

**IT IS FAIR TO SAY
AGNEW IS RATHER
LIKE MARMITE**

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**TIPS FROM 'H' AT
NATIONAL CYBER
SECURITY CENTRE**

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**TALK WILL
INEVITABLY
TURN TO PAY**

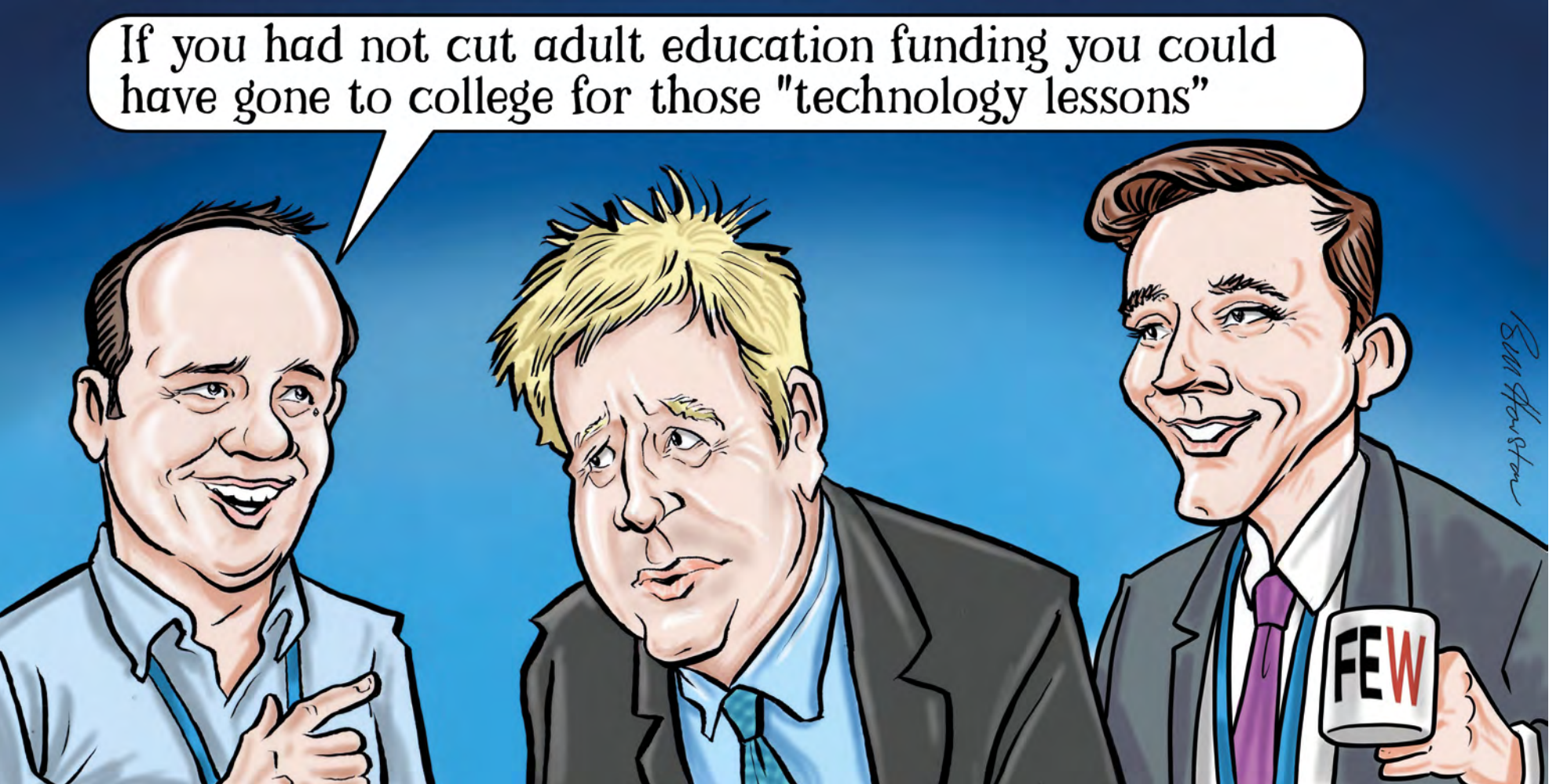
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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2019
EDITION 292



CONSERVATIVE CONFERENCE SPECIAL REPORT

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‘ABUSE OF SUBCONTRACTING’ REVIEW

- › Funding body chief reveals in letter to providers there are 11 investigations
- › Chair at £20m scandal-hit Brooklands quits and replaced by DfE consultant
- › ESFA plans (again) to end non-compliance and root out ‘systematic fraud’
- › GLA already planning to end funding prime providers not based in London

Exclusive **BILLY CAMDEN** BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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REVEALED...

**How Leeds City College is pioneering
improvement in English and maths**


Better preparing their learners for the workplace and
improving English and mathematics achievement

Advertorial

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MEET THE TEAM


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CREATING A WORLD CLASS
EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Flagship rail college hopes new name and broader offering will put it back on track

FRASER WHIELDON
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The National College for High Speed Rail is ploughing ahead with a new name and broader course offer, following a multi-million pound government bailout.

After consulting earlier this year, the government’s flagship college is changing its name to the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and intends to offer a wider range of courses at its Birmingham and Doncaster campuses.

Chief executive of the college Clair Mowbray said: “As an employer-led college, it’s key we ensure the skills we equip our learners with meet the demands and the skills shortages of the broader advanced transport and infrastructure sector.”

She quoted figures from the Strategic Transport Apprenticeship

Taskforce which estimate 50,000 more people are needed to work in the rail sector; 41,000 to fill roles on the road network; and 180,000 to deliver the Heathrow Expansion project.

“There is huge demand across the sectors and the name change reflects our dedication to delivering and developing our curriculum to meet industry demands,” Mowbray continued.

This name change coincides with delays and costing problems with the HS2 project, which is meant to deliver a high-speed rail link from London to the north and is closely aligned with the college.

Mowbray developed the college while working at the company responsible for the project, HS2 Ltd, which has lent her college £2,906,000 in 2018 and £2,804,000 in 2017.

But completion of the first phase of HS2, between London and Birmingham, will probably be pushed

back until 2040, transport secretary Grant Shapps told parliament last month, and the budget for the project could increase by around £20 billion.

NCHSR’s rebrand comes after FE Week reported in May the National College for High Speed Rail needed a £4.55 million bailout from the Department for Education to sign off its 2017-18 accounts, that the provider would not need to pay back.

However, what will need to be paid back – by 2030 – is a working capital loan of £8.3 million in 2017-18 that was necessary “to help with start-up costs that have been incurred in establishing the college,” according to a spokesperson.

This is not the only national college to run into difficulty since the scheme was launched with £80 million of taxpayers’ money in 2014.

National College Creative Industries is consulting on dissolving and instead starting a new company, NCCI Ltd,



which would franchise classroom provision and its building out to South Essex College and apprenticeship provision to Access Creative College.

NCCI’s move came after it made it through 2017-18 as a “going concern” thanks to a £600,000 bailout from the Department for Education.

Despite a target to recruit 1,000 learners a year, it only recruited 167 between May 2018 and May 2019.

Following the bailout, then-skills minister Anne Milton announced NCCI would be going through a structure and prospects appraisal to identify partners.

The DfE launched an evaluation of the national college policy in November, to avoid making mistakes in the rollout of the Institutes of Technology, of which eight more were announced this week by education secretary Gavin Williamson (see page 14).

Advertorial

Leeds City College pioneers new approach to tackling improvement in English & mathematics

Leeds City College, the 3rd largest further education college in the UK with over 20,000 students on roll, has revolutionised the process for improving English and mathematics.

In February 2019, Leeds City College, in partnership with Tribal, embarked on a pilot to adapt the internationally recognised Quality Mark for Excellence in English and mathematics.

Tribal’s Quality Mark, established in 1997, is an internationally acknowledged accreditation supporting and recognising improving standards in the provision, practice and performance of English and mathematics, and providing evidence of high-quality education. It has stood the test of time in an ever-changing educational landscape.

Headteacher and a National Leader of Education looking at policy, Liz Bramley, observes ‘It’s very much current. The Quality Mark agenda reflects national policy and absolutely dovetails with pedagogy but also has the flexibility other accreditations or processes are unable to offer. Quality Mark has moved with the times.’

Leeds City College had already made significant progress over the last few years by implementing a progressive model giving all Leads the autonomy to drive their own delivery model and make a significant impact on progress of learners. Their latest Ofsted recognised this development, stating, “Managers have been bold in developing and investing in a strategy in response to the large number of students, particularly on study programmes, who arrive at the college with no or very low grades in GCSE English and mathematics’

However, leaders sought to further embed improvement throughout the college. Whilst taking inspiration from other

further education colleges, as well as exploring the standards and frameworks being utilised in other education settings, Leeds City College explored the Quality Mark for English and mathematics, a framework originally devised for schools.

Head of English and Mathematics, Carol Lyall, and Learning and Development Manager, Jonny Diamond, noted how the Quality Mark standard aligned to national priorities and the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework; it was also clear how it offered flexibility to support the priorities of Leeds City College. And so, they embarked on a pilot project to ensure the framework’s suitability and rigor for the world of Further Education, working closely with Tribal to examine and develop each part of the Quality Mark standard, its self-evaluation criteria and the delivery model itself.

‘Piloting the Quality Mark standard in FE was undoubtedly a big piece of work. But it was so worth it... from the outset I believed that Quality Mark was the right approach for us, which meant I could really sell it to my team – and the wider teaching staff’ said Carol.

The pilot has resulted in a highly relevant framework and supporting audit tool which enables Leeds City College, and other Further Education and Skills providers, to have a uniquely focused lens on English and mathematics provision. It has proven to provide high level strategic and governance priorities, scrutiny and triangulation of data and delivery. And, most importantly, Quality Mark identifies key priorities for further improvement. Speaking about the impact of the pilot, Carol stated ‘The Quality Mark has really been the ‘rubber stamp’ of approval of our commitment and efforts to continuously improve and champion best practice. You can go into any campus and see how Quality

Mark is benefitting the students and teachers’

When asked about the importance of the college’s adoption of Quality Mark, Carol sees it as a significant step for Leeds City College and one that could have relevance for the wider sector, “Getting everyone to work towards the same high standard - the Quality Mark – will help to embed good practices and will undoubtedly improve attainment in English and mathematics. I’m anticipating that the Quality Mark accreditation will become very sought after in FE.”

Hear more about Leeds City College’s Quality Mark experience and what it means for their English and maths provision – join Carol and Jonny on the webinar, “Revolutionising the process for English and maths improvement in FE & Skills”

<https://info.tribalgroup.com/revolutionise-english-and-maths-in-fe>



Williamson defends his old sixth form as it drops digital T-level

FREDDIE WHITTAKER
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Exclusive

The education secretary has said his former college made the “right decision” in pulling out of offering a T-level in digital, as he pledged to convene business leaders in an attempt to address shortages of work placement opportunities.

“Every youngster that takes a T-level, we want to get it right first time”

It was announced this week that Scarborough Sixth Form College, where Gavin Williamson studied, will no longer deliver the digital pathway in 2020. The principal said the decision was made because of a lack of work placement opportunities in the area and a shortage of good-quality teachers.

Senior leaders in FE have long expressed concern that young people, especially in rural areas, will be unable to pass the T-level owing to a lack of local and lengthy placement opportunities. However, in 2017, the

government said it would not budge on the mandatory work placements. Speaking to FE Week at the Conservative Party conference, Williamson said it was “fantastic” his former college was going ahead with the education and childcare pathway, but said dropping the digital offer was the right call.

“They have to look as to how they deliver the very best quality and the very best choice, and they’ve had to make that decision and it is the right decision because it is about preserving that quality.

“This doesn’t close the opportunity to offer it in a year after that, but it’s getting the whole package right, because every youngster that takes a T-level, we want to get it right first time.”

Williamson said there was a “clear recognition” in government that T-levels must be “exceptionally high quality” and that colleges must be “able to offer the full spectrum of what needs to be in the T-level”.

He acknowledged that skills “aren’t as evenly spread as we would like them to be”, and said government must become a “convening force” between colleges and employers.

“We want to take the opportunity to work really closely, very closely with not just colleges but also employers as to actually how best we unlock some of the opportunities to do the vocational side of it.

“It’s one of the reasons that we’re



From left: Reporter Freddie Whittaker, education secretary Gavin Williamson and LSECT managing director Shane Mann

convening together some of the country’s largest employers to have a conversation about how we work closer with employers to make sure that the opportunities are coming available for colleges right across the country.”

However, when pressed for further information on the work with employers, the DfE did not respond to questions. Nor would it say how the process would differ from a lengthy consultation with businesses already held in 2017.

FE Week also asked the DfE for its advice to families in Scarborough who want to study the digital pathway, but received no response.

“We always expected there to be a certain amount of fluctuation of providers”

The DfE did say this week that the Grimsby Institute of Further & Higher Education, which was already set to offer the education and childcare pathway from next year, will now also deliver the digital pathway.

“We always expected there to be a certain amount of fluctuation of providers, and the pathways they offer,

as we progress towards September 2020,” a spokesperson said.

“However, we continue to have an excellent group of high-quality providers offering a variety of pathways across the country.”

T-levels were originally meant to be rolled out from September 2019 but skills minister Anne Milton announced a delay of a year in July 2017.

Williamson’s predecessor, Damian Hinds, then rejected a request from the DfE’s permanent secretary, Jonathan Slater, for another year-long delay rejected in the first ever ministerial direction issued by an education secretary last May.

This week’s changes are not the first to affect the T-levels wave one provider list: Big Creative Training and the London Design and Engineering UTC were removed in February.

It follows a pledge by Williamson in his Conference speech on Monday that England will “aim to overtake Germany in the opportunities we offer to those studying technical routes by 2029”.

Asked how it would work towards the target, the DfE said the introduction of new T-levels would boost access to great technical education across the country.



Scarborough Sixth Form College

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DIVERSITY AND CHOICE IN QUALIFICATIONS

AELP accuses DfE of 'sidestepping' with £515k tender to engage SMEs in apprenticeships

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Exclusive

The government has come under fire for planning to spend £500,000 helping small employers get “onboarded onto the Apprenticeship Service”.

A tender was launched last week by the Department for Education seeking a supplier to help “intermediaries”, such as local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and membership organisations, ensure non-levy payers engaging in apprenticeships are aware of the transition to the digital system.

“Apprenticeships are a key feature of the government’s educational policy”, the procurement, worth up to £515,000, says, “with specific ambitions to improve quality and ensure all employers offering apprenticeships are onboarded onto

the Apprenticeship Service – be they levy-paying or otherwise.

“Intermediaries, including LEPs, have a significant role to play in helping government achieve these goals through using their existing employer networks and understanding of local skills needs.”

The DfE has been inviting non-levy payers to test the Apprenticeship Service – where employers can manage apprenticeship funding and pick standards, frameworks and end-point assessment organisations – since the summer.

Previously only companies which pay the apprenticeship levy, so those with a pay bill of over £3 million, could access the service.

The ESFA original aimed to have all small employers on the digital system by April 2019, but had to delay this for a year.

But the tender has been criticised by Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and

Learning Providers, who said: “Why does the government need to do this when there are local networks of providers who would have no difficulty in finding SMEs across the country willing to offer apprenticeship opportunities? They are just side-stepping the obvious solution.”

AELP research in August found three-quarters of training providers could not meet demand from such businesses for apprenticeship provision, showing that engaging small-to-medium enterprises in apprenticeship delivery is not so much of a problem.

Dawe has called for greater funding to be put towards the apprenticeships budget, due to a shortage of funding for SME apprenticeships that he warned could become worse.

The Department for Education defended the tender: “The aim of this initiative is to make sure all avenues are being pursued in the engagement of small businesses in apprenticeship

delivery,” a spokesperson said.

“Of course, we are aware of the local networks of providers, but this is an additional option to connect more employers with apprenticeships.”

The ESFA allocated a £500 million funding pot to providers to deliver apprenticeships to small employers between January 2018 and March 2019. Contracts were then renewed for another year while the digital system is prepared.

As FE Week has reported, last year’s funding pot had been exhausted by February 2019 and providers were having to turn learners away.

Shortly afterwards, the Federation of Small Businesses went public with “serious concerns” over how the budget was being handled, having found 41 per cent of businesses had reported an increase in costs related to recruiting and training apprentices since the system reforms in 2017.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education warned the



budget could be overspent by £0.5 billion in 2018/19 and £1.5 billion in 2021/22, which FE Week was first to report upon in December 2018.

Applicants to the DfE’s tender, which must be not-for-profit organisations, have until October 11 to bid.

Minister admits no power to stop Stourbridge College becoming flats

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An education minister has admitted the government has no power to preserve Stourbridge College’s site for educational use, heightening concern that it could become housing.

Following an announcement in May that cash-strapped Birmingham Metropolitan College would be selling its site in Stourbridge, its local MP Margot James this week led a Westminster Hall debate on adult learning and vocational skills in the area.

“The site has been associated with education for many years, and it is the deep wish of our community that the site be protected in future for educational use, at least for the most part, for the generations to come,” was James’ main call.

But she received little reassurance from Michelle Donelan, who is one of three ministers helping with the FE brief in the Department for Education.

“I want to put it on record that I have listened to the proposal mentioned by the hon. member for Stourbridge for the site to continue as an educational facility

with some adult education,” Donelan said.

“Although I do not have jurisdiction over that option, I encourage all local stakeholders to review and explore it.

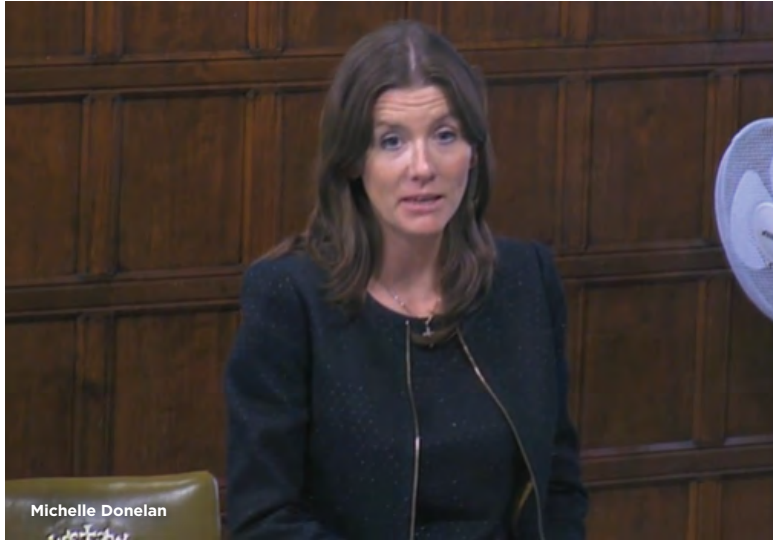
“It is matter for BMet, however, and its governors will need to demonstrate that they secure the best value from the sale of the asset to satisfy their legal responsibilities as trustees.”

The minister used her speech to express how the closure of the Stourbridge campus “is regrettable” and “I do not want to underestimate the impact that it has had across the community and the ripples that we have seen”.

She added that Stourbridge’s closure “will continue to cast a shadow over the area”, but said it was the “best option” to support BMet’s financial sustainability and, “crucially, to ensure that good-quality provision was available for current and future students”.

BMet is selling off Stourbridge College, which dates back over 100 years, in order to pay back debts which had totalled £8.9 million to banks and £7.5 million to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by May of this year.

Stourbridge’s learners and some staff



have been transferred to Dudley or Halesowen colleges.

Donelan announced during the debate that the FE Commissioner’s team, who intervened at BMet earlier this year, is planning to undertake a capacity and capability review to assess the group’s progress since a new leadership team arrived.

This is in addition to Dame Mary Ney’s review of how the DfE monitors college finances and financial management.

The commissioner has come in for criticism from a survey of Stourbridge’s stakeholders conducted by the University and College Union, which said their experience was “symptomatic of a more widespread failure by the FE Commissioner to engage effectively with staff and students”.

Labour’s shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said during the debate this survey showed how “flawed and disconnected that intervention system for colleges can become.

“It has become far too casual about

how it engages with people in the colleges, and apprenticeships have not been engaged with in any meaningful way.”

Marsden said Stourbridge’s problems were not unique, highlighting how: “In recent weeks, the columns of FE Week have been littered with accounts of problems at other colleges.”

He cited the cases of Brooklands College, where it was reported the ESFA ignored a whistleblower nearly two years earlier; the planned dissolution of National College Creative Industries, despite DfE bailouts; and the appointment of Lord Agnew as an FE “enforcer”.

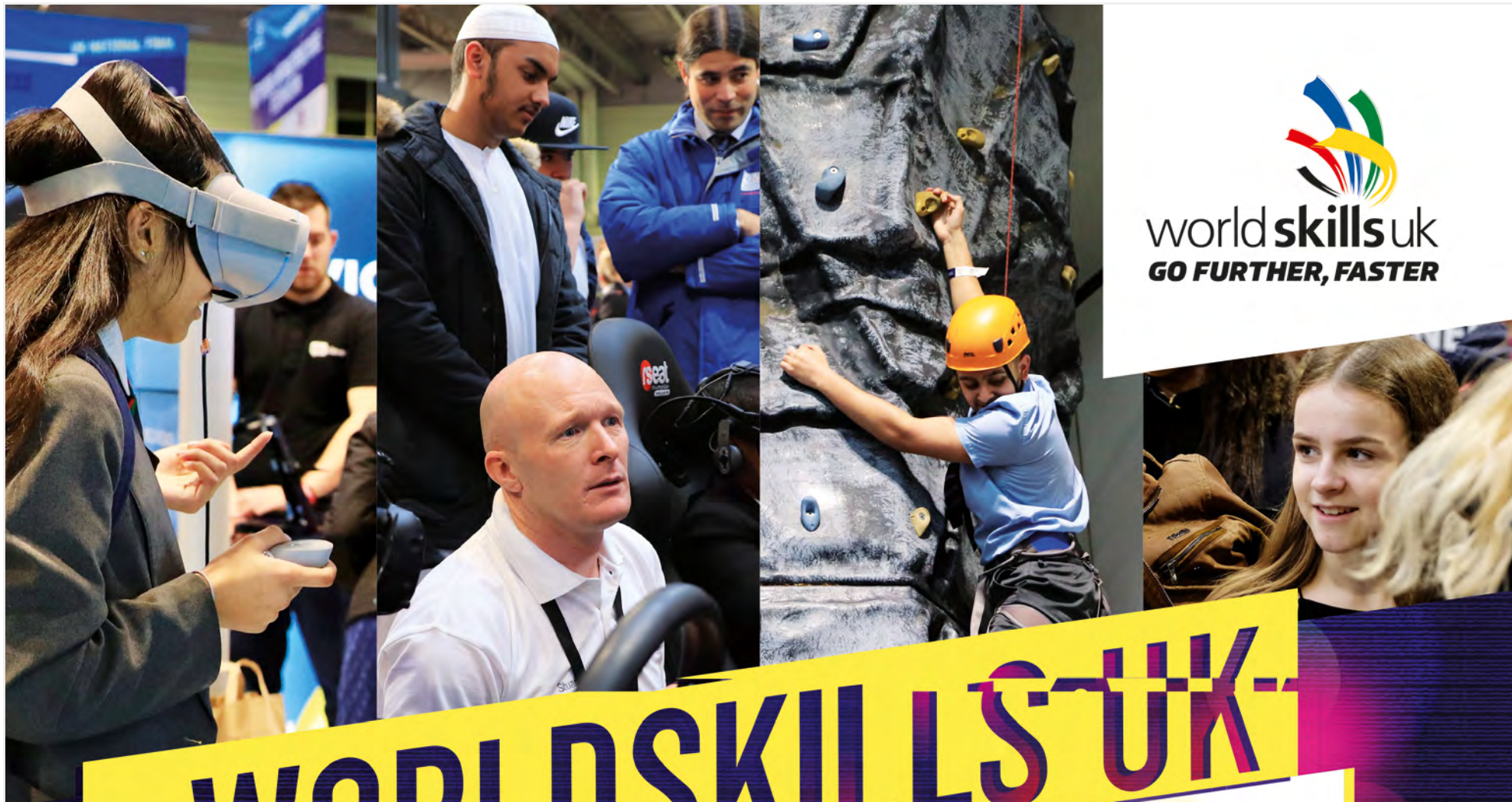
“Stourbridge College was not failing, but it was still put into this situation,” Marsden said.

“It had those buildings, which Margot James is so keen to preserve in another capacity, but that did not save it from being shut down.”

James said staff and students had told her the closure “came as a terrible shock and something of a bereavement”.

“The board of BMet and the ESFA should reflect hard on the fact that there would be huge opposition to selling the Hagley Road site for residential development,” she warned.

In addition to the Ney inquiry and the planned FE Commissioner review, the National Audit Office confirmed it will be investigating the management of colleges’ financial sustainability, after James wrote asking them to investigate BMet.



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London to clamp down on fur

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

Eastleigh is one of over 30 colleges that could lose millions as part of plans to end out-of-area providers subcontracting in London, FE Week can reveal.

The Greater London Authority proposal, approved by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, will come into effect from 2021-22 – the third year of devolution of the adult education budget.

“The GLA will redirect funding to providers delivering directly to London learners”

Currently, the GLA provides around £14 million of AEB grant funding to providers located further than what is considered to be a “reasonable travel-to-learn distances for London

learners”.

Officials say the majority of this funding is subcontracted to training providers based in London who are then charged a “substantial” management fee.

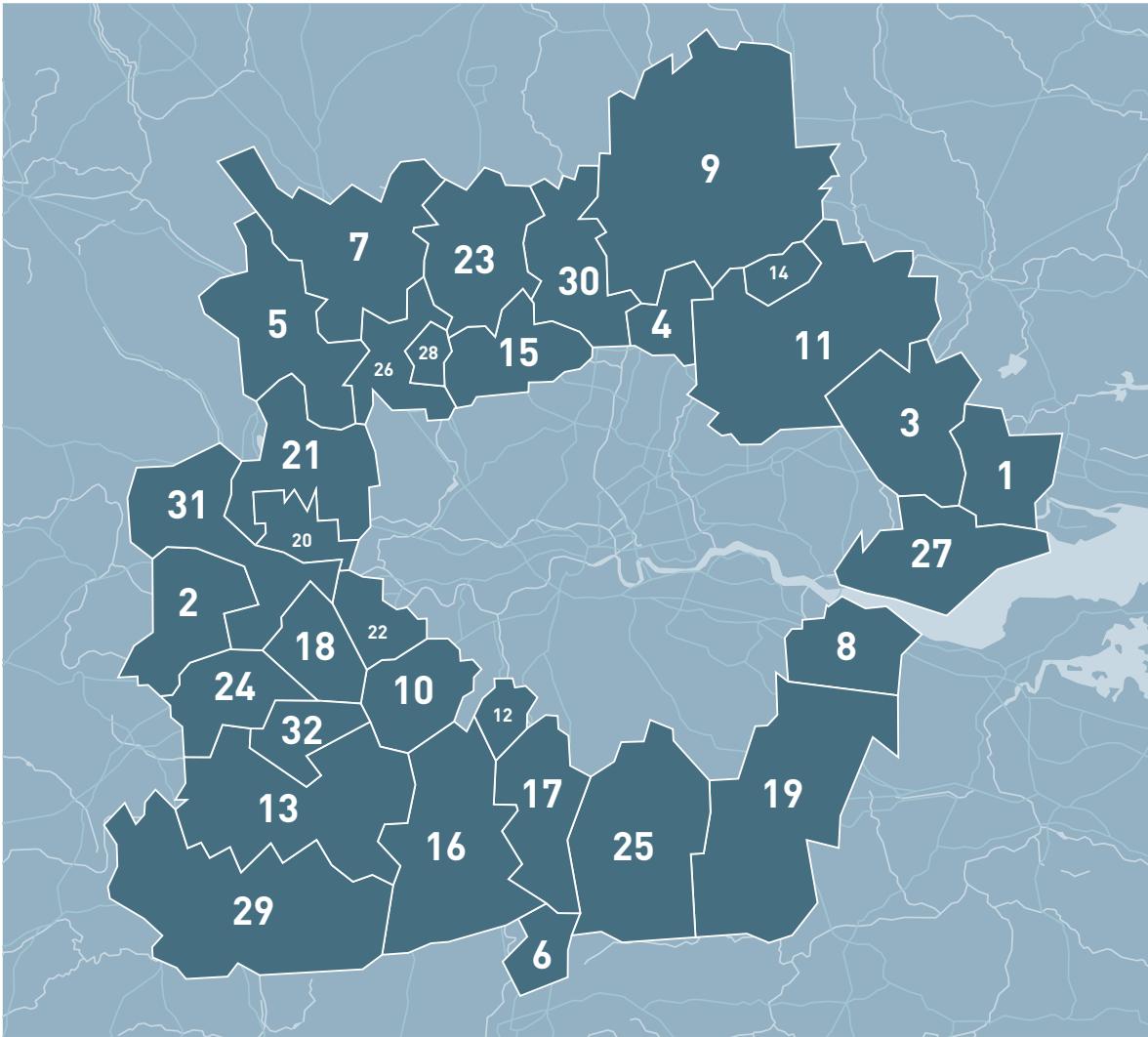
“By restricting the number of out-of-London providers it grants to, the GLA will be able to redirect funding, including subcontracting management fees, to those providers delivering directly to London learners with the local knowledge and understanding to ensure it meets the needs of the local community most effectively,” the GLA said.

It comes after the authority introduced the first-ever cap on management fees in subcontracting deals. From August 2019, providers with direct AEB contracts with the GLA are expected to limit the management charge to a maximum of 20 per cent of the funding.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation “strongly supports” a reduction in top slicing and “more direct delivery is also desirable”.

However, he warned this shouldn’t “necessarily preclude national providers from winning contracts if they have a demonstrable presence in the area and show good knowledge of it”.

Local authority areas within the ESFA's definition of London's "fringe"



Mary Vine-Morris, the area director for London at the Association of Colleges, said the GLA's proposed policy is an “inevitable consequence of adult education budget devolution”.

“This is an inevitable consequence of AEB devolution”

News of the move comes in the same week that Education and Skills Funding Agency boss Eileen Milner sent a sector-wide letter cracking down on poor subcontracting practice.

It comes amid high-profile subcontracting scandals, the latest of which involves Brooklands College (see page 18). FE Week has also previously exposed examples where management fees have risen to as much as 40 per cent.

Mirroring the GLA, Milner's letter said the government is considering

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| 2 | Bracknell Forest | 18 | Runnymede |
| 3 | Brentwood | 19 | Sevenoaks |
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placing “limits on the permitted geographical distance between a directly-funded institution and the location where subcontracted provision is delivered”.

To determine which providers are within reasonable travel-to-learn distances for London learners, the GLA has adopted the ESFA's definition of London's “fringe” (see map).

For those providers based outside the fringe – typically more than 30

miles away from central London – the authority said it has notified and invited them to make a business case for why their funding should continue based on the type of provision they offer and the groups of learners they support.

FE Week analysis shows there are 33 colleges based more than 30 miles away from central London which are currently grant funded with the GLA to deliver AEB in the capital.



Sadiq Khan

Funding for out-of-area colleges

One of the largest college groups in the country, NCG, has its headquarters based nearly 250 miles away in Newcastle and currently holds a GLA contract worth £10.4 million.

However, two colleges in its group – Lewisham and Southwark – are located in London. A spokesperson for NCG said they have been notified that “we are recognised as a London provider”.

“We are concerned about the future of the priority area provision we have provided Londoners”

Eastleigh College, which is based 65 miles away from central London, has a contract with the GLA totalling £3.4 million.

It has a history of high-level subcontracting, as highlighted in the latest subcontracting figures published by the government, which are for the 2016-17 academic year.

The college subcontracted to 58

providers in that year and charged a 22 per cent top-slice on average.

Principal Jan Edrich said Eastleigh is now “concerned about the future of the priority area provision (Functional Skills in English, maths and IT) that we have provided Londoners for many years”.

“We are working closely with the GLA to understand how we can support them to achieve their objectives over the next few years,” she added.

Elsewhere, Strode College has a contract with the GLA worth £379,000 this year, and is based 115 miles away from central London. It currently subcontracts all of this funding out to a provider in the capital called Yeti, which is charged a 20 per management fee.

A spokesperson said the college “agrees that the training provider should be based within 30 miles of central London, employing London quality training staff delivering to London residents”.

However, the training providers the college has “partnered with, have clearly stated they prefer to focus on delivering outstanding training to their learners and rely on Strode College to efficiently manage compliance and quality for a value for money management fee”.

The spokesperson added they will

not be making a business case to the GLA to continue this relationship.

Derby College, based 112 miles away from central London, has a GLA contract worth £672,000 for this year. A spokesperson said the college is in “early discussions” with the authority on the impact of its grant funding plan.

East Sussex Colleges Group is based more than 50 miles away from central London and has a current GLA contract worth £383,000.

Its executive director for strategic partnerships and engagement, Dan Shelley, said the college “respects devolution decisions and will continue to work with the GLA to deliver provision that meets their identified priorities”.

“To that end ESCG is seeking more information on the business case process so we can continue to deliver our programmes to disadvantaged adults in the capital,” he added.

A decision on those providers in

scope for continued grant funding will be made by the GLA “before the end of 2019”.

The move will free up a chunk of AEB funding, and the GLA has said it will consult on how best to use this as part of its next Skills for Londoners framework consultation, which will launch in February.

Options could include running a separate AEB procurement exercise or funding uplifts for certain learners and qualifications.

The 33 providers with GLA contracts located more than 30 miles away from central London

College name	Miles away from London	Contract value for 2019/20
AYLESBURY COLLEGE	36.65	£389,761
BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	45	£549,319
BATH COLLEGE	97.3	£122,394
BEDFORD COLLEGE	45.89	£352,307
BRIDGWATER AND TAUNTON COLLEGE	126	£225,801
CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE	51.12	£1,167,529
CITY OF BRISTOL COLLEGE	106.56	£292,052
DERBY COLLEGE	112.15	£672,543
DN COLLEGES GROUP	145.62	£108,686
EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE GROUP	52.64	£383,128
EASTLEIGH COLLEGE	64.96	£3,280,424
EKC GROUP	67.95	£463,163
GATESHEAD COLLEGE	248.31	£561,385
GLOUCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	152.2	£206,230
HEART OF WORCESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	94	£153,852
LEICESTER COLLEGE	88	£208,382
MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE	44.8	£143,512
NCG	246	£10,426,296
NEW COLLEGE SWINDON	70.15	£135,739
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE AND SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE COLLEGE	90.17	£1,051,704
NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE	107.26	£177,197
PETROC	172.28	£111,113
PLUMPTON COLLEGE	41.84	£118,547
RNN GROUP	142.54	£123,225
RUSKIN COLLEGE	50.04	£271,577
SHREWSBURY COLLEGES GROUP	137.58	£173,328
SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	58.3	£411,375
STRODE COLLEGE	115.7	£379,279
SWINDON COLLEGE	71.49	£213,912
TELFORD COLLEGE	130	£284,409
THE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA	80.65	£287,414
WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE	121	£169,974
WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE	62.45	£125,351



Dr Jan Edrich

News

NCFE and City & Guilds win contracts to deliver second wave of T-levels

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The awarding organisations that will develop, deliver and award the seven T-levels being rolled out from 2021 are NCFE and City & Guilds, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has announced.

NCFE has been awarded contracts worth a combined total of £16.6 million to develop qualifications for digital business services, digital support and services, health, healthcare science and science.

City & Guilds has won the contract worth £3.7 million for onsite construction and building services engineering.

Education secretary Gavin Williamson said: "It's really important that we get the delivery of T-levels right.

"City & Guilds and the NCFE have been selected to deliver the second wave of T-levels because of their breadth of knowledge and expertise in the sector. I look forward to seeing our



Stuart Foster

new qualifications become world-leading, ahead of the 2021 roll out, with these two organisations at the helm."

NCFE also won a contract to help deliver first wave of T-levels from next year, along with Pearson.

"This a landmark moment within UK education and we look forward to being at the forefront"

Its chief operating officer Stewart Foster said: "We are absolutely delighted that NCFE has been awarded this new contract to be the delivery partner.

"To be at the forefront of this revolution in technical education means we can continue to support thousands of learners across England to progress and succeed."

NCFE director Julie Hyde said: "We are also thrilled to be the delivery partner for the two digital

routes, equipping learners with the skills they need to develop successful careers in this exciting and rapidly evolving sector that will be so crucial for businesses to help fill their skills gaps."

City & Guilds will be partnering with engineering and advanced manufacturing awarding organisation EAL to develop and deliver qualifications.

Managing director of City & Guilds Kirstie Donnelly said: "The construction sector has been at the heart of City & Guilds since it was founded over 140 years ago and so we are delighted to have been awarded the contract to deliver construction T-levels.

"This a landmark moment within UK education and we look forward to being at the forefront of this new era. T-levels present an unparalleled opportunity to provide young people with the technical knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers are demanding.

"As the leading sector specialists, we are ideally placed to develop these qualifications and we are very excited to be part of this new direction for technical education. We are especially pleased to have won this bid in collaboration with EAL."

Managing director of EAL Alison Parkes said: "Bringing our understanding and expertise in



Kirstie Donnelly

building services engineering and as the leading specialist awarding organisation in engineering, we are immensely proud to be a part of the reshaping of the skills landscape for the construction route."

Chief executive of the institute Sir Gerry Berragan said he was "delighted" the contracts are now signed for the second wave of T-Levels.

"I am sure NCFE and City & Guilds will do an excellent job preparing T-levels for delivery in classrooms across the country," he added.

T-levels are new post-16 technical qualifications which are designed to have "parity of esteem" with A-levels. They will offer learners a mixture of classroom learning and lengthy industry placements.

Three initial

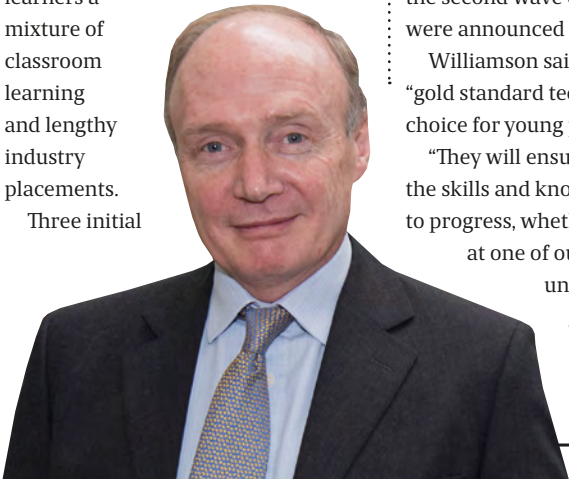
pathways, in education, construction and digital, will be rolled out from 2020. They will be delivered by 50 providers across England.

"I look forward to seeing our new qualifications become world-leading"

The 64 providers selected to deliver the second wave of T-levels from 2021 were announced in June.

Williamson said T-levels will be the "gold standard technical course of choice for young people post-16".

"They will ensure students can get the skills and knowledge they need to progress, whether that is studying at one of our world-class universities, landing a great job or doing an apprenticeship," he added.



Sir Gerry Berragan

The awarding bodies with T-level contracts

Wave 1	NCFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education and childcare
	Pearson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design, surveying and planning• Digital production, design and development
Wave 2	City & Guilds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onsite construction• Building services engineering
	NCFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital business services• Digital support and services• Health• Healthcare science• Science



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Profile



Introducing...

LORD AGNEW

Education minister

JESS STAUFENBERG
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Jess Staufenberg has closely followed Lord Agnew’s career in the schools sector, where his reputation divides opinion. As he settles into his new remit as minister for the further education market, she sets out what his appointment might mean for the sector

It’s fair to say Lord Agnew, or rather Theodore Agnew, Baron of Oulton, is rather like Marmite. On the one hand, he has got right up school leaders’ noses with his flippant comments about savings. On the other, some admire him for his tough talk and several of his policy stances. So who is the new minister for the further education provider market, and what can the sector expect of him?

Agnew’s gung-ho approach to school savings has prompted much

irritation among academy leaders – and is likely to do the same with many college bosses. In November last year he exuberantly claimed he is “like a pig hunting for truffles” when finding savings in the education system, and that he can “wager a bottle of champagne” he will find some in every school.

Aside from the annoying reference to expensive foodstuffs, this claim outraged education leaders all the more, firstly because it came from a wealthy venture capitalist rather than an experienced educator, and secondly because evidence shows that school funding has dropped in real terms over the past decade.

And if it’s been bad for schools, it’s been worse for colleges: the Institute for Fiscal Studies confirmed last year that further education has been the “biggest loser” in education funding cuts. A £400 million spending boost and extra £120 million for Institutes of Technology have been welcomed by

the sector, but many college heads are clear that more money is needed.

So it’s likely that references to truffles and champagne will not go down well in FE if Agnew continues in the same vein in his new role. He has since claimed his words were “taken out of context” – but he remains a tough talker, and on Friday warned in these pages that he will personally be making sure colleges “curb excessive costs” and that “investment is not wasted”.

“College principals may take comfort that Agnew’s bark is worse than his bite”

In academies, his army of school resource management advisers (SRMAs) – or cost-cutting consultants – have been executing this mission, though not always with a good reception. FE Week’s sister paper Schools Week greatly irritated Agnew by revealing some SRMA reports were advising schools to cut down on lunch portions and replace experienced teachers with support staff. An expansion of the scheme is on the cards. For the moment, the FE sector is not in their remit.

A bark worse than his bite

But college staff may have more sympathy with Agnew for his pet peeve – excessive senior pay. In the colleges sector, as in the academies sector, there has been outrage at the amount some college principals are taking home, with the University and College

Union blasting them as “greedy and hopelessly out of touch” in April last year, after a third enjoyed a pay rise of more than 10 per cent in 2016-17. Agnew warns in his FE Week piece that where senior staff salaries are too high, he will “not hesitate to step in”. So, be warned.

Or perhaps not? College principals may take comfort (and underpaid lecturers groan) that Agnew’s bark is, frustratingly for him, worse than his bite. We know from Schools Week that despite the Education and Skills Funding Agency sending out more than 200 letters to academy trusts demanding they justify big salaries paid to bosses, they didn’t have much impact. Nearly half of the trusts to get letters actually paid their chief executives more last year – and the Department for Education was powerless to intervene.

The equivalent pressure on colleges is the Association of Colleges’ controversial senior pay code, which colleges are being asked to follow. The voluntary guidance suggests giving seniors a pay rise only if all staff receive one, removing top college bosses from remuneration committees, and publishing principal salaries separately. But again, it’s all voluntary. So it is not clear exactly what Agnew means when he says he will “step in”.

Take, for instance, Judith Doyle, principal at Gateshead College. Her salary moved from a minimum of £240,000 in 2017 to £340,000 in 2018. Asked to justify this, the college said “executive pay is decided by the remuneration committee following thorough due process and procedure” and that “individual and organisational performance” is considered.

The college added that “the

published accounts take into account an accrual for a remuneration scheme payable in respect of a three-year period.” FE Week understands this means Doyle was owed money from the previous three years, which was paid in one lump sum last year. It was not explained what money she was owed or why.

The college has told FE Week her salary this year is £252,000. It is a reduction from last year, but hardly a model of pay restraint. And following the departure of three principals who last year were paid more, it is now likely to be the sector’s highest in 2019.

The anger around these big packages was also demonstrated when Sir Ian Diamond was appointed to lead the Commission for the College of the Future, with critics pointing out the ex-Aberdeen University boss’s £280,000 payout is still being probed by finance bosses.

So can Agnew really bring down



Lord Agnew speaking at the Festival of Education 2019



“Agnew’s gung-ho approach has prompted much irritation among academy leaders and is likely to do the same with many college bosses”

salaries? It would appear difficult. In which case, he has a tricky job: he risks irritating the FE sector by talking endlessly of savings, when most experts agree a serious funding injection for colleges is well overdue. Yet where he could win over staff – by cutting senior pay – he is rather emasculated.

A hands-on politician

To return to the Marmite analogy, some like Agnew because he is pretty outspoken. He is also a doer, so don’t underestimate him yet. After all, he’s only had his FE brief for a couple of weeks and has already ordered the FE Commissioner to investigate the credit card expenses of Stella Mbubaegbu, principal at Highbury College in Portsmouth, which were revealed after *FE Week*’s year-long freedom of information battle with the college. Agnew also told this paper he is “carefully monitoring”

an independent investigation into alleged mismanagement of funds at Hull College Group.

Agnew is outspoken in other ways, too. Brought up in Norfolk and privately educated at Rugby, he revealed to local press in 2013 he opposes grammar schools because failing the 11+ himself made him feel like a “second-class citizen”. He’s also vowed to crack down on schools using “monopoly suppliers” for school uniforms, claiming it is a “pernicious way of excluding children from less well-off backgrounds”, and has pledged to look at academy whistleblowing procedures. Agnew was there when inspection exemptions for “outstanding” colleges and schools were stripped away – undoing one of Michael Gove’s worst legacies – and is a vocal backer of greater exclusions accountability.

So even if he can’t do all he likes with colleges, he will do what he can. Councils at this moment may

be trembling at Agnew’s proposed “accountability matrix” to show how academies are different (read: “better”) from local authority schools. He and the DfE are also going after local authority schools by requesting they publish their annual finances on their website. Could all this be coming the way of FE? There’s a reason he has been described as the man who “wants to chair every academy trust in England”.

Yet Agnew, formerly a trustee at influential think tanks Policy Exchange and Education Policy Institute, has one serious weak spot – the accusation that he represents a biased system, and doesn’t always play fair. This has a long history: there were rumblings of discontent when he received his knighthood in 2015, given he had donated £134,000 to the Conservative Party between 2007 and 2009.

The Norfolk-based academy trust he founded in 2012, Inspiration Trust, was dogged by accusations of

“special treatment” by the DfE because of its links to him, ranging from undue influence with Ofsted to not being required to publish important documents.

“Even if he can’t do all he likes, he will do what he can”

He finally stepped down as a director in summer 2018, but keeping certain documents under wraps still seems to be a habit. An investigation launched three years ago into the epic collapse of Lilac Sky Schools Academy Trust has still not been published, even though Agnew keeps banging on about “unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency”.

He promised in April this year that 70 reports by his SRMAs would be

published in the next few months, but they haven’t appeared. And Agnew refused MP requests to disclose any details of a £16 million turnaround plan for the large Academies Enterprise Trust. He also wrote to academy trust auditors telling them a “simple way to avoid failings going on to the public record is through mid-year audit reviews”. So much for total transparency.

So like him or loathe him, the message on Agnew is clear. Better get in his good books quick.

The Association of Colleges has responded to the appointment by saying: “We should be pleased, not worried, that Lord Agnew has been tasked with looking at FE quality and improvement because ours is a sector with a great story to tell.” Kirsti Lord, their deputy chief executive, writes exclusively for *FE Week* on page 21.

Ed sec's bold conference pledges put under the spotlight



Gavin Williamson

'Supercharging' further education

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The education secretary has revealed his ambition to “supercharge FE” by aiming to overtake Germany in this area over the next decade.

Gavin Williamson made the pledge during a passionate speech at the Conservative Party Conference on Monday where he put FE centre stage.

“My mission as your education secretary is clear: to deliver nothing less than a revolution in technical education,” he said.

“Our aim is to overtake Germany

in the opportunities we offer to those studying technical routes by 2029.”

When pressed on how this would be measured, the Department for Education said it is committed to delivering “three key things: access, quality, parity” over the next 10 years.

A spokesperson added that these are “clear objectives” which should be treated as an “opener”.

Williamson, who is leading on the FE and skills brief at the DfE, continued: “I promise to make technical and vocational education the first choice for anybody with the aptitude, desire and interest to pursue it.

“Apprenticeships, technical and

vocational education: these are just as important, and as valuable as going to university and are just as important to our economy to make sure Britain succeeds in the future.”

His warm words about the value of the sector were followed up on Wednesday by prime minister Boris Johnson, who used his keynote speech to say “the government is investing in better FE training to give young people the prospect of a good job”.

During his speech, the education secretary also announced a new expert skills and productivity board of leading industrialists and labour market economists.

Funding for new wave of IoTs

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A new wave of Institutes of Technology are to be opened by the government with a £120 million funding pot, education secretary Gavin Williamson also announced at conference.

“They have the potential to transform high-level technical education, bringing together FE colleges, universities and employers,” the minister said, as the institutions provide “university-level technical qualifications and the sector-specific skills that are most needed in their local economies”.

But he added: “We don’t have enough of them to serve the whole country.”

“We need stretching technical education at every level”

The money will be spread across eight new institutes, so there is one in each major city of England.

“We will make sure every young

person in every part of our country gets the chance to gain the high-level technical skills that they, and we, need,” Williamson continued.

“From the elementary to the elite – we need stretching technical education at every level.”

His announcement to the Conservative Party Conference comes after 12 of the flagship providers were announced earlier this year.

As FE Week previously reported, the locations of the first wave of institutes left cold spots in the north west and east of England, leading the DfE to promise a review of the programme.

And the Association of Colleges said in April up to 50 or 60 institutes need to be opened in the next decade.

It is not yet known where each of the eight new institutes will be located; however, Williamson told the Manchester Evening News this week one would be located in the north west.

Institutes of technology specialise in delivering higher level technical training at level four and five in STEM subjects, including digital, advanced manufacturing and engineering.

FE and apprenticeship providers for each institute must hold at least a grade two from Ofsted.

The first wave, which was paid for with £170 million of government funding, was whittled down from a shortlist of 16 applications.

Sector’s mixed response

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Leaders from FE and the wider education sector have shared their mixed thoughts on Gavin Williamson’s performance at the Conservative Party Conference.

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said it was “very encouraging to see the secretary of state today back up his strong support for colleges with more investment”.

“His speech reinforces the prime minister and chancellor’s commitment to technical and vocational education,” he added. “The second funding announcement in as many months shows the tide, rightly, is changing.

“Colleges have the knowledge, teaching staff and initiative to deliver the ‘revolution in technical education’ Williamson described so passionately.”

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation takes “real encouragement

from the secretary of state wanting to take a good look at the productivity gains from skills programmes”.

“We’re confident that his group of economists will give him the information he needs about the value of apprenticeships in this respect and why more investment in SME apprenticeships is necessary,” he added.

Sixth Form Colleges Association chief executive Bill Watkin welcomed the “government’s commitment to the FE sector and the secretary of state’s explicit commitment to both technical and vocational education”.

Matthew Fell, chief UK policy director at the Confederation of British Industry, said: “The CBI has been calling for investment and reform of our skills system to be put centre stage. The education secretary is right to make colleges and further education a top priority.

“Today’s announcement, coming hot on the heels of further funding announced in the Spending Review, shows the government is rising to the challenge.”

Stephen Evans, chief executive of the Learning and Work Institute, said it was “good to see” Williamson’s “personal commitment to FE translating into funding and action”.

However, “our research shows improvements in skills have stalled over the last decade with the UK poised to fall further down the international league tables by 2030.

“We can only improve relative to Germany and other countries with significant and sustained investment alongside a clear, lifelong learning strategy – we argued for ten-year plan with a £1.9 billion per year boost to adult learning,” Evans added.

“The government’s announcements are a welcome start, but there is so much more to do.”

Sue Pember, former director of FE at the Department for Education and now director of policy at adult education network HOLEX, welcomed Williamson’s “optimism and ambition” but warned that “without better financial support for students, this ambition will not be met”.

“The secretary of state could make immediate changes now and that would help, for example, removing the existing cap on FE post-19 loans and allowing FE students to have access to maintenance loans,” she added.

“The other area that needs immediate action is the progression route into higher-level skills – a continuous level-two platform in all vocational subjects is needed now – without that rung on the ladder 30 per cent of our young people and adults are barred from taking part”.

University and College Union head of further education Andrew Harden said it is “of course encouraging that further education formed a central plank of speech today”.

“Warm words and a pledge to match Germany are something of a rite of passage for any new minister, but what we desperately need is proper funding and support,” he added.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, echoed similar thoughts: “The ambition for Britain to offer better technical education than Germany in ten years’ time will come to nothing if more funding is not found.”

Commenting specifically on

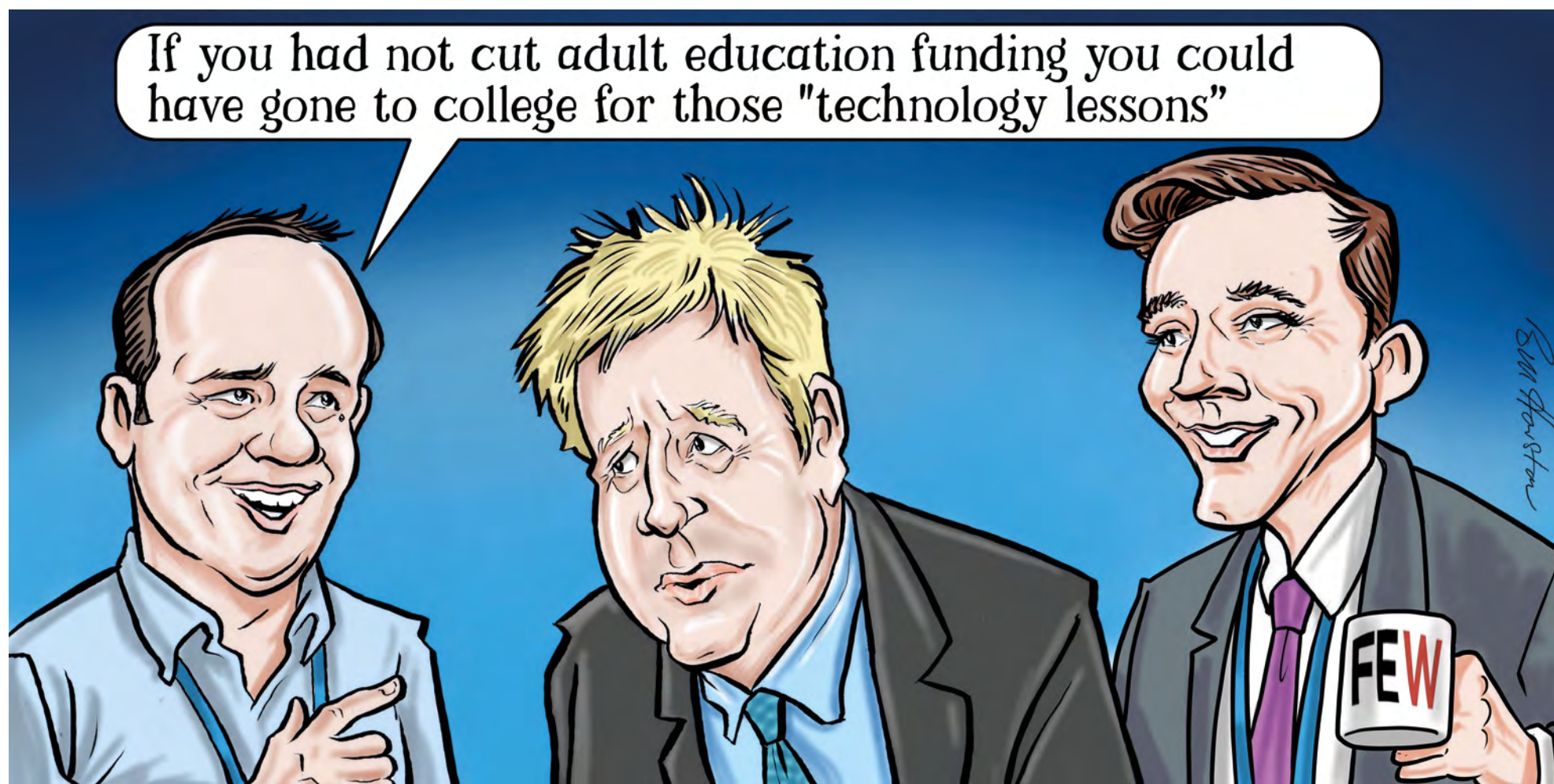
Williamson’s pledge to overtake Germany in technical education, Sam Freedman, the chief executive of the Education Partnerships Group, tweeted: “In a crowded field this is the most meaningless announcement I’ve ever heard from an education secretary. What would ‘overtaking Germany in technical education’ even look like?”

“Germany has a completely different economy and an entirely different structural relationship between training institutions and employers. It shows such little understanding of the issues I don’t even know where to start.”

And Tom Richmond, adviser to former skills minister Matt Hancock and founder and director of think-tank EDSK, told FE Week: “Gavin Williamson’s ambition is certainly eye catching. The obvious question is how will his plan be measured?”

“The three million apprenticeship starts target was easy to measure and well intentioned, but it was ultimately a disastrous approach that has reduced the quality and credibility of apprenticeships instead of enhancing it.

“Unless this new approach is carefully designed and delivered, ministers could yet again fall into a similar trap.”



AoC boss critical of vice-chancellors spending university cash on 'wine and beer'

BILLY CAMDEN

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The Augar report could be "dead" after university vice-chancellors whinged they couldn't "possibly survive" on slashed tuition fees "because we'll all have to reduce our salaries or spend on wine and beer".

That is according to the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, David Hughes, who told a Conservative Party Conference fringe event yesterday that he is "not very optimistic" the post-18 education review "will be taken as seriously as it might".

He cited a number of reasons for this, including the fact that the review, the recommendations from which were originally meant to turn into policy, was "the last prime minister's report, not the present".

"The politics of life are that the present prime minister will take it less seriously because of that," he said.

"It was also a report that had a lot of infighting between Treasury and Number 10, between Philip Hammond and Theresa May."

Hughes then turned to university bosses: "You add to that then the

possible nail in the coffin of the report as a whole: the vice-chancellors immediately just went for it and said we can't possibly survive on £7,500 fees because 'we'll all have to reduce our salaries or reduce our spend on wine and beer'.

"It was a report that had a lot of infighting between Treasury and Number 10"

"They got to Johnson, not Boris but Jo, when he was fleetingly, for about five weeks as higher education minister again, and basically just sunk the whole report by saying we can't implement the £7,500 fees as 'it's just not going to work'."

He added: "Interestingly, if you go to Scotland the average fee is about £6,500 and the universities there seem to do ok, so I don't know how that works."

"It is real shame actually, because

there was a lot of really good analysis in the report and I would recommend you read, certainly, the chapter on skills and FE."

Excessive university vice-chancellor pay has made headlines in recent years with many calls for the government to restrain salary levels.

The higher education regulator, the Office for Students, published its first ever survey on senior staff pay in February, which revealed how six universities in England paid their vice-chancellors £500,000 or more in salary, bonuses and benefits last year, while nearly half of all vice-chancellors received more than £300,000.

In June, The Press and Journal revealed how the Scottish government had launched an investigation into a £282,000 payment to the former principal of Aberdeen University, Ian Diamond, who is now the chair of the Association of Colleges' College of the Future commission.

This week's fringe event at the Conservative Party Conference, hosted by the Centre for Progressive Policy, was entitled Implementing Augar – building an adult education system fit for the future of work.

Hughes said it was worth reflecting



David Hughes

on the "genesis" of the report, which was launched with an "amazing speech" by then prime minister Theresa May at Derby College – a venue choice which the AoC boss said was a "real tide turn" for FE.

"I was in the audience, sitting just behind the vice-chancellor of Derby University who I know quite well, and I heard him muttering away at how terrible this was that it was in a college and not in his university, which is about two miles away," Hughes told

the audience.

"It was the start, I think, of a kind of a real tide turn when universities started to realise they weren't the chosen children of the education system anymore and that colleges have started to rise up."

He added: "It could be that it [the Augar report] is dead but the issues it was trying to address and the reason that Theresa May launched the review in the first place are so important that it won't go away."

Experts

PROFESSOR
EWART KEEP

Director of SKOPE,
Oxford University



Beating Germany will require
radical change – not quick fixes

The secretary of state's Conservative Party conference speech unveiled an ambition to overtake Germany by 2029 in the technical and vocational education opportunities we offer. His objective is laudable, but, asks Ewart Keep, what does it mean and is it achievable?

The first thing to note is that we have been here before. Since at least the 1880s and the Samuelson Commission, we have cast envious glances at overseas vocational systems and witnessed calls to match or better them in pursuit of economic success. Back in 1984, The Institute of Manpower Studies produced its report, *Competence and Competition*, which benchmarked the UK against the US, Germany and Japan. We came out badly.

The Leitch Review of skills (2006) demanded that we be in the top eight for each different level of skill across the OECD by 2020. We are not set to achieve this, except probably in

higher education.

Gavin Williamson, wisely, does not seem to be claiming that we should copy the German vocational education and training (VET) system, but that our own arrangements need to match and then better what theirs achieves. This is still a tall order.

Many of the elements upon which successful vocational education systems are founded – in Germany, but also in other developed countries – are currently lacking in England.

They include a stable policy climate; supportive cultural expectations among employers, young people and parents that have been built up over time; and the means to best pursue policy objectives based on social partnership models and the sharing of power between government and other stakeholders. None of these has been in evidence here in recent times.

More importantly, other countries expect a great deal more from their employers than we do, and this is often

enshrined in obligations and duties supported by legislation. For example, the quality of German apprenticeships is underpinned by requirements that firms have a qualified trainer to deliver the on-the-job elements.

More generally, the German dual system of apprenticeships is based on

“Other countries expect a great deal more from their employers than we do”

real employer leadership, and this in turn relies upon time-hallowed forms of collective employer organisation, not least through the local chambers of commerce and handicrafts (membership of which is mandated by law) that we do not possess.

The evidence to date suggests that incentivising English firms to take an active role in VET will require effort, as well as a different approach to the collective organisation and representation of employers than that which currently pertains.

What else might be needed? The first, predictably, is cash. World-class VET will not be delivered on the cheap. Besides higher levels of funding, the upper-secondary phase may need to be seen as a fully funded three-year entitlement (ie, 16-19) in order to get far more young people in FE to Level 3 and above, as is the norm elsewhere.

The second covers designing, agreeing and re-engineering incentives to support virtuous behaviour. These have to go beyond public subsidy, and might, for example, include wider support for training through public procurement.

We need to engineer a world where employers and the labour market consistently reward skills acquisition.

We need firms who will act as partners, co-producers and providers of workplaces that offer rich, expansive learning environments. We need education and training providers who co-operate in the best interests of the learner, locality and labour market.

Most of the successful overseas VET systems are just that – systems that operate with limited levels of competition and which encourage co-operation and seamless pathways.

At present, we lack the incentive structures that would power these kinds of behaviours. We also need to accept that spraying a new layer of institutions – like institutes of technology – on top of a set of local, regional and sectoral marketplaces is at best a very small part of any solution.

Finally, we need a persistent approach. 2029 offers a sensible timeframe for what is being attempted. Real revolutions are long-term projects, not quick fixes, of which we have had far too many in the past.

DR NEIL BENTLEY
-GOCKMANN OBE

Chief executive,
WorldSkills UK



Williamson's vision is a catalyst
for international perspective

The secretary of state's endorsement of a bold vision for vocational and technical education is a catalyst for the sector and we need a bold vision to inspire the young people on whom its success depends

Of all the words spoken at this week's Conservative Party conference, none were more powerful or persuasive than those of education secretary Gavin Williamson.

Referencing the fact that we have just recently met the 1997 Labour government's target of 50% of young people going to university, Williamson's speech spoke directly to what he called 'the other 50%' – young people who, for too long, have not been prioritised in education policy.

We can be in no doubt that new DfE leadership means a new enthusiasm for apprenticeships and technical qualifications, encapsulated by the ambition 'to super-charge further education over the next decade'. This is

a secretary of state who understands the value of our sector and is committed to working with us to realise its vast potential.

I was especially struck by Williamson's bold vision for 2029: "To overtake Germany in the opportunities we offer to those studying technical routes".

For decades, we have held the German system up as the exemplar of world-class vocational education, especially with respect to apprenticeships, and while we should be mindful of the differences between our economies and how our skill systems operate, international benchmarking is something we have been increasingly advocating.

There is unquestionably lots to admire about how Germany trains its young people, and lots we can learn from, but there is no reason why, with the right levels of investment, the right leadership within the DfE and the right provision for our

young people, we cannot surpass their achievements.

Indeed, we placed higher than Germany in the WorldSkills competition benchmark medal tables in 2015 and 2017, losing out to them this year by only one medal point. So I feel confident that the ten-year

“There is no reason that we can't surpass Germany's achievements”

vision Williamson has set out can be delivered if we take a strategic, holistic approach to learning from international best practice – in Germany and elsewhere.

The welcome commitments around new Institutes of Technology

in England and the Skills and Productivity Board are key parts of this, but I would like to table another idea too: we should use the WorldSkills platform to galvanise change. It can inspire millions of young people to take up apprenticeships and technical careers, develop thousands of young people's skills to higher levels every year, and engage our partners to learn from global skills innovation, including boosting standards of teaching, training and assessment.

WorldSkills was a huge success in Russia. WorldSkills Shanghai is less than two years away, and we will be creating opportunities for our partners to learn from the best of the rest of the world – because seeing really is believing. We will shortly be publishing what we and our construction sector delegation – run in partnership with the National Open College Network – learned in Kazan.

This builds on our recent Productivity Lab research with the

RSA looking at the best of international skills systems, and we will be publishing more research on best practice and the lessons of mainstreaming skills in other major economies.

We will also be creating opportunities for international skills leaders to share their insights with us, starting at WorldSkills UK LIVE next month. Ultimately, we want to use our platform to help support the government to make its ambition a reality across the UK.

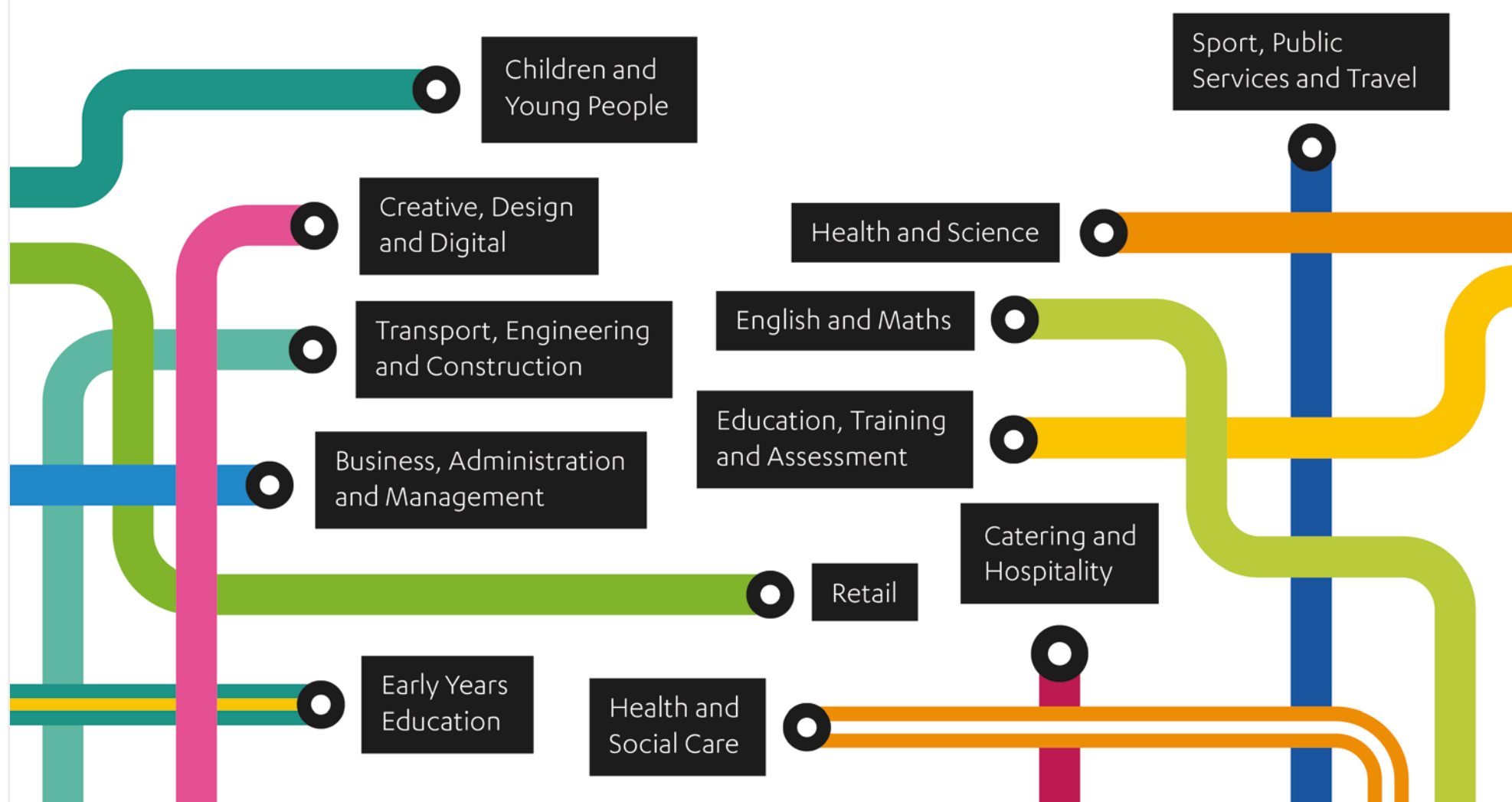
Williamson's words this week should act as a catalyst for the sector to think big. We are just three months away from the start of a new decade and what we make of it will be shaped by the decisions we make now. For the education secretary, that means setting the country on a course to beat one of our major strategic rivals come the decade's end – and for us, it means stretching our global ambition to help create the world-class skills system our economy will need.

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Government to target fraudsters in overhaul of subcontracting rules

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The government is planning a radical overhaul of its subcontracting rules amid high-profile cases of “deliberate” fraud.

Eileen Milner, the chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, this week sent a sector-wide letter warning of rule changes and that she will take strong action against any provider that abuses the system.

She said there are currently 11 live investigations into subcontracting, with issues underpinning them ranging in seriousness from “complacency and mismanagement”, through to matters of “deliberate and systematic fraud”.

“Whilst these cases vary in degrees of seriousness, they all exhibit features that reflect badly upon the organisations involved and clearly suggest that the sector must do better,” Milner added.

“I want to make it clear that where

poor subcontracting practice is evident to us we will act decisively.”

She revealed the government will review its current subcontracting rules later this year.

Areas under consideration include “placing limits on the permitted geographical distance between a directly funded institution and the location where subcontracted provision is delivered”.

The ESFA is also looking to “potentially preclude the use of some subcontractors”.

Other areas being looked at include the “balance of oversight and accountability arrangements, and with which bodies they should rest; reasonable expectations of the external audit process; and reviewing the aggregate funding value of subcontracted provision held by subcontractors”.

The review will be concluded this academic year and the ESFA will start to implement the changes at the

start of 2020-21.

There have been a number of high-profile subcontracting scandals in recent years, including the Luis Michael Training case where its owners, which included two former professional footballers, created “ghost learners” and were jailed for over 25 years combined.

The most recent subcontracting scandal, exposed by FE Week, involved Brooklands College and resulted in the ESFA demanding a £20 million clawback (see story below).

Milner said the ESFA will, in future, be “more forensic in our examination of the data and information available to us to hold individuals and organisations to account”.

“We will recover public money where appropriate,” she added.

“In response to the evidence gathered so far, we have tightened our requirements and made it clear that we will take action with lead providers who do not exercise control over subcontracted provision.”

Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Mark Dawe said: “The ESFA letter correctly sets out that subcontracting can be done well for the right curriculum reasons and in our view underlines why independent providers and colleges must have strong governance and auditing arrangements in place to ensure that either abuse or inefficient use of public money is avoided.”

However, he added that his organisation believes the agency “could still go much further” in limiting the potential for misuse if it followed the Greater London Authority’s example and imposed a 20 per cent cap on management fees under subcontracting arrangements.

“We haven’t seen any justification for it not taking this step after the Commons education committee made its recommendations a year ago.”

Association of Colleges deputy chief executive Julian Gravatt said it is “clear” the ESFA’s subcontracting review



is “necessary”.

“Consulting on changes for 2020 is a useful start to firm up the subcontracting process,” he added.

“We will use this opportunity to submit our response to the consultation.”

All providers have been told they must confirm they have read Milner’s letter by no later than November 1, 2019. You can read the full letter by visiting www.feweek.co.uk.

Chair quits at college stung by £20m scandal and replaced by DfE consultant

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

A college rocked by a £20 million apprenticeship scandal is now being run by a Department for Education consultant after the chair stood down, FE Week can reveal.

Terry Lazenby resigned from Brooklands College this week.

It is a relatively small college that FE Week understands is now trading whilst insolvent, after government demanded it returns a huge amount of funding.

Lazenby’s replacement on an interim basis is Andrew Baird, one of the DfE’s National Leaders of Governance, who is on their payroll and takes home £300 a day for his services.

Baird, who is also currently the chair of governors at Orbital South Colleges, was parachuted into Hadlow College earlier this year after financial irregularities were exposed.

He stopped being chair of Hadlow when it went into administration in May – making it the first to go through the

new college insolvency regime.

Baird will be paid for up to 15 days work between now and the end of the year at Brooklands College, according to the DfE.

The department confirmed they offered Baird to Brooklands as interim chair, and the decision to appoint him was taken by the college’s governing body. They declined to comment on how much influence they had in the resignation of Lazenby, who was chair of the audit committee when the apprenticeship funds were received.

A spokesperson said: “We welcome the college’s appointment of Andrew Baird as chair, who brings a wide range of experience within FE and beyond.”

A Brooklands College spokesperson said it was “pleased to announce” Baird as the new chair of governors with immediate effect on Wednesday.

“Governors look forward to the opportunity to work with Andrew in taking forward the strategic intentions of the corporation,” she added.

Brooklands College’s future currently hangs in the balance following an Education and Skills Funding Agency investigation into its subcontracting



relationship with a training firm called SCL Security Ltd.

Amongst many findings, the agency discovered that apprenticeship funding was being used to pay the wages for the 16 to 18-year-olds, which is strictly against the funding rules.

The ESFA has now demanded it pays up to £20 million back to the government.

ESFA boss Eileen Milner also sent a sector-wide letter this week, which promised a crackdown on “complacency and mismanagement” of subcontracting deals, as well as “deliberate and systematic fraud” (see story above).

Prior to taking over as chair, Lazenby

had been vice chair since 2014, a member of three committees including audit and attended 32 out of 33 board and committee meetings in the past three years, according to the published college accounts.

Audit committee minutes show that Lazenby was fully aware of the scale of subcontracting, noting in a September 2017 meeting it was “a significantly higher proportion of income at Brooklands than many FE colleges”.

The audit committee for Brooklands currently only has three members, following the recent resignation of its chair Jerry Loy, as revealed in minutes from a board meeting for June 2019.

Gail Walker, who worked her way up to principal and chief executive of Brooklands after joining in 2011, resigned in March.

She was replaced on an interim basis by deputy principal Christine Ricketts and vice principal Shereen Sameresinghe, who are splitting the role.

The college’s spokesperson said: “In recognising the previous chair’s achievements the interim principal and interim chief executive expressed their gratitude for Terry’s commitment.

“Terry Lazenby MBE, a former chief engineer at BP, was an accessible and visible member of the governing Board to both staff and students.

“Terry was passionate and committed to the student experience and actively engaged in student life to inspire the next generation of engineers.”

Lazenby said all staff at the college “have the best interests of our students at the heart of everything they do”. He did not respond to a request for comment on the ESFA’s investigation.

The DfE said Baird is the only National Leader of Governance, paid by the department, who is currently acting as interim chair of a college.



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Vice Principal - Group Operations

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The ideal candidate will have managed Finance & Resource along with other service departments in a multi-site FE College. We want to hear from experienced FE leaders who have worked successfully at a strategic level. If you want to know more about living and working in Cornwall, then get in touch.

For an informal conversation about the post, please call Jayne Nannes, HR Director on 07795 645637 who will arrange a phone call with the Principal.

For more information and to apply for the position, please visit www.cornwall.ac.uk

Interview date: 28th October 2019

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We have appointed FE Associates to support us with this critical appointment. Interested parties are invited to have an initial discussion with our Lead Advisor, Matt Atkinson, ahead of the closing date and prior to submitting an application. This can be arranged by emailing matt.atkinson@fea.co.uk.

For further details and a candidate pack visit: www.fea.co.uk/escg-ceo/

Closing date for applications: **Noon on Friday 11th October 2019**

Interview dates: **Thursday 7th and Friday 8th November 2019**

FEA
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The City of Liverpool College Group serves 12,000 learners each year from a diverse variety of backgrounds. With state-of-the-art facilities, TEF Gold status for Higher Education provision, the College is home to ground breaking innovation and involved in a wide variety of exciting new developments across the city.

We are an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified



persons regardless of their race, sex, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and adhering to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The College is committed to safeguarding children and safer recruitment practices and will undertake all the required DFE pre-employment checks on the successful candidate including an enhanced DBS Disclosure including a Barred List Check.

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You will join a dynamic team of dedicated staff to enhance a high quality apprenticeship journey by working with academic experts and professional staff at the University and a diverse employer client base.

Possessing excellent communication skills and the ability to work with people from a variety of business and organisation situations you will have recent demonstrable experience of supporting learning using coaching and mentoring skills. You will also have experience of engaging with employers as customers and active partners in the training and development of post 16 learning.

You will be required to undertake frequent and regular progress reviews with apprentices and their employers, conducted

digitally, via telephone and often in the Apprentice's workplace to support the apprenticeship journey and the University's compliance with funding rules and good practice in vocational learning at higher levels. You will engage with the course teams to enhance your discipline knowledge and use your organisational strengths to support the delivery of work-based learning modules on campus.

A strong customer focus, attention to detail and accuracy are essential for this role. Experience of working unsupervised including planning and prioritising own workload, dealing with conflicting deadlines and ensuring deadlines are met, is a must.

You must be able to drive and have a full UK valid driving license. This role requires you to be able to plan and undertake substantial travel to visit employer client sites.

If you are offered this post you will be subject to an enhanced check by the Disclosure and Barring Service. A criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from working at Sheffield Hallam University but its relevance to the duties of the post will need to be assessed before the appointment is confirmed.

For this job we particularly welcome applications from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) candidates who are underrepresented in our Professional Services jobs at Sheffield Hallam.

We welcome applications for job-share, part-time and flexible working arrangements.

For non-EU applicants, we won't be able to provide a certificate of sponsorship / visa for this job.

Follow @sheffhallamjobs on Twitter for job alerts and information about what makes this a great place to work.

In addition to the live vacancies above we are always looking to build our talent bank in other areas and may recruit Associate Work Based Learning Coaches in the following areas in the near future:

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- Built Environment, Surveying, planning, architecture
- Police Constable
- Food and Packaging

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Management Apprenticeship Assessor/Tutor

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Hours - Full time, 40 hours per week, Monday to Friday, Permanent



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Our Management Apprenticeship Assessor/Tutor is required to deliver an outstanding learner experience on the Management apprenticeship through effective and engaging teaching - but it doesn't stop there! You will enable our learners to maximise their potential through delivering classroom/group based training, field based visits and learning through digital platforms. Using a variety of engaging and interesting teaching and learning strategies, you will give learners access to a full range of high quality resources.

The experience you will need

You will already have apprenticeship delivery experience with a training provider/college or levy paying employer provider, with an A1 Assessing Qualification or equivalent.

You will also have an award in Education & Training (Level 3) or equivalent and the ability to deliver English and Maths functional skills.

You will also have proven experience of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, with the ability to work flexibly to meet the needs of the business with your friendly and supportive attitude

Strong IT skills to include experience at using e-portfolio systems would also be advantageous.

Benefits you will receive within this role are

- Eligible for Company Car or Company Car Allowance
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This role is home based, but will require regular travel to key sites around the UK, including but not exhaustive to Wolverhampton, Warrington, Reading and London.

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We are the UK leader in Environmental Solutions. We offer services and expertise in waste, water and energy management helping to build a more sustainable future. As a global organisation, our work focuses on delivering simple but innovative solutions to preserving natural resources, reducing pollution and protecting our environment.

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communities and protecting the environment are right at the heart of our business.

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employer. All applicants meeting the minimum criteria for the role will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, gender or gender expression, disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

How to apply

Please send a CV and supporting statement to uki.veolia.resourcing.all.mailbox@veolia.com

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Want to know more? In the first instance, please send your CV along with a paragraph explaining why you are the best candidate for this role to Christie Hoyte, Head of Training: christie@stepahead.co.uk

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EDITORIAL



Even a mastermind would fail to keep up with complex, changing and contradictory subcontracting rules

My specialist subject on Mastermind would be the ESFA funding rules for subcontracting.

I can quote documents and paragraphs for every year going back a decade because my business has in part grown by personally delivering commercial training to help colleges and training providers stay on the right side of the increasingly complex and confusing rules.

In 2011 I even wrote a guide to subcontracting policy, commissioned, funded and published by a government quango.

In addition, FE Week has typically been first to report rule changes and expose when they have been broken.

So I feel well placed to comment on the ESFA's latest letter, a decade too late, threatening yet more subcontracting rules following the £20 million scandal at Brooklands College.

But first the ESFA need to get their own house in order.

The ESFA letter to providers

ends with current 'Subcontracting Requirements and Intervention and Oversight Policies'.

Eight documents with a total of 426 pages, plus a lengthy webpage, all liable to be updated at any time during the contractual year.

But, even these documents don't include summary of changes or other ESFA documents doing the rounds, all of which can contradict the rules.

Mastermind question one: Should apprenticeship providers reduce the price when subcontracting to an employer?

In March 2018, ten months into the contractual year, the ESFA published version 6 of the 2017/18 funding rules. Alongside the rules was an 8 page summary of changes document, which included conflicting "clarifications".

One clarification said the overall price should not be reduced: "Where an employer is legitimately delivering training or providing an eligible cost the overall price should

not be reduced."

Another clarification said the price should be reduced to exclude profit: "where the employer is the delivery sub-contractor actual costs must be used. An employer should not make a profit on the delivery to their own employees."..."we will only pay actual costs and this must be recorded".

When I asked the ESFA for an explanation at the time they emailed me to say: "we mean that the overall price should not be discounted to completely remove the employer element".

Mastermind question two: When should apprenticeship providers apply the subcontracting rules to an employer if the employer delivers some of the relevant training themselves?

When seeking clarity from the ESFA in March 2017, they said the following: "All providers should be clear that any delivery of training is classed as sub-contracting, regardless of who is delivering

it, the volume or the financial amount."

So far so clear, and I think nearly all providers would today say the answer to the question is "always". But they would be wrong.

It seems this rule was quietly changed last month, with no update to the funding rules, in an obscure document, updated for the third time, associated with the off-the-job training policy.

Buried away on page 31 of version three of the ESFA's "Apprenticeship off-the-job training: policy background and examples" document, published on the 13 September 2019, is paragraph 109.

It states: "If the employer is delivering relevant training associated with the apprenticeship framework or standard, without which the apprenticeship cannot be achieved, then they are potentially a subcontractor. The acid test is whether apprenticeship funding is being used"... "if the employer is not accessing apprenticeship funding then they are not considered to be

a subcontractor"

So there you have it, a significant change to the subcontracting rules that are not even published in the funding rules.

If we are to expect providers to play this game the answers needs to be consistent and clear

This may all sound complex, and it is, but it sits at the core of the problem for the ESFA.

They have to get a grip of both their communications and rules - which have spiralled out of all control over the last few years.

If they cannot do it, then the job should go to an agency that can.

Mastermind question three: If the technical machinations of the funding rules are not understood by anyone then what hope is there to enforce them?

Answers on a postcard please...

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



Williamson pledges to 'supercharge' FE to overtake Germany within a decade

This is nonsense! Cut, cut, cut, for a decade then promise a bit of cash for more new un-costed initiatives meanwhile colleges struggle to pay staff decent wages and face insolvency. Why would any of us be excited by this? More insulting spin.

Jimmy Kinsella

This is great news. Will he now see vocational education leading to genuine employment as a key part of the future strategy for the government? Or will he stick with fundamentally broken, historic, not yet launched and unproven, and failing routes?

Andrew J Powell

Plan for 8 new institutes of technology

How disappointing. There was me thinking current FE colleges would get real terms investment and we might actually get a pay rise after 8 years. We can and already do deliver quality technology courses

Jo Kitchen

T-levels dropped by education secretary's former sixth form college ahead of 2020 launch

T-levels are an impractical programme to deliver and offer a solution to a problem which doesn't exist; hard to see where the appetite is going to come from, making it unviable to providers

Rob Brooks

Prioritise investment in level 2 qualifications, new report urges

I recommend this report as an important wake up call to counter the last few years' negative and inadequate vocational education and training policy. If the approach is to build on the Levy approach, I am concerned that the current system be reviewed to ensure it will properly support the proposals. At present the system does not facilitate a proper partnership and balance between the employer and the state and does not incentivise the employer to share a responsibility for all vocational levels of the system and skill supply.

Jon Thompson

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Lord Agnew: I will not hesitate to step in on college spending

Good governance can only go so far in enabling a stable FE institution. I would respectfully point out to his lordship that years of funding standstill (i.e. annual cuts), has been far more damaging than dodgy governance. The increase is welcome, but it needs to be sustained for the medium and long term. When that happens, I think he will find financial stability return to FE.

I.Ron Pyrites

Experts

LAWRENCE
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Managing Director,
GB Training



Increasing transparency will
improve students' learning

Financial mismanagement and substandard teaching provision are often co-symptomatic. Enhanced financial transparency will help address financial mismanagement among poor-performing colleges, as well as improve educational experiences and outcomes, says Lawrence Barton.

Barely a week goes by without news of yet another further education college navigating its way into financial difficulty, either through mismanagement or impropriety. It really is time for concerted action to prevent it, for the good of the sector.

Less than a fortnight ago saw the conclusion of *FE Week*'s own year-long Freedom of Information (FOI) battle with Highbury College. The findings shed light on the lavish chauffeur-driven lifestyle of its principal, Stella Mbubaegbu, and the splashing of college funds on first-class flights, five-star hotels and lobster dinners – all at a time of salary freezes, job cuts and plummeting Ofsted ratings

for the college.

Last Wednesday offered news of the latest rescue bid to save the ailing City College Southampton, which has been limping from one taxpayer-funded bailout to another.

The next day, the government revealed that it is “carefully monitoring” an independent investigation into allegations regarding the management of Hull College Group, including reports of nepotism and inappropriate use of college funds by management staff. It has subsequently been revealed that this “independent” investigation is to be led by the college’s own lawyer.

This culture of financial mismanagement and aversion to public accountability is unsustainable. Not only is it unfair on the thousands of learners who pass through the college system every year, but it also paints an unfair picture of the college system as a whole. Despite the multitude of negative stories, the bulk of our country’s FE colleges are in good financial health and offer quality

teaching to their students. Reform is needed to address the minority of colleges who let the rest of the sector down.

The Department for Education’s pledge that there is to be an end to the long-term bailouts available to colleges is a much-needed step. Hadlow College

“A minority of colleges let the rest of the sector down”

represented a watershed moment for the sector. For too long, the attitude of further education colleges being “too big to fail” only fostered an attitude of financial irresponsibility among some college chiefs, safe in the knowledge that further funding was just a phone call away.

The expansion of education minister Lord Agnew’s brief to include

financial oversight of colleges and his commitment to improve college governance structures is also needed. Similarly, proposals for financial ratings reports to form part of Ofsted’s inspection remit will help to identify the financial health of all providers. But the department needs to go further.

Financial mismanagement and substandard teaching provision are often co-symptomatic. Beyond their weak financial health, a common thread linking Hull, Southampton City and Highbury colleges is their poor teaching standards. It is not just the public purse that suffers; students and communities are being let down too, with knock-on effects on long-term prosperity.

The unwillingness of colleges such as Highbury to disclose senior management spending is unacceptable. Action is needed.

Just as enhanced transparency of MPs’ spending in the wake of the 2009 Westminster expenses scandal has done much to restrict irresponsible spending

and restore public confidence, the college sector needs an equivalent.

The Department for Education should mandate the automatic public disclosure online of all senior management spending above a given threshold for colleges in receipt of significant public funding who have an Ofsted rating below that of “good”.

This enhanced transparency and improved public oversight would do much to deliver a culture shift among poorly performing colleges and their management. Incentivising college leaders to show greater financial discipline will increase the likelihood of financial wrongdoing being spotted sooner.

Such a culture change within the sector will benefit taxpayers for sure, but it must be driven by more than financial probity to capture broad support. There is a strong case to be made for the betterment of learners’ education and the sustainability of the skills industry as a whole.

HANNAH
H

National Cyber
Security Centre (NCSC)



It's time for colleges to
embrace cyber security

Hannah H from National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) tells us why it's vital that everyone in the FE sector understands their own role in protecting their networks

The possible impact of a cyber incident

Like all organisations, colleges are increasingly reliant on IT and technology and, as a result, are falling victim to a range of malicious cyber activity. In recent weeks, for example, we’ve seen reports about a significant data breach at Swindon College and an attack by a so-called “ethical hacker” at South Staffordshire College.

Think about all the services used by your college that rely on your IT systems: not just teaching and learning resources, but administrative functions too, perhaps your phones, CCTV, safeguarding records and maybe even the way you pay for your lunch.

Losing access to this technology, having funds stolen or suffering a data breach through a cyber attack can

be devastating, both financially and reputationally.

Cyber attacks faced by colleges

Many cyber incidents at colleges are caused by untargeted attacks that can potentially impact hundreds of thousands of victims. Those behind these sorts of attacks are often cyber criminals, who deploy a range of tactics to make money, often through quite sophisticated technical means.

Phishing emails are commonplace and getting more and more difficult to spot, and the deployment of ransomware – which encrypts data to make it inaccessible, with victims then invited to pay a ransom to decrypt their information – is a risk too.

Targeted attacks are more specifically directed at an organisation. We recently heard of a head of HR receiving an email seemingly from the college principal requesting their salary should be paid into a different account that month. Colleges also need to be alert to

the risk posed by insiders, such as a disgruntled staff member or student, past or present, who wants to discredit the college or cause disruption.

“A cyber attack can be devastating, both financially and reputationally”

Taking action

There are a range of measures colleges can take to make any attack less likely to succeed in the first place and, if they are affected, to reduce its impact. The NCSC website is a great place to start.

1. Help all users understand their own role

An NCSC product already being used in many colleges is the Top Tips for Staff e-learning package. This covers

essential information on issues such as choosing strong passwords and spotting potential phishing attempts. This resource could become part of mandatory staff training and ingested into your own eLMS system. Best of all, it’s totally free!

2. Support technical teams

Many colleges have already been accredited through *Cyber Essentials*, a programme that ensures basic technical controls are in place. The *Ten Steps To Cyber Security* will also be of use to network managers and/or heads of IT. The NCSC website has detailed guidance on topics such as phishing and password policies.

3. Lead from the top

We know that cyber security can be a daunting subject, but boards are pivotal in improving the cyber security of their organisations. The NCSC’s Board Toolkit was created to encourage essential discussions about cyber security to take place between the board and their technical experts.

4. Check your cyber resilience

A particularly practical product is *Exercise in a Box*, which enables organisations to test their preparedness for a cyber incident with table-top exercises or simulations. Full guidance is given for each exercise – they don’t need to be led by an expert.

Get the right mindset!

It’s vital that we all know our role in keeping our networks and data safe. Colleges are an attractive target for cyber criminals and we want to ensure that, wherever the threat comes from, they are able to protect themselves in cyberspace.

We all have a part to play in keeping the UK the safest place to live and work online.

NCSC experts work closely with colleges and the wider academic sector to improve their security practices and help protect from cyber threats. For further information, please email enquiries@ncsc.gov.uk

KIRSTI LORD

**Deputy chief executive,
Association of Colleges**



Agnew's appointment shows colleges have renewed status

The Department for Education has appointed Lord Agnew to take responsibility for the FE Commissioner and college financial oversight and intervention. Kirsti Lord explains why this is something to be pleased about, not worried

Colleges should welcome the announcement that Lord Agnew has become the third government minister to have further education as part of their brief. Especially given the concern some had when Anne Milton was not immediately replaced after resigning from government to protest a no-deal Brexit.

He is a distinguished minister, respected by the government, the department and the wider education sector. Of course there will be disagreements over policy and implementation, but his appointment shows the seriousness with which colleges are now being taken. And that's

one of the things we've been pushing for with #LoveOurColleges to be taken seriously at the highest levels of government.

“Despite recent headlines, it’s important to remind ourselves that colleges are run incredibly well”

We should also be pleased, not worried, that Lord Agnew has been tasked with looking at FE quality and improvement because ours is a sector with a great story to tell. The vast majority of colleges are delivering high quality education and training for more than two million people in England

each year.

A key part of Agnew's expanded role will be financial accountability and we shouldn't feel defensive about this. Despite recent headlines, it's important to remind ourselves that colleges are run incredibly well on the tightest of budgets, in incredibly difficult circumstances. They have faced cut after cut, reform after reform and these have had consequences on staffing, on pay, on provision, and ultimately on the country's ability to train and skill its workforce. Though the recent funding announcement was welcome, it was only a start.

It was reassuring to hear Agnew discuss the need to support struggling colleges and that's what we'll be pushing for him, and government to do to fix the roof before the storm hits. We need to move beyond punishing leaders for things outside of their control, and encourage them to spot,

report and reduce potential issues before they become big problems, in a way that does not risk their reputations and livelihoods if they do so. Having a climate that supports leaders, rather than punishes, is the best way to prevent issues becoming crises.

Talk will inevitably turn to senior pay, as it so often does. I understand that salary stories always make for good headlines and clickbait though they don't often tell the full and true story.

“Strengthening college governance was the right thing to do”

All public sector institutions, including colleges, must be transparent and decisions about finance and pay should

be made appropriately with the support of clear guidance.

That is why, last year, Association of Colleges developed the Remuneration Code which amended the existing AoC Code (of Good Governance for English Colleges). It was seen at the time as the most appropriate way to respond to developments in the sector and the wider context in which colleges work. Considerable political debate, media and public interest and a consultation with members showed that strengthening college governance was the right thing to do.

Our three core principles in the code fairness, independence and transparency are still as true today as they were when we published the code. And fairness, independence and transparency are at the heart of how colleges approach financial management and pay. As Lord Agnew gets to grips with his new brief, he will soon come to see that for himself.



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A City & Guilds Group Collaboration

 Tuesday, 29 October 2019 | The Principal, Manchester

AELP Autumn Conference provides a forward-looking oversight across all the main skills programmes. The agenda and the keynote speakers will cover:

- an apprenticeship system that meets the needs of all employers
- what employers want in terms of skills training
- the future strategies of the Mayoral Combined Authorities
- the aims of the new National Retraining Scheme
- careers initiatives that actually work in our schools
- delivering quality provision in tough circumstances

With both the incoming chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships and the ESFA's director of apprenticeships speaking at the event, AELP members are hoping for some good news which delivers on Boris Johnson's promise that apprenticeships and technical education should be "properly funded". Throughout 2019, providers have been reporting that their non-levy funding allocations are woefully short for meeting employer demand for apprenticeships and in the meantime the ESFA is pressing ahead with its plans to move the non-levy paying employers on to the Apprenticeship Service. How the latter can be achieved successfully without certainty over a sustainable programme budget could be the key question at the conference.



AELP Autumn Conference 2019

SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE



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Elizabeth Taylor

Chief executive, Employment Related Services Association

Start date November 2019

Previous job
Interim chief executive, Employment Related Services Association

Interesting fact
She was once the social enterprise champion for Lancashire



Nancy Doyle

Vice chair, Employment Related Services Association

Start date September 2019

Concurrent job
Chief executive, Genius Within CIC

Interesting fact
She has appeared on BBC Two's Employable Me

Movers & Shakers

...

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



John Kerr

Managing director, Develop Training

Start date July 2019

Previous job
Operations director, Develop Training

Interesting fact
He spent his upbringing playing in brass bands



Richard Clifton

Chair, Employment Related Services Association

Start date September 2019

Concurrent job
Chief commercial officer, Shaw Trust

Interesting fact
He is a lifelong Leicester City supporter

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