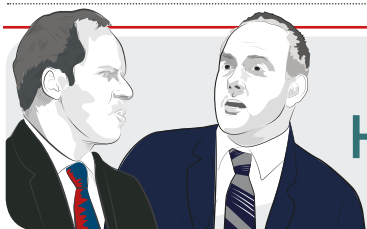




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FE Week



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NEWS



Last week, I spoke to apprenticeships minister Robert Halfon about the government's so-called funding U-turn and the apprenticeship levy. Part two of the interview takes in employer ownership, assessment organisations and subcontracting.

So, I asked, is employer ownership compatible with social justice? “Absolutely,” he told me. “If you don’t incentivise the employer you then don’t get the quality apprenticeships that you need.

“We’re doing everything possible to incentivise the employer. That includes levy payers, because if they fulfil their levy they

get some money back and an immediate £15,000.”

However, he insisted that the shift to employer control wouldn’t affect those in the 16- to 18-year-old bracket, who make up 25 per cent of all apprentices.

“Not everyone is 16 to 18,” he said. “This is not about one particular group of people, and don’t forget many 16- to 18- year olds will choose to carry on in education, or do technical education, or whatever it may be.”

So even though 16 to 18 apprentices will be out of a ring-fenced budget from May 1, he believes employers will take the incentives to keep taking young people on.

“If we want the apprentices we have to

RACE ON TO APPROVE ASSESSORS IN TIME FOR APPRENTICES FINISHING IN MARCH

PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

EXCLUSIVE

Fresh concerns have been raised about end-point tests on apprenticeships, after an FE Week investigation found learners who will finish in March on a new standard without any officially approved awarding organisation.

Global insurance company Aon has confirmed this to be the case for the first wave of students taking its level three insurance practitioner standard without any AO to run final tests.

FE Week recently revealed that more than 40 per cent of learner starts on standards approved by the government had no official AO.

The news provoked a furious reaction throughout the sector, with former top FE civil servant Dr Sue Pember describing the lack of consideration towards learners as “diabolical”.

There is still no officially approved AO listed by the government to run end point tests for the level three insurance practitioner standard - although City & Guilds said this week it and the Chartered Insurance Institute had been cleared to develop this.

When asked if it was concerned about the short notice, which will leave learners little time to prepare for the test, an Aon spokesperson said: “As with much in the apprenticeship space we’re trailblazing, so sometimes ‘just in time’ is the only option we have.”

This attitude reflected the relaxed approach

taken by Skills Funding Agency boss Peter Lauener (pictured), who told delegates at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers autumn conference that while it was “not ideal” to have no approved awarding organisations for learner starts on so many standards, the situation is “manageable”.

Apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon said this week that he was “pretty sure” no apprentices would get to the end of their course without an end-point assessment organisation in place, during a sub-committee on education, skills and the economy hearing on November 2.

And last week, he told the FE Week editor there was “plenty of time to sort it out” (see above).

However, Terry Fennell, group operations director at the Food and Drink Training and Education Council and deputy chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, was more concerned.

“A part of any good assessment approach is that the apprentices won’t face any nasty surprises at the end testing stage,” he told FE Week.

“There is a danger here that while AOs will no doubt have the resources to produce an effective assessment at short notice, candidates may not have sufficient time to adequately prepare and be ready to undertake the end tests.”

Dr Pember added: “Although it is called an end test, the method and content has

create an employer-led system,” he said.

Next question: Will the minister prevent apprentices from starting standards before they have an assessment organisation? His answer: “No.”

“We’re not going to slow it down because we’ve got roughly 400 standards with something like 3,800 apprentice starts,” he added. “We’re going to work incredibly hard to get this assessment situation sorted out.”

He did however acknowledge the situation as “a difficulty”, and promised “more clarity” and “more support”, adding: “there’ll be plenty of time to sort it out”.

On subcontracting, and the government’s change of heart, he admitted that it had been down to the responses to the consultations

“We’ve actually listened,” he said. “We still want to do something on the subcontracting issue... and our decision is to take stock and look at this issue in the round.”

And finally, he was bullish on the CBI’s concerns on the apprenticeship levy, and on its call to delay implementation, pointing to the TUC, the EEF and the various colleges which have spoken in support of the measure.

He said: “Of course [the CBI] is going to raise these issues – all businesses are going to ask – but we’re working incredibly hard to make sure it is ready, and it will be ready. But if you go back to what the CBI originally said about our levy, you should recognise that while they have questions on the final implementation, they have welcomed the vast substance of what we’ve done.”

an impact on the success of the whole programme.

“We do not treat our A-level students in this way. A-levels have also gone through a major reform programme in the same timescale as the change to apprenticeship standards but, although the process was probably difficult for awarding bodies, it did safeguard the students’ interests.

“Where an A-level couldn’t be approved in time for the start of the academic year, the old one stands until the new one is approved by Ofqual.

“For A-levels, assessment material must be submitted at the start of the approvals process and no approval is given without them. If that process is right for A-level students and their teachers, then we must ensure apprentices and their trainers have the same level of support.”

A Department for Education spokesperson would only confirm that “level three and four insurance standards have been approved and the assessment plans are included in the list of standards we publish as part of the register overview”.

She conceded however that no awarding organisation had been officially confirmed yet for these, but insisted an announcement would be made on it soon.



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INVESTIGATES

Small school scandal deepens as academy trust fo

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE

FROM FRONT

A multi-academy trust might be running a new sixth form with fewer than 20 students, FE Week has learned, just days after the DfE reversed a decision to let it open another one over fears it wouldn't be able to make up numbers.

Loxford Trust has refused to reveal exactly how many students attend the sixth form attached to Tabor Academy in Braintree in Essex, after two separate sources claimed it was running far under either its capacity or the 200-pupil minimum specified in the Department for Education's own guidelines.

The Trust also sponsors Abbs Cross academy and arts college in Hornchurch, Essex, and had been due to open a new sixth form there until the government was forced to climb down under the threat of a judicial review led by the Association of Colleges on Tuesday.

The DfE backed out on the morning of the hearing, reversing its decision and admitting that the trust had not "adequately conducted" a consultation with the local authority.

Significantly, the judicial review alleged that Tim Coulson, the regional schools commissioner for East England and North East London, had flouted government rules when approving the request from Loxford.

Regional schools commissioners work with the national schools commissioner Sir David Carter to take action in underperforming schools, and to decide on applications which can make significant changes to academies and free schools – such as opening new sixth forms.

The decision to approve the sixth forms at both Abbs Cross and Tabor was made by Mr Coulson at a meeting of the East England and North East London headteacher board on May 12.

In addition to the 200-pupil minimum, the DfE's rules also state that applications for new sixth forms should normally come from academies rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

Abbs Cross had been rated 'inadequate' following its last full inspection in June 2015, losing its previous 'good' rating, while Tabor Academy also received an 'inadequate' rating at its most recent full inspection, published in January 2015.

A jubilant David Hughes, AoC's chief executive, now wants full details of all new sixth form proposals to be put "on the public record".

"Lots of our members think it is very unfair when a school sixth form gets set up on their doorstep," he told FE Week, "and where the business case isn't clear or the consultation is not perhaps as thorough as it might be, the transparency of the decision making isn't clear."

The DfE has also agreed to pay a "substantial contribution to a figure in excess of £50,000" to the AoC towards legal



Tim Coulson, the regional schools commissioner for East England and North East London

costs incurred for the review, he added.

A DfE spokesperson would not comment on the costs and said further information about the review would be published in due course, while Mr Hughes told FE Week that he had written to Sir David to set out what AoC believes the review should look at.

It's unclear exactly how many pupils attend Tabor's sixth form, which opened in September, while neither it nor Loxford Trust responded to repeated requests asking for clarification on the sources' claims, that fewer than 20 students attend.

A DfE spokesperson told FE Week that the decision to approve Tabor Academy's sixth form "was taken following advice from the Education Funding Agency and the headteacher board, taking into account a consultation in which 81 per cent of respondents were in favour of the proposal.

"It is expected that the sixth form will have 200 pupils from 2017-18," they added, a figure which seems hard to achieve if the 20-student rumours are true.

A spokesperson for Colchester Institute, which also has a campus in Braintree, told FE Week that it had responded to the consultation on Tabor's new sixth form a few years ago, "expressing serious concerns about the need and viability of further post-16 provision in the area".

"Colchester Institute's concerns were noted but the decision was made," the spokesperson said.



Tabor Academy aerial view



Tabor Academy

ound running sixth form with less than 20 pupils

What the AoC chief executive David Hughes told FE Week

On the cost of the legal action: The DfE has agreed to pay a “substantial contribution to a figure in excess of £50,000.”

On fairness between way schools and colleges are treated: “We have just been through area reviews and colleges are having to put down three and five year financial plans that are properly rigorous and robust, why wouldn’t you expect that of a new school sixth form proposal?”

“Why wouldn’t you allow that to be published? It should be on the public record so we have asked for that.”

“Lots of our members think it is very unfair when a school sixth form gets set up on their doorstep, and where the business case isn’t clear or the consultation is not perhaps as thorough as it might be, that the transparency of the decision making isn’t clear.”

On the Regional Schools Commissioners: “They need some clear rules and guidance to work to and we don’t think the current guidance offers that.”

“The guidance is not written in a way that helps set out clearly what is expected. It is not about individuals. It is about the system.”

On the risk that forcing the DfE to review the policy might result in them weakening it, such as by taking out the 200 minimum student requirement: “That is an interesting question and I hadn’t thought of that.”

“I don’t think so. I think there is a realisation that small school sixth forms are difficult financially.”

“We have asked the DfE to analyse the evidence that shows small school sixth forms have poorer quality generally and I think they know that.”

“I think the way the case has gone and their actions and discussions we have had suggest that is low risk, but it is a political process.”

“I’ve just been with Justine Greening and the sort of education system she wants is high quality. Small school sixth forms find high quality very difficult and I think they know that.”

On the Tabor school sixth form: “We are aware of that [issue].”

“I don’t want to comment on an individual position because there are probably many other cases like this.”

On what next: “I’m writing to Sir David Carter today, a letter that sets out in a bit more detail of what we think the review needs to look at

and what the issues are.

“We have asked for and will ask the DfE to engage us, which they have promised to do, but also engage some of our members in that process.”

“Ideally they will do it in an open and transparent way, that is what I think they should do and that is what we will be pushing for, including a timetable and publication.”



David Hughes

New south London free school ruffles local feathers

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Two colleges in south London have hit out at a new 16-19 free school that will offer only vocational courses and GCSE resits opening in their area.

The Harris Professional Skills Sixth Form (HPS6F), a standalone free school in Croydon, will offer 170 places for professional skills courses, with another 60 places for students retaking GCSEs before they progress to a vocational qualification.

It is set to open on a temporary site next year, before moving into a former police station in South Norwood in 2018.

But Frances Wadsworth, the principal of Croydon College, which is located just two miles away from the new school, has openly asked whether it is a “required addition” to the area’s post-16 landscape.

She told FE Week that the proposal by the Harris federation, the multi-academy trust opening the school, has come at a time when the “16-to-18 population of Croydon and adjacent boroughs is falling, and will continue to fall until 2021”.

She continued: “The post-16 market is already congested, with several sixth forms below the Department for Education’s guidance on minimum numbers and overall providing poor value to the taxpayer.”

Her criticism was joined by that of Peter



Mayhew-Smith, the principal of Carshalton College, which is seven miles away from HPS6F, who told FE Week that there was “no need for this initiative”.

“It is of great concern that this new vocational provision has been approved to open at exactly the time when the area review process has identified duplication and oversupply already in the FE provision in this area of London,” he said.

“Most of what is already in place is either good or outstanding, so there is simply no need for this initiative.”

The criticism comes in the same week that the Association of Colleges won its first judicial review against the government in more than a decade – which will now prevent plans for a new school sixth form at Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College in Essex from going ahead.

New government rules, introduced in April, bar academies from opening sixth forms that do not have 200 pupils or offer at least 15 A-levels.

The DfE rules also require schools to be rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted. Abbs Cross is in special measures.

As HPS6F will be classed as a free school it does not have to abide by the new government guidance.

It must nevertheless be able to demonstrate demand in the local area, and that the venture will be financially viable and provide “value for money”.

Croydon already has five general FE colleges and three sixth form colleges.

HPS6F will offer four pathways: construction, manufacturing, business and media. Students in years 12 and 13 will combine vocational courses with level three English and maths qualifications and employability skills.

Andrew Barr, the sixth form’s principal, said the Harris academy chain wanted to create a “niche offer for students who would find a traditional large college more difficult to cope in”.

But Ms Wadsworth said Croydon College, rated ‘good’ by Ofsted and attended by 1,651 16- to 18-year-old students in 2015/16, already provides successful construction and media programmes to meet local needs.

Dan Moynihan, head of the Harris federation, said the option will benefit a large contingent of youngsters in Croydon who are not in education, employment or training.

“NEETs often miss the first entry for local colleges, who for example have an entry in September, so we are offering a second date of entry to vocational courses for students who are otherwise NEET in October and November.”

Mr Moynihan said that because of the demand for NEETs, his sixth form’s provision “will not impact negatively on other sixth forms or colleges”.

NEWS

Student focus for Sir Vince Cable’s FE comeback

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

There’s an FE comeback for Sir Vince Cable which will see him leading a new research project for the National Union of Students into how major new reforms should be tailored for learners.

The former business secretary, who two years ago claimed that he had been responsible for blocking drastic funding cuts for “post-school” training in 2010, is taking charge of the new project with NUS vice-president for FE Shakira Martin.

The project will be called Students Shaping FE, and its findings will be published in a report by autumn 2017.

“I am a firm exponent of FE and did my best to defend it in government,” Sir Vince told FE Week.

“It is embedded in me, as I saw first-hand how colleges transformed lives in my family – my father was a lecturer at York Tech College and my mother was in many ways saved, after a period of personal trauma, by adult education classes. I now want to do my best to help future students.”

He continued: “There is a natural tendency in government to look at it as a debate just between principals and civil servants and ministers, but I want to get a handle on how all these reforms are affecting students and what policies are needed to help them.

“It’s a good time to do this, now the new skills and education minsters have bedded in, and we have seen a lot of detail of reform plans, for apprenticeships for example.”

One of Sir Vince’s priorities for students is



Shakira Martin and Sir Vince Cable

collective representation.

“I know the NUS is already trying to organise apprentices better,” he said. “That’s needed because a lot of them are very poorly paid and having bad experiences.”

Sir Vince, who was profiled by FE Week last September, said he and Ms Martin will visit as many FE providers across Britain as possible.

“In the old days, I would turn up in the ministerial car and just speak to senior staff who told me what they thought I wanted to hear; now the key thing will be talking to students,” he said.

“That won’t just be with traditional FE student colleges either, as I know a lot of

apprentices are trained by private providers.”

He admitted to not being fully versed with the government’s plans, announced through the Skills White Paper in May for 15 new post-16 ‘professional and technical’ routes.

However, he raised concern about associated plans to channel students into either technical or academic education.

“I’m against the artificial divide between the two routes – and even though I’m a grammar school boy, I fear that plans for more selection will set back education greatly.

“I’m also really interested in learning more about the role FE plays in rehabilitating offenders, and giving people across a broad spectrum a second chance.”

Ms Martin spoke about her excitement at working with the former minister.

She said: “We both came at FE from different areas, but are both totally committed to it, and I hope working in partnership will reflect the diverse approach we want to take with this.

“Going to college transformed my life, and I know it did the same for Vince’s family members.”

She says the key issue facing students has been the lack of consultation over apprenticeship reforms.

“The fact that there is not going to be, as it stands, a student voice on the apprenticeship policing body, the Institute for Apprenticeships, is a disgrace. That’s the sort of thing we need to address.

“It will be a pleasure working on this ambitious project together.”

Ofqual opens malpractice investigation following apprentice complaint

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

EXCLUSIVE

Allegations of malpractice lodged by a former apprentice of Highbury College are being investigated by Ofqual, an FE Week investigation has revealed.

The qualifications watchdog confirmed it is looking into complaints lodged by 35-year-old Maxwell Hyde – who started as a boatbuilding apprentice at the college in Portsmouth in September 2011, and who went on to work there as a workshop instructor from January 2013 until May 2014.

He completed his apprenticeship, but claims that during the process he was granted qualifications for courses that he did not take.

The SFA has previously opted to “partially uphold” another of Mr Hyde’s complaints against the college – in which he alleged his apprentice progress reports were falsified – in a report released in October 2015.

An Ofqual spokesperson told FE Week that it is currently “reviewing the actions carried out by the awarding organisations” involved – VTCT, Laser Awards and NCFE – but that it won’t be investigating the college.

Mr Hyde submitted a freedom of information request to the Skills Funding Agency in February, which indicated funding had been paid out for courses he claimed to have no



knowledge of, for example on preventing contact dermatitis and substance misuse awareness.

“Sadly it seems to me that students are seen as little more than cash cows, and provided the correct boxes are ticked and funding is obtained, no one cares how this is achieved,” he told FE Week.

NCFE revealed it had conducted its own investigation into the complaints in June – which concluded the certificates Mr Hyde felt he should not have been awarded had been built into other parts of his apprenticeship.

It said: “Qualifications awarded to Mr Hyde by NCFE were completed as additionality qualifications which were delivered during Highbury College’s induction programme.”

Laser Awards and VTCT also confirmed that they have been carrying out investigations into the claims.

A VTCT spokesperson denied any wrongdoing, adding that Highbury College “followed appropriate assessment and quality assurance procedures”.

Mr Hyde alleges that Highbury College had wrongly indicated that the progress reports had

been completed with his input, despite the fact that in some cases he was allegedly out of the country.

The SFA report said: “There is no suggestion the college has committed any kind of fraud, but not ensuring the learner is demonstrably involved in his own reviews was bad practice on behalf of the college.

“We note that the college has committed to improving its processes.”

Mr Hyde told FE Week that he had taken up his concerns with Stella Mbubaegbu, the principal of Highbury College, who told him that her managers “had acted properly”.

A Highbury College spokesperson said: “The allegations raised with the SFA by Mr Hyde were in the first instance investigated by the college in line with college procedures.

“All the SFA recommendations have been considered by the college and changes arising from those recommendations implemented.”

She added: “Mr Hyde has reported the college to a number of awarding bodies and on each occasion, where requested, a report including the scope and outcome of the internal investigation was submitted by the college in response to each enquiry.

“On all occasions the awarding bodies have been satisfied with the way the college handled the complaint and the outcomes of the investigation.”

Halfon and Hill face MP grilling over lack of assessors

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The apprenticeships and skills minister is “pretty sure” that no apprentice will get to the end of their course before an end-point assessment organisation is in place.

Robert Halfon was grilled on the topic at a sub-committee on education, skills and the economy evidence session on apprenticeships last week at the Palace of Westminster, by co-chairs Neil Carmichael and Iain Wright, and Ian Mearns, MP for Gateshead.

However, while the government claims 60 per cent of standards currently have assessment organisations, many of these standards have no learners.

As previously reported in FE Week, of those standards with learners, 59 per cent (33) have no assessment org and 42 per cent (1,790) of the apprentices on standards rather than frameworks are on the 33 standards with no assessment organisation.

Mr Halfon told the sub-committee: “Even where there isn’t an assessment organisation yet, we’re pretty sure that by the time they’ve finished their apprenticeship, which could be one year or two years, they will have the assessment organisation in place.

“Huge amounts of resources are being put in in terms of working with the providers; a lot of work is going on with the employers to make sure of that.

“I don’t think the picture is quite as bleak as it’s been painted in some areas.”

Mr Halfon’s words followed similar comments from Peter Lauener, interim chief executive of the new Institute for Apprenticeships, who is also the boss at the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency.

He told a packed audience at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers’ autumn conference in Manchester that while it’s “not ideal” that there are no approved awarding organisations for over 40 per cent of learner starts on new standard, the situation is “manageable”.

He doesn’t believe “there’s a consensus” that the situation is a serious problem, or that apprentices should not start courses without an end-point assessor in place.

However, when AELP chief executive Mark Dawe took a poll of the audience, every single member agreed it was not acceptable for an apprentice to be studying on a course that had no end-point assessment organisation assigned.

Mr Halfon told the sub-committee that “60 per cent of standards have an assessment organisation in place” and “that figure goes up from 60 per cent to 94 per cent if you include assessment organisations either about to be registered or within 12 months of the gateway of the end of the apprenticeship”.

David Hill, director of apprenticeships at the Department for Education, who accompanied Mr Halfon to the evidence hearing, added: “Looking specifically at



Robert Halfon MP



David Hill, director of apprenticeships at the Department for Education

apprentices expected to be ready for their end-point assessment in the next 12 months, our analysis is that of those, 1,737 (86 per cent) already have at least one end-point assessment organisation ready for selection.

“That leaves another 278 apprentices and we’ve gone through exactly the status of those apprentices on different standards”.

He insisted that for three apprenticeship standards, covering 40 apprentices, “we have organisations very, very close to being approved, and we’re working with those organisations to get them on the register”.

He concluded: “We’ve looked hard at this, and we are confident that we have a plan in place to make sure that there will be full coverage.”

Dr Sue Pember, who stood down as the civil service head of further education and skills investment in 2013, told FE Week in October that it is “diabolical to let an apprentice start a programme without explaining what the end test will contain, where it will be, what shape it will take, and who will be the organisation to oversee and manage the process”.

Mr Dawe has also written on the topic for FE Week, saying: “Appropriate standards and robust EPAs are vital to the success of the apprenticeship programme and the development of skills in the UK.

“However feedback from AELP members suggests that while there are some excellent ones, this isn’t true for every standard, and the damage that could be done to apprenticeships is far worse than the concerns around funding changes which we have had over the past weeks.”

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LEAD CIVIL SERVANT DEBUNKS 'MYTH' THAT

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The government's controversial plans to replace over 20,000 technical courses with 15 routes won't lead to just 15 qualifications, a top civil servant has insisted. Warwick Sharp, the deputy director 16-19 strategy at the Department for Education, said it was a "myth" that the streamlining – which many in the sector worry is too drastic – would result in limited outcomes.

The plans, announced in the Post-16 Skills Plan in July and building on the recommendations of Sainsbury Review into technical education, will see the first routes being taught from September 2019.

They will be two-year, college-based programmes closely aligned to new apprenticeship standards.

The full 15 routes are due to be rolled out for teaching by September 2022, with four of the 15 "primarily delivered through apprenticeships."

There has been considerable confusion in the sector over this significant simplification, with many worried that it would lead to just 15 qualifications – which would leave many in the range of subjects as awkward bedfellows.

The 'Creative and Design' route, for example, includes training as an audio-visual technician, a journalist or a furniture maker. The 'Engineering and Manufacturing' route meanwhile links the roles of aircraft fitter, printer and energy plant operative.

However Mr Sharp attempted to ease sector worries during a speech at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers' autumn conference on November 1.

"There is myth out there that there are 15 qualifications because there are 15 routes," he said, adding: "I think it will look different across each route."

Q&A, from left to right: Peter Lauener, SFA, EFA, IfA; Richard Guy, City and Guilds; Kirsty Evans, Skills Funding Agency; Mark Dawe AELP



He suggested that the routes could branch, using 'Legal, Finance and Accounting' as an example.

"I'm not saying it will happen – but we could see three clear branches there; something like engineering or manufacturing is probably much more diverse."

He went on: "I can't say how many qualifications there will be, but there will definitely be multiple qualifications per route, according to how much sense it makes to either bump those occupations together, or have a qualification per occupation."

"We just don't know yet."

FE Week put Mr Sharp's comments to the DfE, asking why this "myth" has been allowed to spread, whether the DfE was responsible for the idea, and what the reality will be for the routes and qualifications.

However, the department's spokesperson insisted that there were no further comments to make at this stage.

Nevertheless, a letter from apprenticeships

and skills minister Robert Halfon, written in October and sent to all chairs and principals of colleges and chief executives of independent training providers, raised the suggestion directly.

He wrote that the Post-16 Skills Plan "replaces the current system of thousands of competing qualifications with 15 high-quality routes encompassing college-based and apprenticeships".

A release from the DfE for Business, Innovation and Skills on July 8 also said: "Thousands of ineffective courses that short-change employers and young people will be replaced with 15 straightforward routes into technical employment creating a more skilled workforce fit for modern Britain."

"Currently young people considering a technical education must choose between more than 20,000 courses provided by 160 different organisations with no clear indicator of which course will give them

the best chance of landing a job.

"The skills plan proposes a new system where students who have finished their GCSEs will be able to choose from up to 15 routes providing a clear path to skilled employment."



Warwick Sharp

Mike Cox's close shave for charity

After a delicious lunch at the AELP conference in the Palace Hotel, Manchester on Tuesday (November 1), delegates were treated to a hair-raising spectacle from the Michaeljohn Training School.

The team from Michaeljohn, which delivers apprenticeships and traineeships in hairdressing and barbering, were raising money for the British Legion by selling poppies and trying out their skills on top AELP employees.

Mike Cox, operations director, and head of marketing and membership Stephen Ram Kissun, were both treated to a wet shave in front of an audience of amused onlookers, while the money raised through sponsorship all went to the charity.

Lesley McCormack, managing director of the school, said: "The government has noticed that 16- to 18-year-olds aren't participating enough in charitable activities, so we've come along today with learners to help to raise money and the charity's profile."

Michael Conroy, a former level three apprentice who is now a barbering tutor and assessor, said: "Barbering is such a big thing at the moment with the growing interest in male



The Michaeljohn fundraisers: Michael Conroy, barbering tutor and assessor; Alexander Kay, employer engagement; Chantelle Greenhaugh, apprentice; Gabriella McCormack, director

grooming. We've been doing hairdressing for a long time and we're now trying to build that kind of recognition for the barbering as well."



Mike Cox enjoys some special treatment from trainee assessor and former level two apprentice, Michael Swords

AT SKILLS PLAN PROMISES JUST 15 QUALS

AELP VOXPOPS: IS THE FACT THAT THERE'S NO GUARANTEED FUNDING FOR NON-LEVY PAYERS A BIG CONCERN? WILL THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY ULTIMATELY SHUT OUT THE SMES?



ANTHONY WAMBUA
HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, ULAS

I get the feeling it will be OK. If it doesn't work there will definitely be some sort of review. I think that more of the issue will be if they [SMEs] will have the time and resource and staff to actually engage with the new system.



ANGELA MIDDLETON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MIDDLETON MURRAY

I really strongly believe there's going to be a substantial amount of levy pot available, to be circulated. I'm actually not worried about it at the moment.



NICOLA CODD,
REGIONAL ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, LEARNING CURVE GROUP

It is a concern for people. It has to be, as most employers who have apprentices are non-levy payers, so it is a problem.



JOHN HERMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, INTEC BUSINESS COLLEGES

The large employers that are going to engage are going to take their time to do that and therefore if there aren't guarantees for the SMEs to be able to access apprenticeship funding, the numbers are going to fall away.



PRABSHARON SAUND
DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIP TRAINING LIMITED

I think the new system is effectively pushing out non-levy payers because they're never going to be in a position to be in the levy. So it seems as though the smaller guys are just being penalised each time without fail.



ROB GEORGE
RGFE

I think the government will just find the money, whether it comes from the levy pot or an extra pot. Because it's one of the opportunities of Brexit that's opened up, it's been stated by so many ministers that we've got to invest so much more in our own skills.



VICTORIA SYLVESTER
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ACACIA TRAINING LIMITED

I think the employers themselves don't recognise the reform properly yet in that SME level. A lot of the employers we speak to are completely oblivious until we walk through the door and say, this is happening to them.



SAYED JAFREY
DIRECTOR, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE TRAINING NETWORK

The reality is there are so many changes happening and even the top providers with the top grades with all the experience - they're all worried. And there are still a lot of questions unanswered. But there has to be a pot of money - because otherwise they'll be left out.



RAJ KUMARAN
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS, MINDFUL EDUCATION

Whilst there is on the one hand uncertainty about funding, on the other hand small employers are too busy to even think about it. It's only the bigger ones that actually know what's going to be in the future - for certain they will be paying the levy.



SHEILA MOSLEY
EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE, CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE

There's such a focus on the larger employers. I think a lot of the mid-range will, but I'm not sure the smaller ones will. It is a concern that they may just not take on apprentices.

EDITORIAL

Big win
over small
schools

I would like to congratulate the Association of Colleges on its important win for the sector.

It flexed its muscles through demanding a judicial review, and the DfE was right to respond by dropping plans to fund what would have been another undersized and unneeded sixth form.

Our discovery that a further Loxford Trust sixth form cleared by the government is potentially operating with under 20 students, raises further serious questions over judgement and scant regard for its own guidelines.

Justine Greening should now review all recent decisions to approve small sixth forms.

They're poor value for taxpayers' money and have been flooding an already overcrowded post-16 market for too long.

It would be wrong of the DfE to continue forcing through a decline in the number of established and valued colleges, while dubious school sixth forms are allowed to proliferate.

On a closing note, while David Hughes is being rightly lauded for seeing the legal challenge through, we should also credit his predecessor Martin Doel for preparing the way. Thank you both!

Paul Offord, deputy editor
news@feweek.co.uk

DAVID LAMMY'S BACKBENCH APPRENTICESHIPS DEBATE

PHA Public Affairs @PHAPolitical
Very strong words from @DavidLammy on #apprenticeships funding cuts in his Westminster Hall debate "Put your money where your mouth is"

Hadstrong @Hadstrong
The axe is falling on areas of deprivation @DavidLammy debate. 9 in 10 of most pop apprentice posts face funding cuts

Nic Dakin NicDakinMP
Pleased to be supporting @DavidLammy in debate to argue changes to apprenticeship funding should not disadvantage young people

Richard Burden MP @RichardBurdenMP
Brilliant speech by @DavidLammy opening #apprenticeships debate in @UKParliament today. Govt U-turn welcome but funding shortfall still acute

Jansev Jemal @Jansev
@DavidLammy raises the importance of adult education in his Westminster Hall debate on #apprenticeships



LAMMY ACCUSES HALFON OF HOODWINKING PARLIAMENT ON FUNDING CUTS

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The skills minister Robert Halfon has been accused of trying to "hoodwink" parliament over deep cuts to apprenticeship funding, according to Labour MP David Lammy, who has vowed to keep the pressure on the government.

"Frankly, the young people of this country deserve better than they are getting from the minister," Mr Lammy told FE Week following a heated debate in Westminster Hall on Tuesday, which was held at his insistence.

"Apprenticeship funding will still face huge cuts and I am absolutely clear in my position that I will be keeping up the pressure on this government to come clean about these cuts before it is too late," he said.

The MP for Tottenham had personally requested a debate on apprenticeship funding cuts, in response to FE Week findings that planned reforms would cause major cuts of up to 50 per cent, falling particularly on younger and disadvantaged learners.

At the end of the hearing, he argued that Mr Halfon had not responded to key

questions on the issue of framework funding, and had instead focused on new standards – despite their low take-up.

"The minister has relied on these new standards – standards that only just over 3,000 apprentices have taken up," he said.

"Over 99 per cent are on the current frameworks, which is the matter of the debate, and the minister has not addressed it at all. He's trying to hoodwink the house."

Earlier in the debate, the minister insisted that "actually we are moving to a new world".

He added: "Businesses will choose different kind of apprenticeships because of the move to standards, and would-be apprentices will choose a different kind of apprenticeship."

"So the way the discussion has gone from some of people on the benches opposite, it is as if we are comparing apples with apples. The world is changing. It is now apples with pears."

Mr Lammy's frustration at his opponent's lack of response was evident, and he was called to order during his closing remarks, when he said: "It is disappointing that the minister has said nothing about funding rate cuts in this country."

"He's been reliant on the £2.5 billion extra he's said is coming in. He's robbing Peter to pay Paul."

The debate had been called in response to FE Week's analysis of new apprenticeship funding rates proposed by the Department for Education in August.

We proved that the new rates would lead to massive cuts in funding of up to 50 per cent for 16- to 18-year-olds, mostly in some of the nation's most deprived areas.

In response FE Week launched its #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign, which forced the government to announce a partial U-turn on the worst of the cuts last week.

The DfE announced two weeks ago that it would pay an extra 20 per cent on the funding band limit for 16- to 18-year-olds, and £60 million in "additional support in areas of disadvantage".

However, further analysis found that while the cuts won't now be quite as severe, most frameworks would still see reductions of 20 per cent or more.

Mr Lammy is writing a piece on the subject for next week's edition of FE Week.

COMMENTS

Peter Lauener at odds with sector over lack of end-point assessors

We agree with Dr Sue Pember's proposals; they accord with our own views on sensible managerial and professional controls to ensure quality. It seems to us that it is the IfA/SFA that is "sacrificing quality" in order to make the number of apprentices on programme look as big as possible.

People should not start on an apprenticeship unless they know what they have to achieve and how they are going to be assessed at the end. The assessment plans do not give this level of detail. The detailed EPA requirements can only be finalised after apprenticeship assessment organisations (AAOs) have been appointed and they have worked with the employers' group to agree the detail of all the testing required under the plan.

Graham Hasting-Evans

Colleges warned off overseas ventures following collapse of AoC India after just four years

When this was announced I commented that it was a waste of funding and should concentrate on using funding to support business in UK and Europe. It's a case

of told you so! Next we'll be sending schools to observe Draconian teaching methods' in China and try and transfer to UK.

Dave

Apprenticeship funding 'u-turn' – but how far does it really go?

Health and social care (Fwk 444) is similarly affected. Indeed any non-STEM framework will show similar reductions.

Gordon Ridland

I am also concerned about health and social care, a concern which extends to the standards. This sector is not sufficiently valued in the work arena and now it is being pushed to the bottom of the education and training stack. I fail to understand how Standards funding bands can have been applied as follows.

Healthcare support worker £3,000
Customer service practitioner £4,000
Hospitality team member £5,000
Golf green-keeper £6,000

What 'standardisation' is being applied to the Standards?

Clair Schafer

I agree with Gordon and Clair, it seems the government is putting more value on these STEM standards and cutting any framework value not deemed as an important a sector and thus fund it as a second class citizen....here we go again!

We provide hairdressing and barbering apprenticeships and find this lack of professional understanding from the government as disgraceful. The result speaks for itself... framework values have been halved, framework bands were suppose to reflect current funding levels. That is clearly not the case. Hairdressing should be in band eight not band three, as it has been allocated by this government.

I would love to get my scissors on the hair of these politicians and let's see if they like my 50 per cent reduced funded haircut after I get through with them!! How can greenkeeping be valued at £6,000 when hairdressing is valued at only £3,000 – is that due to many politicians liking a game of golf?

Gail Dalton-Ayres

Lancashire's only Microsoft risual Digital Academy Launches at Accrington and Rossendale College.

Accrington and Rossendale College has teamed up with risual Limited and Microsoft, to launch the North West's first risual Microsoft academy, based at the college's state-of-the-art Heartwood Centre.

The digital academy will provide a wide range of digital training opportunities, which will drive the growth of digital skills across Lancashire. Apprenticeships are at the heart of the academy provision, which will include Microsoft specialist units. Students across the college will have access to the academy, which will support the embedding of digital skills across all subject areas. All our students will have the opportunity to gain Microsoft specialist qualifications. The academy will also provide a diverse range of training programmes for businesses across Lancashire, which will upskill the existing workforce and keep our businesses at the leading edge of their industries.

College Principal Sue Taylor commented, "We are very excited to be working alongside Microsoft and risual on such a fantastic venture. I believe the digital academy will be a real catalyst for the growth of digital skills across our region. We know many of our employers, across all sectors, struggle to recruit and retain staff with high level digital skills. The academy directly addresses the Lancashire Economic Partnership priority to improve digital skills in the region and drive economic growth."

Richard Proud, Director of risual commented: "We are overjoyed to be working with Accrington and Rossendale College in the Lancashire LEP. The support and passion from the college and the LEP really demonstrates the commitment of the region to developing digital skills. risual's Microsoft academies are proactively working to offer relevant digital apprenticeships delivered by academic and industry experts to reverse engineer the digital skills gap."

Lisa Moizer, Manager at Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, said: "Improving the skills of Lancashire's workforce is an important part of the Lancashire Economic Partnership's ambitious strategic programme to transform the county and drive economic growth over the next decade. The digital sector is a significant priority, with Lancashire businesses telling us that there is a high demand for up-to-date digital skills and so the investment in the risual academy is an exciting opportunity to meet this demand, by investing in young people and growing the digital talent pool."

"The LEP is investing around £30m in Growth Deal Skills funds to build new, modern training facilities, upgrade existing facilities and buy new equipment for centres such as The Accrington and Rossendale risual Digital Academy. This substantial investment will enable thousands of local people all across Lancashire to learn new skills, engage with apprenticeships, progress in work, and achieve economic well-being over the next few years."

The Annual Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Dinner, Proudly Sponsored by risual Education.

risual Education proudly sponsored the prestigious LEP network dinner which was attended by MPs and important guests alike from Microsoft. There was a key focus from both the LEP chairs, CEOs and MPs on developing digital skills to support industry growth in all sectors.

During the instructive evening, Greg Clark MP, drove the idea that "local growth has to be the foundation of national growth". Whilst Sajid Javid MP, challenged LEP leaders to also target local growth, along with devolution and housing.

The LEP dinner was a rare opportunity to bring together some of the biggest names in government to raise and examine matters of true importance with members of LEPs.

Industrial skills and digital strategy are in increasing demand and this was discussed in full detail at the risual backed event. The event hoped to raise awareness of the needs for development of digital skills in FE, in collaboration with risual and Microsoft.

Distinguished guests included The Rt Hon Liam Fox MP, Secretary of State for International Trade, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, The Rt Hon Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, The Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE CMG and host Dr Ann Limb CBE DL.

A need for an industry relevant IT apprenticeship scheme across the UK was identified by risual, to develop a constant supply of fresh talent, enriching the ecosystem and supporting the sector to thrive. risual's Director of Education, Tina Jones, delivered a presentation discussing the importance of digital skills and how academies such as Accrington and Rossendale are bridging the gap between industry and education.

risual academies are already deployed at Derby College, Cardiff and Vale College, College of West Anglia, Walsall College and Accrington and Rossendale College, with Sparsholt College launching in December. There are already scheduled launches for a further three colleges early next year, with one in each LEP within 3 years.

The first London-based academy is due to open at the College of North East London, Haringey and Enfield on 9 November, with over 20 apprentices already recruited through the partnership prior to the academy launching.

risual
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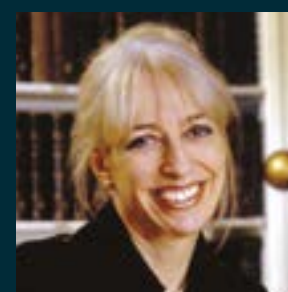
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Conference Programme

Tuesday Highlights

- Keynote session with Sir David Carter, National Schools Commissioner and Lord Sainsbury, Chair of the Independent Panel on Technical Education.
- Morning breakout sessions '*Leaders' role in driving performance improvement*' and '*After area reviews - Making recommendations reality*'.
- Afternoon breakout session '*The big financial challenges for colleges: Solvency, debt and pensions*'
Dedicated programme for sixth form college delegates.



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Wednesday Highlights

- Keynote session with Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE, Neuroscientist, writer and broadcaster: Bringing out the best in the 21st Century mind – *A neuroscientist's perspective on the digital world*.
- Keynote session with Ruby Wax OBE, Comedian, author and mental health campaigner. Strategic leadership lecture: *Responding to disruptive change* with Costas Markides, Professor of Strategic and International Management, London Business School.
- Eight hot topic sessions including 'Who is in charge? Local accountability and autonomy'.
- Afternoon breakout sessions 'English and maths - Strategies for success' and 'The Future Apprenticeships programme - Support to deliver apprenticeship standards'.

Thursday Highlights

Only £99 to attend the full day of the conference

- Address by Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education.
- Keynote session with Richard Atkins CBE, Further Education Commissioner and Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills.
- A day of discussion on apprenticeships including a focussed forum on 'Apprenticeship reforms - The latest update'.

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FE INSIDER

Shane Chowen is head of policy and public affairs at the Learning and Work Institute, and a governor at Westminster Kingsway College. He is also a former Institute for Learning policy officer and an ex-vice president of the National Union of Students. He writes a column for FE Week once a month.

The government must go much further with reforms

The Technical and Further Education Bill is a good start, but it needs to address structural problems that will hold us back in world trade, says Shane Chowen.

In the wake of the vote to leave the EU, the economic aftershocks are beginning to be felt. Economists still forecast a rise in unemployment – albeit not to the scale predicted immediately after the referendum – and the consequences of a weak currency are starting to have an impact, with retailers and energy companies set to increase prices.

But looking at other changes to our economy, it seems the government has not dropped the ball. Self-employment is now at its highest rate ever, helped by the rise in what has been dubbed the ‘gig economy’, where companies enlist self-employed individuals for work that is often low-paid and insecure, but very flexible.

Matthew Taylor, chief executive at the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, and a former adviser to Tony Blair, has been asked by Theresa May to look into what these emerging employment models mean for employee rights and employer responsibilities. One of the six key themes of Taylor’s inquiry is to look at progression and training, and to recommend ways to ‘facilitate and encourage professional development’. After all, self-employed people can’t ‘apprentice’ themselves. The sector must engage in this important review.

The Technical and Further Education Bill, introduced by the government on October 27, is the ideal opportunity for the government to go further in granting the regulatory freedoms necessary to respond to our changing economy. The bill provides the legislative backing for the new Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to provide technical training pathways within defined occupational groups.

If that sounds familiar, that’s because it’s what the Sainsbury Review recommended. However, the bill doesn’t say there should be 15 routes, as Sainsbury suggested. Instead, it charges the secretary of state with responsibility to determine occupational groups, and then it will be up to the new Institute to decide which occupations fall into each group. Interestingly, there is a clause in the bill that would ensure any occupation that doesn’t fit neatly into a pre-determined group, would still have to be lumped in anyway. So I for one would not put money on 15 being the magic number.

The new Institute will have a powerful role in technical education as well as

apprenticeships. It will be empowered by law to set standards and approve, own copyright for, and license technical qualifications related to those occupations.

I would love to see a more explicit requirement to work with learners. The bill requires it to share information with Ofqual, Ofsted and the new Office for Students, but these are hardly organisations

Self-employed people can’t ‘apprentice’ themselves

with outstanding track records of learner engagement. Lessons should be learned from the trailblazer process and learners should be systematically embedded in the development and approval of standards and assessment plans for apprenticeships and technical education.

The Department for Education’s own evidence suggests that their reforms will benefit groups of learners. For example, its impact assessment says those with learning difficulties and disabilities will benefit from the transition year proposed in the Post-16 Skills Plan. Learners from black and ethnic minority (BME) groups will benefit from the new college insolvency regime introduced by the bill, because a higher proportion of BME learners go to college relative to the general population.

Yet the bill does not even touch on glaring access issues currently plaguing the apprenticeships system. People with learning difficulties and disabilities, and people from BME backgrounds have been famously underrepresented in apprenticeships for a number of years. There should be amendments to the bill that enshrine the developed recommendations of the Maynard Review on apprenticeship accessibility.

At the very least, the bill should legislate for the new Institute to have a defined role in widening access to apprenticeships and technical education, similar to the Office for Students’ role in widening participation in universities.

The bill is a good start, but could do much more to set the sector up for a modern economy and address serious structural problems that will hold us back as we trade with the rest of the world.



KAREN ROBERTS

Director of youth justice at training provider Novus

How to create inclusive learning spaces

To successfully create inclusive spaces for those with learning difficulties, the entire organisation needs to be brought on-board, says Karen Roberts.

While dyslexia is estimated to affect around 10 per cent of the general population (four per cent severely), the figure is estimated at around one third in young offender institutions.

If colleges and FE institutions are not dyslexia-friendly, it may well be that learners and staff are not reaching their full potential and many maybe struggling to articulate their needs.

In September, HMYOI Werrington became the first secure establishment ever to receive the dyslexia-friendly quality kite mark from the British Dyslexia Association. Here are three elements that we at Novus, working alongside them, found to be essential:

Support for the leadership team

The demands of the award were stringent, assessing areas such as leadership and management, communication, training, partnerships and educational provision.

For Werrington the whole process took almost two years, from initial self-assessment on the standards, through development of an action plan, to building up a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that we had met the standard, ready for a verification visit.

We had full support from senior management, both in the YOI and at Novus – this ensured that staff were enabled to attend the training and given time to develop the initiative in their area of the prison.

A full-organisation project

A critical factor in the success of this project was how we approached the process – as a whole establishment, not just an education department.

Young people in this environment are influenced by many touchpoints in the prison regime, and there was a danger that the impact of the project could be significantly diluted once the young people went back to other parts of the prison, if the project was contained within the education department.

Fortunately, the governor at Werrington provided his full support in ensuring the establishment took an inclusive and proactive approach. Dyslexia-friendly training was embedded into the prison induction programme for all new staff, as well as training of existing colleagues.

We asked for volunteer dyslexia champions across all parts of the establishment, including the kitchen, residential wings and chaplaincy, for example – supported by their

line managers and allocated time to attend training with our regional SENCo.

Once the champions started to understand the challenges faced by young people with dyslexia, and the impact this had on their daily lives, they began to identify innovative ways in which they could support them in the prison.

Their enthusiasm was infectious – coloured acetate overlays appeared everywhere, notices such as the daily menu were replaced with newly printed versions on cream-coloured paper with sans serif fonts size 14 or larger, and dyslexia-friendly support packs were provided to all wings and every department throughout the establishment.

Full training led by the governor and the

It became an initiative to support staff as well as young people

education staff ensured everyone had an understanding of dyslexia and knew where to go for support.

One thing that surprised us was the number of staff who identified themselves as needing support as a result of the training – it became an initiative to support staff, as well as young people.

One member of staff in his 60s, who had not been diagnosed previously, took home a coloured overlay and returned the next day excited about the new world that had opened up to him overnight, when he had managed to read a chapter of a book.

A committed project lead

We had an enthusiastic, inspirational and determined regional SENCo who was able to gain support for the project from a wide range of colleagues. The project lead needs to have a real commitment to this area of work as well as the ability to motivate others to get involved.

A dyslexia-friendly environment boosts individuals’ confidence and supports the creation of an inclusive environment, in which all can thrive and fulfil their potential.

The buzz from hearing one young offender saying he doesn’t need help with reading his letter from home today, “because I’ve got my coloured filter now”, makes the whole project worthwhile.

If the government wants to develop a high-quality apprenticeship system, we need to do more than just fix the funding formula, says Joe Dromey.

At their best, apprenticeships can offer young people the opportunity to earn and to learn, to blend on-the-job training with off-the-job learning in a way that can help them build a successful and sustainable career.

They can be great for employers too: helping them develop skilled, motivated and loyal employees. For the country, an effective apprenticeship system can help address the skills gap, boost our stalled levels of productivity and act as an engine of social mobility.

The government’s ambitious target of three million apprenticeships this parliament is to be welcomed, and it has already taken action by introducing the apprenticeship levy on large employers.

The partial reversal of spending cuts for apprenticeships, announced last week, is also welcome.

The cuts would have hit young learners and deprived areas of the country particularly hard. Credit for convincing the government to rethink its plans should go to FE Week for its #SaveOurApprenticeships campaign, and to David Lammy MP and Gordon Marsden MP too.

However, this is only a partial U-turn. In a debate in parliament on Tuesday, further number-crunching from FE Week showed that nine out of 10 of the most popular



JOE DROMEY
Senior research fellow,
Institute for Public Policy Research

Making apprenticeships work for young people will take more than fixing funding

apprenticeship frameworks will still face funding cuts of between 14 and 51 per cent.

It seems the cuts have only been downgraded, from the realm of the eye-watering to the merely swingeing.

But while the debate about government funding for apprenticeships is important, it is of course just part of the picture.

There remain significant and systemic challenges with our apprenticeship system, particularly for young learners. It is failing to meet the needs either of young people, employers or our economy.

One of these is an ongoing problem with employer demand for young apprentices.

The number of apprenticeship starts has increased substantially, doubling in the last five years. This will likely be further boosted with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, as employers seek to get value from their contributions.

However, the growth has been driven by older apprentices, many of whom were already working with their employer. The number of young apprentices remains

disappointingly static; fewer 16- to 18-year-olds started an apprenticeship last year compared to four years previously, when the economy was just emerging from recession.

Beyond quantity, there are very real concerns about progression and quality. Too often, apprenticeships seem not to offer young people the opportunity to progress and develop sustainable and successful careers.

Upcoming IPPR research shows that far too many 16- to 18-year-olds studying level two apprenticeships do not progress to the higher levels of vocational education that can really help them get on into work.

We know that people who do not progress beyond level two are far more likely to face low pay and unemployment.

Compared to countries with more established and effective vocational systems like Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, young apprentices in England tend to spend far less time on off-the-job learning; normally just one day a week. This training is often very job-specific, rather than embracing the wider vocation, and there is a lesser focus on

general education such as English, maths and digital skills.

The current model of level two apprenticeships contrasts not just with these countries, but also with the recommendations of the excellent Sainsbury Review of technical education.

The cuts have merely been downgraded from the eye-watering to the swingeing

Lord Sainsbury recommended that young people take a two-year course featuring a common core of knowledge that results in a certificate linked to an occupational pathway.

We need to learn the lessons both of our continental neighbours, and of the Sainsbury Review.

The apprenticeship levy could make a real difference to numbers, and the partial U-turn on funding cuts is to be welcomed. But there is more to be done.

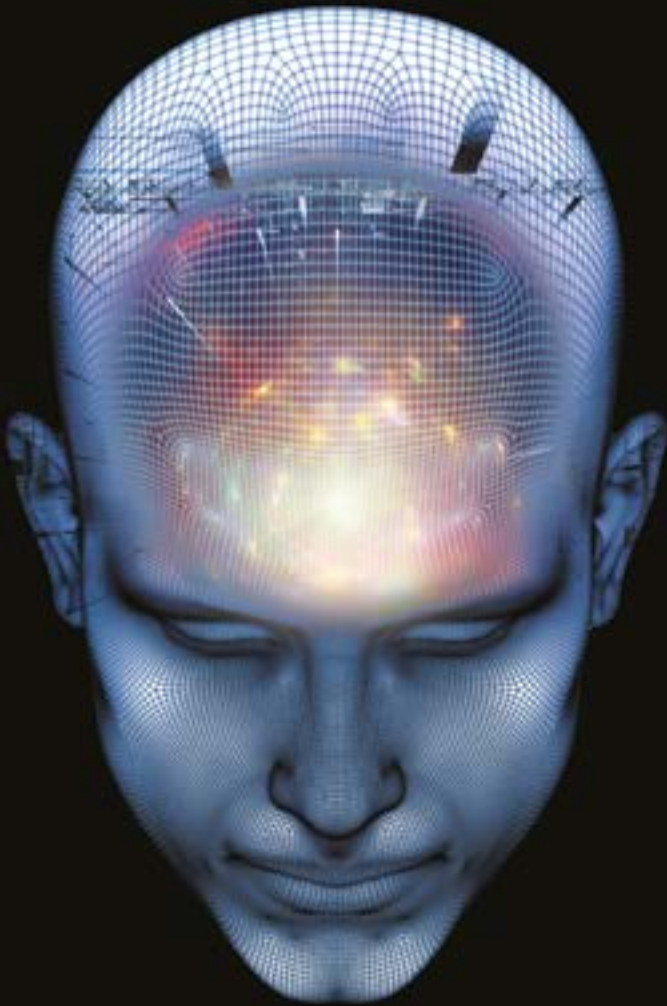
If the government wants to build on its reforms, and to develop a high-quality apprenticeship system that works for our economy, for employers and for young people too, we need to do more than just fix the funding formula.



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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Sam King*

Hair and beauty students get involved with international hairdressing project



Tutor Lucinda Vaughan with students Rebecca Franks, Ellie-Mae Davies, Sophie Westlake and Melanie Sukevics

Staff and students from the hair and beauty department at Bridgwater and Taunton College had a lesson on sustainability during a recent trip to Spain.

The aim of the trip was to get students involved with the Green Salon project in Malaga, which develops innovative ways of promoting sustainability in the hair and beauty sector in schools, colleges and businesses.

During the visit, staff and students played a vital role in the next stages of the project, developing educational tools for use within the hairdressing industry across the EU.

Lucinda Vaughan, curriculum manager for hair and beauty at the college, said: "As a college we are so fortunate to be linked with such an important project. This trip has enabled our students to collaborate with a group of international students to discuss ideas, produce an industry video and visit Spanish salons."

The trip also included a visit to L'Oréal Green Academy in Madrid, a salon which combines the application of modern technology and the use of environmentally friendly materials to develop a new method of hairdressing for future generations.



Craig George from Smartmove handing out sponsorship forms to the Bradford College students

Sleeping under the stars for the homeless

A group of social work students at Bradford College are preparing to spend the night outside to raise money for the homeless.

The team will give up their home comforts and bed down at the Shay Stadium in Halifax as part of a charity fundraising event.

The students have already raised over £500 through their online fundraising page, and hope to hit a grand total of £1,000 before the event takes place on November 11.

Marco Radley, who is in the second year of her social work course at the college, said:

"A few of us did the event last year and it was absolutely freezing, we were cold to the bone, but it's for a great cause. As tough as it was to do last year, we all felt it was very worthwhile and wanted to do it again."

The 'Under 1 Roof' fundraiser, which will see teams of fundraisers come together to sleep outside, has been organised by homeless charity Calderdale Smartmove, which assists homeless and vulnerably housed people to find accommodation in the Calderdale area.



Psychology teacher Roy Owen, head girl Emily Wagstaff, head boy Louis Earley, psychology teacher Amanda Hoey

Mindfulness course a hit with students

A unique life skills programme for first-year students at the Sixth Form College Birkenhead has reached its halfway point – and students are already feeling the benefits.

Devised by two psychology teachers at the college, Roy Owen and Amanda Hoey, and deputy principal Mike Kilbride, the BePART (Be Positive, Ambitious, Resilient, Thoughtful) course looks at methods to improve mental health and wellbeing in teenagers.

The six-week programme focusses on the importance of sleep and diet, challenging negative thoughts, and mindfulness – a form of meditation.

Students who joined the Wirral-based college in September have now had three sessions and several are already reporting an increase in their overall wellbeing.

Sixteen-year-old Eleanor Adams, who studies biology, chemistry, English literature and maths at the college, said: "I've found it really therapeutic. It's helped me with stress levels and eating habits, and made me take a step back and assess what I'm doing, which makes things a lot easier and calmer."

"This kind of programme is so important. You may have the ability to get good grades but you're never going to achieve that if you're burnt out."

Poppy selling won't lose its appeal for Sian

A dedicated volunteer and manager at a Teesside college hopes to raise thousands of pounds selling poppies this November.

Sian Cameron, who is support centre manager at Stockton Riverside College's engineering and vocational training provider, NETA Training, spends two weeks a year working 14-hour shifts for free during the poppy appeal.

Last year, Sian and her team of volunteers raised more than £50,000 for the Royal British Legion charity, and she hopes to raise even more this year.

The charity provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces community, including serving men and women, veterans and their families.

The 34-year-old took on the job of annually shifting 60,000 poppies for the poppy appeal following the death of her father in 2010, and is now entering her sixth year as a volunteer.

Cameron said: "As poppy appeal organiser for Hartlepool it is something my dad, Ian, was really passionate about. He was proud to be involved".

"When he died suddenly after suffering a heart attack in 2010, it seemed only right for me to step into the role."

With her small terraced cottage filled with poppies year-round, volunteer Sian has even had to have her loft renovated to accommodate them all.



Sian Cameron with her beloved poppies

College student’s business venture is fighting fit



Starting a business is notoriously difficult, but one entrepreneur launched her fitness empire in her first year at college. Now, just two years later she has opened her own studio – and she’s only 19. **Samantha King reports.**

When Amy Simpson left school, she decided a traditional A-level route wasn’t for her. Instead, she enrolled at Middlesbrough College to pursue courses in level two fitness instructing and level three personal training.

Her passion for fitness was a constant throughout her time at school, where she captained the football team, and “always liked leading”, a quality that would prove to be crucial in the success of her business.

At just 16, during the first year of her studies at Middlesbrough College, Amy decided to set up a personal training and group fitness class service, which she called Amy Simpson Fitness.

Speaking of how she juggled her work and study life, she said: “Although it was a full-time course, I had a couple of hours in the morning or in the afternoon between study times, so I’d fit in personal training classes then. When I was qualified to teach classes, I ran them at night, and it built up and up from there.”

Building a client base through leafleting and social media, she would train clients in whatever space she could find. For personal training sessions, she would work with them in football fields, and even their front rooms



Amy in her new studio

and gardens. When it came to group classes she would rent out school halls, paying by the hour.

“When I first started my classes, they were very small in numbers and it was a struggle to get them to expand. Starting off, I just had my friends and family there.

“In the first couple

of weeks I thought, “There’re only eight people here, is it worth carrying on?” because I was only

making £4 at the end of the night after I had paid the venue.”

A business unit on her course gave Amy the confidence to take her next steps and when she left the college, she invested in a 2,000 sq ft fitness venue in the heart of Normanby high street in North



Yorkshire.
“As soon as I saw the premises I thought ‘yes, I need it’. It had all the metal beams to hang all my bags on and it was just perfect. I said there and then that I wanted it, and signed the papers.”

Amy’s business has grown exponentially in the two years it has been in operation and classes that started out with a handful of family and friends now regularly attract around 30 clients.

“At the beginning it might be hard and it might be embarrassing if only three people are turning up to the class, but you’ve just got to keep going because that three will soon turn into 30.”

Her client base now ranges from teenage boys training to go into the army and wanting to build up their general fitness, to women who are struggling to put on weight and want to develop muscle.

Speaking of how college helped her, she said: “I couldn’t have done it all without the experience at Middlesbrough College behind me. My tutors really encouraged me, and it was working with them that gave me the inspiration to go for it.”

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN CAMPUS ROUND-UP?

Send your stories with pictures to campus@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course details of students where applicable

& MOVERS SHAKERS

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

Frank McLoughlin has been appointed associate director for leadership at the Education and Training Foundation.

A registered charity, the ETF is a commissioning body serving the FE and training sector.

Mr McLoughlin joins the organisation from his previous role as principal of City and Islington College, a position he held for 14 years.

During his time there, he received both a CBE and a knighthood for his services to education.

His new role at the ETF will involve developing a bespoke new training programme for principals and CEOs of colleges and training organisations.

Speaking about his new role, Mr McLoughlin said: “Having been a principal for so long I’m very well known in the sector. I’m managing to get in there and really speak to lots of people to help shape what this programme should be like.”

He began his career teaching part-time at various colleges, before landing a full-time job at North London College in 1981, which

would later become known as City and Islington College.

He is most looking forward to “giving something back” to the FE sector in his new role, saying: “if I can put a programme in place for our top leaders and they say it’s fantastic and just what they want, then I’ll be a happy man.”

Andrew Hall has been appointed the non-

executive chairman of Babington Group, a leading provider of apprenticeships and skills training in the UK.

Based in Derby, Babington Group provides apprenticeships and skills training to learners and employers and is supported by ten training centres.

Since 2010, Mr Hall has been chief executive of academic qualifications provider AQA. At the same time, he has held the role of non-executive director and chairman at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Before that, he was chief executive and director of strategic resource management at the QCA, a non-departmental government body with responsibility for evolving the curriculum, assessments and qualifications

in England. In addition, he has also served on the governing body of two schools near his West Midlands home.

Commenting on his new appointment, Mr Hall said: “I am looking forward to working with a strong team to grow Babington’s impressive presence in the growing skills and training market.

“Employers, learners and the government rely on Babington to provide high-quality and relevant courses. This trend is set to increase with the impact of new apprenticeship reforms in coming years.”

Further education consultancy FEA has appointed **Darran Marks** as curriculum consultant, a newly created role.

In his new role, Mr Marks will go into various college departments for periods of up to a year to support them in raising their standards, both to Ofsted requirements and also in aiding staff development.

He takes on the role from his previous position as curriculum manager for the technology department at Newbury College in Berkshire, a role he held for two years.

Prior to this, Mr Marks was a programme leader in plumbing and electricals, and began his educational career as a lecturer in plumbing.

He states that his biggest goal is to “improve outcomes for learners”, and is most looking forward to “getting out and about in FE, helping a range of colleges with their varying needs and really making a difference.”



FRANK MCLOUGHLIN



ANDREW HALL



DARRAN MARKS

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

Curriculum Development Manager Wanted



Interserve Learning & Employment is on the lookout for an experienced professional to join its expanding team as a Curriculum Development Manager, reporting into the Director of Quality and Curriculum. The successful candidate will hold responsibility over the quality of the curriculum for learners and employers, ensuring it's of a high standard. This includes managing our transition from apprenticeship frameworks to standards, as well as understanding the complex needs of medium and large employers whilst ensuring that the content, processes and assurance needed is in place to meets these needs to the highest standard.

The Skills

The successful applicant will desirably hold a teaching qualification, knowledge of a range of online learning technologies, an understanding and experience of ISO 9000 Quality Assurance Systems and Procedures, experience of Ofsted, Matrix and Merlin inspections, experience of leading, managing and developing a range of subject areas and qualifications across a large organisation, extensive knowledge of functional skills delivery and highly developed analytical report writing skills. Working for us, you'll need to be a people person and you will be representing and promoting our values each and every day; taking pride in your work, ensuring everyone has a voice, bringing better to life and doing the right thing.

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The Company

Interserve Learning & Employment has a strong position in the education, skills and employability markets, with a significant share of the Work Programme and delivery across the country as one of the largest private sector suppliers of Apprenticeships. Our ever-expanding team, of over 800 dedicated people, provides tailored support to help individuals in a range of situations: including young people leaving school and looking for the first step in their career, people in work who need help to progress through in-work training, people who have an illness which has prevented them from completing their journey into employment, and people who are ex-offenders wanting to turn their lives around, get back to work and re-join society. Whatever challenges someone faces, when they come to us, they receive flexible support to make sure they get the right help for them.

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Working for Interserve Learning & Employment comes with a variety of benefits, equating to between £1300 and £2400 per annum, such as: a company pension scheme, a healthcare scheme, enhanced maternity and paternity pay, childcare vouchers, a share incentive plan scheme, an employee assistance programme and life assurance. At Interserve you'll also have access to an online retail discount service called MyInterserve, allowing you to save £1000s on everything from holidays to your weekly shop. Not only will you access all of the above, you'll be working for an organisation that prides itself on redefining the future for people and places.

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Deputy Apprenticeship Manager Kempston (Bedford) based. Full time. Salary to £35k plus benefits.

This is a new role which would suit a candidate with excellent attention to detail, and experience in either the apprenticeship sector or professional qualification delivery.

You will be responsible for safeguarding and under the direction of the Apprenticeship Manager, ensuring funding and quality assurance compliance requirements are met.

You will have line management experience or be able to demonstrate the ability to manage professional staff under the guidance of the Apprenticeship Manager.

Strong IT skills are essential.

Apprenticeship Manager Kempston (Bedford) based. Full time. Salary to £50k plus benefits.

This is an exciting position for someone to manage our apprenticeship provision and delivery to the legal sector.

You will be responsible for ensuring that teaching and assessing meet quality standard requirements, and will be a point of contact for our clients and other strategic partners.

The ideal candidate will be an experienced manager of apprenticeships in the professional qualification sector. You will have current knowledge and experience of dealing with quality assurance and funding requirements.

You will have demonstrable leadership and team work skills, and be prepared to manage and develop your team to achieve continual improvement. Strong IT skills are essential.

Some travel within the UK will be necessary so a clean driving licence is required.



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Please indicate which job you are applying for.

CILEx Law School welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

No agencies please.

Closing date for applications for both positions
is 21 Nov 16.

ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

Executive Director - Students, Quality & Standards
circa £75k

Askham Bryan College is seeking to appoint a passionate Executive Director of Students, Quality & Standards.

The Role

Reporting to the Chief Executive and working alongside the college's two Campus Principals and the Chief Finance Officer, the successful candidate will be key to enhancing the College's ethos of scholarship, high expectations and individual personal achievement. The appointee will be the College's Ofsted Nominee and responsible for the preparation and implementation of a Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Plan.

The Person

In addition to possessing strong leadership skills the successful candidate will have experience of a successful Ofsted inspection along with a track record of quality improvement and expertise in modern teaching and statutory funding methodologies.

The College

Askham Bryan College is the largest provider of specialist land-based further and higher education in England. This role will be based at the college's main York site but with a requirement for travel to all other sites.

Closing Date: 9.00am on Monday 28th November

Assessment & interview day: Wed 14th December

To download the application pack visit www.protocol.co.uk/askham
For a confidential discussion about the role
contact Ian Sackree: 07795 271559 or David Beynon: 07970 042334

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Head of Maths

Location: Medway & Maidstone, full-time
£45,000

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An outstanding Head of Maths is required to support the Assistant Principal and run the English department. You will provide first line management and development to the maths team, including the supervision and delivery of maths across the College. The role will focus on the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment and the drive towards improved success rates.

We are looking for a dynamic leader to provide inspiration and direction for our maths team. If you are an outstanding teacher with demonstrable leaderships skills, looking for a move into management or an established first line manager looking for a new challenge, come and join us. You will need to specialise in GCSE and also have IQA moderation experience.

You will also have the resources to innovate and create an exciting learning environment. We are also offering a Golden Hello of up to £20,000; subject to qualifications and experience. In addition, there is a generous benefits package and pension.

This is a full-time, permanent position. The role will require you to work from both the Medway & Maidstone campuses.

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JOBS



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We currently have an exciting opportunity for a Lecturer in Maths to join us on a permanent basis where you will provide an outstanding educational experience on a range of courses through teaching, learning and assessment.

For full details, and to apply for this role, please visit www.walsallcollege.ac.uk/jobs

Closing date: Monday 14 November at 12 noon.

Walsall College is passionate about promoting equality of opportunity and creating a working environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated and everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. Our environment is diverse in character and student population. We particularly welcome applications from candidates from Black Minority Ethnic origin and those with a disability.

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Hours: Various

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The ideal candidate will have the ability to deliver a diverse range of Maths/English qualifications, ranging from entry level, through to GCSE and above. Ideally you will be qualified to degree level in Maths/English, or will have an equivalent industry or professional qualification, and will hold a full teaching qualification (or working towards this). Candidates will have an innovative approach to teaching and will ensure that lessons are designed to not only develop skills but that they connect to the industry which the students aspire to work in.

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

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LOCATION: WEST MIDLANDS

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If you can help to inspire and support our learners to progress and achieve their qualifications, and want to be part of our successful team please submit your CV to Sarbjit Bahia, HR Manager, email address: sarb.bahia@gbtraining.org.uk or post, to be received by 5.00pm Friday 25th November 2016. This post will require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. We strive to achieve diversity in our staff to reflect the community we serve.

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Location: Medway & Maidstone, full-time

£23,871, £37,291 (depending on qualifications and experience)

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Do you have a firm belief in the potential of all learners?
Do you reflect and develop new approaches to learning?

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If you are an English teacher or have aspirations to become one, we are keen to hear from you. You should be suitably skilled and qualified in English (or a closely related subject). You may be experienced in teaching, be recently qualified or have experience that demonstrates your potential.

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Location: Medway & Maidstone, full-time

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If you are a Maths teacher or have aspirations to become one, we are keen to hear from you. You should be suitably skilled and qualified in Maths (or a closely related subject). You may be experienced in teaching, be recently qualified or have experience that demonstrates your potential.

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FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference
to WIN an FE Week mug



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