepping stone into a level-three course



for those who, for whatever reason, didn't achieve the GCSE grades they needed. Indeed, almost all our learners who do a level-two arts course also do English and maths GCSE resits."

He continued: "For many of our level-two students therefore, college represents a second chance at education. And doing an arts course alongside their GCSE resits develops students' life skills and massively improves their confidence and prepares them for further study."

Should Ofsted judge college leaders on financial management?

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Ofsted's chief inspector was quizzed by *FE Week's* chief reporter, Billy Camden, on a selection of topical questions at the Association of Colleges' annual conference

College finances – should they feature in the leadership and management judgment?

Several college leaders and boards have come under heavy criticism from the FE commissioner for their management of the finances.

So why doesn't the education watchdog take into account financial management during its inspections? To find out, *FE Week* asked the chief inspector, Amanda Spielman.

"I think it's very clear that our responsibilities are mainly about quality, and theirs [the FE commissioner's team] are mainly about finance," she said.

"We don't have the remit to look at that side of colleges, and that's something that's down to the Department for Education to decide if it wants to shift the split. But it is important. They affect each other clearly. Neither we nor anyone else should say they're completely independent of each other."

Asked if Ofsted inspectors may take a closer look at college finances future common inspection frameworks (CIF), particularly around the leadership judgment in reports, Ms Spielman didn't rule it out.

"There are a lot of different ways that you could cut this particular cake," she explained.

"If a conversation begins at some point about ways of taking that forward I'd be happy to have it. At the moment we're developing our framework on the basis that the responsibility is where it is at the moment."

Campus-level inspections – will they happen?

Campus-level inspections are also not going to feature in the upcoming CIF, Ms Spielman confirmed.

Ofsted previously said that if "more granulated performance data" was available it would be open to performing the inspections, which are being called for by large college groups such as NCG.

But the chief inspector ruled out introducing them in the upcoming CIF, being launched in September 2019.

"It's still very much on the list of things we'd like to do but looking at the logistics, looking at when the data, the campus-level data that's needed to do it is going to become fully available, it just doesn't fit with the timing of this framework," she explained.

"There's no point in trying to consult on a proposition now. It's something we'll have to do down the line."

How many is too many grade-three reports for one provider?

Earlier this week, high street giant Boots was hit with a third 'requires improvement' rating in a row. Before Ms Spielman's time at the helm of Ofsted

there was a rule which said three grade-three reports in a row for a provider would equal an 'inadequate'.

But the current chief inspector wasn't a fan of it.

"I changed that rule very shortly after I came in because I thought it was flawed in conception," she said.

"The job of inspection is to report on what we see when we inspect. Notwithstanding that something may still be at 'requires improvement' level, that does not of itself say right, really what we inspected was 'requires improvement' but we're going to say it's 'inadequate' because we saw 'requires improvement'."

"To artificially say that something is 'inadequate' and trigger all the consequences that we know go with grade-four judgments, because we want to heap up pressure, I don't think that's the right thing for us to do."

Asked if she would give a provider five grade-three reports in a row, for example, she said it would be "interesting to see what conclusion that took us to on governance if we got to something that looked like a fifth 'requires improvement'."

Tick-box apprenticeships, is Ofsted still worried?

The inspectorate's deputy director for FE and skills, Paul Joyce, raised concerns in May that the quality of apprenticeships is in decline, and the programmes are starting to resemble the doomed Train to Gain initiative.

Is this a concern that Ms Spielman shares, currently?



"We have started monitoring visits to all the levy-funded apprenticeship providers because I was really concerned about opening that up to a raft of new providers and leaving them for several years without scrutiny," she said.

"We've done well over 100 visits so far and happily the majority of them are doing what they're doing, but there's a significant portion of them that aren't making sufficient progress, where there is reason to be concerned."

She continued: "I think everybody wants to see the apprenticeship reforms to do well, and to have a flow of excellent high-quality apprenticeships and training, and part of doing that is weeding out the stuff that shouldn't be there as quickly as possible before it messes up any individual's life too much."

"Getting to the end of an apprenticeship and discovering that you haven't actually had what you were supposed to have and that what you've

got has got zero labour-market value is not a great place to be. I don't want that to happen to learners."

Will Ofsted urge Treasury to increase FE funding

Ms Spielman has long said that the base rate for 16-to-18 education needs to be boosted.

She reiterated this view last month in a letter to the Public Accounts Committee but revealed for the first time that inspections are now finding that a lack of cash has directly led to falling standards in FE.

Asked what Ofsted could do to get the Treasury to invest, the chief inspector said: "I think the main thing I can do is to talk honestly about what we see and what I do is to try and speak about the things that I think really need attention rather than absolutely everything under the sun."

"I think you have more impact if you really go for the things that matter."

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College group gives staff a five per cent pay rise, despite a deficit

JUDE BURKE
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From front Exclusive

A huge London college group has defended awarding its staff up to a five per cent pay rise – even though it will result in its third annual operating deficit in a row.

The pay deal for Capital City College Group staff, announced on Wednesday, was described as a “landmark” by the University and College Union, and followed eight days of strike action by union members earlier this year.

But a spokesperson has confirmed to *FE Week* that it will cost the group more than £3 million – and will turn a projected break-even budget into a £2.3 million deficit.

“We are fortunate that, as a group, we have the financial strength to invest in improvements to our learners’ experience, as well as staff salaries – even if this investment may result in a short-term operating deficit,” he said.

CCCG had previously budgeted for a one per cent pay rise, which the spokesperson said would have cost £660,000, and had “forecast that the group would break even” this year as a result.

The pay award announced this week “will cost an additional £2,387,000 and we anticipate that this would result in a £2.3 million deficit for the group in the

year 2018/19”.

To make up for this loss the group will look at “ways to develop new sources of income” and at reducing its costs, including the potential for “not replacing certain jobs as they become vacant”.

It comes just months after the group’s chief executive, Roy O’Shaughnessy, took over the reins from previous boss Andy Wilson, who retired over the summer.

“The group will look at ‘ways to develop new sources of income’”

Jeremy Benson, the Department for Education’s deputy director for FE resilience and sustainability, warned that “governors have responsibilities” – to their communities, to students and as charity trustees – when he was asked about the deal at this week’s Association of Colleges annual conference.

“They have to make sure that the decisions they make, financial and wider decisions they take, do what the college is intended to do but also allow that college to be sustainable,” he said.

“I assume that the governors will have concluded that this is affordable

- While apprenticeships are below budget (£2.75m), there has been some modest growth recently;
- Administrative errors associated with CIC loan income have been resolved. WKC and CIC have under-recruited in respect of HE loans income.

5.2 FINANCE UPDATE AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

A finance update report on management accounts to 31st May was received and considered. It was noted that:

- While the Group is unlikely to regain its previously held ESFA outstanding status before the 18/19 academic year, the balance sheet and cash flow are healthy;
- A £6.2m deficit is the current forecast, though areas like CCCT need to be monitored closely right up until the end of the academic year as data changes constantly. The £3m deficit forecast in February/March is unlikely to be achieved;
- For accounting purposes, there will be a £3.3m deficit. The one-off accounting gain of CONEL being acquired in the year will be reported as a separate line in the income and expenditure account;
- The main reasons for not achieving the lower forecast deficit include:
 - the failure of the colleges and CCCT to meet income targets, with continued underperformance in apprenticeship and AEB activity;
 - uncertainty relating to the timely delivery of the Group’s £3m subcontracting plan; a breakdown of the progress in respect of each partner was provided;
 - the one-off non-consolidated pay award to staff to settle industrial action which will cost the Group £750,000;

CCCG board minutes, 11 July 2018

and it won’t increase the risk of the college running into financial difficulties.”

The projected deficit for the current year follows a £5 million shortfall in 2016/17, according to the group’s accounts – the first since CCCG was formed in August 2016.

According to its most recent board minutes, from July, the group was expecting a £6.2 million loss in 2017/18, although the spokesperson said this has now been revised to £5.5 million.

He said the college is currently rated ‘outstanding’ for financial health by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

However, minutes from a board meeting in May reveal that the “anticipated end-of-year assessment of the group’s financial health is ‘good’”, while the July minutes indicate that it is “unlikely to regain” its ‘outstanding’ status before 2018/19 – although they note that “the balance sheet and cash flow are healthy”.

CCCG is made up of three colleges – City and Islington College, Westminster Kingsway College and the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL) – as well as an apprenticeship provider, Capital City College Training.

Its income in 2016/17, before CONEL joined the group, was £80.7 million, according to the accounts, which also revealed the group to have assets of more than £258 million – the vast majority of which were its buildings – and “no external debt”.

The pay deal announced this week will see the majority of staff receive the full five per cent increase, backdated to September, while senior managers will receive less or nothing, depending on their salary.

UCU members will also not have their pay deducted for two of the eight days of strike action between February and April.

The union claimed that Mr O’Shaughnessy, who took up his post

in September, had waived his right to a bonus as part of the deal.

However, the CCCG spokesperson said he gave up this right – which would have been worth up to 15 per cent of his £220,000 salary – when he was appointed earlier this year.

“This landmark pay increase, agreed at one of the largest college groups in England, sets the bar for others when it comes to the pay and conditions of staff,” said Matt Waddup, the UCU’s head of policy and campaigns.

In a statement from the UCU, shadow chancellor John McDonnell offered his congratulations to its members at the college for securing a “brilliant victory”.

“Congratulations to the governing body in agreeing this bold and progressive step forward and I hope this signals a change in direction that the whole sector can follow.”

Staff at six colleges across the country will walk out for two days next week in the first wave of action over this year’s pay award.

At the same time ballots will open on possible future action over pay at a further 26 colleges.

Staff were left bitterly disappointed in July when the AoC – which represents colleges on pay discussions – said it was unable to recommend a salary increase of five per cent, and was instead only able to propose a “substantial pay package” over two years dependent on government funding.



Revealed: The 'scary' mess left by principal who jumped ship

BILLY CAMDEN

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Significant senior-staff vacancies and nonexistent strategic and financial plans are just some of the issues facing a cash-strapped London college which was left in tatters by its old leader, its new principal has revealed.

Karen Redhead lifted the lid on the difficulties at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College during a hot-topic panel session at the Association of Colleges conference.

She took over from Garry Phillips as principal in September, after he jumped ship in the summer before the college's financial mess could be revealed by FE commissioner Richard Atkins in October. Mr Phillips stood down from his new role at City College Plymouth last week, following a union and staff backlash.

Ms Redhead told delegates in the session that she doesn't "like an easy life" and prefers to "take on challenges", and the job at EHWLC "has not let me down".

"I could see the college was about to run out of money in early October, and I was only five minutes into the job at the time, so an urgent priority was to apply for exceptional financial support, and that could meet our ongoing obligations, the main one being the payroll," she explained.

"I still am carrying a load of vacancies at the college, including chair, vice chair, clerk, deputy principal for curriculum and quality, director for finances and resources, director of management information system, and the director of human resources is due to leave next month.

"That should give you a little bit of an idea about what I'm working with."

She said that, in addition, the college has "no strategic plan, no curriculum plan to speak of, no workforce plan or financial plan that was fit for purpose, or estates strategy, despite having multiple and complex projects on the go, and no risk register has been produced since 2016.

"By way of context you will realise the scale of the issue".

Mr Atkins' visit in March was prompted by EHWLC's precarious financial position which has now left it dependent on government bailouts for its survival.

According to the college's published accounts, it went from a £5.7 million



From left: FE Commissioner Richard Atkins, EHWLC new principal Karen Redhead, Association of Colleges boss David Hughes, Ofsted deputy director for FE Paul Joyce, and the ESFA's director for FE Peter Mucklow

surplus in 2015/16 to an £8 million deficit in 2016/17.

Ms Redhead said it will take two years for the college to achieve a break-even position, which is "scary, we can't hang about".

"That should give you a little bit of an idea about what I'm working with"

The new principal explained that due to the "extent of our financial issues", there are currently three agencies "that have us in intervention". These include the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Transactions Unit which administers bailouts, and the FE commissioner's team.

"My experience is that the three agencies are trying really hard to work effectively together in order to streamline intervention and also attempt to minimise any duplication of demands on the college," Ms Redhead said.

"It has been simultaneously supportive and burdensome."



Garry Phillips

However, due to the college being in receipt of exceptional financial support, the "hoops we're having to jump through are considerable and they present in my view probably the biggest barrier to the college's rapid recovery", the new principal added.

"We're constantly being asked by the agencies to supply things that would be readily available in a college that was in better shape, but I've already mentioned some of the strategies and policies that we're lacking.

"Our management information is significantly underdeveloped so I'm having to do a lot of retrospective shoring up, while also trying to propel a college forward."

Ms Redhead went on to explain that the college has just undergone its first stock-take visit, which was "thorough, challenging and purposeful".

"It genuinely gave me access to what felt like a combination of high-quality coaching and mentoring which is just what we need at the moment," she said.

"We've worked very hard as a college over the last few months and stock-take-visit feedback noted that an overwhelming amount of work has taken place in the first few months, but I do know we're off on a long journey."

She concluded that it is a "lonely job" at the top of a college, and there are some "major financial challenges and tough decisions ahead".

FE COMMISSIONER QUIZZED OVER 'SERIAL OFFENDERS'

During the hot-topic panel session at the Association of Colleges conference, several new college governors asked about how to avoid "serial offender" college principals.

Nazir Afzal OBE became chair of Hopwood Hall College on September 1, 2018, after stepping down as pro-chancellor at Brunel University the previous month, before which he was chief crown prosecutor with the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Afzal, addressing Karen Redhead on the panel, said: "I heard your story about your college and the failings that the senior team were involved in.

"If they were running a company they would be disqualified.

"If they were running a police force they would never run a police force ever again.

"Is there any mechanism to ensure those individuals are held accountable for what you have to deal with?"

Richard Atkins, the FE commissioner, responded that he was "really pleased that the question came from a chair because chairs are a really crucial part of the accountability structure".

This sector has always had

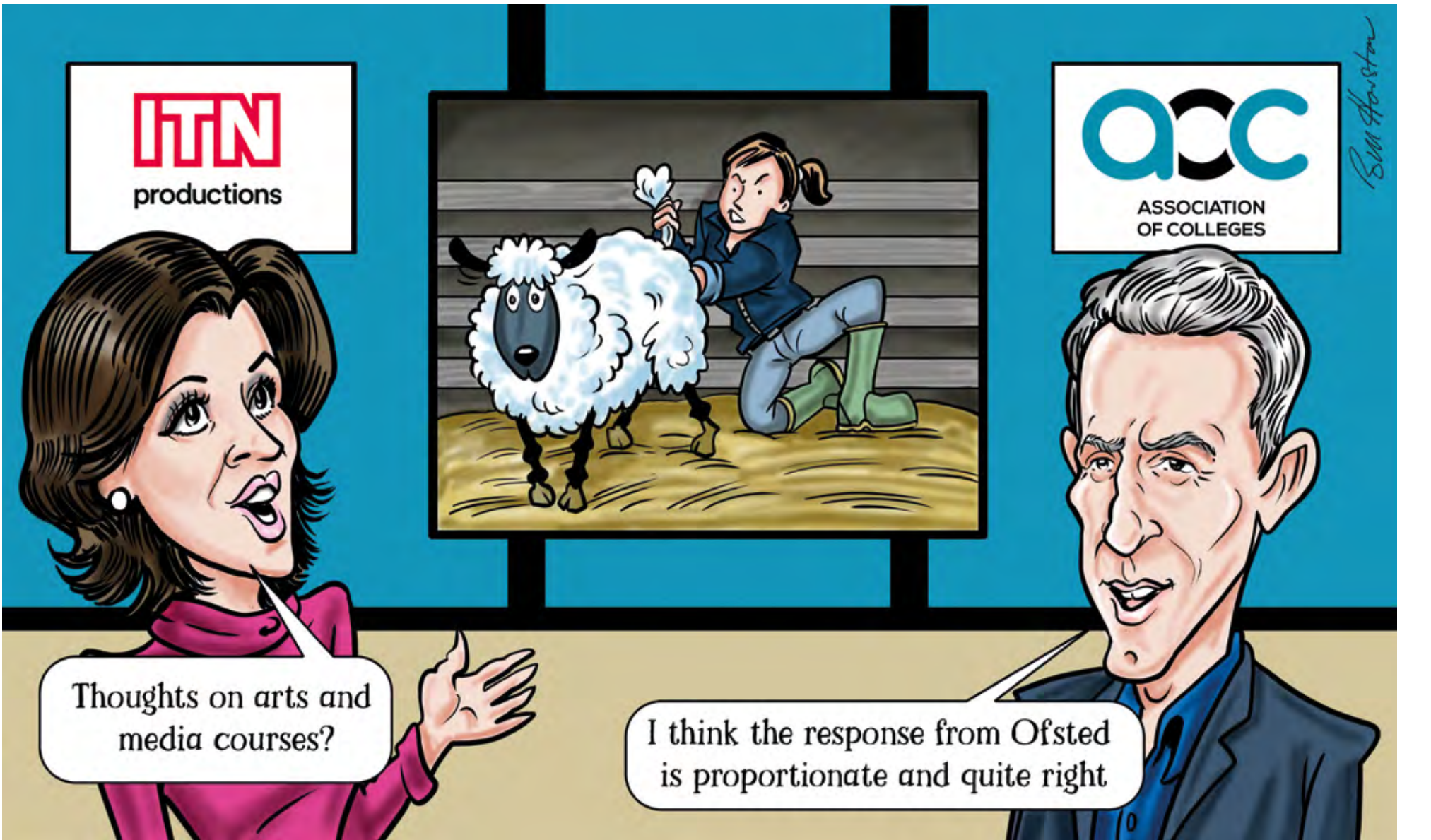
a very small number of serial offenders who have driven one college into the ground and then got a job somewhere else and done the same thing, he said.

"At the moment, I have powers of intervention and beyond that everything is essentially kind of persuasion and so on. People do move on." He added that he thinks it is right that we have a free press "and that the press report on these situations because how else are people going to know not to employ them?"

"If we intervene and publish that means my team thinks something very serious went wrong, probably involving a number of people, and I think that should be put in the public domain. I don't think that should be swept under the carpet and if you put that in the public domain then we have a free press that does that."

He said that "personally I don't comment individually on cases, people will know that, the press who are in the room know that, but I think that when we publish intervention reports in that way when things have gone seriously wrong, one of the reasons for doing that is to disclose serial offenders and make them known to the sector."

News



Civil-service apprentices left in limbo after Premier termination

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The cabinet office is reviewing the training providers used for civil-service apprentices, to decide who will take over from a government provider with “unsafe” recruitment practices.

Last week, FE Week exclusively revealed that the Education and Skills Funding Agency had terminated the levy funding of Premier People Solutions following a shocking monitoring report from Ofsted, which warned that “leaders and managers cannot be sure that their members of staff are safe to work in the sensitive environments of the employers for whom their apprentices work”.

The provider, which trades as Premier Partnership, delivered apprenticeship training to government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs and the UK Visas and Immigration service. It will be removed from the register of apprenticeship training providers next month.

The cabinet office said a decision was still being made on what to do for the 686 apprentices that trained with Premier.

Provider on cabinet office register (CCS)	Ofsted Grade	Date inspected
Ashridge Executive & Organisation Development Ltd	Not on Ofsted	Not on Ofsted
Babington Business College	Good	02/03/2015
BC Arch Limited	Outstanding	23/02/2016
BPP Professional Education	Not inspected	Not inspected
Capita Business Services Ltd	Good	12/09/2017
CIPFA Business Ltd	Not inspected	Not inspected
Encompass Consultancy Limited	Requires improvement	07/08/2018
Estio Training Ltd	Reasonable monitoring	07/08/2018
GP Strategies Training Limited	Short - good	21/04/2016
Interserve Learning & Employment (Services) Limited	Short - good	26/09/2017
Kaplan	Requires improvement	24/07/2018
Lifetime Training Group	Short - good	18/05/2016
QA Limited	Outstanding	21/10/2013
The Open University	Not inspected	Not inspected
University College of Estate Management	Reasonable monitoring	08/08/2018

A spokesperson said: “The cabinet office is currently reviewing education and training providers for civil-service apprentices and will appoint a replacement in due course.”

A source with knowledge of the situation said the apprentices may be transferred to Capita (see table), but neither the cabinet office nor Capita would confirm this.

Ofsted’s poor verdict on Premier was made more surprising by the fact the company had successfully tendered to get on to the Crown Commercial Service call-off list from September 2017.

The CCS is an executive agency sponsored by the cabinet office, and making its list is seen as a badge of quality for any provider.

However, Premier made it on to the list of approved apprenticeship providers despite the fact it only began recruiting its first levy-funded apprentices in August 2017, and its apprenticeship provision had not been inspected by Ofsted.

According to the “find apprenticeship training” service, it had provided apprenticeships to the government for the last six months, meaning it was accepted on to the CCS

list after providing apprentice training for less than a year.

Premier is not the only outlier to have reached this prestigious list of cabinet office-approved providers, although it is the only one the cabinet office has plans to replace.

Fifteen suppliers are listed under the CCS’s “apprenticeship training and related services” contract page. Two of these – Encompass Consultancy and Kaplan – are currently rated as ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted.

Three of the providers on the list have not yet had their apprenticeship provision graded by Ofsted: The Open

University, CIPFA Business and BPP Professional Education.

BPP Professional Education is one of four BPP providers to appear on the register of apprenticeship training providers. The global education group was rocked earlier this month after an Ofsted monitoring report slammed the apprenticeship provision at sister company BPP University and warned leaders were unaware of the “slow progress” apprentices make.

ESFA will now have to decide whether to temporarily ban BPP University from taking on new starts, but it is not clear whether the other BPP branches, including BPP Professional Education, will be allowed to take over their apprenticeship training.

Two other providers on the CCS list – University College of Estate Management and Estio Training – are still classed as “new” apprenticeship providers and have only been subjected to early-monitoring visits by Ofsted.

Of the remaining providers, five are ‘good’, two are ‘outstanding’ and one – Ashridge Executive and Organisation Development – does not appear on Ofsted at all.

Unlocking potential through learning



Chief Executive

Newcastle. Salary c£200,000

NCG is one of the largest providers of further education and training in the sector with national reach delivered through two training providers and seven Colleges based in the North, the Midlands and London. We have our own higher education degree awarding powers and are determined to provide the best opportunities for young people and adults alike and contribute to our local communities and economy. We are now seeking a new CEO to lead our large, successful and complex organisation through the next stage in our journey.

NCG works with over 45,000 learners and 7,800 businesses. We have a turnover of c£180m and employ 2,500 staff in 61 locations across the UK. The education, skills and training sector is changing and NCG is ready to meet the needs of our customers and the expectations of our stakeholders. Our agreed strategy and improvement action plan will ensure, following our recent Ofsted, that we rapidly deliver improvements in quality across NCG. Our goal is not just to be 'good', but to ensure that each part of NCG is at, or on a clear journey towards 'outstanding'.

We are looking for a highly capable, inspiring and empowering CEO who will ensure NCG delivers for our learners, employees and external partners. We want to appoint an outstanding leader with a successful track record in transformational change, a strong commitment to the empowering potential of education and experience of working within a complex, multi-site organisation.

This is a high-profile and hugely exciting opportunity to lead one of the largest College Groups in the UK with huge potential to realise benefits for learners, businesses and the broader further education sector.



For more information and to apply visit www.leadingNCG.com and contact our advising consultants at GatenbySanderson: Paul Aristides on 020 7426 3987 or Emma French on 07977 225 513.

Closing date: 17 December 2018.



Director of Finance Salary £60 - £65k per annum

Are you up to the challenge of this exciting and challenging opportunity? Weymouth College is looking to appoint an experienced Director of Finance, a Qualified Accountant, to join our Senior Leadership Team.

As a highly ambitious college, which continues to build on its Ofsted Good inspection rating and outstanding results, we are now seeking a qualified and experienced accountant who will develop and implement a financial strategy that will return us to good financial health and maintain this position.

Reporting to the Principal and Chief Executive you must have recent financial management experience gained in the further education sector with experience of developing financial strategies, and all aspects of budget management and business planning. You must be able to report complex financial data and information in formats which inspire the

confidence of senior leaders and support decision making at all levels.

For an informal discussion with the current post holder, Liz Hurst, please contact her by email in the first instance at liz_hurst@weymouth.ac.uk

Weymouth College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy. The successful applicant will be required to apply for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and to provide proof of eligibility to work in the UK.

For an application pack please contact Louise Gilligan HR Adviser at louise_gilligan@weymouth.ac.uk or phone 01305 208873. Completed applications should be sent to Louise Gilligan

Closing date for applications: 9.00 am Monday 10 December 2018
Interviews will be held on 11 January 2019



Head of Business Intelligence (MIS) Full time, permanent Circa £46k

Burton and South Derbyshire College is looking for an experienced MIS professional to take our MIS strategy to the next level. Experienced in funding and data management, you will be passionate about delivering proactive and accurate MIS services through motivational leadership, and will build on your strong track record of exceptional data integrity and system design.

In return we will offer an excellent remuneration package in a supportive and development-focussed culture at a Good (OFSTED 2017) College boasting outstanding financial health and attractive staff benefits.

If you have the requisite skills, knowledge and experience as an MIS professional and are looking to secure your next step then we would like to hear from you.

For an informal discussion about the role with Gary Chin – Vice Principal: Corporate

Services, please call 01283 494551 to arrange an appointment.

The College is registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service and the successful applicants for this post will be required to apply for the Disclosure at the enhanced level. Burton and South Derbyshire College is committed to Equal Opportunities.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people/vulnerable adults and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 23:59 on Sunday 2nd December 2018. Please visit <https://www.bsdc.ac.uk/work-for-us/vacancies> for more information and to apply. Interviews will be held on 11th December 2018. Please note late applications and CVs are not acceptable.

Role: Curriculum Manager

Type: Permanent

Salary: Up to £42,000

Location: Dearne Valley

Closing Date: 2nd December 2018

The RNN Group incorporates Rotherham College, North Notts College, Dearne Valley College and its five subsidiary training organisations. We are based in the East Midlands and the South Yorkshire region and aim to help companies succeed and individuals learn their way to career security, fulfilment and happiness. Whatever role they are in, our staff are skilled, effective and dedicated to delivering or supporting outstanding education or training. If you are passionate, driven and enthusiastic with a desire to work in a friendly, progressive organisation which makes a positive impact then don't hesitate to get in touch.

The Role

In this key role you will manage the curriculum areas of Engineering, Construction and Digital, providing dynamic leadership in the day to day operations.

As operational lead the post holder will line manage teaching and support staff to ensure the delivery of high quality teaching learning and assessment. They will pro-actively drive forward college strategies for quality improvement which will support the College's ambition to become outstanding. The main goal is to ensure that our learners have great learning experiences. The post holder will support the Assistant Principal to ensure that the performance of the area is outstanding by achieving key targets to ensure the successful delivery of our agreed strategic objectives.

Have you got what it takes?

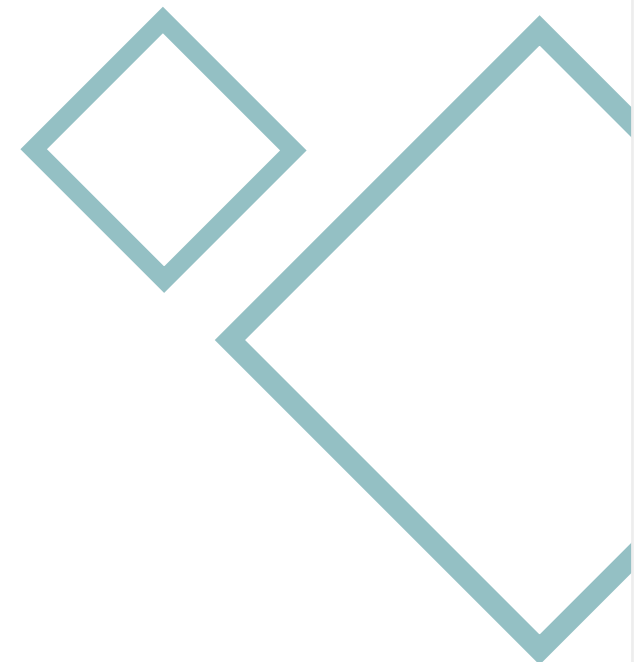
In this challenging role, you will be required to have the skills and vision to continually develop and adapt the curriculum, ensuring that the offer meets the needs of learners, employers and addresses local priorities. You will need to be a dynamic curriculum manager who can lead and inspire. You should have experience of managing curriculum within either Engineering, Digital or Construction and be able to demonstrate a track record of making improvements along with experience of leading and performance managing teams. Ideally you will be qualified to degree level and have a relevant teaching and assessor qualification.

We can offer:

- Competitive salary
- Generous annual leave entitlement for teaching and support staff
- Entry to Local Government or Teachers pension scheme, with a significant contribution from the RNN Group
- Access to salary sacrifice childcare vouchers scheme and other benefits designed to save you time and money.
- Significant investment in your development.

We celebrate diversity and welcome applications from everyone. We are also proud to be part of the Disability Confidence Scheme.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, vulnerable adults and young people. All new employees will be required undertake a DBS check.



For more information or to apply please contact:
mattjones@rotherham.ac.uk

OPPORTUNITIES AT WARRINGTON & VALE ROYAL COLLEGE

At Warrington & Vale Royal College we are determined to secure our position as an outstanding college, becoming a leader in the sector.

A rapidly improving college, we are ranked 6th nationally for pass rates and our results put us in the top 5% of General Further Education colleges. We are now looking to build upon our success, further accelerating the pace of improvement, as we continue to invest in high quality teaching and learning and diversify our curriculum.



DEPUTY PRINCIPAL – CURRICULUM & QUALITY

Salary: Up to 90k
Permanent
Ref: J76/18

We are seeking to appoint a truly exceptional individual as Deputy Principal for Curriculum & Quality, with an outstanding track record of achievement, raising standards and developing innovative, engaging and valuable learning experiences. A dynamic and highly credible leader, you will share our passion for, and commitment to, excellent teaching, learning and skills development.

DIRECTOR OF TEACHING, LEARNING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Salary: £42,508 - £53,294
Permanent
Ref: J77/18

We are seeking to appoint an inspirational leader to proactively lead the innovative practice and effective management of teaching, learning, assessment and quality improvement across the college. Suitable candidates should have comprehensive knowledge and experience of what outstanding teaching, learning and assessment looks like and a proven track record of developing teachers.

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT

Salary: £42,508 - £53,294
12 months maternity cover
Ref: J78/18

We are seeking to appoint an experienced leader to cover the Director of Student Support's maternity leave from March 2019. Suitable candidates should have a successful track record in leading high performance teams and also have comprehensive knowledge and experience of safeguarding and learning support.

All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS.

Further details for all vacancies and how to apply are available at www.wvr.ac.uk

The closing date for all these vacancies is 27 November 2018



'Warrington & Vale Royal College is committed to Equal Opportunities and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our learners'

Further Education Partnership

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Consultants

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We are a successful and growing company offering competitive solutions with consultancy and interim services. Founded by highly experienced and reputable consultants, we now operate nationally and continue to build a very satisfied client base.

We are looking to recruit experienced individuals who are at the top of their game in managing resources and delivering results in an ever-challenging environment. You may already be working as a consultant in the sector or may be contemplating your next career step, having already built up solid experience in FE, with a successful track record. If you are interested in joining our team in either a full-time or an associate capacity, we'd be happy to hear from you.

See our on-line advert for more details or send your CV to mike.craddock@furthereducationpartnership.com

www.furthereducationpartnership.com



CITY of BRISTOL COLLEGE

HEAD OF ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

£35,809 - £37,993

This position will lead and manage cross-college provision of high quality learning support for students, with oversight for securing and sustaining improvements in all aspects of learning support. You will be required:

- To work in partnership with feeder schools and other organisations, to effectively transition and support students with high needs and / or into College, their programme of study, and progression into work or towards independence
- To lead on establishing best practice and the continuous improvement of approaches to assist students with learning difficulties associated with English and maths, and overcome wider barriers to achievement.

We are looking for someone with experience of SEN and Learning Support and who is confident in working in a fast paced environment, with changing priorities.

The post-holder will need to have a good understanding of how learning support is funded and of the different methods of delivery such as in class, 1:1 and small groups and will understand how will be able to demonstrate a range of strategies to enable students to succeed.

City of Bristol College offers generous holiday entitlement of 51 holiday days (including bank holiday and College Closure Days). In addition, we offer membership to the Teachers' Pension Scheme as well as a range of other benefits including a supportive package of continuous professional development.

Closing date: Wednesday 19 December 2018 (midnight)

Interview date: Tuesday 8 January 2019 - College Green Centre

Please see our website for details <http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs>

BUTTERCUPS TRAINING IS HIRING!



Who are Buttercups?

Since our inception in 1988, we have evolved from a small team solely providing workshops to pharmacy staff, to a team of over 140 delivering more than 25 blended learning courses across all pharmacy sectors. Despite the transition across the years, Buttercups' mission has always remained the same; to deliver high quality training programmes to pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, dispensing assistants and support staff working in hospitals, the community, dispensing doctors' practices and the Armed Forces.

We are the largest training provider in the pharmacy sector serving pharmacies from the largest multiples to independents, dispensing doctors, the MOD and NHS Trusts.

Buttercups Culture

Despite our growth over the years, Buttercups still maintains a "family business" culture. We all know and converse with each other - we have open plan offices and this assists with our very friendly and open culture. There is a strong ethos of teamwork and everyone is approachable. There are many opportunities to get to know people in the company that you may not work closely with, such as sporting activities and social events. We have a very healthy work social life and we believe in work life balance! We embrace the value of wellness and encourage employees who are in the office to break out for fresh air, table tennis, a musical interlude or simply coffee in our spacious and relaxing refectory. We empower employees to respond to the challenges of an ever-changing pharmacy landscape and see our diverse team as innovators building the Buttercups of tomorrow and beyond.

Our Vacancies

Buttercups Training is currently seeking enthusiastic and motivated pharmacy assessors, tutors and science graduates or teachers. The successful applicants will demonstrate excellent communication skills as well as the ability to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment to our learners via our blended learning delivery.

What do we mean by blended learning?

At Buttercups Training, we use a range of different teaching techniques to best suit the needs of our learners. The following is an overview of what we mean:

Buttercups virtual classrooms - these are interactive online classrooms delivered by Buttercups tutors.

Broadcast webinars - these are a more structured version of our virtual classroom, delivered in a lecture-like way.

e-Learning - this is online interactive learning using our suite of education tools, such as our b-Hive learner management platform and Virtual Pharmacy. Our Virtual Pharmacy is an interactive learning tool, which simulates various medicines counter scenarios and gives real-time feedback on the learner's decisions.

1 to 1 tutorials - these are delivered online or over the telephone.

VACANCIES

Assessors and Tutors

Candidates must hold relevant teaching or assessing qualifications and have experience in the pharmacy sector and/or a registrant of the GPhC.

Science Graduates or Teachers

Candidates must be located within a commutable distance to our Nottingham head office, as intensive training will be required. The following science degrees are suitable:

Physiology
Medicine
Nursing
Pharmacology
Human Biology

For more information, please visit:
<https://www.buttercupstraining.co.uk/content/vacancies>



Head of Marketing

Organisation: London South Bank University and Lambeth College

Salary Range: £54,562 - £62,519 (inclusive of London Weighting)

Start: January 2019

In January 2019, Lambeth College will join the London South Bank University family of institutions which heralds the beginning of an exciting new era for the College and its learners. The University is now looking to appoint an experienced marketing leader to support the College with its exciting agenda for growth and development.

Working as the FE marketing lead within our marketing organisation, you will lead on the design and implementation of an exciting and robust marketing strategy that will enable the College to increase student recruitment, build market share and enhance brand reputation throughout the communities it serves. Central to this will be the identification of target markets and segments to underpin sustainable growth, the influencing of curriculum provision based on learner and employer needs, and the execution of highly effective and continually optimised recruitment campaigns.

The successful candidate will be a driven and experienced marketer with a high level of commercial acumen and a track record of delivering growth, preferably within the FE sector. An individual who combines a strategic mind-set with highly developed operational marketing skills that can flex across a range of both digital and non-digital channels. They will possess an excellent understanding of how to engage a range of stakeholders through digital and social media channels and will be target driven, able to translate ideas and activities into measurable outcomes.

For more details and to apply, please visit www.lsbu.ac.uk/jobs

Closing Date: 06/12/2018

Interviews: 14/12/2018

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Basic listings include your company logo, unlimited text, attachments.

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Featured listings include enhanced visibility on our website, posts via our social media accounts, inclusion on our weekly jobs email (sent to thousands of education professionals) and all the features of a basic listing.



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Discounted rates available until December 14th 2018

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A successful growing company, the Skills and Education Group is seeking a **Head of Awarding Research and Development** and a **Qualifications and Assessment Development Manager**. This is an exciting time to join a unique organisation with opportunities to help shape the future of our business and grow with the Group.

HEAD OF AWARDING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Salary: £40k - £50k pa (according to ability and experience)

Permanent full-time post based in Nottingham
(some flexible home working may be considered)

An exciting opportunity is available for a professional and skilled individual, with the drive and ambition to succeed, to take on this key senior management role in our successful and continuously evolving organisation.

This is a challenging role suitable for a confident individual who has the ability to lead, direct, manage and implement an effective and efficient awarding research, development and review function within a secure and confidential environment.

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Closing date: 5.00 pm Thursday 29 November 2018

Interviews: Tuesday 11 December 2018 at Robins Wood House,
Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 3NH

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Permanent full-time post based in Nottingham
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Key responsibilities will include managing an individual portfolio of qualifications, assessments and resources within defined sectors within a secure and confidential environment. Working with partners, stakeholders and specialists, managing the lifecycle of review and development projects, assessment strategies, e-enabled systems and regulatory requirements.

Closing date: 12 noon Monday 3 December 2018

Interviews: Monday 10 December 2018 at Robins Wood House,
Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 3NH

The Skills and Education Group is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We offer good terms and conditions of employment with a generous holiday entitlement and a contributory pension scheme. If you are interested in working for an organisation where you can directly contribute to its continued success please contact Tracy Roser by e-mail tracyr@skillsedugroup.co.uk or telephone **0115 8541628** for further details or visit the Skills and Education Group website

Please note we do not accept late applications and CVs submitted without a formal application form will not be accepted for consideration. No agencies please.

EDITORIAL



Look beyond achievement rates to wider outcomes in the NICDEX

The NICDEX is back for its third year. At its simplest, it is a list of nearly all further education colleges, each given points for a basket of official DfE performance measures.

Clearly, by listing the colleges in order of points, with the most first, it becomes a league table.

As a result, the NICDEX has generated a lot of interest and opinion in equal measure, even making the local news for Exeter College, who came top in both 2016 and 2017.

But my interest in FE data and performance measure began in 2003, when I joined Lewisham College as Director of Planning and Performance.

Prior to that point, working for the WEA and two private training providers, my focus had been on

the funding methodology.

But at the college, a large general further education college in South East London, I also became responsible for all aspects of performance reporting.

For seven enjoyable years I crunched ILR data and was paid to turn it into meaningful information to help junior and senior managers make well informed and ultimately successful decisions.

Then, in 2010 I wrote a book about FE data, called The hands-on guide to post-16 performance and data, which was published by Pearson.

At the same time the funding agency attempted to create a new performance regime, that they called the Framework for

Excellence.

It was to be a balanced score-card approach, drawing on a range of measures to arrive at an overall score for the college.

Before it was launched, the idea of an overall score was dropped, and from that point it was destined to fail.

Tens of millions was spent by the DfE, a Framework for Excellence website was launched, but it flopped.

The remnants of the Framework for Excellence still exist to this day, in the form of the annual learner and employer satisfaction surveys (known as FE Choices for no obvious reason).

So in 2016 I decided to have a go at a balanced score-card approach, and the NICDEX was born.

Was it possible to make a college league table from DfE statistics, which was fair and not overly complex?

You will be the judge of that.

Most importantly NICDEX is transparent. The four measures that make up the NICDEX are published by the DfE, and unlike achievement rates they are hard to game.

The measures are also updated every year by the DfE, unlike Ofsted grades.

Aside from selecting the measures, the main challenge (some may say controversy) was to devise a scoring system.

The NICDEX system is not perfect, but with bonus points it does take account of cohort size and with it being a score out of 10, it is fairly easy to understand

when it comes to adding the four scores together to arrive at an overall score out of 40.

The NICDEX was an enjoyable intellectual challenge, to create an annual performance table from a mix of measures.

But it is also a serious attempt to encourage colleges to look beyond achievement rates, and really focus on increasing satisfaction and progression.

Who knows, in a few years from now these wider measures may even feature in the funding methodology. Now that's worth a debate!

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



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AoC conference: Seven takeaway points from the chief inspector's speech

 @samparrett1

Great article Billy and a really good message to end to the conference on after a very weak start! #loveFE

 The first point is fundamentally wrong and shame on you for not challenging this. The creative industry contributes £92 billion to the UK economy, careers in this sector are growing at 4 times the pace of other sectors, there are 2 million people directly employed in the creative and media sector and another 3 million people employed in other roles within the sector.

Not to mention the transferable skills these courses provide that will be critical in helping the UK meet the challenges of the future.

To say colleges are giving false hope is patently wrong and this narrative needs to change.

CareersChampion

Careers and Enterprise Company blasted over £200k conference spend

 @WestKentEAN

Also much favourable feedback and plenty of encouragement for @careerent in today's select committee. Also stated they welcome Ofsted inspections. Well worth listening to Rob Halfon's summary at the end.

Use your money wisely, Milton tells colleges

 @UCUNottmCollege

@AnneMilton might be referring to the scandals of 3aaa or #principalspay...? Teachers & support staff have been on the receiving end of careful resource management for years #nopayrise #LoveOurColleges #ucu

 @ipryce


It felt like the opposite of a Mr Grace visit in Are You Being Served? "You're all doing very badly." Poor speech, would have been better to ditch it and

just take questions instead. No examples of unwise spending given either, so a cheap shot Low take-up of scheme to transfer levy funds from larger to smaller employers

 @AR_Charity

Well done to @FEWeek for this. We @AR_Charity have been working with several large employers, with very pleasing progress. However, if we all want to meet our target of more apprentices in work, the restrictions on how to spend the levy need lifting. Now! @AnneMilton talk to us!!

Labour would scrap GCSE English and maths resit policy

 A maths qualification that was relevant to the student's vocational course would be great, for example carpentry and brickwork where you need to understand angles, measurements, area etc. Maths that can be used in everyday life would be greatly beneficial.

Rachel Mayne

REPLY OF THE WEEK

AoC conference: Seven takeaway points from the chief inspector's speech



"Inspectors will want to see that the decisions that are being made are in the best interests of learners, rather than in the interests of performance tables...."

There always appears to be this assumption that all providers are on the fiddle - some are, yes, but I'd venture that the vast majority are being driven into certain behaviours as a result of poor policy and funding rates.

One example of this would be chasing achievement rates to get a good Ofsted grade - I'm glad to see that Ofsted recognises this.

Geoff

Experts

PROFESSOR
EWART KEEP

Director of SKOPE,
Oxford University



Confusion surrounds the
imminent arrival of SAPs

Will SAPs really be able to match local skills supply to employers' needs, or is this just magical thinking, asks Ewart Keep

Sometimes a piece of policy is announced and then vanishes from view for a lengthy period.

This often signifies that it is proving hard to design and deliver. A current case in point is the Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) whose birth was heralded in the Conservative party manifesto in 2017. The SAPs would, it was claimed, provide the mechanism to ensure that local skills supply was better matched with the needs of employers – a policy goal that we have been pursuing by one means or another for more than 35 years.

With the election out of the way, the Department for Education sat down and tried to work out what SAPs could do, how they could do it and how they might best be structured. The SAPs were extremely vaguely sketched in the

manifesto, so this proved to be a major challenge, not least as the government had abolished the preceding infrastructure that aimed to help link supply and demand: sector skills councils (SSCs) and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). One strand of thought was to have a single national SAP, but in the end this was abandoned.

Proposals are now, finally, emerging and there are questions as to whether they make any sense. Each Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) is to have a SAP. Each SAP will assess skill demand/need data, manage relationships in order to use the SAP analysis to create a common understanding and move skill priorities forward, and deliver priorities through influencing a more efficient allocation of resources. Sounds easy!

Three big problems loom. First, the survey data that is supposed to power the SAPs' deliberations and planning,

when broken down by sector or firm size at LEP level, will be weak, and data of any kind to answer some of the questions the SAPs have been set (particularly around firms' training efforts) is simply unavailable at present.

“There are questions as to whether the proposals make any sense”

Second, the SAPs are supposed to be shifting the pattern of provision without any real financial levers. Our marketplace for provision is highly centralised. The vast bulk of funding is controlled by DfE and the Education and Skills Funding Agency at national level and disbursed to providers without any mechanism for local

involvement in decision-making. The MCAs will soon have what is left of the adult-education budget devolved to them, but this is a limited pot of money, and its ability to leverage fundamental changes in the pattern of provision, particularly pre-19, is probably close to nil. Government plans talk about the SAPs “identifying levers”, but it is hard to identify things that currently do not exist.

The third problem is that the SAPs are intended to encourage local co-operation between providers. Given the absence of major funding powers to incentivise different behaviours, and given also the marketization of the different strands of provision (14-16, 16-18/19, apprenticeship levy and non-levy, loans funded +19, etc), it is profoundly unclear how this can be achieved. As recent issues of FE Week have illustrated in the starkest possible fashion, the “invisible hand” of contestability and quasi-markets is working its magic with providers

in ways that DfE and the architects of marketization probably never dreamed of. The idea that elements of planning and cooperation can be superimposed on often fierce local competition across a range of providers looks like magical thinking.

In Scotland a broadly similar regime has been introduced, with regional skills assessments and sectoral investment plans producing demand forecasts at spatial and occupational levels, and these are then used to negotiate outcome agreements with both colleges and universities that aim to encourage institutions to flex supply to help meet demand. The key difference is that the Scottish Funding Council negotiates the agreement with the college via a two-way, iterative process, and the agreement is in turn tied to releasing the block-grant funding that keeps the college in business – in other words, funding incentivises everyone to take the process seriously.

RONEL
LEHMANN

CEO, Finito



Colleges can give students a
headstart over universities

With their close employer relationships, colleges have a major advantage over schools and universities, says Ronel Lehmann

For years there has been discussion around the growing skills gaps faced by UK industry. With Brexit looming, many employers are urgently looking at ways to address the issue.

Fifty years ago, technical education suffered from snobbery. People began to view academic achievement as the main driver of successw.

Traditional polytechnics rebranded themselves as universities, with vocational learning taking a back seat. This supported the previous government's target of getting 50 per cent of young people into higher education.

Yet it was an evidently flawed approach, as here we are in 2018 with the demand for skilled workers growing exponentially. Employers complain that graduates are not adequately prepared for the world of work – hardly surprising

considering the lack of emphasis on careers throughout the entire school system.

Compounding this problem, further education colleges, which tend to have a much sharper focus on skills and careers, are severely underfunded and not admired enough for the vital technical and vocational provision they offer.

Having been an employer for many years, in industries from finance to communications, I now help young people from a range of backgrounds to get into their chosen career. Many have armfuls of high-quality qualifications, perhaps from the best schools and universities, yet woefully lack the skills needed in a commercial environment.

Skills such as being able to shake someone's hand and look them in the eye sound basic but, believe me, are often missing. Presenting information confidently to other people doesn't come naturally to many and must be taught. Then there is workplace etiquette – being part of a team, getting to work

on time and striving to do your very best. Again, these skills can be lacking if young people have never been taught them or set foot in a workplace.

With schools dropping vocational subjects to focus on academic qualifications, FE colleges have an unprecedented opportunity to fill the

“Learner recruitment needs to be about promoting a route to a fulfilling career”

gap. In a tough financial climate, every college should capitalise on their strong links with employers and get students into the workplace wherever possible.

Most schools could never offer the many vocational options available at colleges – which often come with

industry-standard facilities and expert tutors. College recruitment needs to be about promoting a route to a fulfilling career.

Ofted chief inspector Amanda Spielman didn't make herself popular when she said this at the Association of Colleges conference this week, and AoC chief executive David Hughes made a valid retort that universities seem to ignore the ratio of course places to employment prospects. The purpose of education is an important debate – is it valuable in itself or only as a route to a career? – but the larger point is that informed choice for students is vital.

Curriculums should be developed in partnership with employers – a luxury unavailable to schools and something many universities feel they don't need to do.

In reality, many employers have never visited an FE college and are unlikely to knock at the door of an unfamiliar environment, asking to get involved. We employers moan about the lack of skills, but rarely do we proactively approach

colleges and work with them to fix the situation.

I would urge colleges to invite local businesses in and tell them clearly how they can support you and inspire your students. It's a win-win situation. Employers will quickly see the advantages of driving curriculum development and helping to nurture young talent.

I regularly see young people leaving school or university who have had no guidance about careers throughout their entire educational journey. This is a disaster.

Students progressing from college into higher education or work may well have a clearer idea where their careers are heading and a more specialist set of skills – a real asset in securing fulfilling employment.

Colleges are and should be the first choice for many learners. They should be better valued and more widely recognised for their ability to help address the skills crisis facing our economy.

DEBORAH MILLAR

Group Director of Digital Learning Tech, Grimsby Institute



How to use digital technology to remove barriers to learning

Using tech effectively throughout your college is about creating equal opportunities for all learners, explains Deborah Millar

Our job is to prepare students for their future. If we don't teach them to use digital technology, we're not preparing them for the real world of business and industry.

Two of the three colleges I've worked at have embraced technology, allowing every learner to access the content in their preferred way. But not all colleges do this successfully.

So why should colleges prioritise tech?

1. Learners are different

When 17% of learners in further education and skills provision have a disclosed special educational need or disability, it's not good enough not to be making the most of the inclusive learning technology that's available.

I've seen the difference with my own eyes, as students with disabilities

become just another learner in the room.

Take one student – let's call her Laura. She's a fantastic performing arts student but she'd always been dependent on other people reading out her lines to her in order to learn them, due to her dyslexia.

Who wants to be singled out for having to carry around different-coloured handouts, or large-text versions of scripts? Since she has had access to the Immersive Reader tool, all that has changed. The tool can shade out all the lines except the one you're reading, break the text into syllables, add coloured filters, make fonts easier to read or simply read out the text to you.

2. Life gets in the way

Teachers who are using tech well are creating equal opportunities for all learners to access the material, from anywhere. Students might get ill, they might be parents, they might have to hold down a job. Life sometimes gets in the way, but that doesn't mean they

aren't willing to learn.

A student who had a two-hour bus journey saw her approach to learning revolutionised when we showed her how to access it online.

In fact, in FE, it's our job to provide an opportunity for learning at a student's preferred time. If they need to learn at 3am, what's that to us?

"Students with disabilities become just another learner in the room"

3. It allows teachers to use their time wisely

Teachers are an expensive resource – but videos can be watched online without them. If the teacher has done their job correctly, they will have made sure the knowledge is already in the

learners' minds before they come to class, which then becomes a time to deepen understanding and correct misperceptions. When used well, tech also allows teachers to differentiate in a classroom with a huge range of abilities.

4. It extends learning beyond the classroom

If the homework is to find a hair-colouring disaster, students can share their examples in real time via OneNote or Pinterest. The teacher can weigh in and ask, "How would you correct this?" and other students can chip in with ideas.

In a context where hours have been drastically cut over the years, tech enables you to extend the collaborative learning beyond the classroom.

5. It transcends geography

Tweet-meets are just one example of connecting students with employers. In my class, an ex-student working at a design studio would give my students a virtual tour. Students would then prepare questions to tweet – and share

their work and get feedback.

Just recently, one of our staff members took a course on using Skype in the classroom. The next thing I heard, she'd arranged for a series of childcare specialists from all over the world to deliver presentations to her students. And last week, one of our animal care teachers Skyped Lisbon zoo for a tour of their rare animals.

In short, tech removes barriers to learning – whether they are geographic, financial or related to a disability.

Of course, we need to make sure people are educated about the difference between screen time that educates and screen time that's a waste of time. But this will only happen with greater understanding of the learning technology that's out there. Teachers and managers in FE – and Ofsted inspectors – need to push themselves out of their comfort zone and become learners again. Only then will they begin to truly appreciate how to use tech well, and what a boon it can be for learning.

ncfe. | cache

AEB funding - supporting you through the devolution evolution

From the start of the 2019-20 funding year, the adult education budget (AEB) will be devolved regionally with significant implications on providers.

As you start to prepare for this change and develop key relationships, we are here to support you. We understand the skills gaps in your region and our comprehensive product offer will give strength and depth to your delivery. What's more, we have dedicated account managers based in your region who have both the local and national expertise you need.

Don't forget, you can also make the most of your current AEB allocation in 2018-19 by taking a look at our short packages of qualifications which can be delivered in-year.

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Email: businessdevelopment@ncfe.org.uk Visit: www.ncfe.org.uk/AEB

News

Movers & Shakers

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



Anna Jackson

**Vice principal,
Chesterfield College**

Start date October 29 2018



David Raine

**National Apprenticeship
Operations Director**

Start Date October 2018



Alison Maynard

**Deputy chief executive,
Tyne Coast College**

Start date November 2018

Previous job

Head of faculty, Business, ICT, technology and construction, BMet

Interesting fact

Anna grew up in Zambia, where she continues to support an international educational charity.

Previous Job

Operations Manager, Lifetime Training

Interesting fact

When Gladiators UK returned to the screens in 2008, David got down to the final 20 to become a Gladiator.

Previous job

Principal, South Tyneside College (she remains in post)

Interesting fact

Super-fit Alison is a keen runner, and has run thousands of miles to raise money for prostate cancer research.

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

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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

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

Difficulty:
Easy

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

Difficulty:
Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference
To WIN an FE Week mug

Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**
Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: **news@feweek.co.uk**.



Last Edition's winner: Julie Coverley

Solutions

Turn the paper around to check if your answers match - but no cheating!

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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