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CORRECTIONS

An article in edition 266 of *FE Week*, 'The death of former principal Garry Phillips prompts warm tributes', included the wrong job title for Steve Frampton. He is the president of the Association of Colleges, not its chair.

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Principal 'not right' for next stage of college journey given £150k payment

JUDE BURKE

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The principal of a college group who stepped down with immediate effect last year after concluding he was no longer the "right person" to lead it received a payment of £150,000 when he left.

The "emolument" to John Connolly, who led the RNN Group until his resignation in mid-October, was "in lieu of notice, entitled holiday pay and early access to pension funds," according to the group's recently published 2017/18 accounts.

However, the group denied that this amounted to a payoff.

"The RNN Group in reaching a mutual agreement to accept John Connolly's request to step down, fulfilled its contractual obligation in respect of his terms of employment," a spokesperson said.

The payment represented around a year's salary for Mr Connolly, who received a pay package worth £161,000 in 2017/18, including pension costs of £19,000, according to the accounts.

The group has yet to recruit a

permanent replacement for him, with Jason Austin, the group's vice principal, currently filling the role on an interim basis.

A spokesperson said at the time that Mr Connolly had "considered for some time whether he is the right person to take the RNN Group on to the next stage of the group's journey".

The decision to step down with immediate effect followed "discussion with the board" and was "by mutual agreement".

The group was formed through the merger of Rotherham and North Nottinghamshire colleges

in 2016, with Dearne Valley College joining in 2017.

As a merged college it doesn't have an Ofsted grade yet, but the most recent inspection of Rotherham College in 2013 resulted in a 'good' rating.

However, an early monitoring visit carried out last February warned it was making 'insufficient progress' in managing subcontracted provision effectively.

According to its accounts, the group was assessed as having 'good' financial health for 2017/18 by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and is predicting an improvement to 'outstanding' by 2020/21.

It made an operating deficit of almost £2.5 million, which it said was "exacerbated by merger activities and costs", on an income of £45.5 million.

However its borrowing levels were "low" and its balance sheet was "also a strong financial measure for the group", according to the accounts.

Mr Connolly led North Nottinghamshire College until the merger in 2016, when he took over leadership of the group.

Over eight college leaders, including Mr Connolly, stepped down with little or no notice in the last few months of 2018.



John Connolly

Strike dates announced for 16 colleges

Members of the University and College Union at 16 colleges will walk out for two days starting January 29, in an ongoing dispute over pay.

The union has also written to the education secretary Damian Hinds urging the government to provide extra funding for staff who feel "undervalued and severely underpaid".

The colleges due to strike are:

Abingdon and Witney College, Bridgwater and Taunton College, City of Wolverhampton College, Coventry College, East Sussex College, Harlow College, Hugh Baird College, Kendal College, Leicester College, West Thames College, Bath College, Bradford College, Croydon College, Lambeth College, New College Swindon and Petroc.

Consultation on college pension contributions

The Department for Education is consulting on plans to provide extra funding to cover the estimated £80 million rise in pension contributions for colleges in 2019-20.

The amount that colleges and other public-funded FE training providers must contribute to staff pensions is to rise from the current rate of 16.48 per cent to 23.6 per cent

from September.

The DfE is now consulting on plans to fully fund the increase in its first year, after which any further funding would rely on the government's spending review.

FE providers have until February 12 to give their feedback. You can take part in the consultation by visiting <https://bit.ly/2AOK50k>.

ESFA seeks T-levels providers for 2021/22

Training providers can now bid to deliver T-levels in the second year of their rollout.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has continued with its desire to select a "relatively small number" of providers for year two of T-levels "so we can continue providing the right level of support in the early stages of rollout" but it is not clear how many it wants.

Providers must currently deliver relevant ESFA-funded 16-to-19 education to at least ten qualifying students per T-level subject area level they are applying to deliver.

They must also have at least 100 qualifying students across all pathways they are applying to deliver.

The closing date for applications February 28, 2019.

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IfA boss refuses to say whether he wants to remain in post as DfE forced to re-advertise role

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

The Institute for Apprenticeships will re-advertise for a new chief executive in the coming months, but its current boss has remained tight-lipped over his future.

Sir Gerry Berragan took the top job at the IfA in November 2017 and later revealed to *FE Week* that he was only contracted for two years because he did not go through a formal recruitment process.

The former army man, who was a career soldier for 37 years, admitted at the time that he only decided to “throw my hat in the ring” after the institute endured a fruitless sixth-month hunt.

But as the end of his contract approaches, Sir Gerry has refused to commit to reapplying for the role.

“The post will be re-advertised this year and if I want to do it I will reapply,” he told *FE Week*.

“That’s none of your business, I’ve said all I am going to say,” he added when asked about his interest in carrying on in the job.

If Sir Gerry decides not to reapply it is likely to be a blow for the IfA.

The current chief executive and former board member has been

pivotal in creating and leading the institute, guiding it through its “faster and better” approach to the apprenticeships programme, and the government’s first ever funding band reviews.

It will also come at a time when the institute takes on responsibility for T-levels from the Department for Education.

The IfA will officially change its name to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education in the next few weeks, at which point it will assume powers for the new post-16 technical qualifications.

If Sir Gerry doesn’t throw his hat back in the ring for the IfA job then a likely successor could be his second-in-command, Robert Nitsch.

The current chief operating officer, who also worked in the army for years, caused controversy last month when he delivered a presentation to an employer engagement event which included a forecast of a £500 million overspend on the apprenticeship budget in 2018/19 – rising to £1.5 billion by 2020/21.

The figures prompted widespread concerns and demands for an open debate on how the levy operates, and for the IfA to share the full presentation, which it has now finally done (see page 8 for full story).



Sir Gerry Berragan

The IfA will most likely be hoping that it doesn’t have to recruit an external person to the chief executive role, considering the difficulty it ran into two years ago.

Sir Gerry spoke to *FE Week* about his

unusual appointment when he took the job in 2017.

“All I know is that by mid-to-end October, it had reached a stage where they had not found a candidate that fitted all the criteria, and that was a

frustration because we knew Peter Lauener was going to retire at the end of the year,” he said.

The search for a full-time successor to the outgoing Mr Lauener, who was also coming to the end of his stint as chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, began in April 2017.

The initial recruitment round had no success so the IfA turned to headhunters in July, which again was unsuccessful.

A breakthrough was finally achieved during a two-hour working dinner with two fellow board members, IfA chair and former Barclays chief executive Antony Jenkins, and Dame Fiona Kendrick, who chairs Nestle UK.

“There was a bit of an imperative to get someone in place,” said Sir Gerry. “That’s when I said to the chairman ‘well, you know, if you want I’ll throw my hat in the ring’”

A “mini-recruitment phase” followed.

“The only way they could appoint me was for a two-year period because I hadn’t gone through the formal recruitment process. After that, I’d have to go through another recruitment process if I wanted to stay longer.”

A formal recruitment process, under Cabinet Office rules, would have involved Sir Gerry going up against multiple other candidates for the job.

£2m bank charge for college clearing debt with bailout

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A cash-strapped college has spent almost £2 million of the bailout cash it received from the government on bank charges – although it has actually saved money.

Stoke on Trent College successfully bid for a reported £21.9 million from the Department for Education’s restructuring facility in September.

According to its recently published 2017/18 accounts, £1.93 million of this cash went on “break costs”.

These are the fees levied by a bank for repaying a loan earlier than agreed, to compensate it for lost interest.

“Most people who have received fixed-term or fixed-interest loans or mortgages in their personal or business lives will have also experienced this penalty when repaying loans early,” said Denise

Brown, Stoke on Trent College’s principal.

“In the college’s case, the fee paid represents a net saving of around £2.5 million on further payments that would have been due under the original loan agreements.”

The accounts said that on September 27, 2018 “the college received restructuring funding from the transaction unit which resulted in three of the college’s loans with Lloyds Bank being repaid in full (£9.06 million plus £1.93 million break costs”).

A further £5,475,000 of the cash went on repaying exception financial support owed by the college, which included a £1.1 million loan from the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The college also received a £500,000 “interest-bearing” loan, repayable by July 2030 “subject to a capital loan repayment holiday until October 2021”.

FE Week previously reported on

the college’s successful bid to the restructuring facility in September, although it wouldn’t say at the time how much it was awarded.

Ms Brown has now confirmed that the college has so far received £16.5 million, with a further £5 million available for it to draw down.

The college had been through a “rigorous process” to get its hands on the funding, she said.

The support package it has received “provides an adequate injection of funding to clear the burden of debt, to ensure that the college meets its immediate financial commitments and starts to build the foundations of a more sustainable future”.

According to the 2017/18 accounts, the college was “reliant on exceptional financial support in order to meet its working capital requirements and debt-serving obligations”.

It made an operating deficit over the year of more than £3 million on an

income of £23 million, before adjusting for other gains and losses, and owed a combined total of £13.3 million in bank and BIS loans.

The previous year it was almost £16 million in the red, according to the 2016/17 accounts.

That year, the college made two separate requests for EFS over the year – one for £990,000 and the other for £2.55 million.

FE Week reported in February that the college had drawn down more than £500,000 in EFS in December 2017 alone, although it wasn’t clear if this was part of or in addition to the £3.5 million.

Unlike other colleges with similarly precarious finances, Stoke on Trent has no plans to merge.

An FE commissioner-led structure and prospects appraisal in 2017 “recommended a ‘fresh-start’ approach as the college had been unable to find a willing strategic partner”.

It is currently rated ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted – a grade it has had for two inspections in a row.

A monitoring visit report, published in December, found that the college was making ‘reasonable progress’ in all areas under review.

The restructuring facility, which closed for applications in October, was originally intended to fund changes resulting from the area review of post-16 education and training, which ended in March 2017.

However, it has increasingly been used to prop up failing colleges, although both the DfE and the skills minister Anne Milton have both denied this.

Other huge payouts from the fund include a reported £54 million to Hull College last year, and £21 million for Telford College, formed through the merger of New College Telford and Telford College of Arts and Technology in December 2017.

DfE launches new campaign to 'shift deeply held views' on apprenticeships

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A new government campaign that aims to "shift deeply held views" on apprenticeships has been launched.

The Fire It Up campaign follows on from the Department for Education's previous campaign, Get In, Go Far, which ran from 2014.

It will promote the benefits of apprenticeships to young people, parents and employers through a series of adverts on national TV and social media, featuring real-life apprentices.

A new website will provide advice and guidance, as well as access to a wide variety of apprenticeships options for all ages and backgrounds.

"We are seeing the apprenticeship system in this country come of age, with leading employers waking up to the benefits apprenticeships can bring," said education secretary Damian Hinds.

"Outdated and snobby attitudes" were are "still putting people off apprenticeships" – meaning they're "missing out on great jobs and higher salaries.

"It's vital that we challenge people's thinking about apprenticeships, which is why the government's new Fire It Up campaign will aim to shift deeply held views and drive more people towards an apprenticeship."

"Young people like me are thinking about their options," said Alim Jalloh, a former apprentice with Channel 4, and one of the stars of the campaign.

University "wasn't for me" because "I didn't feel it was preparing me for the job I really wanted", he said.

"My apprenticeship was an amazing combination of world-class, on-the-job learning, hyper-relevant qualifications, with a clear potential career ahead of me. All while earning a salary."

The DfE's announcement cited a number of benefits to doing an apprenticeship, including access to "high-quality training" and the "range of exciting career options" on offer – including aerospace engineering, nuclear science, teaching, nursing, digital marketing, fashion and law.

It quoted figures, first published by the DfE in December, that showed the amount of time apprentices are spending in off-the-job training over

the length of their apprenticeship has increased – from an average of 560 hours in 2016/17 to 700 in 2017/18.

The announcement also highlighted a range of evidence it said was "proof" that employers and young people were starting to see the benefits of apprenticeships.

These included DfE outcomes data, learner and apprentice surveys, employer evaluations and reports by the Sutton Trust.

The campaign is also focusing on ensuring that young people are made aware of apprenticeships.

Mr Hinds wants "parents, schools and colleges to make sure apprenticeships are being promoted alongside more traditional academic routes", it said.

This week's launch follows the DfE's appointment of advertising agency M&C Saatchi in November last year to relaunch its apprenticeships marketing campaign.

The contract was worth £2.55 million for 2018-19, according to an answer from skills minister Anne Milton to a parliamentary question from shadow education secretary Angela Rayner,



dated November 21.

The contract "covers the development of a new integrated communications campaign to change perceptions of apprenticeships", Ms Milton's response said, which included "agency fees, the cost of producing the new advertising campaign and promotional content, the development of a new digital service and third-party costs, such as research".

The previous Get In, Go Far campaign was launched in 2014 and relaunched in 2016.

FE Week reported in May 2016 that the campaign, which was run by the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, had been allocated £13 million and was set to run until 2020.

This was in addition to the £6 million previously spent on the 2014 campaign.



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Hinds gets grilling on accountability from education select committee

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Education secretary Damian Hinds and his permanent secretary, Jonathan Slater, faced a grilling by the education select committee on Wednesday morning. The pair faced questions from MPs on a range of topics, including apprenticeships, T-levels, careers advice – even Brexit. Here are six things we learned from the hearing.

1 Hinds won't be 'heavy-handed' on Baker clause non-compliance

A week after a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research revealed that two-thirds of schools are not complying with the Baker clause, Mr Hinds said the Department for Education had no intention to be unnecessarily “heavy-handed”.
“If there’s total intransigence – and this is not something we’d do lightly – there’s the option of the minister writing to the school to remind them of their duties to ensure compliance,” he said.

But it wasn’t “the idea at all” that the DfE would be “getting into sending direction letters to schools”, which contradicts what the DfE announced the following day (see page 3).
Mr Hinds indicated that schools would comply with the clause because “it’s in everybody’s interests that kids have the range of options available to them” – a view that prompted committee member James Frith to point out that “the Baker clause exists

because it hasn’t been in everyone’s interest”.

2 There’s ‘a role’ for management education

The question of whether expensive management apprenticeships – particularly those where employers had rebadged existing training – risked edging out those at lower levels was a “legitimate” one for the committee to ask, but the education secretary would not be drawn on his view.
“If you take a productivity view of the UK, and where we have challenges compared to other countries, management is usually one that is alighted on,” he said.

“No-deal Brexit could ‘absolutely’ see DfE staff transferred to other departments”

“So there is a role – whether you’re talking apprenticeships or anything else – for management education.”
But only a “pretty small minority” of apprenticeships were at that level.
The government is consulting with business on the future operation of the levy, Mr Hinds said, which will “take in multiple aspects of the whole operation of the levy”.



Damian Hinds

“We will be working with business to make sure that it’s something that works for business – and that includes all the sort of questions that you’ve just asked.”

3 ‘No plans’ for greater oversight of the Careers and Enterprise Company

The education secretary has “no plans” for greater oversight of the Careers and Enterprise Company, he told MPs.
This was despite two bruising select committee appearances by its chief executive and chair which revealed it “does little analysis of its outcomes”, has “very little oversight” and is “quite wasteful” with some of its apparently “unlimited funds”, according to committee chair Robert Halfon.
“There has to be confidence on the part of the taxpayer of value for money and efficacy” for “all bodies in receipt of public money,” Mr Hinds said.
“I do have that confidence in the CEC,” he said.
He reassured MPs that “nobody has unlimited funds”.
In terms of outcomes, it was “early days for the CEC”.
“Ultimately when we talk about careers advice and guidance you want to be measuring what happens in people’s careers. It is a bit early in the life of the CEC to be able to do that”

4 DfE civil servants may be moved if there’s a no-deal Brexit

There is “absolutely” a risk of DfE civil servants being moved to other departments “on a temporary basis” in the event of a no-deal Brexit, Mr Hinds

said.
He made the admission in response to a question by committee member Ben Bradley about the department’s no-deal preparation, the day after the prime minister’s deal was resoundingly voted down by MPs.
“I am confident that everything reasonably that we could be planning for, we are planning for,” he said.
But he admitted that the DfE was “not one of the very most impacted in a no-deal scenario compared to other departments”.
Consequently, to ensure that “mission-critical things for people’s way of life: supply of foods, medicines and so on are protected” in the event of a no-deal Brexit, there was “absolutely” a risk that DfE staff could be released on a “temporary basis” to “support those other departments”, Mr Hinds said.

5 Tight T-levels timetable is “on track”

The tight T-levels timetable is “on track” and is “going well”, Mr Slater insisted.
Last year he took the unusual step of writing to Mr Hinds to request that the new qualifications be delayed by a year, to 2021/22.
That request was turned down, in the first ever ministerial direction issued by an education secretary.
Mr Slater said the exchange of letters was part of “a system working well” and denied that he had said the planned timeframe for T-levels was “too ambitious”.
“I said there would be significant risks with trying to hit a particular timetable because there were a number

of things that might go wrong,” he said.
These included the risk that “if you’re running a procurement exercise you don’t know before you start if it’s going to work or if there are enough bidders” or if “there’s enough competitive tension” and “challenge”.
“So far it’s going well. The timetable is on track.”

6 Apprenticeship budget overspend: ‘That is not my projection’

Committee chair Robert Halfon had a second chance to ask Mr Hinds about a projected overspend on the apprenticeships budget, after the education secretary dodged his question on the matter in parliament in December.
He was no more forthcoming on this occasion, however.
“I think you’re referring to some presentation given by the Institute for Apprenticeships which was illustrating a particular scenario,” Mr Hinds said in response to Mr Halfon’s question.
“Those weren’t my slides – someone else was illustrating what they thought might happen – but that is not my projection.”
Predicting future take-up and spend on apprenticeships “absolutely accurately” was challenging as “this is a demand-led system”, Mr Hinds said.
“When apprenticeships are multi-year, there’s the issue of completion rates, which you can’t know absolutely in advance, and companies have up to two years to spend their levy, so all of this becomes difficult to project accurately,” he said.
But, he added, “we have to work with the budget we have”.



Jonathan Slater

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ESFA appoints Kate Josephs as its first director of funding

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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A top government academies official has been appointed as the Education and Skills Funding Agency's new director of funding.

Kate Josephs, currently director of national operations for academies and regional delivery at the Department of Education, will start in the new role in April.

She will head up a new funding "operations centre of excellence" team. Plans for the new team and role, the first to preside over the DfE's entire £63 billion budget, were first revealed by FE Week last weekend.

Ms Josephs, a former Treasury official, will take charge of delivering the national funding formula for pre-16 schools and the post-16 funding agenda, including apprenticeships and T-levels.

The job description said the ESFA was "moving towards a single funding operations centre of excellence, bringing together and improving existing functions".

Eileen Milner, the ESFA chief executive, said: "Kate will lead and oversee the creation and operation of a single funding centre of excellence that is solely responsible for all schools, academies and post-16 funding."

The new single funding operations centre of excellence will "bring together existing functions to deliver an excellent and expert funding service", Ms Milner said.

It will be responsible for the "development, implementation and maintenance of an ever more efficient system across the agency with potential to grow and develop the scope of work undertaken still further".

However, there are "no current plans to recruit staff to this new function". Vacancies will be filled "through existing posts".

Ms Josephs said she was "thrilled" to join the ESFA and intends "to make it as straightforward as possible for schools, trusts, colleges and work-based learning providers to engage with us and, whilst we do this, provide rigorous scrutiny and oversight to ensure that every £1 of public money spent is invested wisely."

IfA finally releases presentation on apprenticeship overspend

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Exclusive

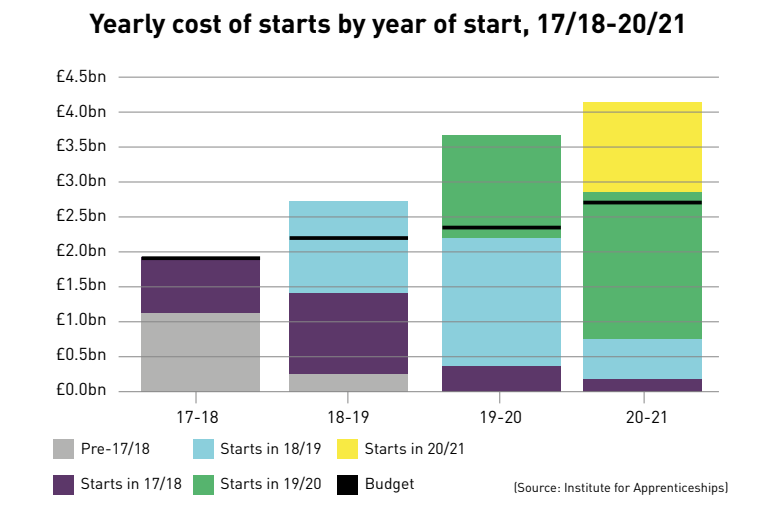
The Institute for Apprenticeships has finally released a presentation given to employers that warned of an imminent apprenticeship overspend, following pressure from the shadow skills minister.

On November 30, during an employer engagement event at Exeter College, a talk by IfA's chief operating officer Robert Nitsch included a forecast of a £500 million overspend on the apprenticeship budget in 2018/19 – rising to £1.5 billion by 2020/21.

The figures, exclusively reported by FE Week three days later, prompted widespread concern and demands for an open debate on how the levy operates, and for the IfA to share the full presentation.

The institute finally released it on Tuesday but only to Gordon Marsden, the shadow skills minister, after he wrote to the IfA's chief executive Sir Gerry Berragan about the issue in early December.

The presentation has, however, had a couple of slides redacted, while more information has been added.



Speaking to FE Week about the situation, Sir Gerry said: "It [the presentation] was about apprenticeships, what's going on with apprenticeships, and it was designed to bring them up to date as to how the reforms are going.

"The particular slide in question was based on some speculative planning, scenarios, what-if planning. It was there to really make two points.

"One is that the levy isn't massively underspent – it's being used. And secondly that it's a finite resource and therefore, when people say why are you being tight about funding and

funding bands, you've got to see it in the context that there's a finite resource, and therefore we need to make sure we get every bit of value for money out of every apprenticeship."

He added the reason why it wasn't released to the wider public was because of potential "misinterpretation, it would generate all sorts of concerns over whether the levy was being overspent".

Keith Smith, the Education and Skills Funding Agency's director of apprenticeships, told FE Week in December that he was "not expecting any pressures" on the budget this year.

This point was reiterated by skills

minister Anne Milton last week.

"I think the department is being pretty clear the levy isn't overspent, but the point is that particular model took in certain assumptions and therefore showed how it could be," Sir Gerry said.

When quizzed on why it took so long for the IfA to release the slides, despite multiple requests from FE Week and parliamentary questions including one from chair of the education select committee Robert Halfon, the institute's boss claimed that the only request he knew about was from Mr Marsden.

He confirmed that the Department for Education had not told the IfA not to release the slides.

"It [the delay] was us looking at the slides and making sure that everything in those slides was on the official statistical release. That's what we were doing," Sir Gerry said.

"They were not going to be released until I released them today to Gordon, because at that stage we were clear on what the information underpinning them... in fact, what we've done is redacted two of the slides and produced slides that do reflect official statistics, the starts and the training slides."

Visit <https://bit.ly/2QUCSkU> to view the full slide pack.

Provider rated 'inadequate' after Ofsted found low employment for arts and media students

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A private provider is appealing an 'inadequate' report after Ofsted criticised it for not moving enough of its arts and media students onto jobs at the end of their training.

The judgement comes after the chief inspector caused a media storm when she told the Association of Colleges conference in November that there is a "mismatch" between the numbers of students taking such courses and their "future employment in the industry".

Amanda Spielman said that Ofsted's research on level two qualifications found that these courses were giving learners "false hope" and questioned whether some providers are chasing income over students' best interests.

Her controversial comments made headlines in The Guardian, The Times and the Daily Mail.

Dv8 Training (Brighton) Limited, which received two consecutive 'requires improvement' grades prior

to a fresh inspection in November, received the worst possible rating from the education watchdog in a report published on Wednesday.

Ofsted found that the study programmes on offer to nearly 200 young people, mostly aged 16 to 19, in art and design, media, fashion, events management and games development are "not well managed" and learners "do not have access to impartial careers guidance early enough in their programmes to help them make informed choices".

Ofsted said that while most learners move on to further education at the end of their courses, "only a few learners enter employment, an apprenticeship or higher education".

However, Dv8 Training has disputed Ofsted's findings.

Its managing director, Dan Wallman, said his provider is "obviously hugely disappointed", especially as it has "just achieved our best ever year of qualification achievement and outcomes".

"We have a longstanding track

record, recognised by local authorities, of working positively with a vulnerable client group and succeeding with young people who often have not achieved previously," he added.

"We have appealed the overall grading and this is in process, however we have to focus on moving forward positively."

Mr Wallman also said that progression at Dv8 Training is not high into employment, apprenticeships or FE currently as "many learners choose to remain in learning to further develop skills and work readiness".

The Ofsted report did recognise Dv8 Training's improvement in achievement rates, which are "now high in many subjects".

But there are numerous other issues at the provider, according to the education watchdog.

"Managers did not identify what tutors need to improve until very recently. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has not improved sufficiently," inspectors said.

"Tutors do not have high enough



expectations for their learners. As a result, learners do not develop independent learning skills or behaviours for employment, or improve their attendance and punctuality."

Mr Wallman said "immediate action" has been taken to "address key areas identified in the report such as poor attendance and punctuality and forming a high level advisory board to provide support and challenge".

Following Dv8 Training's grade four Ofsted report, the Education and Skills Funding Agency will decide if it will axe the providers training contracts.

The agency typically gives providers a three month termination warning notice following a grade four.

Deficit hits £10m in three years as KCC continues to seek merger solution

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Kensington and Chelsea College is considering a fresh merger attempt as it runs down its reserves created by the controversial sale of a campus after years of being in deficit.

The latest set of accounts for the embattled institution, which received its fifth consecutive grade three report from Ofsted this week, reveal more than £10 million deficit in the past three years, having accumulated "significant" reserves of £34.6 million.

The cash, which is quickly shrinking, was built up mostly by the sale of KCC's Wornington Road campus, sold to the local council for £25.3 million in 2016 despite local opposition.

A spokesperson said that while it does have healthy reserves, the college has been running operational deficits for several years, "which in the long term are unsustainable".

In 2015/16, KCC had an operating

deficit of £1.2 million; in 2016/17 it was £5.2 million; and in 2017/18 it was £3.9 million.

To tackle its financial difficulties the college attempted to merge with Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College last year. The proposal was however canned by the FE commissioner Richard Atkins following a backlash from a local campaign group.

But it appears a different merger may now be on the cards.

KCC told FE Week it is considering two options as part of its structure and prospects appraisal with Mr Atkins' team. One is a merger with Morley College.

The second option is to remain a stand-alone college, a route which is being developed with the help of the Save Wornington College campaign, which opposed the selling of KCC's Wornington Road campus.

Campaign member Sam Batra said: "The Save Wornington College campaign has been influential in driving the stand-alone bid for KCC.

"Thanks to community activism there is a committed team in place currently working on the stand-alone vision for this venerable college.

"It's probably the first time that a campaign group has been so involved in recruiting the right people to steer the course of such a project.

"Grassroots action is vital and nowhere less so than in North Kensington."

A KCC spokesperson said the college had experienced operating losses and resulting financial pressures for "a number of years" prior to the proposed merger with EHWLC.

"These pressures were behind the sale and lease-back agreement of the Wornington Road campus," he explained.

"After the merger proposal was provisionally agreed in 2017, EHWLC took over some of KCC's services.

"The merger was then put on hold two weeks before the proposed completion date in January 2018 and then cancelled shortly afterwards.

"As a result, KCC then had to incur the costs of recruiting a new senior management team and restoring capacity in some key back-office functions."

He continued: "At the recommendation of the FE commissioner, the college then re-entered the structure and prospects appraisal process which has associated costs.

"KCC also commissioned the Kroll report into the aforementioned campus sale.

"It is therefore the case that KCC's financial problems were not caused by the failed merger, but some additional costs were incurred as a result."

The Kroll report was published last October and found the sale of the Wornington Road campus was "plainly wrong" and was not in the interests of the community.

The chair of KCC's board, Ian Valvona, who replaced Mary Curnock Cook last year, apologised on the college's behalf for the "shameful" behaviour of the



previous management team.

The sale of the Wornington site was led by former principal Mark Brickley in the face of falling income. In 2012 the college's income sat at £27.5 million but had fallen to just £9.25 million by 2016.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea bought the site and outlined proposals to demolish the building and replace it with housing, which became controversial when the fire at nearby Grenfell Tower in June 2017 killed 72 people.

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Controversial management degree apprenticeship celebrates third birthday

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One of the most popular – and controversial – apprenticeship standards is celebrating its third birthday this week.

The chartered manager degree apprenticeship’s anniversary was marked with an event in parliament, hosted by the Chartered Management Institute – with speakers including the boss of the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Starts on the standard have grown massively in the three years since it was launched, and it is now the most popular degree-level apprenticeship.

But it has also come in for criticism – with detractors including Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman raising concerns that it is simply “rebadging” existing employee-training schemes, and diverting vital funding away from young people at the start of their careers.

Sue Husband, director of employer and employee engagement at the Education and Skills Funding Agency,

is among those on the apprenticeship.

Speaking to FE Week during last year’s EuroSkills in Budapest, she said the course was “tough” and “challenging” but it had “huge benefit”.

“My boss was saying the other day she can see me thinking differently and offering better results,” she said.

Ms Husband is doing her apprenticeship with the Open University, which has had the second highest number of starts on the standard to date, according to DfE figures.

She’s one of a cohort of “about 20” from the DfE, which she said was “great” as “we can discuss progress and vent and support”.

“I’m enjoying learning again. I’m confident I will pass and my tutor is too,” she said.

The standard was approved in October 2015, and in that first year it saw just 60 starts, according to DfE figures.

But by 2017/18 that had risen to 2,310 – more than any other level six apprenticeship.

Those figures represented 1.5 per cent of the 163,700 starts on standards

for the year, making it the 22nd most popular of all apprenticeship standards, regardless of level.

Other top providers, alongside the Open University, include Manchester Metropolitan University, Anglia Ruskin University, QA Limited and Sheffield Hallam University, who between them account for almost half of all starts on the standard so far.

The manager degree apprenticeship is one of the most expensive, with its funding band initially set at the maximum – £27,000.

That was cut to £22,000 following the IfA’s funding band review last year, with the reduction set to take effect from March.

More than 150 employers joined forces with the CMI and the employer group behind the standard in an unsuccessful appeal against the “extensive and highly damaging cuts”.

The rising number of starts on expensive standards such as the chartered manager degree apprenticeship is understood to be placing pressure on the apprenticeships budget, with the IfA warning of a potential £500,000

overspend this year.

Ms Spielman voiced her concerns that “levy money is not being spent in the intended way” during the launch of the Ofsted annual report in December.

“We have seen examples where existing graduate schemes are in essence being rebadged as apprenticeships. This might meet the rules of the levy policy, but it falls well short of its spirit.

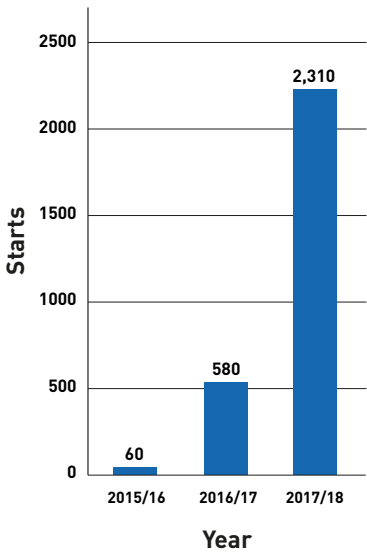
“We hope the government will give greater thought as to how levy money can be better directed at addressing skills shortages.”

Just a day later the skills minister Anne Milton admitted that the government would need to “look at whether it is right to continue to fund all apprenticeships” in the future.

“We will need to look ahead, when the system is really running well – and I think we’re nearly at that stage – when we need to look at do we continue to fund apprenticeships for people who are already in work, people doing second degrees,” she said in an interview with Association of Colleges boss David Hughes.

Speaking in November 2017, IfA

Starts on the chartered manager standard have skyrocketed



Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

board member Dame Fiona Kendrick said that a focus on management apprenticeships “at least in the short-to middle-term” has “got to be good for the overall country”.

Awarding body drops Ofqual appeal and lands six-figure fine and legal bill

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An awarding organisation has been left with a bill of over £100,000 from Ofqual – which includes the exams regulator’s highest ever costs for an enforcement action – after dropping its lengthy appeal against a fine.

But Industry Qualifications could have been forced to cough up even more, had Ofqual decided not to waive more than £30,000 of its almost £85,000 legal and investigation costs.

Paul Mills, chair of IQ, declined to comment on the appeal or the money it now has to pay – even though Ofqual blamed the awarding organisation’s approach to the case for its huge charges.

Mr Mills told FE Week that IQ had “taken actions to address Ofqual’s concerns” and was “looking forward to concluding this matter and moving forward in 2019”.

The fine related to IQ’s handling

of a high-profile case of alleged qualifications fraud in 2015 involving a private training provider in Essex, which was the subject of a BBC investigation.

Ofqual first announced its intention to impose a £50,000 fine on the awarding organisation in February 2017, at which time IQ told FE Week it would appeal.

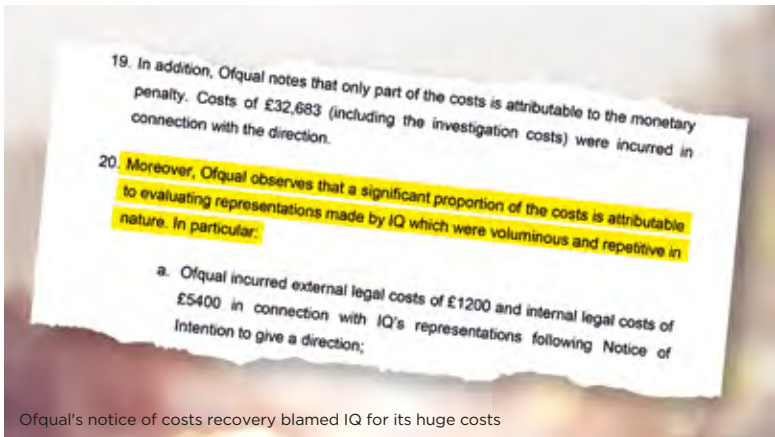
In September 2018 Ofqual confirmed its decision to impose this “monetary penalty”, plus costs of £50,000.

An update to this decision notice, published on Monday, revealed that IQ had abandoned its appeal on November 26, shortly before it would have been heard by its tribunal.

The appeal added a further £7,000 on top of the £100,000 Ofqual had previously said it must pay.

This is the sixth time that the exams regulator has issued a fine, but the first in which the awarding organisation will not have to pay all of its costs.

However, in the other five instances Ofqual’s expenses were substantially lower – ranging from £5,842 in a case involving OCR in April 2018 to £11,855



Ofqual's notice of costs recovery blamed IQ for its huge costs

in a case also involving OCR in July last year.

According to Ofqual’s notice of costs recovery, published in September, a “significant proportion” of its costs – which amounted to £84,119 – were “attributable to evaluating representations made by IQ which were voluminous and repetitive in nature”.

“In substantial part, the magnitude of the costs reflects the way in which the awarding organisation chose to make its case,” the notice said.

The notice said it would not be “unreasonable” to require IQ to pay the regulator’s full costs – and furthermore the regulator had “not seen any evidence that IQ would be unable” to do so.

But while “combined financial orders of £100,000 would not put at risk IQ’s viability”, it was “possible” that making the body pay the full costs “may put at risk” its “ability to operate as an awarding organisation, by depriving it of investment funds”.

For this reason, “Ofqual has decided

to exercise its discretion to require IQ to pay Ofqual’s costs in part only”.

IQ, which offers qualifications in a range of sectors including security, fire safety and business and administration, made an “operating loss for the year to 31 December 2017 of £425,621”, according to its most recent accounts.

This included a “provision of £75,000 for fines from regulators and associated legal costs”.

FE Week reported in May 2015 that IQ revoked 251 level two and three door-supervision and CCTV surveillance qualifications it certificated for learners at Ashley Commerce College in Ilford, after the college was exposed for allegedly allowing students to gain the qualifications illegally.

But Ofqual’s notice of intention to fine, in February 2017, said that IQ had breached its conditions of recognition “in relation to its approval and management of a college, the investigation of suspected malpractice at the college and the actions it took in respect of persons alleged to have been concerned in such malpractice”.

Its monitoring of the college and its investigation into the incident were both branded “defective”, and it was criticised for having failed to “identify the potential for conflicts of interest to arise” or to manage any such conflicts.

College hiding principal's expenses 'skirting with possible criminal offence'

BILLY CAMDEN

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From front

A college which "shocked" the skills minister this week after it blocked *FE Week*'s website from its internet servers has been reported to the information commissioner's office for hiding corporate expense claims.

The repeated refusal by Highbury College to release the material, which was requested by this newspaper under the freedom of information act, is "skirting with a possible criminal offence", according to an FOI expert.

FE Week requested the expense claims for the period covering 2014/15 to 2017/18 from the college 64 working days ago at the time of going to press.

The FOI law states that responses should take no longer than 20 working days, or 40 working days if the organisation needs to apply the public interest test.

After confirming it had the information, the college told *FE Week* that it was applying the public interest test because the material may be subject to four qualified exemptions: law enforcement, health and safety, personal

data and commercial interests.

The college has not provided a response to *FE Week* since this communication on November 13, despite numerous requests.

Maurice Frankel, the director of the UK Campaign for Freedom of Information, said the exemptions "sound pretty far-fetched".

"I can't think how they could argue that disclosing the expenses claims would lead to a risk to somebody's health and safety, and even if it would the answer would be to delete the particular line in question," added.

"I can't see how the law-enforcement exemption would apply and personal data is not a qualified exemption.

"If they are deliberately delaying the response as a reprisal for stories you have published that they do not like then they are skirting with a possible criminal offence."

He added: "A person who alters, defaces, blocks, erases, destroys or conceals any record with the intention of preventing disclosure of information that the applicant would be entitled to commits a criminal offence under section 77 of the FOI act."

FE Week made the request for Highbury's corporate expense claims

after a whistleblower came to us with concerns over the college's spending.

The referral to the ICO comes in the same week that Highbury College took the unprecedented move of blocking *FE Week*'s website from its internal computer servers.

This came days after this newspaper revealed that the college was locked in a £1.4 million legal battle with the Nigerian state.

"That is terrible, absolutely shocking," said skills minister Anne Milton when she learnt about the college's action.

Ofsted's chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, added that the move "sounds astonishing and concerning".

Dominic Ponsford, the editor-in-chief at the Press Gazette, said he has "never heard of any organisation reacting in this way to negative press coverage, it may be a first".

"Highbury College has obviously never heard of the 'Streisand effect' whereby in attempting to hide or censor a piece of information you have the unintended consequence of publicising it far more widely than it would have been anyway."

Highbury claimed to its staff through internal emails, seen by *FE Week* this week, that "much of" the story is "untrue"



What Highbury College staff now see when they try to access *FE Week* on their work computer

and "paints a picture of Highbury that we simply do not recognise".

The college has however been unable to tell this newspaper specifically how the content of the story was inaccurate, even though they had ample opportunity to do so before the story was published.

A spokesperson for Highbury defended the decision to block the *FE Week* website.

"It is college policy to block access to inappropriate websites," she said.

"In view of this we have blocked *FE Week* from the college's internet servers because we do not think students and staff while in college should be

distracted by inaccurate and untrue stories about Highbury which may cause them concern or distress.

"We have a duty of care."

From a previous FOI, it was revealed that Highbury's principal, Stella Mbubaegbu, used college cash to pay for a first-class return flight from London to Dallas at a cost of £4,132. The college has refused to say whether or not this flight was work-related.

The spokesperson for Highbury said: "We look forward to having a positive conversation with the information commissioner's office about the vexatious nature of your FOI request"



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Provider integrity at heart of Ofsted's new Common Inspection Framework

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From front

Ofsted will soon focus on providers' "integrity" during inspections, but its chief inspector has said she cannot turn the education watchdog into a police force.

In a speech to launch a consultation on the new inspection process, Amanda Spielman said: "Two words that sum up my ambition for the framework and which underlie everything we have published today: substance and integrity."

"One thing I hope will flow from this new approach is that integrity will be properly rewarded."

"I know how easy it is to let drift happen, because of the pressures of making the numbers add up, or because someone down the road is doing it and you think that you or your students will suffer unless you do the same."

"That's not your fault; it's human

nature.

"But its effect is pernicious, and we know that it is disadvantaged pupils that suffer the most when substance comes second to point scoring."

Ofsted's new focus on integrity means inspectors will challenge providers if they find evidence of practices such as enrolling students with funding and high achievement rates as a motivation ahead of which course is best for the learner.

Ms Spielman said: "We've seen some young people kept on level 2 study courses, when they could and should have been progressing."

"We've also seen off-rolling between year 12 and year 13 on A-level courses."

Providers were also criticised for being funded for apprentices "whether or not they are really learning anything".

"All of these practices need to be discouraged, and inspection has a valuable role to play in doing so," she said.

After her speech, Ms Spielman told FE Week: "I can't turn Ofsted into a

police force, I'm not resourced and I don't have the skills; and I do not think it will be a helpful thing to turn Ofsted into an investigation service, turning up to try and find any possible way integrity has been damaged."

"I'm about trying to create the right incentives and the right conversation."

"Everybody in every sector can start to wobble at the edges under pressure."

She would not be drawn on how big the problem is in the FE sector.

This is not the first time Ofsted has shown an interest in potential gaming of data, funding and the integrity of the sector.

In 2009, Geoff Russell, the then-chief executive of the Learning and Skills Council – the predecessor organisation to the Skills Funding Agency – sent a letter to college principals after finding data mismanagement.

This followed "desk-based analysis and fact finding reviews" by the LSC, Ofsted, the Data Service and the information authority looking into "suggestions that data manipulation goes beyond routine data cleansing to

improve the accuracy of the data".

They concluded: "Some of the practices identified at the fact-finding visits have led to an artificial increase in success rates."

And Mr Russell's letter read: "Colleges adopt various approaches to the completion of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and interpret the ILR guidance differently, resulting in inconsistent and sometimes inappropriate reporting."

"If the data management in your college varies from [best] practice, please ensure this practice ceases with immediate effect."

For several years thereafter, Ofsted used government software to analyse the credibility of ILR data prior to inspections.

The conference also exhumed the controversy around the chief inspector's thoughts on arts courses, which caused a national media furore.

At an Association of Colleges conference in November, Ms Spielman said: "Arts and media does stand out as the area where there is greatest



mismatch between the numbers of students taking the courses and the employment prospects at the end."

At the Sixth Form Colleges Association conference, she clarified her remarks: "I gave an example, which was widely misinterpreted, that arts education is a bad thing."

"That was an example of where getting the funding is taking priority over putting people on the right track."

New Ofsted framework to be less reliant on achievement-rate data

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Ofsted is looking to put "less emphasis" on achievement-rate data in its proposed new inspection framework.

The education watchdog launched its consultation on a refreshed inspection framework on Wednesday for FE and skills providers, as well as schools and early years settings.

Scrapping the current 'outcomes' grade and introducing a new 'quality of education' rating will be one of the key areas of change.

It is part of a move away from the over-reliance on data such as achievement rates towards a greater focus on progress and destinations.

Speaking to FE Week ahead of the consultation's release, Paul Joyce, Ofsted's deputy director for further education and skills, said: "Data remains an important part of the inspection process and it is vital that providers continue to use it effectively."

"However, as part of the new 'quality of education' grade, less emphasis will be placed on achievement rates alone."

"Having said that, as part of looking at the impact of the curriculum, we will place greater

emphasis on progress and destination data."

Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman summed it up as "the curriculum occupies a far more central place in all remits, and in data a lesser place."

"The new quality of education judgment will look at how providers are deciding what to teach and why, how well they are doing it and whether it is leading to strong outcomes for young people."

"This will reward those who are ambitious and make sure that young people accumulate rich, well-connected knowledge and develop strong skills using this knowledge."

"This is all about raising true standards. Nothing is more pernicious to these than a culture of curriculum narrowing and teaching to the test."

Ofsted is seeking to move away from an accountability system which is over-dependent on performance data, as inspectors believe this is a barrier to further improvement.

Far too much time, work and energy are being spent defending and managing outcomes, in the watchdog's view, and the culture has been extended to providers defending against and trying to manage Ofsted inspections and expectations.

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said his association "strongly supports the emphasis" on

curriculum, education and training.

"Data is important for day to day monitoring but shouldn't be the only thing that Ofsted looks at and so we approve of the new approach being adopted," he added.

Under the new framework, there will be a reduction in the types of FE provision that will be inspected.

Instead of the six that are inspected currently, Ofsted would only look at education programmes for young people, apprenticeships and adult learning programmes.

Education and training for people with special educational needs and disabilities and high needs will be inspected under the relevant type of provision, rather than separately.

Ofsted is also proposing to split the current judgment of personal development, behaviour and welfare into two separate judgments: one for behaviour and attitudes, and the other for personal development.

Meanwhile, colleges given a grade three in their Ofsted report will be given longer to improve after the last inspection before their next one: from 12 to 24 months to 12 to 30 months.

Two things that will not be in the inspection framework are T-Levels, which are due to be introduced in September 2020, and campus-level inspections.



Education secretary Damian Hinds said: "I welcome this consultation as Ofsted reaches out to teachers, lecturers, early years providers, parents and leaders though the most comprehensive framework development in Ofsted's history."

The consultation is open until April 4 and the new framework will be rolled out from September this year.

Student petition triggers a House of Commons debate on college funding

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A petition to increase college funding will get its day in the sun with a debate in the House of Commons.

On January 21, MPs, led by Daniel Zeichner, will debate the topic after a student petition reached 69,000 signatures.

It reads: "Funding for colleges has been cut by almost 30 per cent from 2009 to 2019.

"A decade of almost continuous cuts and constant reforms have led to a significant reduction in the resources available for teaching and support for sixth formers in schools and colleges; potentially restricted course choice; fewer adults in learning; pressures

on staff pay and workload, a growing population that is not able to acquire the skills the UK needs to secure prosperity post-Brexit.

"We call on the government to urgently increase college funding to sustainable levels, including immediate parity with recent increases to schools funding."

Upon hearing the news about the upcoming debate, Peter Mayhew-Smith, the principal of the South Thames Colleges Group, tweeted: "Excellent news - great to hear that fair funding for FE will be discussed in Parliament next week. About time! Well done Brockenhurst students for making it happen."

The petition was started in October last year by students at Brockenhurst College, in line with the Love Our

Colleges campaign.

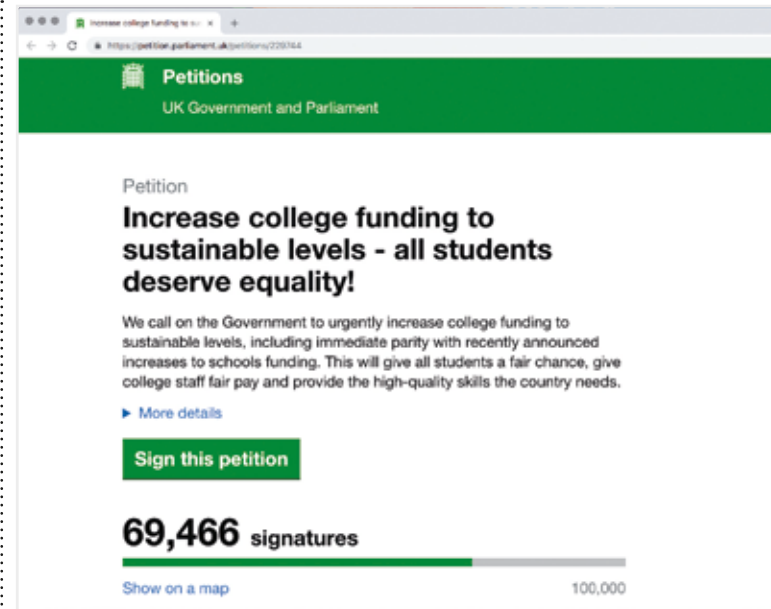
One of those students, Charlotte Jones, told FE Week: "Our teacher has talked to us previously about the way in which we are funded as students, and we decided as a group we wanted to do something about the inequality.

"All we want is equality, and I think that's fair to ask.

"If we all had equal funding it would be a fair playing field, and everyone would be on the same level."

The announcement of a debate follows a formal response by the Department for Education on the topic of the petition in November.

The response read: "We are funding priorities in further education including new T-Levels, and looking at the needs of colleges ahead of the Spending Review."



To sign the petition or check out current number of signatories, visit: parliament.uk/petitions/229744

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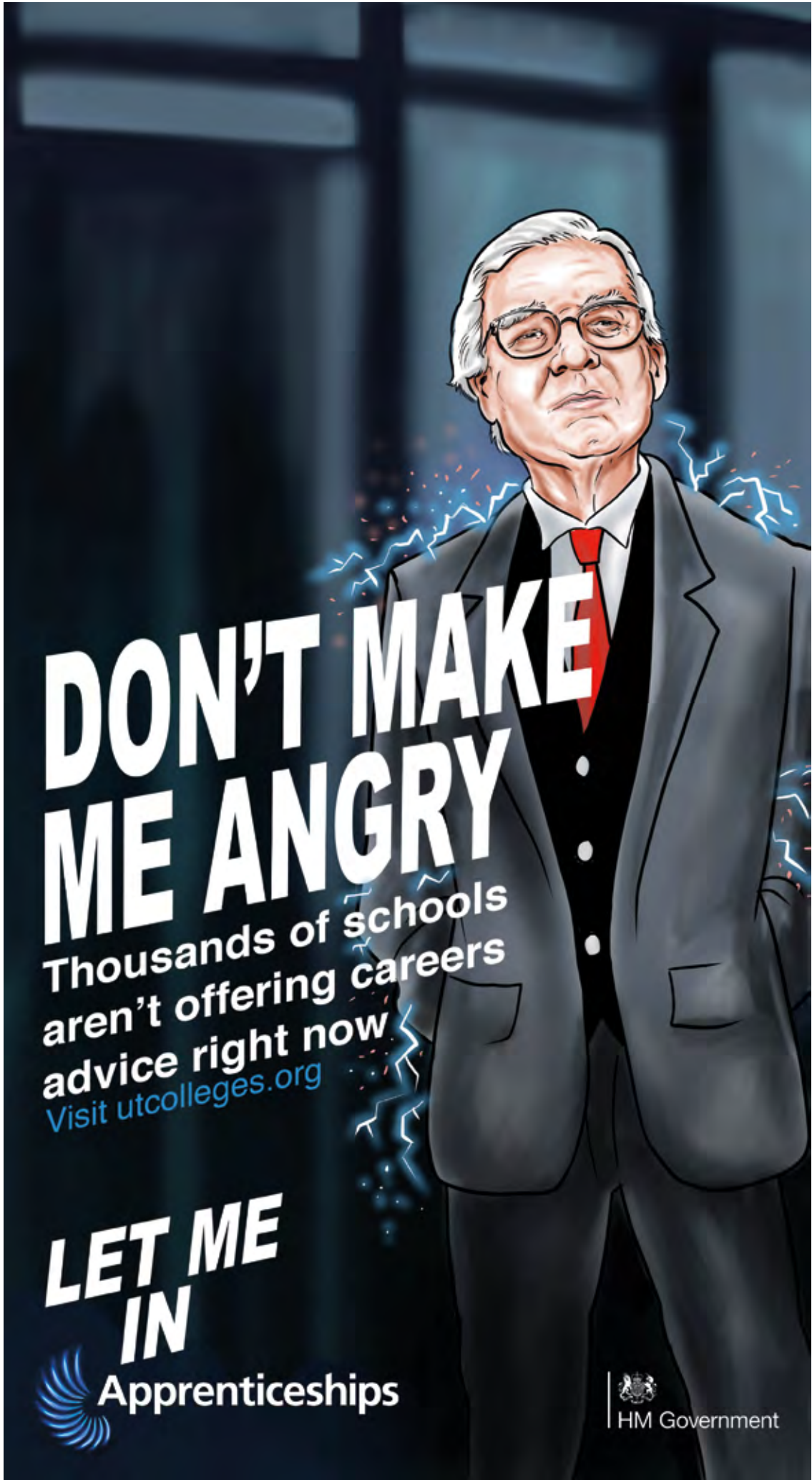
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News

Schools hit with warning letters after flouting Baker clause



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Ten large academy trusts flouting the Baker clause will soon be issued letters from the skills minister to “remind them of their legal duty”.
The announcement on Thursday came just a day after secretary of state Damian Hinds said writing to schools who prevent FE providers from talking to students about technical education would be “done lightly” and said the sending of letters was a “rare thing to do”.

“The Baker clause was a major step to improve career guidance”

Anne Milton, the skills minister, has been warning since August that the government would directly intervene where schools were flouting rules, but it is believed that no intervention has yet taken place.
Ms Milton will write to the ten largest multi-academy trusts that are not complying with the clause to remind them of their duties. The Department for Education said her letters are being classed as a “reminder” rather than an intervention.
The press release accompanying the announcement said the government will “take appropriate action” if there is further evidence of a school failing to provide their students with a full range of information.
On Wednesday, secretary of state Damian Hinds used his appearance before the education select committee to insist he would not be “heavy handed” with schools with regards to the clause.
He told the committee: “Ultimately, if there’s total intransigence – and this isn’t something we wouldn’t do lightly – there’s the option for the minister to write to the school to remind them of their duties to ensure compliance. But the intention of this is not that we’re going to be getting into sending direction letters to schools,

that’s not the idea at all.”
Asked by Ben Bradley if the way to ensure compliance was really just a “strongly worded letter”, Mr Hinds said: “In this line of work that is quite a rare thing to do.”
The controversial Baker clause requires schools to publish a policy statement online to show how they ensure education and training providers can access pupils to talk about technical education and apprenticeships.
Schools must also publish details about the careers programmes they offer, how the success of these programmes are measured and when the published information will be reviewed.
However, a report from the Institute for Public Policy Research last week found that two thirds of secondary schools were failing to follow the rules, with providers voicing concerns about a “lack of any real consequences”.
It found that 70 per cent of the 68 FE providers approached as part of the research continue to find it difficult to access schools, while most of those who were granted access raised concerns that they were only allowed to speak to less academic pupils.
After reading the report, Lord Baker accused schools of “deliberately flouting and flagrantly disregarding the law of the land”.

“Ultimately, if there’s total intransigence there’s the option for the minister to write to the school”

“The Baker clause was a major step to improve career guidance and by ignoring it schools are denying the right of their students to know more about technical education. This is totally unacceptable,” he said.
An FE Week investigation in September found that the ten biggest multi-academy trusts in England had failed to comply fully with the requirements.



Principal & Chief Executive



Location: Fareham, Hampshire **Salary:** £110,000 - £120,000 **Closing Date:** Monday 11th February 2019

Our Successes:

- "Outstanding" Ofsted November 2017
- "TES FE Awards for FE College of the Year" February 2018
- "Nominated for TES Apprenticeship Programme of the Year November" 2018
- Setting the agenda for improving teaching and learning for post-16 Maths with investment from the Department for Education to develop a regional "Centre of Excellence in Basic Maths" – awarded October 2018
- Fareham College wins Apprenticeship Initiative Award at Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards 2018 in July
- "Awarded T-Level Pilot" – June 2018. Fareham College is one of only 9 colleges in the south-east to be offered the opportunity to deliver the first 3 T-level subjects in 2020.
- Fareham College scoops Teaching Excellence Framework Award in June 2018

Fareham College offers state of the art facilities comprising workshops, teaching classrooms, learning resource centres, restaurants, a theatre, a hair & beauty salon and associated facilities. We operate over a number of sites which are either purpose

built or significantly updated and refurbished following an investment of £34m.

In November 2017, the College received an 'Outstanding' judgement in its latest Ofsted inspection, one of only a handful of colleges to have converted to the highest grade in more than two years.

Our success is supported by a team of over 300 academic and business support staff. We work closely with employers to provide the very best technical and professional training to set our students on the path to exciting and rewarding careers.

We are looking for a Principal with proven experience/skills in the following areas:

- Advanced leadership skills - adapting and managing change projects, making difficult decisions whilst still maintaining a motivated team
- Financial acumen to understand key drivers and respond with clear timely and measurable recommendations
- Advanced communication skills and the ability to adapt to different groups, students, employers, politicians, educationalists and Governors

- Student engagement to deliver high quality outcomes and tracking students into employment
- Employer engagement and responding to sector opportunities, including partnering individual organisations and groups of businesses within sectors
- Exploit the reputational opportunities arising from an "outstanding" organisation and deliver growth in student numbers and continually improve quality
- Able to respond effectively in a rapidly changing environment
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Interview Dates: 20th & 21st March 2019

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For any application queries, please contact Sarah Allen, HR Adviser on 01329 815 394. More information on the position can be found here: www.fareham.ac.uk/college-overview/fareham-college-principal-recruitment/

We are not using agencies to recruit to this position.



Principal and Chief Executive

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For more information visit the FE Associates website: <https://fea.co.uk/jobs>

Closing date: **Noon on Wednesday 13th February 2019**

Interview dates: **Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th February 2019**



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Rhestrwyd Gogledd Cymru ymysg y 10 rhanbarth uchaf i ymweld ag ef yn y byd i gyd gan Lonely Planet yn 2017. Mae'r gornel brydferth hon o Gymru yn llawn hanes, gyda golygfeydd ac arfordiroedd trawiadol.

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth ac i wneud cais ewch i www.cambria.ac.uk/vacancies

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EDITORIAL



Ofsted talk tough on integrity in new regime, but they can't do it alone

A first glance there is little new in the draft Common Inspection Framework and accompanying Handbook for FE and Skills, due for implementation from September.

Those hoping for the four grade structure to change or the introduction of campus level inspections for college groups will be sorely disappointed.

There was also an opportunity to take a fresh look at the way some providers dodge inspection by subcontracting, but clearly no appetite.

But the emphasis on integrity is certainly welcome and could be very significant.

For too long Ofsted has been heavily reliant on achievement rates when making judgements – trusting they told a credible story about the quality of a provider.

As a result, in a high stakes inspection regime, some colleges and training providers have found ways to game the system.

For example, as reported by the DfE statisticians, after closing some long exploited loop-holes,

many providers saw their apprenticeship achievement rates drop by over 20 percentage points for 2015/16.

And in the last few years following the end of Ofsted ILR data checks ahead of an inspection, I've regularly heard stories about colleges returning to poor practices to boost achievement rates.

These including 'nesting', where students are for example enrolled on several short courses making up all the constituent parts of a larger one.

Ofsted plan to focus more on positive progression and destination data is welcome, but this data is open to manipulation too.

But, as the chief inspector told me, Ofsted can't become a police force.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to ensure providers follow the rules and, where necessarily, the 'spirit' of the rules and guidance they write.

Is the ESFA up to the task? Well, they have been

recruiting plenty of new auditors, but just how sensible is it that they are responsible for both funding and compliance?

Ofsted's inspection refresh is welcome, but a wider review of the whole compliance regime is really what's overdue.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



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Minister 'shocked' by college decision to block access to *FE Week*.

REM: College leaders should be held accountable for their behaviour, decisions and performance, as should other staff.

It seems to me that *FE Week* is filling a void that exists through ineffective scrutiny by Gov & conspicuous lack of self-governance by sector bodies and leadership. ESFA seeks training providers to deliver T-levels from 2021

Stuart Nice: Sounds like a positive step, in the best interests of students and managers. Hoping it improves the inspection experience and reduces the slog of data presentation and looks

at the delivery package students and employees are receiving.

DfE launches new Fire It Up apprenticeships campaign

Kevin Moore: The DfE should...

1) Remove the AMW for 19+ learners. How can an opportunity REALLY be seen as credible when it pays such a derisory figure?

2) Insert a contract clause for providers requiring a minimum percentage of apprentices to progress from completion to sustained employment, thus removing the "fee fodder" approach of employing an apprentice for the minimum time allowed, then dropping them and replacing them with a new fee, err, I mean learner.

The Baker clause can only be a short-term fix

Jon Allen: The system from pre-school to post-16 education is flawed, society & industry not represented throughout the education process by varied, balanced personnel with learning, skills & employment experiences.

New Ofsted framework to be less reliant on achievement-rate data

Tracey Fitzgerald: Well, because of the new Technical exam based results it will have to be! Plus you need experienced highly qualified teachers to manage and deliver them, not trainer assessors on minimum wage!

REPLY OF THE WEEK

DfE publishes 20% off-the-job training 'mythbusters'

Whilst it makes a small difference I have to say that I had never considered that annual leave would count towards the baseline on which the 20% is calculated.

My main problems with the 20% requirement are not addressed by any of the 'myth busters'. First is that the 20% applies for the duration of the apprenticeship. For flexible apprenticeships, particularly at the higher levels, different apprentices and employers may decide to tailor their participation to fit with personal and work commitment, so one might complete a Masters' apprenticeship in 2.5 years whilst another might take 4 years. Both put in the same amount of time to the learning activities, both gain the same benefits but for the latter the employer and apprentice has to commit significantly more off-the-job time.

Peter Moore

Experts

EMMA
MEREDITH

International
Director, AoC



International work should be
discussed more and celebrated

Colleges that choose to extend their work internationally can reap rewards in many different ways, says Emma Meredith, but perceptions are almost entirely negative

Many readers will remember the now-infamous “Deptford not Delhi” comment made by a former chief inspector six years ago. The message to colleges was: focus on domestic work, forget about international.

At the time, stories about India ventures and revoked Tier 4 licences dominated the headlines (and let’s face it, good news doesn’t always sell). International work was tricky, expensive and not guaranteed to deliver results.

As we begin 2019, the story about a college owed £1.4m by a Nigerian regional government does little to fix that picture.

But is this the norm? The short answer is no. Why? Because we rarely hear about colleges’ international

successes, however great or small. While external factors such as visa restrictions have caused some colleges to drop out of international work, others are quietly making a success of it, against the odds.

Any college that operates the most modest student exchange abroad or that enrolls a student born outside the UK is doing international work. The main misconception about college international work is that it only fits the stereotype of doomed Saudi colleges or risky student visas, and that it must be done on a BIG SCALE. International work in colleges is so much more than this and is neither celebrated nor talked about nearly enough.

AoC’s 2018 survey of college international activity showed that colleges engage in over 20 different types of international work including transnational education projects, summer schools and the delivery of professional training and consultancy

overseas.

Why do they engage? It’s an inescapable fact that colleges look to international work as an alternative income source. Anyone associated with the sector or who followed the #LoveOurColleges campaign will

“With funding in decline, work abroad can boost colleges’ income”

know that college funding levels have been in decline for the last 10 years. International work won’t make up the difference, but it can bring in income that can be invested back into central college operations once costs are covered.

But it isn’t only about the money.

Some colleges are in parts of the UK with very little ethnic or cultural diversity. Institutions look to exchange programmes such as the EU-funded Erasmus+ programme to give their local students an invaluable opportunity to go abroad and improve their interpersonal and employability skills. I’ve heard many amazing stories of how life-changing these experiences have been for students and staff, thus benefiting the entire college. And that’s certainly staying focused on the local.

Colleges are simply not able to take major financial risks on international ventures. I think that ship should now sail. As a sector we have a responsibility to mitigate risk, which means colleges talking to each other and sharing best practice. Colleges might be in competition, but it doesn’t mean that they can’t, or don’t already, help each other.

AoC works closely with the UK Skills Partnership and government departments to position the college

sector for new international opportunities. But we also advise government that these need to be the right opportunities, and that colleges need support to deliver them. Staff capacity, infrastructure and finance are obstacles, but colleges have fantastic expertise to offer a world that wants skills education and training.

Telling colleges that they should only focus on domestic work was another unfortunate example of the snobbery and ignorance with which colleges have been treated. Thankfully, in most quarters the thinking is starting to move on.

International work is difficult and doesn’t always work out, but it is worth it and does make a difference to the college community. Colleges should have the right to choose to do international work, and if they do they should be accountable and responsible. Colleges must always focus on Deptford, but they should also be free to choose Delhi.

MATT
WADDUP

Head of policy, University
and College Union



College staff have had enough
of being taken for granted

The pay crisis in further education has led to the forthcoming UCU strike. Those who work in this sector are doing a vital job, says Matt Waddup, and they need to be rewarded better

Members of the University and College Union at 16 colleges will be taking strike action over pay at the end of the month. The two-day walkouts represent the second wave of action in response to colleges’ failure to deal with the declining value of pay in the sector. The arguments are well rehearsed and unfortunately so are the excuses.

The dispute centres on the refusal of colleges to make a decent pay offer to staff who have seen the value of their pay decline by 25 per cent over the last decade. The pay gap between teachers in colleges and schools currently stands at £7,000 and low pay is bad for staff, students and colleges, with around two-thirds of college heads

citing pay as a major obstacle when it comes to attracting staff.

An indication of what can be done came from the 5 per cent pay increase offered by the Capital City College Group (CCCG) to over 1,700 staff last

“The value of pay has declined by 25% over the last decade”

term. While not every college can match the CCCG deal, UCU members are fed up with being told that nothing at all is possible unless, and until, government comes to the rescue.

Is it really true that colleges can do nothing about workload? Nothing about the rising casualisation of the workforce? Nothing about the

collapsing rates of pay of teachers relative to their colleagues in schools? Or nothing to improve the job security of their staff?

Leadership is about setting an example, not hiding in the crowd, and institutions who step to the front and engage with the union on these important issues will receive a positive hearing from UCU.

Our members know all about the cuts that have so damaged the sector – we have been campaigning against them for more than a decade. We believe that further education needs much higher funding and that those who work in it do a vital job for our society and economy but for little reward.

We have written to education secretary Damian Hinds this week warning that the government’s ambition for further education cannot be met under current funding for the sector. In the letter, we called on the

government to urgently provide extra funding for staff who feel undervalued and severely underpaid.

The strikes later this month build on the action taken at six colleges in November and colleges need to be under no illusion – further action is on the cards if they continue to fail

“The ambitions of government for further education cannot be met under current funding”

to deal with the pay crisis in further education.

Those who give nothing when they

could work with us to solve some of these problems should expect to reap what they sow. While CCCG is rightly being held up as an example of what can be achieved when the college works with us to improve pay and conditions, UCU members at CCCG took eight days of strike action this year to concentrate minds.

Our further education committee will meet after the second phase at the end of this month to consider next steps. Nothing is being ruled out at this point and we are determined to make colleges address the problems within the sector.

Nobody wants to take strike action, but UCU members are tired of being taken for granted by the government and their colleges. We are happy to work with colleges to campaign for more funding but they must not use the lack of government investment as an excuse to do nothing for their overworked and underpaid staff.

SIMON ASHWORTH

Chief policy officer, Association of Employment and Learning Providers



Apprenticeship provider growth – let's not fall into the same traps

If ESFA introduces a limit on the scope of providers to grow it could hinder the delivery of apprenticeships, says Simon Ashworth

At the AELP autumn conference, ESFA apprenticeships director Keith Smith announced that the ESFA was giving serious consideration to introducing a "provider earnings limit" on all apprenticeship providers in 2019, or in plain English placing a cap on a provider's ability to grow.

I find it surprising how little coverage this got, especially as the proposal seems to interfere with the direct customer relationship between levy-paying employers and providers. Weren't we meant to be moving away from this?

In 2017 when the first iteration of the register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP) was launched, the resulting approved list was not robust. Many organisations piled into the marketplace, resulting in *FE Week* stories about "backroom providers"

who were able to gain access to taxpayers' funds. Clearly new, untried providers presented a high risk to our apprenticeship system. Around one in four new providers visited by Ofsted have been judged to be making 'insufficient progress'.

However, let's not be quick to write off all new providers, as many are still judged to be making reasonable or even outstanding progress. Having visited several over the last few months, I have seen some innovative approaches to employer engagement and programme delivery. So we need a levy system that enables good providers to flourish once they have demonstrated they are good, and providers should be able to maintain confidence in the system as their organisation grows.

Mr Smith also expressed concerns about established large providers growing too fast and in some cases appearing to trade quality for surplus. Malpractice can happen in any industry, but despite seemingly being reluctant

to recognise its own role in the high-profile failures, the agency now appears preoccupied with clipping the wings of providers deemed "too big to fail".

In some ways it is amazing that any providers still exist, because the government has made it near-impossible for organisations to trade

"The levy system must enable good providers to flourish"

with any sort of surplus. Indeed we should be celebrating those that have survived and even grown at a time when start numbers have dropped so much and the viability of delivering and assessing a high proportion of standards is still questionable. Thanks to government policy and implementation, it's almost more of a case of "too small to

succeed".

If the ESFA does implement a provider earnings limit later this year, what are the top five things it should consider, having beefed up the RoATP? AELP recommends:

1. An approach that is flexible, transparent and simple to understand and applied only where appropriate.
2. Rethinking the name itself. "Provider earnings limit" has negative connotations, something like "growth framework" would be more positive.
3. A bespoke approach, recognising the different risks between new and established providers.
4. Restricting the amount of funding new providers can initially access and using recognised milestones (successful Ofsted monitoring visits, full Ofsted inspections and ESFA's Provider Financial Assurance visits) to allow access to greater amounts until they become established.
5. For established providers, an

approach that doesn't inhibit quality growth. Rather than a notional hard cap, a flexible framework that allows for a dialogue between providers and the ESFA. If an established provider is judged 'requires improvement', why not limit future growth until it is deemed good, to help it focus on improving existing provision rather than chasing extra volumes?

What we must not do is allow the government to start interfering in an established relationship between levy-paying employers and their providers. Yes, the register needs to be far more robust; yes, the quality and audit regime needs to function adequately; yes, there needs to be intelligent account management between the provider and government, but under no circumstances should we prevent a levy payer from ramping up apprenticeship delivery because its chosen quality provider has had an arbitrary cap placed on it by a misguided new funding regime.

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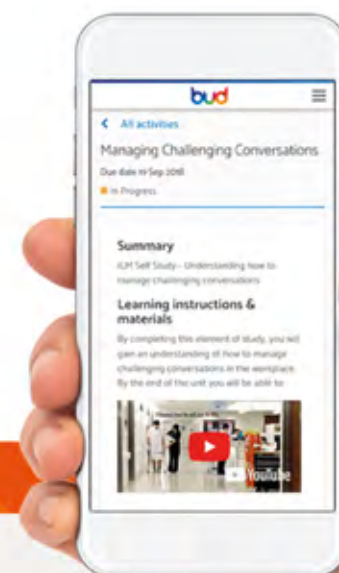
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Bulletin



Lee Probert

Principal and chief executive,
York College

Start date June 2019

Previous job
Principal, City of Bristol College

Interesting fact
Lee has been musical director for pantomime at the Swan Theatre in Worcester three times....oh yes he has!



Kate Josephs

Director of funding,
Education and Skills
Funding Agency

Start date April 2019

Previous job
Director of national operations for academies and regional delivery, Department for Education

Interesting fact
Kate spent two and a half years living and working in Washington DC as part of the Obama administration

Movers & Shakers

...

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



Julie Peaks

Deputy principal, Wyke Sixth Form College

Start date January 2019

Previous job
Vice-principal, Wyke Sixth Form College

Interesting fact
Julie is a keen follower of fashion, and had a part-time job at clothing retailer Topshop while at university in Liverpool.



Daniel Howard

Managing director, For Skills

Start date January 2019

Previous job
Assistant director of apprenticeships, Ixion Holdings

Interesting fact
Daniel is a maternal descendant of the Duke of Wellington

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

Difficulty: Easy

9	2		7	8				5
			9			7	4	8
	7				3			
					5	8		6
5				3				2
2		3	8					
			6				8	
7	1	2			8			
8				2	9		7	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: Mo Dixon



Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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