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**BY NICK LINFORD** 

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## 'Deep concern' over LEP funding decisions

#### PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

NEWS

A call has been made for local enterprise partnerships to have a new contracting process that's "fair and transparent" if they're dealing with cash from the adult education budget, following allegations that board members are allocating valuable contracts to their own companies.

An investigation published by the Mail Online has alleged that LEPs have made more than 270 payments to companies or other projects connected with their own board members, with sums for example ranging from £13,000 to £1 million.

Conflicts of interest like these will be of concern to the sector, as LEPs already control much of the funds available to FE providers for capital spending – while last month's autumn statement confirmed that the government is pushing ahead with plans to devolve the AEB.

The investigation prompted Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, to hit out at "a system set up in a manner that leads to institutional bias".

"We expect a local commissioning model, used by LEPs or combined authorities, to set out the needs of the locality and then to follow a fair and transparent contracting process for the whole adult education budget open to all eligible providers," he said.

Dr Ann Limb CBE, chair of the South East Midlands LEP, previously tweeted that bodies like hers "should be transparent in their

dealings and transactions".

In comments to FE Week however, Dr Limb. the former principal of both Milton Keynes College and Cambridge Regional College, said: "I believe that financial probity, transparent governance, and public accountability lie at the operational heart of every organisation in receipt of government funding – LEPs or FE colleges.

"I can only speak for the LEP I chair, the SE Midlands LEP, where I am confident we have in place sound processes and procedures which I welcome being scrutinised and challenged."

Meg Hillier, the Labour MP who chairs the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, said the issue was "of deep concern".

"We have already raised concerns about the accountability of LEPs and the lack of basic systems in place to make sure interests are declared and where money is being spent," she added.

A LEP-funded report published in October by Metro-Dynamics, called 'Leading the way', also came out in support of greater transparency.

It said: "LEPs need to continue to ensure that they are known for having the best possible approach to transparency and governance in terms of decision-making and spending

"It is important to get the balance right, in being expected to spend £12 billion of public funding to 2021, and it is vital that accountability is, and is perceived to be, to the level required.'

The chairman of the Greater Cambridge



Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership, Mark Reeve, told FE Week on behalf of the LEP Network Board, that "all LEPs take any allegations of improper conduct extremely seriously".

"LEPs continuously seek ways to improve transparency and share best practice," he said.

"It is not the role of the LEP Network to monitor how LEPs allocate grant funding or assess conflicts of interest.

"The government has clearly vested that role in the democratically elected councils who are accountable for monitoring conflicts of interest and ensuring how grant funding is awarded by the LEPs."

A government spokesperson said: "Our rules make clear the need for a published conflicts of interest policy and insist upon transparency in the way taxpayers' money is spent.

"We won't besitate to act if any LEPs are found to have failed to follow our rules."

#### Apprentices get IfA representation – but no place on the board

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

The government has finally committed to establishing an apprentice panel for the Institute for Apprenticeships, in a move hailed by the National Union of Students as a victory for learners.

The panel was announced by

apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon during the sixth sitting of the public bill committee for the Technical and Further Education Bill.

"I am pleased to announce that we expect the Institute to invite apprentices to establish an apprentice panel, which would report directly to the board," he said.

"The panel would be made up of apprentices from different occupations and

experiences. The panel would decide for itself which issues to focus on. and it will challenge and make

recommendations to the board." However, the minister told the committee hearing on

November 29 that he could not "go so far as to say there should definitely be apprentices on the board" of the Institute. His announcement

has broadly been welcomed by the FE sector but some people still believe direct apprentice representation on the Institute's board would be the ideal situation.

Shakira Martin, the NUS vice-president for FE, welcomed the move and praised "the minister's acknowledgement that the board needs to listen to apprentices".

She said: "This is a victory for the apprentices and learners who called for better representation in the IfA, and I look forward to working with the minister constructively to make this a reality."

However, she pointed out that she wants Mr Halfon to "be clear about how he'll make sure the board take the views of the panel seriously".

"If the government truly wants apprentices to be listened to, the panel should be part of the bill," she said.

"We still believe that, ultimately, the only way to be serious about learner voice and apprentice representation is to give them two full seats on the board itself."

> Shane Chowen, the head of policy at the Learning and Work Institute, said the new apprentice panel would be "a useful addition to learner and apprentice representation throughout the Institute's structures".

However, he voiced similar concerns to Ms Martin about board representation, saying: "I stand by my comments at the bill committee. where I said that meaningful involvement of learners and apprentices will add tremendous value to the improvement of apprenticeships and technical education.

"This means involvement at every level - including the 15 route committees and the Institute's board."

He continued: "Learners and apprentices have an important perspective and contribution to make; they are the ones experiencing work and learning, applying for jobs and experiencing the outcomes."

Mr Halfon said that apprentices won't be put on the board "in part... because board members need to have experience and they carry a great deal of governance responsibility" he also argued that "they come under press scrutiny, which is not easy".

Speaking to FE Week after the meeting, the shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said Mr Halfon's decision to appoint an apprentice panel was "a reasonable response" which justified Labour's recent push for greater representation of the views of apprentices in the work of the IfA.

Mr Halfon confirmed during the hearing that the IfA would ensure the first panel "is in place before the institute goes live in April 2017".

Shakira Martin

NEWS

## **Casey Report demands urgent review into savage ESOL cuts**

#### JUDE BURKE @JUDEBURKE77

The country urgently needs a national review into the provisions it makes for non-native English speakers, according to a major new report.

The Casey Review, which looked at how social integration can be improved across the UK, found that community cohesion is being undermined by savage and ongoing funding cuts.

Unveiled on December 6, the report, which was commissioned by former Prime Minister David Cameron, concluded that good English skills are "fundamental" to improving immigrants' opportunities, but that course funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages has been heavily cut.

"The government should support further targeted English language provision by making sufficient funding available for community-based English language classes, and through the adult skills budget for local authorities to prioritise English language where there is a need," wrote the report's author, Dame Louise Casey.

More than 760,000 people aged 16 and above in England and Wales could not speak English well or at all, according to 2011 census data.

At the same time, funding for ESOL provision has dropped by 50 per cent between



2008 and 2015.

This lack of English proficiency is particularly prevalent among Muslim, Polish, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, while women are more likely than men to not be able to speak English well or at all.

The impact of poor English language skills includes lower wages, lower community integration and less civic participation, the review found.

Despite this, the review noted that funding for ESOL courses has been slashed in recent years, and identified "a significant gap in funding for pre-entry and entry level English language courses", confirming what people who teach ESOL have been saying.

Hundreds of staff and students from a range

of colleges gathered at the Houses of Parliament for a protest, which the University and College Union helped organise, against ESOL funding cuts last October.

The UCU's general secretary Sally Hunt told FE Week ESOL should now be a "top priority" for ministers.

"Successive cuts to the adult skills budget have reduced the availability of ESOL, so the government must now invest properly to restore teaching capacity," she said.

Jenny Roden, co-chair of the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults, agreed, and argued in an exclusive expert piece on page 12

#### Protocol Excellence in FE

that there should now be a "national review of ESOL provision".

Sue Pember, director of policy and public relations at HOLEX, said: "The report makes all the underpinning arguments why we need a government-led ESOL strategy."

Stephen Evans, chief executive at the Learning and Work Institute, said: "Knowing that language is vital to integration, cohesive communities, social inclusion and individual opportunity, we need urgent action to help the estimated 850,000 people in the UK with

ESOL needs."

In January the government announced a £20 million English language tuition fund, with the aim of helping Muslim women integrate into British society.

But former Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel said at the time that these

funds would not make up for previous ESOL cuts.

The government has not yet responded to individual recommendations in the Casey Review.

In a statement about the review as a whole, communities secretary Sajid Javid said: "While it's right we celebrate the positive contribution diverse groups make to British life, we also need to continue making sure nobody is excluded from it or left behind."

## Dwindling student numbers blamed as sixth UTC closes

#### FE WEEK REPORTER @Feweek

Yet another University Technical College is going to close, with low student numbers to blame once again.

Daventry UTC will close on August 31, 2017, its trustees have announced, making it the sixth UTC out of 48 to shut.

Figures obtained by FE Week through Freedom of Information requests made earlier this year showed that the UTC was running at just 25 per cent of its capacity last year.

It had just 151 students enrolled in 2015/16, down from 169 in 2014/15 — despite having facilities for 600.

And, as reported by FE Week in May, Daventry was the first standalone UTC to be hit with an Education Funding Agency financial improvement notice.

In a statement published on its website, the UTC said: "Resources made available to schools and colleges are irretrievably linked to the number of students on roll and, unfortunately, our inability to recruit students within the Daventry district and further afield has meant that the UTC is not financially viable into the future.

"Thus the UTC will not accept applications for entry from new Year Ten or Year Twelve learners in September 2017. "This outcome has been reached only after extensive discussion with Baker Dearing Educational Trust, the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency to explore all available options."

Professor Nick Petford, the chair of the trust, said: "Closing Daventry UTC is hugely disappointing for all those who have worked so hard to give students the opportunity to pursue a technical education.

"It was a difficult decision to take, but unfortunately although every attempt has been made to try to find an alternative solution, closure was the only available option due to low student numbers."

Daventry UTC opened in September 2013; its lead sponsor is Moulton College, and the University of Northampton is the co-sponsor. It was visited by Ofsted in April 2015 and received a 'requires improvement' grade.

The inspection report praised the leadership and management at the UTC but had various criticisms. These included: "Teaching is not good because teachers do not have high expectations of what students can achieve in lessons", "there are few opportunities in lessons for students to boost their literacy skills", and the claim that the UTC does "not make the best use of its industrial links in order to provide students with a regular programme of work-related opportunities".



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### NEWS

## Ofsted seeks degree apprenticeships inspection role

#### PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

Ofsted wants to extend its remit to cover degree apprenticeships, amid concern that the education monitoring body currently responsible for them might not be able to cope following cutbacks.

Paul Joyce, Ofsted's deputy director for FE and skills, revealed the plans during an exclusive webinar with FE Week editor Nick Linford on December 6.

Degree apprenticeships are currently inspected by the Quality Assurance Agency, which oversees all university-level provision.

But Mr Joyce admitted that his employer was in talks with the government, as well as QAA and the Higher Education Funding Council for England, about changing the situation.

"Where I would see the gap is the apprenticeship part of the degree," he said, adding that Ofsted won't be investigating "the degree qualification delivered in a university".

"We do need to ensure that the other part of the apprenticeships provision, what happens in the employer, is looked at and that it's quality assured – so not the degree qualification, but the wraparound apprenticeship."

He went on: "I'm certainly of the view that regardless of its level, an apprenticeship is an apprenticeship. To me, it makes perfect sense that we have one inspection regime for an apprenticeship and that inspection regime should be Ofsted across the piece." He admitted that plans are still in their

infancy, and that he doesn't know whether Ofsted would send inspectors to degree apprentices' workplaces, saying: "I don't think we've got that level of clarity yet, that's the conversation we are having with DfE and QAA."

FE Week understands that the capacity for QAA to adequately monitor the growing numbers of degree apprenticeships has been questioned in the wake of mass redundancies this year which involved a particular loss of apprentice expertise.

A QAA spokesperson told FE Week "there is no stand-off" with Ofsted over degree apprenticeships.

She confirmed it previously had 182 fulltime equivalent staff members, but now only had 113.

"QAA has restructured in light of changing expectations and income across the UK," she said.

"We are focused on the sector that we serve, for example creating for the first time a director for universities and a director for colleges and alternative providers, and retain a strong staff-base with extensive experience across all types of higher education, including degree apprenticeships."

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers welcomed the news, and has indeed already been pushing for Ofsted to "have authority to inspect every



#### apprenticeship".

A spokesperson warned that some degree apprenticeships were not genuinely workbased learning and instead involved "simply rebranding of more vocationally-biased degrees", and argued that stricter monitoring would be needed.

In his response to last week's annual Ofsted report, AELP's chief executive Mark Dawe said: "Since I started in this role, I have been told not to worry about the quality regime for degree apprenticeships because QAA has it all in hand – mainly by higher education representatives.

"It has taken me some time, but what I can assure everyone is there is nothing further

from the truth.

"Let's stop pussyfooting around. Ofsted needs to have a role in inspecting all apprenticeship provision whatever level it is." The DfE was unable to comment on its talks

with Ofsted ahead of publication. Last month, FE Week reported that management degree apprenticeships are expected to rocket in popularity, while the recently announced nursing degree-level apprenticeship is also likely to attract a lot of attention.

A DfE spokesperson would only say: "The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) lead on the inspection of degree apprenticeships."

## Funding axe for provider following FE Week investigation

#### ALIX ROBERTSON @Alixrobertson4

A training provider whose parent company hit FE Week's front page after it went bust, leaving learners unable to complete courses and a complicated multimillion-pound trail of debt, has had its contract with the Skills Funding Agency cancelled.

The public funding axe has now fallen on Options 2 Workplace, and an SFA spokesperson has confirmed its name will also be removed from the Register of Training Organisations by the end of the year.

The decision to cut the cash was made in the wake of an exclusive FE Week investigation in September, into the demise of eResponse Training Ltd, which showed that almost £6 million was transferred from its accounts to another, related company shortly before it went into liquidation.

The collapse locked learners out of courses, and gave creditors the task of recovering more than £3 million in debt, while the company's former directors Paul and Joe Alekna continued to run Options 2 Workplace.

At first, the SFA had been reluctant to investigate, taking a week to respond to FE Week's enquiries into what was a very complex and confusing situation.

However, when pressed again in September to comment on our findings, a spokesperson



said the agency would look into "the issues raised".

The SFA has now explained its decision in detail, after we asked if it had decided whether Options 2 Workplace would continue receiving public cash.

A spokesperson for the agency said: "We terminated our contract with Options 2 on November 18 2016, after the provider failed to

meet its contractual requirements. "We are working with the sector to ensure any disruption to learners is kept to a

minimum. "Options 2 will be removed from the register of training organisations before the end of the year."

The decision means the Alekna brothers, along with their father David, are thought to no longer have any direct contract with the SFA.

Options 2 Workplace was acquired in November 2014 by eResponse, which was also owned by the Aleknas, and the Worcestershire-based provider was rated 'requires improvement' by Ofsted after an inspection in January 2015.

It was allocated around  $\pounds 2$  million for apprenticeships and advanced learning loans

for the last academic year.

In September, FE Week revealed assets worth £5.6 million had been moved out of eResponse's accounts just before it was suddenly closed down.

Despite this, the most recent available accounts, ending September 2015, showed the wound-up company was a healthy business, with £2.4 million profit, £1.1 million taken in dividends, and a turnover of £27 million.

Another firm, London Electronics College Limited, was also bought by eResponse in August 2015.

Paul Alekna was appointed as director, and the SFA agreed a direct contract with an allocation of £250,000, a figure which quickly grew to more than £1 million in 2016/17.

However, the SFA confirmed that the contract with this provider was terminated in March 2016.

Paul and Joe Alekna were unavailable to comment this week on our investigations.

In September, a spokesperson for the eResponse Group commented on the sudden demise of eResponse Training Ltd.

He insisted that "no one actually got a penny" of the £5.6 million transfer, and said "it was an approved accounting exercise".

On the restructuring process, he said: "The board of directors have been working with professional auditors, accountants and our legal team on restructuring the business – essentially to separate its recruitment and training operations."



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#### **INVESTIGATES**

## **Revealed at last: Government sets aside £**

#### JUDE BURKE @JUDEBURKE77

The government has set aside almost three quarters of a billion pounds to cover restructuring costs emerging from the area reviews, FE Week can exclusively reveal.

The Department for Education has finally come clean on the figure after we made repeated attempts to get it to reveal the size of the restructuring facility pot via Freedom of Information requests.

In its response, the DfE said: "We have estimated the cost of implementing area review recommendations will cost no more than £726 million over the Spending Review period [ie up to 2020] – consisting primarily of loan funding – and expect it could be far lower than this amount."

It promised that "every pound will be subject to scrutiny", adding that money "will only be paid out subject to applications meeting realism, affordability and need."

Most of the cash will be available through the restructuring facility, to help colleges to cover the costs of implementing area review recommendations.

But £12 million has been reserved for transition grants, which colleges can use specifically to bring in the expertise they need to put in place any changes.

Julian Gravatt, the assistant chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: "It is good that the Treasury has made loans available to support colleges.

"The sums involved are large but colleges educate and train millions of people a year, so this needs to be put in context.

"Colleges have bank loans which total £1.6 billion, and although some colleges can borrow more if they want to invest or fund a merger, others can't." However Mark

Dawe, chief

 Rehard Heins, as FE Commissioner, will oversee college access to the restructuring grant

executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, sounded a note of caution, and stressed the importance of "full transparency" on where and what the allocations are for.

"The total sum is roughly the equivalent of the entire adult apprenticeship budget, and some of the money is being used to set up competing provision in an already effective high-quality market," he said.

This is the first time anyone has been able to confirm how much money the government plans to spend on implementing the area review recommendations.

> In January, FE Week revealed that the government was planning to introduce the restructuring fund.

At the time we understood it to be worth £560 million, but a

spokesperson for the Treasury – which is administering the fund – refused to confirm or deny

the figure.

In October it was the Department for Education's turn to remain tight-lipped over the size of the pot – but it did admit that 50 transition grants had already been awarded, totalling £3.5 million.

But when we asked for an update this week, a spokesperson said the department would not give a "running commentary on the area review transition grants and restructuring facility".

Nor would the DfE reveal which colleges have been awarded the cash

However, FE Week understands that this information will eventually be

published at some unspecified point in the future. According to the minutes of

the area review advisory group meeting on September 6, seen by FE Week, Paul Warner from the Association of Employment and Learning Providers asked if the DfE intended "to publish the amounts awarded in transition grants". The response, according to the minutes, was "yes – unless there are commercial reasons for not doing so."

The £726 million set aside for restructuring will be additional to the costs for the FE commissioner and his team's involvement in the area reviews.

A separate FoI request by FE Week revealed that Sir David Collins had been paid almost £500,000 plus expenses during his time as FE commissioner.

The department also confirmed that the five deputy commissioners are all paid £700 for each day they work, while the team of 13 advisers all receive £600 per day.

FE Week understands that the whole team has been involved in the area review process, although it's not clear how much work each individual member has done.

Sir David told MPs at the education select committee hearing on area reviews in October he expected the reviews to lead to "£200 million to £400 million-plus of potential savings to invest" each year.

David Russell, chief executive of the Education and Training Foundation, also announced this week that the DfE had set aside a further £5 million for 10 "significant new projects" designed to help the sector respond to Skills Plan implementation and area review demands.

The projects cover, for example, sharing outstanding technical teaching learning and assessment, and supporting finance directors, chairs of finance boards and clerks to meet changing responsibilities.



the new FE Commissioner

## What is a transition grant when it's at home?

#### JUDE BURKE @JUDEBURKE77

Transition grants are made up of government cash given to colleges to pay for consultants, and are worth either £50,000 or £100,000.

Mark Dawe

They are part of a package of financial support available to colleges to help them to implement recommendations made in the area reviews, alongside the restructuring facility.

According to guidance published in April, "the grants are to ensure providers can access the best change-management skills and have the capacity to make the changes at the pace required".

In order to access the cash, colleges have to state which skills or services the money will be used for and who will be providing them. One grant is available per significant change, rather than per college.

The amount of the grant depends on the size of the colleges involved and the extent of the changes being made.

FE Week's Freedom of Information request revealed the total budget for the grants to be £12 million – meaning that up to 240 awards can be made.

When we asked in October, we were told that 50 grants had already been awarded, worth £3.5 million.

But our latest request for an update from the Department for Education was met with a flat refusal to divulge fresh information.

The DfE also won't tell us who has been awarded the cash, or how much each college has received. This is likely to fuel concerns, previously reported in FE Week, about a lack of transparency over the grants.

One director of a leading audit firm, who did not want to be named, called the lack of transparency "unacceptable".

Since the transition grants opened for application in April, a number of consultancy companies have been promoting their services as being eligible for funding through the grants.

But it's not clear which consultants have been taken on, or by which colleges.

The transition grants are administered by the transactions unit, run jointly by the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency. As publicised on gov.uk, this is led by

Matthew Atkinson, who is on secondment from the audit firm PwC, which provides financial services to 26 colleges, according to 2014/15 accounts published by the SFA.

A spokesperson for PwC told FE Week: "As far as we are aware we are not engaged to provide any services funded by transition grants."

Grants of up to £100,000 are available for the closure of a college, a merger involving more than two institutions or where the merging colleges have a combined turnover of more than £25 million, or to set up a multi-academy trust of two or more colleges.

For a single sixth form college academisation, a merger involving two colleges with a combined turnover of less than £25 million, or any other significant change expected to have upfront costs, grants of up to £50,000 are on offer.

## 726 million for area review restructuring

### Sir David Collins earned half million in three years as FE commissioner

#### JUDE BURKE @JUDEBURKE77

The former FE commissioner Sir David Collins earned just under £500,000 for doing the job part-time, it has been revealed, though he also did twice as much work than had originally been planned.

The role was advertised in 2013 with a rate of £800 a day for an average of two days' work a week.

A Freedom of Information request by FE Week revealed that Sir David worked for a total 618 days over the three years he was in the job, which equates to an average of four davs a week.

He earned £494,400 in consultancy fees, and tendered £44,310 in expenses.

The extra workload is understood to have come about from the area reviews of post-16 education and training, for which Sir David took a hands-on approach.

He discussed his punishing schedule during FE Week's area review summit at the Festival of Skills in July.

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He said: "I have done 15 steering group meetings in different parts of the country

in 15 working days, which doesn't make me very popular at home but which does make me really popular with Premier Inns, where I seem to spend a lot of my time."

As reported by FE Week in 2013, the original job listing for the FE Commissioner role said: "The post is offered on a two-vear fixed-term contract, with an expected commitment of around 80 to 120 days each year."

The role was created to tackle failing colleges and to drive improvement across the sector through the intervention process – although it was widened in 2015 to include the area reviews.

These began in September 2015, and are due to finish by March 2017.

The majority of the 37 reviews have been chaired by either the FE commissioner or the sixth form college commissioner, Peter Mucklow.

Sir David has also been part of the overall area review advisory group.

FE Week's FOI showed that Sir David worked on 49 interventions and 22 area reviews between November 13 2013, when he was appointed, and November 11 this year, when he retired.

Despite Sir David's heavier-than-planned

schedule, the workload was advertised unchanged when the search for his successor began earlier this year. That advert

said the role was "being offered on a two-year fixed term contract, up to a maximum of

330 days. The role will be remunerated at  $\pounds 800$ a dav.'

It is thought this is because the work of the commissioner is likely to slacken off as the area reviews wind down.

The Department for Education announced Richard Atkins, the former Exeter College principal, as the new FE commissioner in October.

According to information published by the DfE, he is leading four of the eight reviews in the final wave, and is understood to have taken over any unfinished reviews from earlier waves that were previously led by Sir David. During his first major speech since taking

November that he hoped to be much less busy once the reviews were complete.

He said: "I hope that it'll be lighter after March. I hope the workload will become more manageable and I'll have the chance to spend more time out and about sharing with you the lessons we've learned."

He also joked about having had "one of those very short apprenticeships we don't approve of" with Sir David as his "master".

guide to very best Premier Inns," he said.

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over the role, Mr Atkins told delegates at the Association of Colleges conference in

"He left me with the two essentials for this job - the Network Rail map of England and a

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

## Team UK does the nation proud in Gothenburg

**FE WEEK** 

#### BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN

Team UK has returned to home soil with two golds, one silver and two bronze medals to show for a week of fierce competition at EuroSkills 2016 in Gothenburg.

And with eight medallions of excellence awarded to UK competitors who missed out on the top three in their skill area, but who nevertheless hit high scores, it was a haul the team is incredibly proud of.

The 22-strong team travelled to Sweden for the skills competition on November 29 for three intense days of competition against the best in Europe.

EuroSkills is one of two major international competitions, along with WorldSkills, for young people starting trade professions, which are best described as the 'Olympics of skills'.

Competitors, who must be under the age of 25, came from 28 European countries to compete in 44 different skill areas ranging from landscape gardening and stonemasonry to hairdressing and game design.

The competition culminated in a glorious night for Team UK, which was awarded its impressive medal haul at the closing ceremony.

Welder Josh Peek was the team's first gold of the night, followed by landscape gardening duo Will Burberry and Adam Ferguson.

"It was absolutely mad hearing my name for gold," said 20-year-old Josh, who trains at Great Yarmouth College. "I could hardly stop shaking up there, I've never felt adrenaline like it. "It was a tough competition. Sometimes I

thought I'd done well and others I thought I did not so well but obviously the judges liked what I did.

"This feeling is absolutely awesome, the best thing I've ever done."

Will Burberry, a 20-year-old from Merrist Wood College in Surrey, said he and his partner Adam Ferguson, 20, who trains at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise and who is employed by Historic Royal Palaces in Northern Ireland, couldn't put into words how it felt to win gold.

Adam nevertheless found a few words of his own, saying: "We've put so much work and effort into this so it is brilliant to reap the awards now."

Danielle Scandone then won a silver for her beautiful floristry displays, and took Team UK's 'best of nation' award for scoring the highest points out of any of the UK competitors.

The 21-year-old, who also trains at Merrist Wood College, told FE Week: "I can't believe it, I really didn't think I'd get silver let alone the best of nation.

"My stomach dropped as they called my name but I really can't describe the feeling."

> Bronze medals were picked up by 21-year-old cooking competitor Ruth Hansom, who works at the Ritz in London, and mechatronics pair Sam Hillier, 23, and Thomas Revell, 24, who both work for Toyota Manufacturing UK. The team's celebrations

> > had started the day before

when 20-year-old 3D game designer Daniel McCabe also won a gold medal. His award was not counted in the final medal tally as it is classed as a presentation skill.

Before the closing ceremony got underway at the Scandinavium Arena on December 4, skills and apprenticeships minster Robert Halfon gave FE Week a message of congratulation to share with the competitors.

"You guys as a team have done really well and you've made Britain so proud," the minister told Team UK.

"You are showing the world we are becoming a skills nation so well done to all."

Team UK's medal haul meant it finished seventh out of 28 countries for average points scored.

The team finished ninth for the overall

number of points awarded.

Peter Lauener, Team UK's official delegate, attended the ceremony and told FE Week: "It was great to see our medal winners take to the stage tonight, some of our best young people building skills for the future. Well done Team UK."

You can download FE Week's full supplement on EuroSkills Gothenburg, sponsored by Smart Assessor, at www.feweek.co.uk







## round-up

Position	Member	Average Points	Number of Competitors	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Medallion for Excellence	Name	Skill	Age	Training Provider	Medal	Points
1	Switzerland	529.89	9	2	2	2	3	Josh Peek	Welding	20	Great Yarmouth College	Gold	538
2	Austria	520.82	28	5	5	3	9	Daniel McCabe	Game Design	20	n/a	Gold (demonstration skill)	538
3	Germany	517.79	19	3	3	2	8	Will Burberry	Landscape Gardening	20	Merrist Wood College	Gold	532
4	Finland	511.16	25	6	4	2	5						
5	Hungary	511.14	14	0	2	4	3	Adam Ferguson	Landscape Gardening	20	CAFRE	Gold	532
6	France	511.04	23	4	3	3	8	Danielle Scandone	Floristry	21	Merrist Wood College	Silver and best of nation	548
7	United Kingdom Latvia	507.26	19 10	2	1	2	8	Ruth Hansom	Cooking	21	Westminster Kingsway	Bronze	530
8 9	Norway	505.13	15	1	0	1	8	Sam Hillier	Mechatronics	23	Toyota Manufacturing UK	Bronze	529
10	Denmark	502.17	6	1	0	2	1	Tom Revell	Mechatronics	24	Toyota Manufacturing UK	Bronze	529
11	Sweden	500.14	28	2	2	2	11						
12	Netherlands	499.71	31	3	3	2	7	Lucy Knight	Hairdressing	21	City of Bristol College	Medallion of Excellence	525
13	Belgium	499.13	23	3	1	1	9	Jordan Jeffers	Painting and Decorating	21	Southern Regional College	Medallion of Excellence	522
14	Russia	496.31	32	2	2	1	11	Daniel Martins	Plumbing and Heating	19	EAS Mechanical	Medallion of Excellence	519
15	Croatia	490	1	0	0	0	0	Josh Hunter	Bricklaying	20	Hull College	Medallion of Excellence	516
16	Malta	489.50	2	0	0	0	1	Isla McLarty	Beauty Therapy	19	City of Glasgow College	Medallion of Excellence	515
17	Slovenia	488.56	9	0	1	0	2	Betsy Crosbie	Mechanical Engineering CAD		New College Lanarkshire	Medallion of Excellence	508
18	Estonia	488.33	12	0	0	1	3		5 5		-		
19	Slovakia	486.40	5	0	1	0	1	Angus Bruce-Gardner	Cabinet Making	21	Waters and Acland	Medallion of Excellence	506
20	Portugal	486.33	18	0	2	1	3	Ethan Davies	CNC Milling	21	Coleg Cambria	Medallion of Excellence	501
21	Montenegro	483	4	0	0	0	0	Conor Willmott	Joinery	21	West Suffolk College		498
22	South Tyrol, Italy	482.82	11	3	0	0	0	Nathan Jones	Web Design	20	Neath Port Talbot College		490
23	Iceland	480.71	7	0	0	0	3	Seamus Goodfellow	Automotive Technology		South West College		478
24	Lithuania	480.20	5	0	0	0	1						
25	Luxembourg	479	5	0	0	0	2	Dale Hamilton	Heavy Vehicle Maintenance	20	Volvo		467
26	Spain	477.39	18	1	0	1	0	Harrison Moy	Plastering and Drywall	20	H&R Property Development		465
27	Cyprus	459	4	0	0	0	0	Toby Brook	Stonemasonry	20	Bath College		455
28	Kazakhstan	445.40	5	0	0	0	0						

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Over two days the Festival of Skills brings together the best of the sector's most forward thinking advocates, practitioners of change, policy makers and educators, at one of the leading forums for thought leadership, CPD and debate in the FE and skills sector.



summerhouse

I have found the event very interesting. It has been well organised, I love the idea of being outside. I like the marquee events and it is a beautiful setting - I don't think we could have 野野

## It's been a good event. I've been both days and it's been really informative. I have learnt so much. I'd definitely come back and would do both deve again

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#### EDITORIAL

#### The EFA does not need to be Scrooge

As we have proved, it is possible for a college to enrol all their students on English and maths and still not achieve 100% compliance with the condition of funding rule.

I first raised the flaw in the compliance calculation with the agency's top brass a year ago.

A vocational learner studying English and maths that drops out of all their courses before the 42 day qualifying period causes no compliance problems as the whole learner goes unfunded.

Yet if the same learner stays on a little longer on their main qualification, until after the 42nd day, they count against the college as non-compliant.

Pretty big flaw to have a funding system that penalises a college when a student stavs longer on the course!

The EFA has now admitted to FE Week for the first time that "exceptional circumstances" may prevent 100 per cent compliance.

Yet it contradicted that by claiming there's no systematic reason behind this, despite the overwhelming evidence.

The unfair implication is that this is colleges' fault, when as we have proved the blame clearly lies with the way compliance is calculated.

The EFA can and should stop being such a scrooge and fix this flaw, with or without a funding tolerance.

> Nick Linford, editor news@feweek.co.uk

#### **EUROSKILLS TWEETS:**

Steph McGovern @stephbreakfast A shout-out to Team UK @worldskillsuk on @BBCBreakfast this morning for their success at #EuroSkills2016 @EuroSkills\_info #medalsgalore

Nicky Morgan @NickyMorgano1 Many congratulations to constituent Sam Hillier who won a bronze medal in mechatronics at @worldskilllsuk #EuroSkills.

Robert Halfon @halfon4harlowMP Robert Halfon Retweeted Steph McGovern Great to see some of the inspiring young people I met recently doing so well at #EuroSkills2016. Well done to all involved!

Dr Neil Bentley @DrNeilB Well done #TeamUK - you did us proud! #EuroSkills2016 @worldskillsuk



## 'Incredibly unfair' funding quirk riles colleges

EXCLUSIVE FROM FRONT @JUDEBURKE77

Colleges have hit out at an "incredibly unfair"

impossible to achieve 100 percent compliance,

An Education Funding Agency rule states

that any study-programme learners who don't

already have at least a C in English and maths

According to the EFA, last year the sector

cent", but it insisted that progress still "needs

provider that isn't fully compliant to submit a

However, exclusive FE Week analysis has

demonstrated a glaring flaw in the EFA's own

methodology, which effectively makes it all

but impossible for colleges to comply in full, even when all learners are enrolled on English

out of their course after 42 or more "days in

- for their main study-aim, but with fewer

The EFA's own system qualifies learners

like these as 'funded', because they passed the

qualifying period, but not as complying with

the rule, even if the last day of attendance on

If more than five per cent of learners don't

comply, the EFA starts to withhold funds.

However, if a learner drops out before

completing their main study-aim as well,

they aren't recorded as funded - meaning the

the impact, and we estimate that as many as

9.000 college learners across England could be

Sarah Molyneux-Walker, director of MIS

and exams at Peterborough Regional College.

told FE Week that 18 of its students had been

affected by this failure in the system.

FE Week has spoken to many colleges about

each course is a few days apart.

college doesn't lose money.

directly affected.

recorded days for English and or maths.

learning" – the length of the qualifying period

The problem emerges when a learner drops

must continue studying those subjects - or their provider will lose cash in the future.

"maintained compliance at around 97 per

to be made in achieving full compliance".

It also requires "any school, college or

flaw in the notorious English and maths

and could cost them funding.

robust compliance plan".

and maths courses.

condition-of-funding rule – which makes it

JUDE BURKE

Learner A enrolments

Accordi

Days in learning before learner drops out The learner would fail the condition of funding in a compliance report because the main qualification meets the 42 day 'qualifying period' but the maths and or English does not Main qualification 46 40

GCSE maths and or English

Days in learning before learner drops out Learner B enrolments

> The learner would not appear in a condition of funding compliance report as no enrolments meet the 42 day 'qualifying period'

Main qualification	40
GCSE maths and or English	40

The EFA qualifying period and co	ndition of funding flaw explained
ing to EFA's systems, a learner is recorded as	qualifying period for their main study-aim, but not for

1

being funded after they have passed a 42-day 'qualifying period'. For a learner to be fully compliant, they must attend

both their main study-aim and any English or maths classes for at least that length of time.

If a learner leaves a college after meeting the

"For us 100 per cent compliance would be impossible," she said.

Lesley Valentine, head of management information at Luton Sixth Form College, said eight of its students had fallen foul, adding: "It seems incredibly unfair that we are penalised because they stop attending their maths/ English GCSE before their main aim."

Mark Ashton-Blanksby, head of internal audit at ICCA Education, Training and Skills, which provides internal audit services for more than 40 colleges, insisted that the system is at fault - not colleges.

"The EFA funding methodology itself is preventing colleges achieving the target of 100 per cent compliance, so it is inherently unfair to hold providers to account," he said.

This revelation has prompted some to call for the five-per-cent threshold for compliance tolerance - first introduced for the 2016/17 allocations, and now extended to 2017/18-to be made permanent. This means that if less than 5 per cent of a college's learners are noncompliant, the college will not lose funding.

Julian Gravatt, the assistant chief executive at the Association of Colleges, agreed that the

English and maths, they fail the condition-of-funding rule

This could easily happen, for instance, if their English and maths classes started after classes covering their main study-aim, as the system records the start dates and end dates for the different subjects separately.

tolerance should be made "a permanent part of the funding method".

A college manager, who did not want to be named, warned of what might happen if the tolerance were removed, saving that they believe that some colleges "might be tempted to be less than honest with their end dates in order to ensure that all such students meet the condition of funding".

They continued: "This certainly seems counter to the spirit of the guidance within which we all work, and it would surprise me if this is the actual intention of EFA rather than just an unfair quirk."

The DfE denied its systems were at fault - but then appeared to contradict itself by admitting the existence of the quirk.

A spokesperson told FE Week: "There is no systemic reason why an institution cannot be fully compliant with our English and maths requirements."

However, she added, "we recognise that in 'exceptional circumstances' that may be outside the institution's control, a student may not comply with the funding requirement. This is why we allow a five-per-cent tolerance."



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## **INVESTING IN YOUR TALENT -DEVELOPING CAREERS**

#### By Matt Atkinson, FEA Joint Managing Director

College leaders who made it their business to help me develop my career were the greatest gift I ever received as a junior manager.

I remember one Principal had the very practical approach of giving her rising stars bite-sized leadership projects to gradually build skills, confidence and competencies.

Years later, as a college Principal in Bath, I firmly believed it was my job to develop people for our sector. Why? Because I wanted my institution to be known as somewhere people went to develop their careers, and to succeed in their personal goals and aspirations. Their triumph was my triumph.

But when I tried to seek out talent development and management programmes I could never find a solution which developed the skills, capabilities and appreciation for the sector my rising stars needed.

The programmes on offer were too traditional and generic, and not focussed on the needs of the individual.

This sector is full of generous people who give their time to others people who know how important it is to invest in those who will one day run our colleges and occupy positions of real authority and leadership.

I was also lucky enough to have the support of some truly inspirational leaders, and I still feel tremendous gratitude for their trust in and kindness towards me.

#### FREE Workshops

Today I remain proudly planted in the sector, and stepping away from college leadership has enabled me to work with the great team at FEA to develop effective new support for the sector.

All this is why People Development is now at the core of our offering.

And it's under our People Development programme that we're so excited to offer TWO new programmes for colleges and aspirational managers and leaders:

The FEA Talent Academy and our FREE Career Development Workshops.

The FEA Talent Academy is a new concept for the sector. We have created a leadership community of new or recently appointed middle managers who aspire to roles in senior management.

Over a six-month period we will work with this cohort of rising stars to develop their awareness of the issues facing the sector, strengthen their leadership capabilities through individual coaching and get them working on leadership projects which will benefit their careers and their colleges.

The programme is made up of two whole group events, four webinars, six coaching sessions and self-guided leadership projects.

This is a fantastic opportunity for current senior managers to invest in their rising stars, develop their college's future and reward and recognise leadership excellence and potential.

We are delighted to be running the Talent Academy in partnership with Larry Shulman Consulting and will be drawing on the expertise of highly respected individuals.

## FEA

## FEA TALENT ACADEMY

As our sector continues to change and adapt to new challenges and opportunities, the development of our talent base of future leaders is a critical issue. FEA, in partnership with Larry Shulman Consulting, are pleased to announce the launch of our new talent management solution for the sector - The FEA Talent Academy.

For more information visit our website at: **www.fea.co.uk** To enrol your future stars email: **matt.atkinson@fea.co.uk** or call **01454 617 707** 

#### The FEA Talent Academy will:

• Enable you to make a targeted investment in your future talent

• Embed a structured talent management programme for rising stars within your organisation

• Develop valued, motivated and inspired future middle and senior leaders

• Aid succession planning for your organisation.

4

#### LAUNCHING JANUARY 2017

A leading edge and cost effective talent development prograamme for your rising stars

3



Face to Telephone Face Events skype coa sessions

Telephone/ W skype coaching sessions

More information on this new and innovative programme can be found on our website at: **www.fea.co.uk/talent-academy**. You can enrol your rising stars by emailing me directly at: **matt.atkinson@fea.co.uk** 

We're also launching a series of regional Career Development Workshops, which are free to attend and open to anyone who feels they may benefit.

The workshop will bring together the sector's rising stars to network, whilst gaining practical insight into the key aspects of career development. Attendees will hear from a range of leaders and experts to build a better understanding of how to progress in the FE and Skills Sector.

The first event will take place at a central London venue on Wednesday 22nd February 2017.

You can register your interest for this event by emailing: **Samantha.Bunn@fea.co.uk** 

Matt Atkinson, FEA joint managing director

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BCoT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its learners and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake appropriate checks, including an enhanced DBS disclosure as well as providing proof of right to work in the UK.

BCoT is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome enquiries from everyone and value diversity in our workforce.

The closing date for applications is **5th January 2017.** 

Assessment days will be held on 11th & 12th January 2017.



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To apply please visit our website: www.havering-college.ac.uk

For more information contact: hr@havering-college.ac.uk 01708 462 854

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## FEA

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This is a key role where you will be working collaboratively at all levels and across all departments to ensure robust quality systems are in place and that the service performs well. As the key figure responsible for a team you will ensure that you and the department are responding to developments in the adult learning sector.

You will have an in-depth understanding of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and the Skills Funding Agency requirements. Another key aspect to this position is the delivery of robust quality process and ensuring excellent delivery with higher learning retention, achievements and success throughout the year, as well as meeting funding requirements. You will be adept at developing and maintaining partnerships to strengthen delivery and strategically understand the adult learning landscape locally and nationally.

This is a pivotal appointment for our client. The ideal candidate will have a background in ACL and possess knowledge in SARs/QIPS/CIF. First class leadership skills together with strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential. In return our client is offering a fantastic and rewarding working environment.

Interviews are being held week on 11th and 19th January 2017

SHOULD YOU HAVE THE SKILLS REQUIRED AND FIND THIS POSITION OF INTEREST PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT SAMANTHA BUNN ON 07872 378965 OR/AND EMAIL YOUR CV TO SAMANTHA.BUNN@FEA.CO.UK.





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

If you would like to have a confidential discussion about this role, then please contact Karen Brown on **01908 637006** or by email **Karen.Brown@mkcollege.ac.uk** 

#### Website:

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

#### Email:

recruitment@mkcollege.ac.uk

#### Successful candidates will have the following;

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

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

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

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

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

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## Curriculum Manager £35,368 per annum



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Please note we do not accept CVs Closing date: 12 noon Monday 9 January 2017 Interviews will be held week beginning 16 January 2017 Applications to: Wendy Bloom, Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, Leeds, LS3 1AD wendy.bloom@swarthmore.org.uk



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FE WEEK

#### EXPERTS



John Hyde is the chairman of HIT Training, a hospitality training provider that operates across England, and once a month he writes in FE Week about issues affecting independent learning providers

# The race to the bottom has begun

Firm guidelines need to be put into place to ensure the quality of the content of the new apprenticeship standards is accompanied by quality delivery, says John Hyde

Politicians and civil servants are forever talking about 'quality apprenticeships'. The new employer-led apprenticeship standards were introduced to ensure anyone embarking upon an apprenticeship would earn the skills and knowledge their employer required. Indeed, the contents of many of these new standards are inspirational.

At HIT, we have started to roll out the new 'hospitality team member' and 'commis chef' apprenticeship standards. Employers are very enthusiastic about the commis chef standards, and they are a real improvement on the old NVQ frameworks.

The new standards require a commis chef to become competent in all aspects of food-production and cookery, unlike the NVQ qualification. We have now opened our HIT chef academy at 17 centres around the country, and commis chefs can attend additional workshops on topics they may not see regularly at their workplace; covering things like offal or shellfish, pairing wine and beer with dishes, restaurant entrepreneurship and kitchen management.

The higher funding-levels for commis chefs allow us to deliver a really professional programme. Indeed in the past few weeks, a further 12 Michelin-starred restaurants have enrolled their apprentices into our academy, together with two leading contract caterers which cover the executive and director dining end of the market.

I'm sure in hospitality, our academy sets a high standard for the quality apprenticeships demanded by the politicians, civil servants and employers. Yet nowhere can I find any reference or guidance on the quality of delivery of these new standards.

Previously, SFA regulations had minimum requirements, including one-to-one site visits to learners by the provider. Under the new standards, the onus of ensuring quality is transferred from the provider to the employer, which creates uncertainty when Ofsted, the guardians of quality, can inspect only the provider as the one in receipt of government funding.

Whilst some employers will accept this responsibility, there have been horror stories

from the service and retail sector in the past. Firm guidelines need to be put into place to ensure the quality of the content of the new apprenticeship standards is accompanied by quality delivery, which is accountable, transparent and can be monitored and inspected.

Unless this is discussed now by the DfE, providers and employers, we will end up with scare stories in the press, which will force ministers again to take draconian action to enforce quality delivery, to prevent further damage the reputation of apprenticeships.

This is especially true now that price negotiations have been brought into the equation.

# The contents **of many of these new standards are inspirational**

We had our first experience of that last week when we were invited by the SFA to tender to deliver to a national chain. Needless to say we lost out, so without too many sour grapes, it was interesting to review the process. The client generously shared their feedback and scoring with us so we knew their decision was based solely on price and not on the quality of our delivery.

Without undertaking the delivery remotely online, with no face-to-face onsite interventions, we would not compromise our delivery model to match the price. Neither we nor the client will know for 12 months who was right, until the learners complete or not.

It does seem perverse that an apprentice's success or failure could be determined by their employer's willingness to fund their apprenticeship sufficiently.

What will Ofsted's role be now? Traditionally it has not involved itself in funding levels when inspecting provision. However if the negotiated price is too low to deliver the programme effectively, who is blame: the provider or the employer?

It will be the apprentice who loses out, and probably the taxpayer, as this apprentice will have to be retrained to pass their programme in the future.



## JENNY Roden

Co-chair of the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults

## English language classes funding is not a luxury

The Casey Report is right to fight for the cause of English for Speakers of Other Languages courses –improving social integration is an essential public service, says Jenny Roden

A fter much anticipation, speculation and delay Dame Louise Casey's review into integrating isolated communities was finally published this week.

Optimistically entitled 'A review into opportunity and integration', the 199-page report contains much information to be studied and digested. It has raised some controversy, but, as Radio 5 Live's Adrian Chiles observed when interviewing my colleague James Cupper about the report, "there are very few things that all sides of the debate can agree on, but one of them is the necessity to speak English".

By producing evidence of the negative impact of poor English both on people's lives, and on our wider society – and contrasting this with evidence of the benefits that greater proficiency in the language can bring – Dame Louise makes a strong case that good English is absolutely necessary for integration.

#### Those with **b** the highest need are suffering most

She also notes that government funding for ESOL classes has been reduced and that too much emphasis is placed on language for employability, while there is little or no funding for those at pre-entry level.

And so we read in the recommendations that language skills should be promoted and English language provision should be improved. This is music to the ears of the ESOL community, who have been saying it for so long.

In the words of one practitioner: "I think there was a collective thud of redundant ESOL teachers' heads on desks, when they read the line about more ESOL provision."

It is time that ESOL got into the spotlight. Those who need to learn English in this country deserve better than they're getting at the moment.

Adequate and sustained funding of ESOL is not a luxury; it's an essential public service. It's estimated that funding for ESOL has fallen by half since 2009. There is no funding at all for ESOL in the workplace, where countless migrants are trapped in low-skill jobs. With a lack of classes, cost implications for the low-paid, who must pay for classes, and additional costs of learning – such as childcare and transport – mean those with the greatest need suffer the most.

We need an urgent national review of ESOL provision, especially in the current context, with the imminent devolution of funding for adult and further education, which could lead to more fragmentation of an already piecemeal service.

In 2014, the Demos report 'On Speaking Terms' recognised the need for a national strategy for England – as Scotland and Wales already have. There have been calls for a strategy from a range of ESOL stakeholders, such as the Learning and Work Institute, HOLEX and Refugee Action.

NATECLA has added its voice to these, but went a step further with its report 'Towards an ESOL strategy for England', which contains proposals for what might go into any new strategy.

Launched at Westminster in October, the progress of the document is being closely watched by many in the field. It has already attracted a good deal of media attention and, we believe it is the best hope to bring some stability and consistency to the sector in these uncertain times.

We are therefore grateful to the Casey Report for highlightin the ESOL cause. We are heartened by what Dame Louise wrote in her introduction: "My overriding hope is that we can work together in a spirit of unity, compassion and kindness to repair the sometimes fraying fabric of our nation."

NATECLA believes that, by working together, especially cross-sector and at a local level, we can stitch together the patchwork of really good ESOL practice which already exists, and pave the way for a brighter future for teachers and learners.

> Co-authored by James Cupper, NATECLA co-chair

It's time to create a directory of all the apprenticeship standards and technical qualifications that need to be developed, says Graham Hasting-Evans

n order to establish how big the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education should to be, we need to know how many apprenticeship standards and technical qualifications will have to be developed, quality-assured and managed.

There are currently some 1,700 existing apprenticeship job roles in England, excluding higher and degree apprenticeships, and the best estimate is that if we continue with the present Trailblazer approach, there will eventually be up to 2,500 standards.

And, as Peter Lauener, the interim CEO of IfA-TE, said at the recent AoC conference, the government does not, as yet, have a list of apprenticeship standards that will be needed.

Now let's look at the other component: technical qualifications. In June 2016 Ofqual reported that as a result of the way such qualifications are recorded between England and Wales, the total number of registered qualifications has risen from 21,676 to 31,600.

This means that the number of technical qualifications likely to come out of the Post-16 Skills Plan process – bearing in mind that already there appear to be duplications between the ideas in the Sainsbury Report and what is happening in Trailblazers – could be very large indeed!

This all presents a worrying, complex picture. No wonder employers and learners find it confusing.



## How big do we want the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education?

So how are we going to reform the skills system and avoid ending up with a different but equally confusing picture?

### No wonder employers and learners find it confusing

I believe we have to start by recognising how people get into and develop their careers. Government is planning to have four main career path routes to our destination (or 'firstbase') job, namely:

'Academic', or what might be seen as the traditional route, following GSCEs, A-levels and university.

'Apprenticeships', which in essence is a defined period of learning and skills

#### FE Week & Me

development that results in qualifying in a defined job role.

'Technical education', which involves learning beyond A-level but not necessary to a full degree level.

'Work-based learning', where someone gets a job and, generally, goes through a short training course, perhaps supplemented with additional ad-hoc training at a later stage.

We have to understand which route is the best for what employers and the economy need.

The government is about to appoint 15 sector chairs to the IfA-TE. This is an opportunity to confront the issue.

I believe their first task must be to bring together a range of experts who understand the needs of their sector, to analyse what is required across the four main routes.

Step one of the analysis will be to establish a comprehensive-yet-condensed list of 'destination' or 'first-base' jobs – using occupational mapping for common job types, for example 'manager', to avoid duplication when designing technical qualifications and apprenticeships. The list cannot be too rigid, as it will have to flex with any changes that happen in the larger economy.

Once we have a reasonable list, the sector chairs and their employer groups can establish which of the four routes explained above is the primary (best) route, and which could be a secondary route for each job role.

This in turn will produce a directory of those apprenticeship standards and technical qualifications that need to be developed.

This must be robustly managed and challenge the desire to specialise too early; for example, we want to produce a 'scientist' rather than a 'space scientist specialising in Mars exploration'.

If done well, this plan should result in a manageable, focused directory, and clearer career pathways for apprentices, employers, learners and careers advisers.

From this list we can then prioritise which standards and qualifications need to be developed and rolled out first.

We can also better understand from this analysis what we might need to do to support upskilling of the existing workforce, recognising that the majority of this will need to be delivered through the work-based learning route.

Academic and technical education will also contribute, but we can expect only a limited number of people doing more than one full apprenticeship in their life.

Once all this analysis is done, we will be in a position to rationally estimate the likely staffing levels needed in the IfA-TE.



## PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2017

OPEN TO ALL FE STUDENTS



INFO

Our annual FE Week and Me photography competition is back and once again FE Week has teamed up with NCFE to hunt for stunning pictures that portray learning in FE and skills.

This year there are two levels of entry: photography student and non-photography student. Entrants will be in with a chance of winning some stunning prizes and the chance to shadow a high-profile professional photographer.

#### TWO CATEGORIES

The competition is open to anyone studying within the FE and skills sector.

Our readers will vote for the winner, which will be announced in February.

To enter simply email your entry by January 6, along with your name, college or independent learning provider, course details and whether you are entering as a photography or non-photography student.

We look forward to seeing entries. For more information visit feweek.co.uk.

TO ENTER EMAIL: FEWEEKANDME@FEWEEK.CO.UK



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## Young author aims to raise awareness of 'invisible' autism



media student from New College Durham has written a book that he hopes will

Traise awareness of autism. 19-year-old Nathan Alexander Kennedy, a level three media student, has drawn on his own experiences of having autism to write the book, which features an autistic teenager called Foster Graham as the main character.

Nathan describes his book – entitled 'The Subtlety of the Obsession' – as a gritty coming-of-age story with "heavy elements of suspense and suspicion", and it took him a total of two years to write alongside his studies.

Nathan said: "With this book I wanted

to tell a good narrative but I also wanted to raise awareness of autism. It's an invisible disorder that no-one really understands. The main character Foster has autism but he's just a normal guy."

Stuart Drummond, the course tutor for Media at New College Durham, said: "It's great to see a young person so fully engaged with an ambitious project such as this, outside of their normal studies.

"Nathan balances his writing well with his media course at New College Durham."

'The Subtlety of the Obsession' by Nathan Kennedy is currently available on Amazon as a Kindle edition.



### College's new award is a royal affair

college for people with disabilities and learning difficulties has become the first in the UK to receive a new national training award.

National Star College in Cheltenham was awarded the Princess Royal Training Award for its two-week induction training for staff, which involves a mix of classroom and workplace learning, and a tailored learning plan for each member of staff.

Launched by the City and Guilds Group, the Princess Royal Training awards aim to recognise the positive impact training and skills initiatives can have, and encourage best practice in skills development. Other recipients of the award include BAE Systems, Starbucks, IMB UK Ltd av

BAE Systems, Starbucks, IMB UK Ltd and Transport for London. City & Guilds Group chief executive, Chris

Jones said: "I hope these awards have shone a light on how important it is for businesses to invest in training to boost their productivity, address skills gaps and develop their leaders. "This has never mattered more than in

today's uncertain economy. I hope this year's winners inspire other organisations to share their experiences, and put forward their training and development success stories."



## Exceptional students honoured in Celebration of Success

he achievements of students and staff from Weston College have been recognised at the college's annual Celebration of Success event.

Hosted by principal and chief executive of Weston College Group Dr Paul Phillips CBE, alongside keynote speaker and BBC Presenter Alex Lovell, the awards acknowledged students and staff that have exceeded expectations over the past year.

Three students, Jordan Tucker, Abigail Hopkins and Farrah Seyedi, were each awarded the title of 'student of the year' at the ceremony, which took place at Cadbury House in Bristol.

One of the students recognised by the

award, Farrah Seyedi, was told she could never go to university or live independently due to her autism, but after receiving support at the specialist Weston Bay facility during her time at the college, she is now pursuing a degree and successfully living in halls of residence.

Speaking of the award, she said: "When I heard there was an award for Weston Bay I never thought it could be for me. I was speechless."

Closing the ceremony, Dr Phillips said: "When you get success, care and support, you have the foundations to go on to even greater success, and that is what tonight has been about."

## Students create 8ft fairy to promote Christmas panto

heatre design students at Northbrook college are bringing magic to the stage for Christmas, after being commissioned to create a Tinkerbell figurine for Worthing Theatres.

The students from the Sussex-based college were commissioned by the theatre's marketing team to make a larger-thanlife fairy to promote this year's Peter Pan pantomime.

With a brief to recreate the much-loved JM Barrie character with an Edwardian spin, the students got to work – constructing the figure over the course of five weeks using a child-size mannequin as a foundation. Her wings were designed, welded and fitted with 240 LED lights.

The finished creation stands at nearly 8ft tall and will be on display in the Pavilion Theatre's Denton Lounge until mid-January.

Theatre design student Rebecca Foster said: "By working as a team we learned lots of valuable skills, including how to compromise and reach agreement on design."

Sadie Anderson, the course leader for theatre production arts, added, "The students are rightly proud of their creation and hope it will bring to life the magical aspects of this year's pantomime."



The 8ft statue of Tinkerbell

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016 15** 

### Sixth form campaign to reach Christmas number one snowballs

A single produced by Blackpool Sixth Form college to raise money for children living in poverty has climbed into the iTunes and Amazon charts and, with a host of celebrities backing it, has a shot at hitting Christmas number one. Samantha King reports.

n ince Blackpool Sixth Form college released their single 'A Christmas C) Miracle' on December 2, their campaign to reach Christmas number one has taken off, with a whole host of famous faces pledging support.

Comedian Peter Kay, double act Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer, as well as the cast of **Coronation Street** have all pledged their support for the campaign on social media, with Blackpool tower being lit up

in pink – the colour of the song's artwork – to show the town's support.

Composed by students and staff at the college, and recorded by children from 10 schools across the Fylde Coast, the track is currently selling on iTunes for 79p and on Amazon for 69p. Its lyrics aim to raise awareness of the struggles faced by children living in poverty.

All proceeds from the song are to be



Schools from across the Fylde coast recording the track

donated to the Children's Society, a national

charity which runs local projects to help vulnerable children and young people aged 10 to 18.

The track has made it into both the iTunes and Amazon charts and spent some time in the Top 20. Currently, the song is positioned between Chris Rea's 'Driving Home for Christmas', and is overtaking the Pogues' classic Christmas track 'Fairytale of New York'

There have already been a host of glowing reviews on Amazon, with buyers saying the

track is "perfect for listening to while you put the tree up" and "a beautiful song for a worthwhile cause".

The song came about when Blackpool Sixth Form music teachers Ash Goodinson and John Stevens teamed up with English teacher Steve Spencer.

Mr Goodinson said: "We have been overwhelmed by all the support on social media by people from all around the country.

"We really want the song to be shared far and wide, to spread awareness of child poverty, reach Christmas number one, and raise as much money for the Children's Society as possible to help the children that need it most".



The percentage of children living in

poverty is 30.6 per cent in Blackpool, far higher than the national average of 21.4 per cent, according to Public Health England.

The Children's Society's chief executive Matthew Reed said: "We're absolutely thrilled that the Blackpool Sixth Form college and so many schools and community groups in Lancashire have teamed up to launch this uplifting song to raise awareness and support vulnerable children this festive season.

"Christmas can be a particularly difficult time for so many young people and we are truly grateful to everyone involved in putting this single together and also those who buy it.

"Funds raised from this single will help us continue our life-changing work with children and young people who have nowhere left to turn."

As part of the college's campaign to top the charts, schools and colleges across the UK are being encouraged to download the sheet music for the song, record their own versions and share it online with the #BeTheMiracle hashtag.

#### 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



pecialist food awarding body FDQ has announced Terry Fennell as its new chief Ð executive.

FDQ has been a recognised awarding-body for more than 14 years and is regulated by Ofqual, the CCEA and the Welsh Government.

He will be responsible for the strategic direction of FDQ's delivery of qualifications and be the authoritative point of contact with Ofqual and other regulatory bodies.

Mr Fennell first joined FDQ as its operations director in 2013. He will work in the new role alongside the duties of his current position as group operations director at FDQ's parent company, the Food and Drink Training and Education Council, a role he has held since 2014. He was also recently appointed vice-chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies.

Prior to his work at the FDQ, he worked for the Association of Employment and Learning Providers as head of delivery, and has experience in the food industry through 25 years of working on the provision and development of food-related apprenticeships.

Speaking of his appointment, he said: "I

**OVERS** To who's new and who's leaving

am delighted to be leading FDQ into a new era that will see new qualifications in food and drink coupled with exciting products and end-point assessment services for apprenticeships."

Sian Wilson has been appointed director of sales and marketing at national awarding organisation, the Northern Advisory Council for Further Education (NCFE).

In the newly created role, Ms Wilson will be responsible for overseeing business development, marketing and customer

experience across both the NCFE and Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE).

She has over 17 years of experience in the training and education field, and has managed projects and business-growth initiatives for training providers, colleges and employers in the apprenticeship sector.

Before this, she has held numerous senior positions across the UK, including director at the BWB Group, and most recently as head of apprenticeship services at the Tech Partnership.

In the role, Ms Wilson hopes to help develop the "further growth and diversification" of the NCFE.

Commenting on her appointment, she said "I'm delighted to be joining NCFE at a time of significant change and development in the further education sector and for awarding organisations.



SIAN WILSON



"I was keen to be part of an organisation that not only has a strong reputation nationally for awarding and customer service, but that also has ambitious plans for the future." Paul Batterbury has been appointed

interim principal at Lincoln University Technical College (UTC) following the resignation of its current principal Rona McKenzie.

The UTC in Lincolnshire opened in 2014 and caters for 14 to 18-year-olds. The college offers a specialist curriculum that allows core subjects such as maths and English to be combined with specialist studies in engineering and science.

Mr Batterbury, who is currently head of science at the college, will step in as interim principal in January 2017, staying on until the end of August.

With a teaching career spanning 30 years, he has worked across a number of schools, holding the position of head of secondary school at the British School in Kathmandu, Nepal, and head of the international school at Chase Grammar in the West Midlands.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Batterbury said: "I will be working with the excellent and loyal staff to ensure we continue to deliver great opportunities to our students to ensure that each and every one experiences success.

"Lincoln UTC offers a unique education but at its core are its students, and these shall remain our primary focus."

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

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016



edition

Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk. Last Edition's winner: Mo Dixon. New College Durham.