

FE Week

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YET MORE FE LOAN ANGER

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SFA TO BECOME MYSTERY SHOPPER

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THE SKILLS BUDGET

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- > T-levels revealed
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PA/WIRE

Full analysis on pages 6 & 7

'SHOCK' CLOSURE AT FIRST4SKILLS

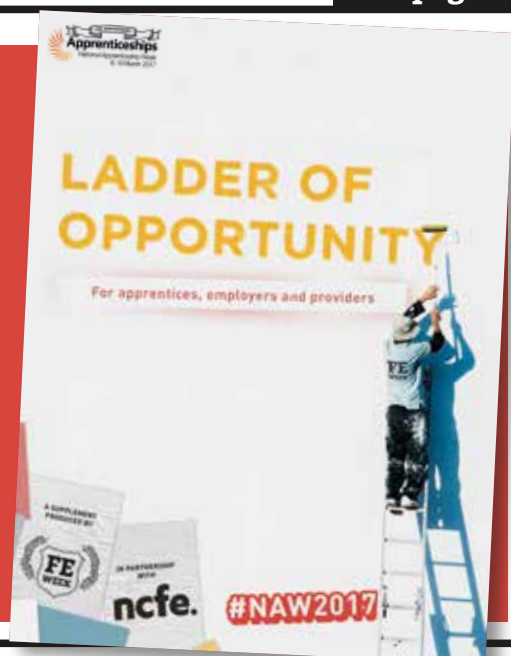
- > £15m apprenticeship provider majority-owned by struggling college goes bust
- > Unison says law may have been broken after hundreds of staff were sacked

Exclusive ALIX ROBERTSON @ALIXROBERTSON4

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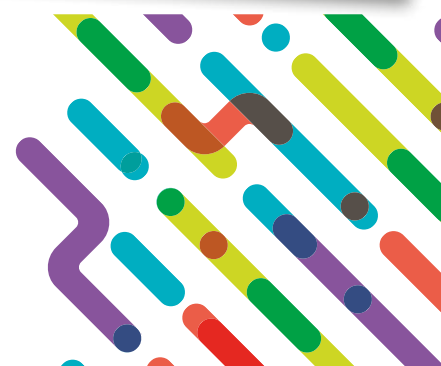
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NEWS

FE champion Shakira Martin runs for NUS president

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The top job at the National Union of Students is in the sights of Shakira Martin, its current head of FE, who recently confirmed she would run for president at the elections in April 2017.

She made the announcement this week on her Facebook and Twitter accounts with a short video, saying: "It is now more than ever that we need to build a strong, fighting union that is campaigning to win for students.

"The government is slashing our education left, right and centre, and you need a strong national union to fight on your behalf.

"We need to put NUS back in your hands." Ms Martin said she would bring "vibrancy, fire, energy" and innovation to the role if she wins.

She has been a forceful spokesperson for further education since her election as vice-president for FE in April 2015, when she replaced Joe Vinson.

In April 2016 she ran uncontested for reelection, winning with 152 votes against just 11 votes to reopen the nominations.

If she becomes president, she will become only the second ever VP for FE to be elected as the leader of the students' union, after Toni Pearce, who was VP of FE from 2011 to 2013, who made the jump into power in July 2013.

Ms Martin, 28, who has two young

daughters, would also be the second NUS leader to attend an FE college instead of studying at university.

She studied a range of courses at Lewisham College starting 2005, including a level five diploma in education and teaching, and held the roles of college's student union president, women's officer and student liaisons officer.

She has also studied at Bromley College and Morley College in the past.

In 2016, Ms Martin championed a new campaign to force the government to recognise the impact that post-16 area reviews were having on learners.

The #FEunplugged campaign was officially launched in January 2016, aiming to raise "the profile of area reviews and making sure the student voice is not ignored during the process".

Later that year, she began work with the former business secretary Sir Vince Cable, on a project to research the way the sector's forthcoming major reforms should be tailored for learners.

Entitled 'Students Shaping FE', her findings will be published in a report this autumn.

Speaking about the project in November last year, she said: "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."

In December 2016, the apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon confirmed that the IfA board would be advised by an apprentice panel, though the appointment of an apprentice to the board itself is yet to be achieved.

"This is a victory for the apprentices and learners who called for better representation in the IfA," said Ms Martin at the time.

The NUS' 2017 elections will take place at its national conference in Brighton, which runs from April 25 to 27.

The current president Malia Bouattia was elected president last April.

She is the first black and minority ethnic woman to hold the role, but sparked controversy because of an article she co-authored in 2011, in which she said the University of Birmingham was "something of a Zionist outpost in British higher education".

An open letter was reportedly sent to Ms Bouattia shortly before her election from protesters and heads of student Jewish societies asking: "Why do you see a large Jewish society as a problem?"

Ms Bouattia responded to the letter by saying that she was "deeply concerned" that her views had been misconstrued, and emphasising her dedication to "liberation, equality and inclusion".



Shakira Martin

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NEWS

More loans misery as provider goes under

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Yet another training provider has gone bust, leaving dozens more blameless learners left with plenty of loans debt but no qualifications to show for it.

Focus Training & Development Ltd, a Darlington-based training provider with a £1.5 million allocation from the Skills Funding Agency, went into liquidation on November 29 last year.

It closed soon after it received an 'inadequate' rating in an Ofsted report earlier in the month, with administrators called in.

The SFA terminated its funding after Ofsted's report came out, which is standard practice when independent training providers are hit with the lowest rating, a grade four.

Of FTD's £1.5 million SFA contract, £136,500 had been allocated for the delivery of advance learner loans. The SFA confirmed this week that 39 learners had outstanding loans to pay for training from FTD which they would not now receive.

They are among hundreds of loans victims who our #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign is fighting for.

A spokesperson told FE Week: "We terminated our loans agreement with Focus Training & Development Ltd in November

2016 with immediate effect.

"Our priority is to support the learners affected to complete their learning with minimal disruption, working closely with the Student Loans Company."

FE Week has recently reported on a spate of provider collapses, leaving hundreds of learners who took out loans to pay for training with heavy debts and no qualifications. Through our new campaign, #SaveOurAdultEducation, we are calling for these debts to be written off.

FTD's website is not operational, and lists no phone number on which to contact the owners.

FE Week spoke with John Birkinshaw, the lead liquidator working on the case, who passed on our request for comment to FTD's director Kuldip Brooks, but we received no response from her despite repeated attempts.

The Student Loans Company also declined to comment.

Focus Training used Aspire Education Consultants UK Ltd, which trades under the name Aspire College, as a subcontractor to deliver its advance learner loans provision, according to Ofsted's report in November.

The programmes on offer included level three qualifications in business and management, health and social care, travel and tourism, and information and communication technology.



Ofsted's damning report concluded that learners "make slow progress" and that no-one who had reached their planned completion date had achieved their qualification.

"Although a minority of learners, particularly those who have not participated in learning for a considerable time, improve their confidence initially, they do not achieve the vocational knowledge and employability skills necessary to enable them to advance their career aspirations," it said.

FE Week approached Aspire, but the provider, based in London, would not comment.

FTD is the third provider to go bust that FE Week has reported on this year. The first of these was London-based John Frank Training, which folded in January leaving hundreds of learners owing up to £8,000 each.

And last month we revealed that another 100 learners had been left in the same situation after Hampshire-based Edudo Ltd went bust.

The SFA has so far refused to write off the debts of those affected, but FE Week now understands the government is considering secondary legislation that might protect learners from situations like this in the future (see page 10).

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NEWS

Third largest awarding organisation pulls out of apprenticeship exams

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

EXCLUSIVE

The awarding giant OCR has pulled out of delivering final apprenticeship exams completely, delivering a major blow to the government's programme of reforms.

The exam board was previously listed as an end-point assessor for the level four network engineer and software developer standards, on the register of apprentice assessment organisations

However, a spokesperson has now confirmed to FE Week that OCR has pulled out altogether.

"Implementing the reforms to apprenticeships will require a high level of development and investment and OCR has recently decided that, unfortunately, we will not now be pursuing or developing any new apprenticeship standards that incorporate changes in assessment," she said, even though OCR will still have to pay the apprenticeship levy from next month.

It will continue to "support apprenticeship

programmes offering qualifications that fit into the existing apprenticeship frameworks, including NVQs, VRQs, Cambridge Technicals and Functional Skills", she added.

Gordon Marsden, the shadow skills minister, said the OCR's defection from the market was "clearly a serious and significant problem" for the government, and for the soon-to-be launched Institute for Apprenticeships.

He insisted that OCR's withdrawal was "extremely worrying" and "could seriously weaken the whole process of end-point assessment", and urged the government to have a "really frank discussion" with OCR about its reasons for pulling out.

"They need to understand them, and they need to address them," he said.

According to Ofqual statistics, OCR is the third largest awarding organisation – awarding 1.78 million certificates in 2014/15, the most recent statistics available.

The company's turnover in the accounts year ending July 2016 was £78 million, and its payroll is in excess of £20 million.



This puts it in the uncomfortable position of having to pay the levy, even though it won't offer any standards assessment.

FE Week reported last month that new rules coming into force in May will set the cost of final apprenticeship exams at a fifth of the overall training costs agreed between an employer and a training provider, moving away from previous guidelines which set the charge at no more than 20 per cent of the funding-band maximum for that standard.

It was warned at the time that this could leave awarding bodies struggling to deliver final exams at an unrealistically low price, as they would effectively play no part in negotiating.

Stephen Wright, chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, warned that

the rule change could limit assessors' ability to deliver the exams.

"Like every other organisation, awarding organisations can only provide their services for a fair price," he said.

"If the percentage of the price between the trainer and the employer is too low to deliver a valid assessment, then awarding organisations will simply not offer end-point assessments, which will undermine the whole system."

The government has been struggling to persuade organisations to sign up to deliver end-point assessment.

At the end of February, 88 out of 162 standards approved for delivery had at least one assessment organisation in place, leaving just under half with no assessor.



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INVESTIGATES

Spring budget: Major funding commitments to T-

JUDE BURKE

@JUDEBURKE77

The spring budget brought good news for FE, as the government committed to invest in the country's skills.

But while many have welcomed the promise of extra cash to fund technical education for 16- to 19-year-olds, others have warned it doesn't go far enough.

Philip Hammond pledged to "invest to deliver, in full" the "game-changing reforms" to technical education outlined in the skills plan, to the tune of £500 million a year.

This investment is designed to pay for a massive increase of more than 50 per cent in the number of hours of training for 16-to-19 technical learners, and a three-month work placement for every student.

The creation of what the chancellor called "T-levels", based on the 15 routes recommended by the Sainsbury review, would end any "doubt for good" about the parity of esteem of technical education.

"Investing in skills and education is the key to inclusive growth – to an economy that works for everyone," he said.

But there's a significant caveat: the Treasury's spending forecast, which was published alongside the budget announcements, reveals that the bulk of the £500 million won't be spent for at least another five years – most likely after the next general election.

In 2018/19 – the first year that any cash will go towards on implementing the reforms – the projected spend is just £60 million.

This is predicted to rise to £115 million in 2019/20, £250 million in 2020/21, and £445 million in 2021/22 – the last year included in the Treasury's projections.

The shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said it was "quite misleading" for Mr Hammond to have cited £500 million "as if

it was happening straightaway".

The overall package announced in the budget was, he added, "the very minimum needed to address the existing shortfalls, let alone the new skills challenges of Brexit – which, of course, the chancellor didn't mention once in his entire speech".

In contrast, David Hughes, the AoC's chief executive, said he was "delighted" that the government had recognised "the need to invest more in technical education".

"This investment is a vote of confidence in colleges that are ready to work with employers to codesign the new routes, deliver the 900 hours per year and help more young people make a smooth and successful transition to work and to higher level learning," he said.

This "step change in thinking", alongside the additional investment, "will put us on a par with our international competitors", he added.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of AELP, told FE Week that "increased investment in technical skills for a post-Brexit Britain" was "welcome".

"Combined with apprenticeships," he said, "this will have a real impact."

The increased focus on skills in the chancellor's announcements prompted Carolyn Fairbairn, the CBI director general, to describe the budget as "a breakthrough budget for skills".

"There has never been a more important time for the UK to sit at the global top table of technical education for young people," she said.

Chris Jones, City & Guilds' group chief executive, described the extra cash as "a step in the right direction".

"For too long, the FE sector has suffered from a lack of investment or focus," he said.

He described the emphasis on "robust" work experience in T-levels as "encouraging", but cautioned that businesses would need to



Philip Hammond

be supported by both the government and the FE sector to ensure that "all placements are high quality".

Mike Cherry, the chair of the Federation of Small Businesses, said that the chancellor's plans to increase spending on T-levels should "improve small businesses' understanding and confidence in these 15 new educational

routes".

And Malcolm Trobe, the interim general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that he "fully supported" the additional investment in 16-to-19 technical education but urged the government to "ensure that overall funding levels are sufficient" in post-16 education.

What about adult education?

While technical education for 16- to 19-year-olds was clearly the winning idea, there was little in the way of support for adult education.

Although Mr Hammond acknowledged that "changing labour markets will mean that retraining is vital", the only investment announced here was "up to £40 million in pilots to test the effectiveness of different approaches to lifelong learning so that we can identify what works best and help the next generation learn and train throughout their lives."

Stephen Evans, the Learning and Work Institute chief executive, criticised the government for a "glaring lack of strategy and investment in adult education".

"We saw very little on training that will deliver the step change we need for

working people to progress in work and increase their earnings," he said.

And Sue Pember, director of policy at HOLEX, said she was "disappointed" the government hadn't taken the chance to "commit to a lifelong learning strategy covering not just those who need high-level skills, but those who are at risk from social exclusion because of their poor basic skills".

But Chris Jones, of City & Guilds, struck a more positive note, describing the £40 million sum as a "promising starting point".

"Ultimately, the test will be in how businesses respond once best practice models are identified, and whether training is offered not as a nice to have but as a key part of both the employment journey, and business strategy," he said.

FE maintenance loans confirmed

The chancellor finally confirmed that maintenance loans would be available to FE learners, almost exactly a year after the government first consulted on the issue.

He said the loans would be available "for those undertaking higher-level technical qualifications at the new institutes of technology and national colleges".

The announcement follows the recent launch of FE Week's #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign, which calls for FE maintenance grant loans to be made available to all adult learners, to make retraining possible for many more older people.

The move was aimed to "encourage and support the best [16- to 19-year-olds] to go on to advanced technical study", Mr Hammond said.

There no detail in Mr Hammond's announcement about the loans, but the

Office for Budget Responsibility's policy costings published alongside the budget announcements revealed that they will be introduced in 2019/20 and limited to those under 60.

As previously reported by FE Week, a decision on the introduction of the loans had been expected as far back as September, when the government published its response to the consultation.

News of the loans has been welcomed, although their restriction to learners at IoTs and National Colleges has prompted criticism.

Gordon Marsden said he "welcomed" the loans but warned that "money announced for loans is not the same as money taken up".

"As with the advanced learning loans, of which only half the money is being taken up at the moment, there's no guarantee that it will actually be spent."

T-levels and maintenance loans is good news for FE

T-levels Q&A

What are 'T Levels'?

'T Levels' is the name used in the budget and briefings for the previously announced technical routes first introduced by the Sainsbury panel review and Post-16 Skills plan last summer.

How many 'T Levels' will there be?

There will be 15 routes (see the DfE slide opposite), but the number of qualifications within those will be determined by occupational maps and employer designed standards currently in development.

When will they be available?

Between 2019 and 2022 for teaching, but work is underway on underpinning maps and standards. The first two pathfinder routes will be available for teaching in September 2019.

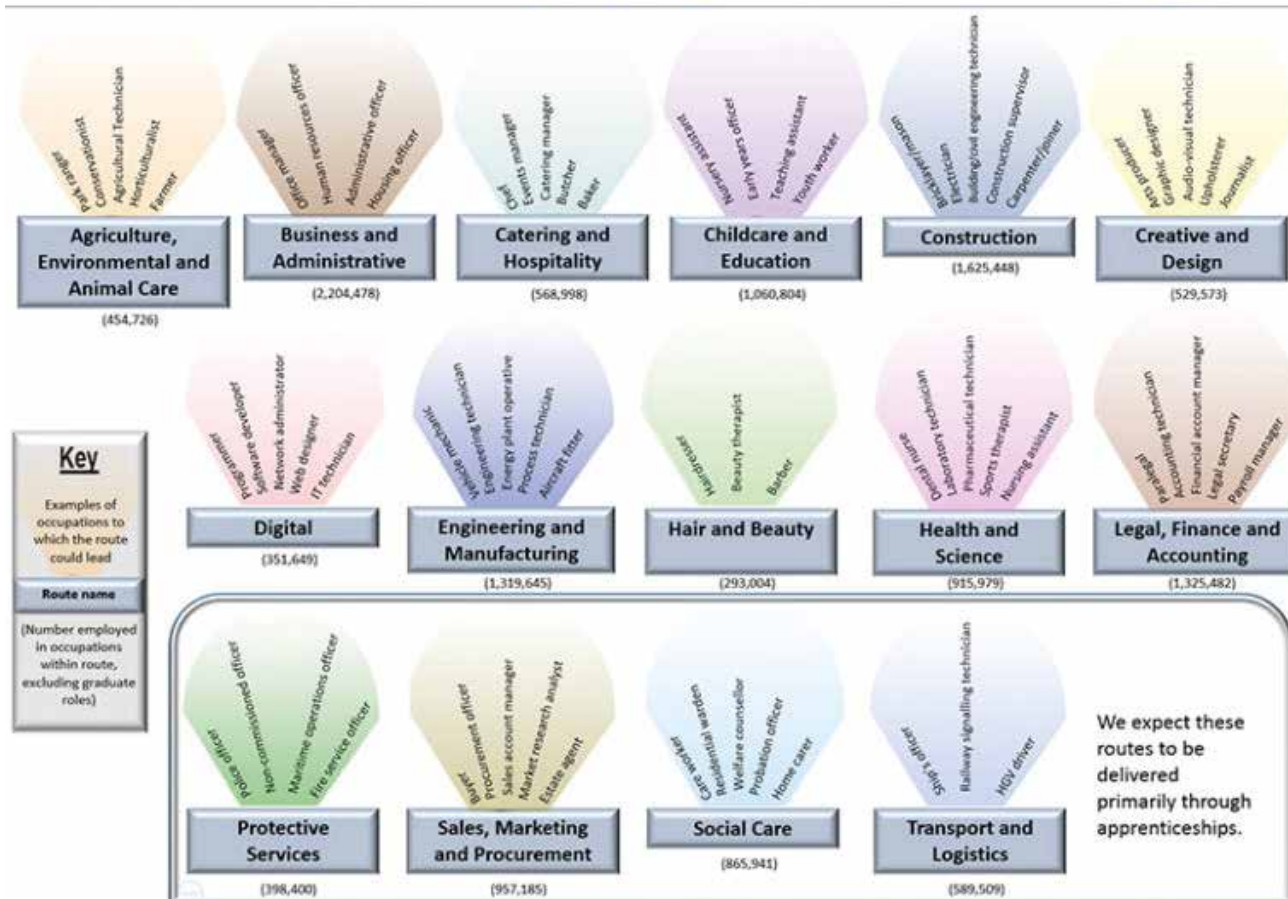
When will we see the content of qualifications?

For the first routes, drafts of the 'T Levels' are planned for September 2018, but the development schedule is very tight, with a phased implementation of the remaining routes

Will all Awarding Organisations (AOs) offer the new qualifications?

It's unlikely. Within the Skills Plan, the government announced their intention to tender for an exclusive license to develop the qualifications, so there will be only one AO per qualification.

Framework of 15 routes - grouping related occupations together



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NEWS

Unison: First4Skills collapse 'could have broken the law'

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

The UK's strict redundancy laws may have been breached when one of the largest apprenticeship providers in England unexpectedly called in the administrators last week, according to a major union.

First4Skills, which received £15 million every year to run apprenticeships, told around 200 'shocked' staff on Friday, March 3 that it was closing down.

Now Unison has come forward to say that the company might have acted unlawfully by hiding the degree of problems it was experiencing from its staff.

"The closure of First4Skills will cause uncertainty for staff and apprentices as jobs are lost and learners are moved to new training providers," said Jon Richards, the union's head of education.

"It's now clear there will be redundancies. Unison believes redundancy laws may have been breached because the company failed to share the extent of the company's woes with the workforce."

First4Skills specialised in retail apprenticeships and operated from offices in Liverpool, Birmingham and Kilmarnock. It employed around 200 staff and supported



First4Skills head office was at Princes Dock at Liverpool Waters

approximately 4,500 apprentices around the UK. Discussions broke out on social networking site LinkedIn after its collapse, as other employers offered opportunities to former First4Skills staff, and sector members gave their condolences.

Judith Jackson, who was a strategic account manager at First4Skills, mentioned

how little staff knew about the provider's struggles before it was forced to call in the administrators.

She wrote: "It's really shocking when staff and clients learn more via LinkedIn than from the [senior leadership team]. Amazing staff in parts, and fantastic clients with levy plans hopefully all which can still be fulfilled."

The firm's apprenticeships and skills senior leader Phil Hedley also posted a message, saying: "First4Skills (the largest retail apprenticeship provider) went into administration today after many years in the WBL sector.

"I am very touched by the reaction I've received, and it reinforces my belief that work-based learning is such a different environment to the other operators in FE, and this surely should be recognised by the governing bodies."

First4Skills was rated 'requires improvement' by Ofsted in May 2015, and FE Week understands that the provider was inspected again in early February, this time receiving the worst possible 'inadequate' grade.

According to the latest Ofsted report, First4Skills was acquired by City of Liverpool College and a private training provider called 3AAA in September 2012, but became wholly owned by City of Liverpool from November 2014.

In City of Liverpool's financial statements for 2015/16, First4Skills is described as a

60-per-cent-owned subsidiary of the college, after a 40 per cent interest was sold to an external training provider for £500,000 in July 2016.

FE Week understands that this external provider is Sysco Business Skills Academy Limited, where Ian Smith, a director of First4Skills, has held another a directorship since 2006.

We asked Mr Smith to comment on the situation, and to explain what would happen now to learners and staff.

However, he said: "Sysco will not be making any comment at this time."

We also asked City of Liverpool College for a comment but were twice directed to the administrators, RSM UK.

A spokesperson for RSM UK gave us the following statement: "Lindsey Cooper and Chris Ratten of RSM Restructuring Advisory LLP were appointed Joint Administrators of First4Skills Limited on March 3, 2017.

"The decision to appoint administrators was made by the directors of First4Skills Limited due to the withdrawal of its key contract with the SFA.

"The move impacted the financial stability of the business, which called into question the company's ability to continue to trade."

Ms Cooper said: "We are working with the SFA and Skills Development Scotland and our professional advisors to assist in the process of transferring the learners to new training providers, whilst maximising the returns to creditors."

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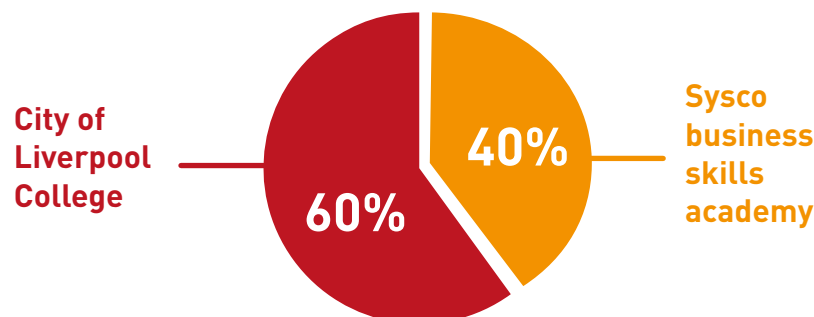
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FIRST4SKILLS OWNERSHIP



NEWS

Government finally U-turns on EYE GCSE requirements

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

People who want to become early years educators will now be allowed to apply for apprenticeships with functional skills qualifications, in a very long-awaited government U-turn.

The change was made last week after nearly four years of campaigning by the likes of the National Day Nurseries Association, who wanted applicants to be able to use functional skills as an alternative to GCSEs.

Purnima Tanuku, the charity's chief executive, said she was "delighted and very relieved to hear that the minister and the Department for Education have listened to the sector's very real fears and are doing something about it".

Up until last week, applicants needed at least a C-grade in both English and maths GCSE before they could finish the necessary level three course to allow them to



Purnima Tanuku

teach early years.

FE Week understands that Caroline Dinenege, the early years minister, made the decision in early March, though the move was confirmed in the DfE's recent Early Years Workforce Strategy document.

"This change will allow the sector choice," said Ms Tanuku. "For those wanting to progress further to early years teacher status, they will still need grade Cs in GCSE maths, English and science to be accepted onto a programme of study.

"For others who aim for level three qualifications with functional skills, they will now be able to demonstrate their

knowledge of supporting young children in their literacy and numeracy skills and understanding through a more appropriate work-based route.

"We have been campaigning for the choice of GCSEs or functional skills since 2013 and are pleased that this new measure will soon be put in place to enable the sector to move forward."

Cheryl Hadland, the founder of nursery chain Tops Day Nursery, also welcomed the announcement, describing it as "great news".

"We thank Caroline Dinenege for listening to the sector and acting on our concerns," she said.

"It is vital that we recruit and train well qualified early years professionals, but the GCSE requirements were becoming a barrier to the continuation of top quality childcare.

"They were also a threat to the government being able to deliver its 30-hour free childcare policy, as we simply wouldn't have been able to employ enough staff to meet the increased demand."

The campaign for changes to EYE apprenticeships, known as #SaveOurEarlyYears, was supported by many bodies including the AELP, awarding organisations NCFE and Skills First, and North Liverpool Community College.

It even gained the backing of the 'Supernanny' Jo Frost, a TV parenting expert.

Before the change came through, she said: "The government seems to have missed a huge grey area, whether people working in childcare have GCSEs is irrelevant to whether they can do the job or not.

"The GCSE rule is just ludicrous and so counterproductive, and must be dismissed.

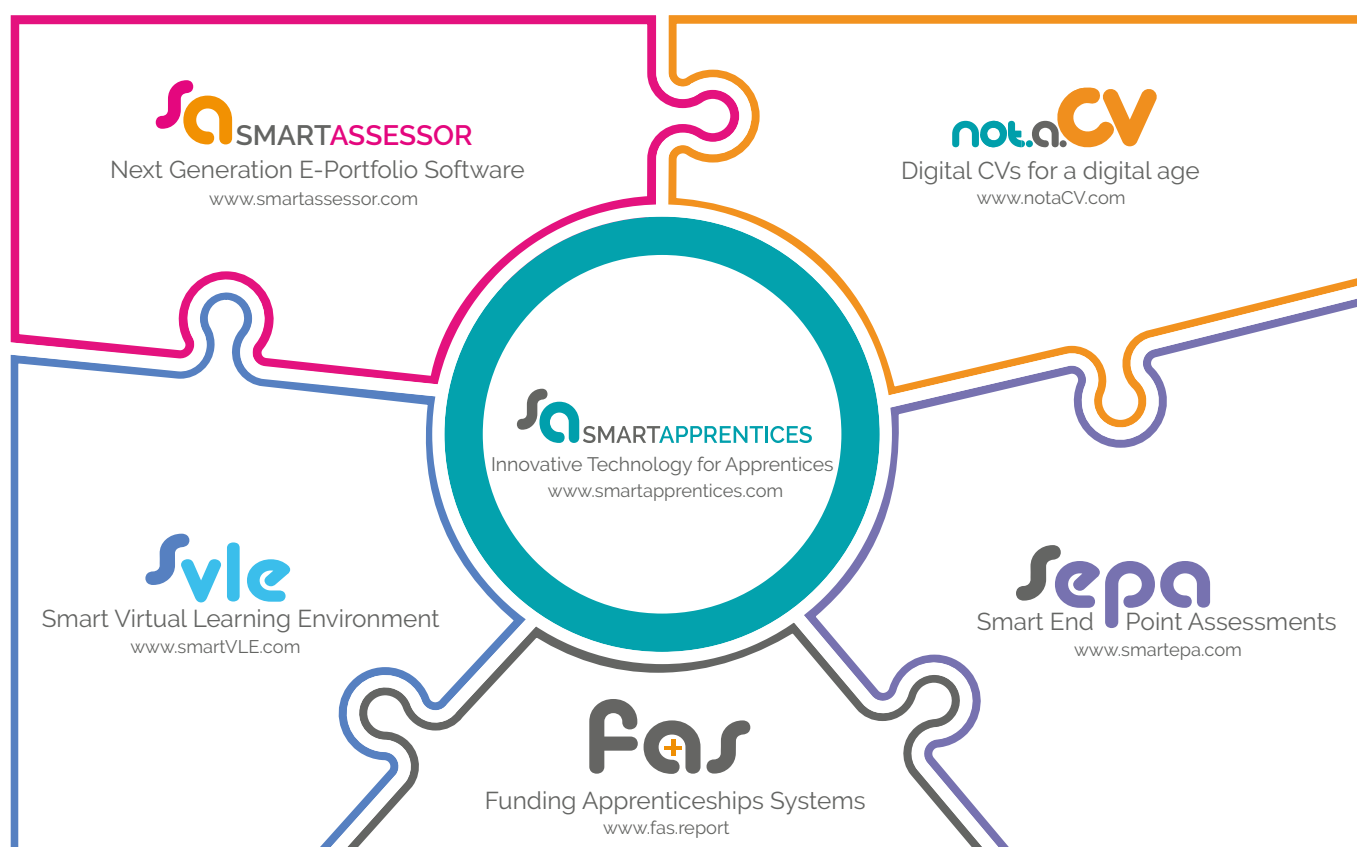
"There is clear evidence that the childcare sector is suffering and unable to recruit the staff they need so that children get the best start in life.

"Functional Skills must therefore be reinstated as an alternative qualification, as it is for every other sector."



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Legislation change considered to protect learners with loans

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

The government is considering a change in legislation to protect learners left in loans debt after their providers go bust, in a move that would mark an early victory for FE Week's #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign.

We have been demanding justice for hundreds of learners who have recently been left with thousands of pounds of student loans but no qualification after several training organisations were suddenly wound up with no warning.

After the launch of our campaign at the end of February, the shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden, asked a parliamentary question (PQ) to education secretary Justine Greening if she would meet with the Skills Funding Agency and the Student Loans Company to discuss the feasibility of writing off student loan debts in such situations.

FE Week now understands that the government is mulling over secondary legislation to protect learner loans when providers go out of business in the future.

"We are committed to finding a solution for each learner and making the process as smooth as possible," Mr Halfon said in response to the PQ.



Former John Frank Training learners left in debt, Mussarrat Bashir and Asim Shaheen

"Where there may ultimately be no viable alternative providers available for some learners to complete their study, we will consider what might be done to avoid these learners being unfairly disadvantaged."

FE Week asked the government to clarify his words, but while the Department for Education did not deny the issue was under consideration, its spokesperson would only refer us back to the minister's comments.

Asim Shaheen, a former learner left with more than £8,000 in debt after his provider, John Frank Training, went bust in murky circumstances in November, said it was "shocking" that the government didn't already have a backup plan in place.

He wants a contingency plan introduced "as quickly as possible", rather than having the SFA "sitting back and waiting for this ricochet to continue".

"The people who put the loans scheme in place should have thought of different eventualities happening in the first place," he said.

"Normal people on the street have to think about every eventuality, so for people at such a high level in government, where we're talking about millions and billions of pounds, surely they should have thought well hang on, these providers we are accrediting, what happens if one of them goes bust?"

"They need to put something in place now because the longer they leave it the worse our cases are going to get. It can't continue like this."

FE Week first revealed the demise of

John Frank Training in January, which left hundreds of learners, who had taken out FE loans to train with the London-based provider, with hefty debts but no course.

It went into liquidation on November 30, leaving no assets, despite recording a profit of £1.3 million in the first half of 2016.

A month later FE Week revealed that another 100 learners were left in the same situation after Hampshire-based Edudo Ltd went bust.

The provider, allocated £500,500 in advanced learner loans by the SFA as of September, went into voluntary liquidation in January, after the company's "assets and business" were sold to Learning Republic Group Ltd last November.

And this week Focus Training & Development Ltd was found to have left 39 learners on the hook for their loans cash, again with no qualifications to show for it, after it went bust following an 'inadequate' Ofsted report in November (see page 4).

FE Week's #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign launched in the Houses of Parliament last month and is demanding three things from the government.

The first is to write off unwarranted loan debts, the second is for the government to consult on a proper adult education strategy, and the third is for the introduction of FE maintenance grant loans for adult learners.

Frameworks could be switched off without SFA clearance

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

EXCLUSIVE

The UK's food and drink frameworks could be switched off against the government's wishes, FE Week has learned.

The Skills Funding Agency is currently deciding on which frameworks it will discontinue from April 2018, but because the new food and drink standards are not yet ready, it hasn't put them up for consideration.

However, the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink, which still has powers as an issuing authority left over from a previous incarnation, is running its own consultation on whether or not to cancel the frameworks it administers – raising the real possibility that learners might not have access to certain pathways for a year or more.

The NSAFD used to be a sector skills council, and is understood to have the power to switch frameworks off without input from the Department for Education, a reality the DfE has now confirmed.

The news has sparked major concern across the food and drink industry.

In a letter to apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon, seen by FE Week (see right), Bill Jermey, chair of the Food and Drink Training and Education Council (FTC), wrote: "We naturally assumed the government's own SFA/IFA had the final say

on framework withdrawals, but we are astonished to discover the NSAFD still retains the 'issuing authority' powers of the defunct SSC to terminate frameworks at their will."

He was particularly worried, he said, that "by closing the framework they stand to gain financially".

Sector skills councils were granted powers both to issue and withdraw apprenticeship frameworks, as issuing authorities, under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

An email from the SFA has now indicated the limits of the government's power over such issuing authorities.

"The NSAFD (if they are the listed issuing authority) do have the power to withdraw the food and drink framework outside of the framework withdrawal process," it said, adding that the NSAFD had "very recently engaged" with the SFA and had "agreed to share the results of the consultation".

This, however, represents "only a small assurance" because the SFA is only empowered to "make recommendations on their proposals".

NSAFD's chief executive Justine Fosh refused to say whether or not her organisation intended to exercise its power as an issuing authority to switch off the frameworks.

The NSAFD's own consultation document



reveals that it is "seeking input to inform recommendations to the DfE", saying that "in a changing landscape it is down to each issuing authority to inform the approach" for framework switch off.

The document outlines the NSAFD's decision-making criteria, which it said had been agreed by the Federation of Sector Skills and Standards, and then lists its recommendations for each of the existing food and drink frameworks.

However another email from the SFA has cast doubt on those recommendations.

"Our mapping of standards to the food and drink framework pathways show some low-volume pathways, gaps and some mapping where the standard does not quite cover the chosen pathway," it said.

"As you can see we do not think this is ready to withdraw yet as this would leave gaps in the market."

NSAFD owns the only awarding body




Bill Jermey

– Occupational Awards Ltd – that offers mandatory qualifications in the level two and three food and drink process operator standards.

The awarding body is also registered as an end-point assessor for both of these standards.

So far 82 frameworks have been, or are due to be, switched off, and the government is currently consulting on the withdrawal of a further 62 full or part frameworks.

All frameworks are expected to be phased out by 2020.



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Dear Dr Sue

Dr Sue, director of policy and external relations at Hoxe, answers your questions, backed by her experience as principal of Canterbury College and in senior civil service posts in education and skills.



Q1: WHERE HAVE ALL THE ADULTS GONE?

David Lammy's passionate speech on the return of night schools prompted me to ask whether we open our buildings to the community. We were told there was no local call for evening classes and it was mainly self-financing gym use and some ESOL classes. I felt this was not enough but didn't know whether to press further.

Answer:

You should ask for this to be an item on your next governors' strategy day. All the evidence suggests adult education will be a growth area in the future and you need to know your local demographics: for example, how many adults locally need ESOL or basic skills support - an area that government is fully funding.

Adult education will be a growth area

Industry, business and the labour market are changing rapidly and there is a growing need for people to retrain and/or change career mid-life. The opportunity to learn in the evening and at weekends will be an important part of the future adult skills landscape. Government has confirmed they will provide loans for level 4 and above, as well as maintenance loans. That's a real sign that they see this to be an important issue.

If you just think about how driverless vehicles could affect the haulage industry, you soon understand the magnitude of the potential retraining scheme for lorry drivers.

Also, don't underestimate the future market for full-cost education for those who want to learn new skills. Soon the largest slice of the population will be the over 60's and research shows that people's wellbeing and life expectancy are enhanced if they continue to learn, integrate and socialise.

Q2: GOVERNOR VISITS TO SUB-CONTRACTORS

When I walk around our college I see a lot of young people but very few adults or students with learning difficulties or disabilities. When I asked about it, the senior team explained they thought it was best to contract out adult work and LLDD to specialist partners. It started me thinking about governors' responsibilities and whether I should do drop-in visits to sub-contractors and partners as I do in the college

Answer:

As the college owns the contract with SFA, the governor body is responsible for quality and the student experience, including safety and Prevent. Even though these areas might be covered in the contracts with sub-contractors/partners, the governors are ultimately responsible. Therefore, you and your fellow governors need to be assured that all the normal policies, safeguards and quality assurance mechanisms are in place and working for any sub-contracted provision. You should also see performance reports for each subcontractor/partner and there should be regular appraisal of whether the partnership adds to the student experience.

The governors are ultimately responsible

If there is a visit or pop-in scheme in main college, there should be the same arrangement for sub-contractors. Out of courtesy you should discuss this with the principal, who may want to let the partner know. Once that is done you should go ahead and make the necessary visit arrangements, following the agreed practice, and if you are not comfortable with what you find, you must speak up and let the chair and principal know.

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Workshop: Institute for Apprenticeships – use of data

Dr Alex Wilson Deputy Director Data Science Unit, IfA
Hall 11b 10:40-11:30 | Friday

Workshop: The role of the Institute for Apprenticeships

Ana Osbourne, Deputy Director Approvals, IfA
Mike Keoghan, Deputy Chief Executive, IfA
Media Suite 11:55-12:45 | Friday

Keynote plenary from the shadow CEO of the Institute for Apprenticeships, Peter Lauener.

Hall 1 13:30-14:30 | Friday



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EDITORIAL

Time to
back
T-levels

It's fantastic news that the government has backed-up its T-level plans with a significant cash commitment.

Yes I know that the headline figure of £500 million-a-year won't be realised until after 2020, with far lower sums committed in the preceding couple of years.

But it's worth remembering that the government said last July there would be no new money to fund these 15 new routes.

There's obviously been a major change of heart which is to be welcomed.

Lots of detail still needs to be worked on, with the plan for example for just one awarding organisation for each qualification bound to cause headaches.

But a sensible amount of time is being allowed, for the many kinks to be ironed out, before full implementation in 2022, with a small number of pathfinder routes in 2019.

This is of course in stark contrast to the imminent apprenticeship reforms, which many people justifiably fear are being rushed.

All in all I think the sector needs to embrace T-levels. If we maintain a positive outlook, we can help shape qualifications that should significantly boost the standing of FE and benefit thousands of learners in the process.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

NAW2017 TWEETS:

Robert Halfon @halfon4harlowMP

Incredible visit this morning meeting #apprentices @crossrail during #NAW2017 @GetInGoFar

Royal Air Force @RoyalAirForce

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HIT Training @HITTraining

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Gordon Marsden MP @GordonMarsden

Young people get short-changed on future career options by poor careers advice that doesn't value apprenticeships #NAW2017

Trafford College @TraffordCollege

Apprentice Jon Malloy is climbing the #ladderofopportunity through his accountancy Apprenticeship #NAW2017.



SFA blasted over 'mystery shopper' scheme

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

FE Week readers are up in arms about the Skills Funding Agency's new mystery shopper scheme to test apprenticeships, because many of them don't even know when or if they'll be able to start delivering their own.

The SFA announced its new initiative in its online update on March 8, and said it would use undercover tactics to help identify "any further support the sector may need to be ready to meet employer demand" over sweeping apprenticeship reforms in the coming weeks.

Our story on the plan, which went online that day, provoked a very angry reaction from readers, most of whom reckon the SFA would be better off making sure it is itself ready for the reforms.

Their ire was compounded by another story that day – which revealed that the SFA had cancelled a key meeting meant to decide how much money providers would be allocated in

non-apprenticeship levy employer funding.

No alternative date has been scheduled, and it should have followed the results of the latest applications to the new Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, which has also not seen the light of day.

The let-downs were all too much for our readers, with Jon Carr taking offence at the SFA's claim that its mystery shopper scheme would help it understand what the sector needs. "Further support? Perhaps telling providers if they have a contract would be a good start," he said.

Bob Smith, meanwhile, wrote: "It's a bit rich this isn't it!?! I don't think the SFA are even prepared fully themselves, never mind checking on us. I'm expecting a full on disaster scenario once the reforms kick in. I don't know any college or training provider that is fully prepared and there will be a fall out."

Another poster, who identified himself only as Norman, added: "Hilarious and what a cheek.

"The reason many aren't ready is the lack of clarity and guidance from the SFA, Institute for Apprenticeships and the unceremonious

rush to get the new reforms in, despite common sense and experience saying we need more time!"

The reforms will come into force after the apprenticeship levy in April, and employers are being given far more influence over the design and funding of apprenticeship programmes.

Many in the sector have asked whether the SFA is ready for the changes, and fear ministers are rushing them through without proper concern.

FE Week employed its own in-house mystery shopper back in November, to test out the government's directory of apprenticeship training providers, which had been launched the previous month.

The website, entitled 'Find Apprenticeship Training', was described as a one-stop shop for any employer, large or small, which wanted to take on apprentices, and we found it relatively easy to use.

We asked the Department for Education if its own mystery shoppers would be in-house employees or hired from outside, but received no response before going to press.

COMMENTS

Banned subcontracting hidden through widespread 'associate partnerships'

What is shocking is that the SFA audit of prime contract holders doesn't seem able to undertake the most basic check of practice against the already established SFA rules!

Blue Boy

This is becoming an even more apparent offer to employers as the levy kicks in.

Stewart Taylor

SFA already finding ineligible employer incentives and will 'strengthen' funding rules

And so the circus begins, easy...terminate the provider contract if evidence of this type of activity is identified.

Levy Watcher

Struggling college bailed out by SFA after bank refusal

Concerning that the SFA are calling the shots regarding employment of principals.

Was Ms Mannock a good principal who fell on her sword? If so, I see legal action ahead. If not, why did it take an ultimatum from the SFA before something happened – doesn't reflect well on governance.

It was only July 2016 that Digby Jones issued a "get your tanks off my lawn" message to Warwickshire College's merger proposal. Life comes at you fast eh?

FE Commentator

College governors brand SFA's new apprenticeship contracts 'ludicrous'

If only we had maintained the existing funding system, and instead, treated the levy as a tax. The tax revenues could have easily been directed through the SFA under the existing funding model. Then, all we would have to worry about is the move from frameworks to standards.

Instead, we have the most complex, ludicrous system you could possibly ever come up with. We have politicians driving forward reforms that are not needed, with civil servants that have no experience of delivering apprenticeships creating processes that are so complex, they will be almost impossible to implement. Its a recipe for disaster and chaos.

As a sector, we have been far too quiet about these reforms, when we should really be questioning the logic of them. They will end up on the same pile as the UTC's and Studio Schools if we are not careful, along with many other failed policies.

Bob Smith



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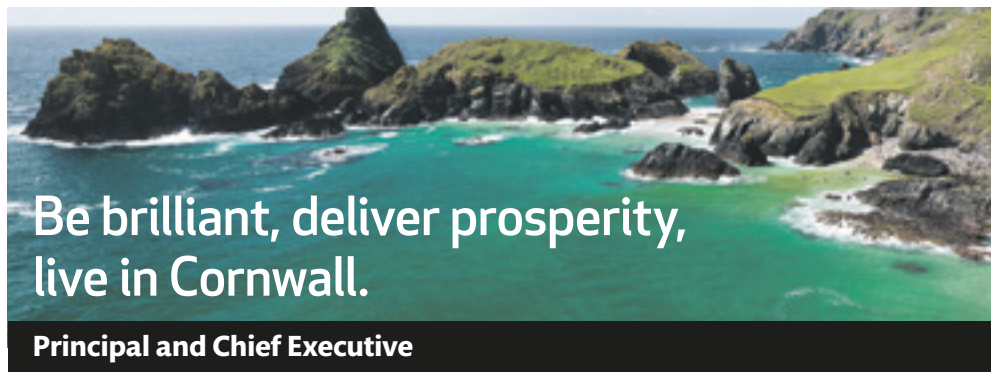
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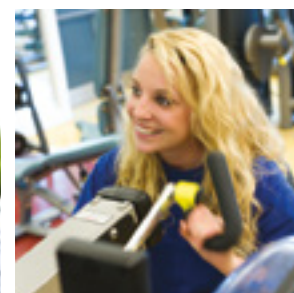
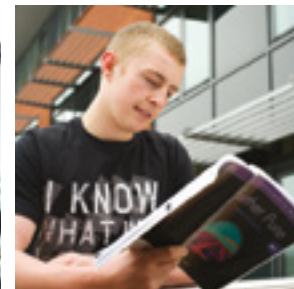
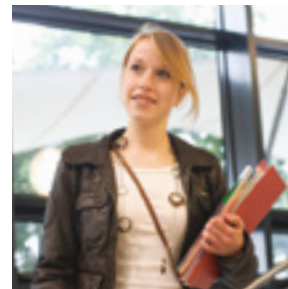
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Mathematics Lecturer & Programme Leader

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Salary: £25,731 - £36,724 per annum

We are a very successful and expanding Further Education College that puts the interests of our students at the heart of everything we do. We are one of the UK's best performing colleges and it is our excellent staff that have enabled us to achieve and maintain this. We are truly an employer of choice, and this remains one of our top priorities.

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1. Manage the Quality of Programmes
2. Coordinate Staff and Resources for the Programmes
3. Coordinate the Learner Experience for the Programmes.

It is essential that you hold a degree in Maths or a related subject and that you have a full Level 5 teaching qualification. An in depth knowledge of the subject specialism to teach on Level 2 and 3 qualifications.

Please note an enhanced DBS will be required for this role. The successful candidate is required to meet the payment of this DBS check which is currently £44.

On appointment, you will be placed at the salary point aligned to a number of factors which include, but are not limited to, qualifications, previous relevant experience, current salary and market forces.

Closing Date: 24th March 2017
Interview Date: To be confirmed



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If you have (or are expecting) a minimum of a 2:1 degree in Maths (or related discipline), please apply by completing an application form and equal opportunities document. You should detail your career aspirations.

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For further information please contact a member of our staff development team.

Closing Date: 6th April 2017
Interview Date: To be confirmed

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Hours: Variable

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Nationally there is a challenge to improve young people's numeracy and literacy skills. Considering recent changes to the funding methodology, this is also a challenge for the Further Education colleges. All students who have not received a grade A to C in maths and English when leaving school now have to continue to study alongside their vocational qualification.

This is an exciting opportunity for a bright, committed and innovative individual who has the ability to work with both mature and 16-19 year old learners as part of a large, dynamic and successful team within a well-established Further Education college.

The purpose of this rewarding role is to make a significant contribution to the effective delivery of the curriculum, in line with the College's Quality Improvement Strategy and to ensure a high quality and relevant learning experience for all students on the courses.

The main responsibilities of the role will be to teach English and maths related subjects at any of the College centres and to develop programmes of study to meet the particular needs of client groups served by the College. The successful candidate will also be required to assess students in accordance with the requirements of the programme and to contribute to systems of quality and advice and assist in the effective organisation of the department by the proper establishment of such syllabuses, schemes of work and records as may be necessary from time to time.

Ideally the successful candidate will already have an English or maths qualification at Level 3 or above. The candidate will also need to have a teaching qualification at Level 5 or above.

Please visit www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs and search under our latest vacancies page for more information and how to apply for this role.

If you have any queries, you can contact the HR department by telephone on 01484 437009 or by email at jobs@kirkleescollege.ac.uk.

Kirklees College is committed to Equality & Diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community





Lecturer in English

We are looking to recruit dynamic and qualified full or part time teachers who are able to teach GCSE and functional skills English. Applicants will need a teaching qualification and subject specific qualifications along with previous teaching experience in their subject area.

We offer:

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Tutor: Maths GCSE (Full-time)

ABOUT YOUR TEAM

You will be part of the school of english, maths and academic studies reporting to the curriculum manager. You may be based at any of the college's sites where maths is taught (Derby Road, Construction Centre, Engineering Innovation Centre).

ABOUT THE ROLE

This is a great opportunity for a dynamic, professional individual qualified in an appropriate discipline, to join a forward thinking college to develop and teach GCSEs to groups of learners from across the college.

It is essential you are qualified to minimum of Level 3 in maths and possess a teaching qualification. Candidates should have experience of successfully delivering GCSE maths within a college or school environment.

It is essential that you have the ability to build positive relationships, displaying excellent communication, organisational skills and administrative skills, and have a flexible and professional attitude.

You will be a highly self-motivated, energetic and driven individual, encompassing a strong sense of autonomy. You will possess excellent presentation and communication skills and be able to demonstrate achievement of targets.

This post has 836 delivery hours	The salary will be within the qualified delivery scale £25,128 - £36,979
You will be entitled to 32 days leave (plus bank holidays).	

The role will require you to take on and work to the college's values; working with **professionalism**, taking **responsibility** for your actions, and giving **respect** to customers and colleagues alike.

For further information and to complete an online application form please visit www.wnc.ac.uk/vacancies

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Please send CVs to human.resources@cityofbristol.ac.uk



For further details visit <http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs/vacancies/>

Lecturer, English and Mathematics



Salary: £23,903 - £32,157 per annum (pro rata for part time)

Hours: Part time or full time, 52 weeks per year

Locations: Hadlow

An opportunity has arisen for a new member of staff within the English and mathematics department at Hadlow College. You will be fundamental in inspiring our post 16 learners to continually develop and improve their mathematics and or English skills. You will deliver a range of qualifications, including GCSE and Functional skills.

Ideally you will need a teaching qualification, or the willingness to work towards one, as well as excellent communication skills and the ability to work as part of an expanding team. Flexibility is required as a willingness to work at our Canterbury, Nottingham and Greenwich sites is a necessity although you will primarily be based at our Hadlow site.

Ideally, you will be an experienced teacher with practical knowledge of delivery and assessment of a range of mathematics and or English qualifications, committed to the holistic development of students within an inclusive environment. Alternatively you will have a passion for English and or mathematics and be qualified to a minimum of Level 3, possess the drive to make a career in teaching and dedicated to ensuring students are successful in improving their mathematics and English skills.

As well as a contributory pension scheme, health cash plan, salary sacrifice scheme and free car parking, this post also attracts 7 weeks holiday each year (pro rata), excluding bank holidays.

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EXPERTS



KIRSTIE DONNELLY

Managing director, City & Guilds

Qualifications cannot be developed overnight

The government should learn from past mistakes and revise its reform timelines so it doesn't set the sector up to fail, says Kirstie Donnelly

Asking how long it takes to develop and launch a qualification is like asking the length of a piece of string. It depends, among other factors, on whether it is a new qualification or an adaptation, on required teaching and assessment models, and on its expected duration and level.

A better question might be: how long does it take to develop qualifications that are truly fit for purpose – the purpose being to help learners gain the skills needed for meaningful employment and progression? Or, as in the present landscape, how long will it take to develop a qualification that aims to fundamentally change the way we deliver professional and technical education?

The government's latest skills timeline answers this question. It allows just under a year from selecting an awarding organisation to finalising the content, then implies teaching will begin four months later.

In a Whitehall office these timings might seem ambitious yet achievable but here in the real world, they are nothing short of fantasy.

Creating qualification content is not a case of sitting in a room, writing. When you set out to develop qualifications that meet the needs of employers, employers need to be consulted! Professional and technical education must genuinely reflect the latest technologies and practices in industry, but this only happens through close collaboration with employers in the development phase, which takes time.

The behavioural changes required to introduce new ways of teaching and learning must also be considered. Moving from a model of teaching underpinning theory to one that prepares learners practically for the workplace involves a mindshift that doesn't happen overnight. Practitioners must be convinced of the value of new approaches and additional training and support are needed to embed new content and changes to assessment models.

And what about the learners? Young people, and their parents, need time to understand the benefits new types of education can bring. The confidence to step away from traditional routes into employment doesn't happen overnight.

I can say all this with the experience of someone who has been there recently. Over three years ago, well before the current government existed, we began to develop our City & Guilds TechBac 14-19 programme

– at the heart of which sit our technical qualifications, designed to give young people deep industry knowledge through meaningful work experience, alongside the skills and behaviours needed by employers. This decision was about making the right investment and being bold in innovation, without any government intervention.

Three years later, after extensive consultation with employers, engagement with the FE sector and a year of piloting, we are half way through our first year of teaching. Even now we still have a long way to go in terms of educating the sector itself, as well as end users. We always accepted it would be a significant investment (over £3 million), and a long-term one (5+ years).

“ We can't afford another Diploma fiasco

Current government thinking doesn't show any appreciation of real timescales or impact and it's worrying that they seem not to be learning from past mistakes. The sector still recoils from diplomas, remembering the well thought-through reform on which government compromised due to pre-election nerves. Then, the risk was mitigated as we still had a fully functioning qualifications market. If current government plans are allowed through, any last-minute U-turns will leave us without a system to fall back on, which would be catastrophic for the sector and the country.

Professional and technical education really matters. It has the power to transform lives, businesses and economies and if we are to create the skilled workforce the UK needs for the future, our sector has a huge role to play.

That is why government has to get this right. My plea to them is to look 10 years ahead: be bold, go further than your predecessors, ask for help from organisations like ours who believe the right change is needed but want it to be done properly.

We can't afford another diploma or Train to Gain fiasco; we need a healthy skills system focused on developing high quality professional and technical qualifications that are given time to succeed. I urge the government to learn from past mistakes, genuinely work with the sector and revisit its timelines so it doesn't yet again set the sector up to fail.



STEVE WOOLCOCK

Head of employment, training and skills, Barnardo's

Is it ethical to apply levy to charities?

The levy will force charities to create new apprenticeships or lose the money to private business, raising a raft of ethical issues, says Steve Woolcock

As April 1 draws nearer, many large organisations have been preparing to deal with the challenges the apprenticeship levy presents.

Barnardo's will be affected in several ways. As the largest children's charity in the UK, which last year helped 248,000 children and young people through almost 1,000 services, we fall into the minority group in this sector as an employer with an annual salary payroll value of more than £3 million.

This means we will have to contribute 0.5 per cent of our payroll as our levy payment. To obtain full benefit from the levy, an organisation the size of Barnardo's would need to create many more apprenticeship roles than we already provide (our current estimate is around 200), or face the prospect of losing this money – money which has been generously donated to support vulnerable young people and families.

While we do not object to the levy in principle and indeed believe apprenticeships are an excellent way for young people to gain new skills, the mechanics will leave some charities out of pocket and deplete funds intended for the very people they exist to help.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations estimates the levy will affect 1,200 charities at a cost in excess of £70 million. Only 10 per cent of any unused funds can be reallocated to other charities, potentially resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds not being used to help people who, for the most part, have already had a difficult start in life.

Unused sums from large-employer levy accounts may be used to fund the cost of apprenticeship training for the remaining 98 per cent of employers who because of payroll size will not pay the levy.

One major reason this raises concern within the charity sector is because we are funded by donations given specifically to support the work we do with vulnerable children and families – not to fund apprenticeships in commercial organisations.

The other ethical dilemma is whether it is right to be taking surplus levy money from charities that they could be using to support vulnerable young people and ensuring they have a better future. Given the government's commitment to ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to reach their full potential, taking money from charities that help them seems a little short-sighted.

Despite these concerns, Barnardo's has been working to maximise the opportunities

the levy does create for our staff and those we support. Barnardo's Employment Training and Skills received a grade two 'good' rating as a provider at its last Ofsted inspection, and our overall apprenticeship success rate in 2015-16 was 77 per cent, with some programmes achieving 93 per cent.

We are launching an internal Barnardo's Apprenticeship Academy as part of our ETS department which will support the development of existing staff and young people joining the organisation.

“ Donations are specifically to support our work with vulnerable children

Barnardo's does not believe that one size fits all, which is why we have a wide range of services to help every child and young person reach their full potential.

As we review our HR needs for the coming years, we are looking at creating new apprenticeship roles that would be made available to the most vulnerable young people in our society.

We will be focusing on upskilling existing staff in areas such as leadership and management, which will further enhance our ability to support the young people that use our services.

Barnardo's is also sharing its knowledge with other third-sector levy paying organisations by managing their levy pot and delivering apprenticeships for them.

Our ETS services can and do support employers by finding the right young people for their vacancies and preparing them for the recruitment process and the apprenticeship. We continue to support them and the employer throughout the apprenticeship.

Barnardo's is committed to becoming a learning organisation so it can continue to improve the outcomes for the most vulnerable young people in society. The apprenticeship levy will contribute towards this goal by increasing the number of young people we can bring into the organisation and whose life chances we can improve.

So, while there are considerable financial and ethical challenges to the levy, Barnardo's has found a way forwards to maximise the benefits, as we continue to believe in children.

EXPERTS

Philip Hammond gifted FE a big headline figure in the budget, but how much of that £500 million is actually guaranteed, asks Gemma Gathercole

The announcement in the spring budget of fresh investment in FE has been warmly received by all parts of the sector. There's little doubt that it's needed – after significant cuts to budgets over the last parliament and an unfavourable international comparison of post-16 funding, there's an audible sigh of relief.

And why is it so important? We all read it, that dreaded line in the ministerial foreword to the 'Post-16 Skills Plan', which said "we accept and will implement all of the Sainsbury panel's proposals, unequivocally where that is possible within current budget constraints", and our hearts sank. More reform, more investment required, but no more money: a recipe for disaster.

So the announcement of additional funding is certainly a welcome step in the right direction, but there are challenges ahead.

Although the headlines talked of an additional £500 million, it's our job to look at the detail, and here's the first thing to note: there is a phased implementation. The first additional investment of £100 million will be made in 2019/20, for teaching the first two pathfinder routes. Investment will then be increased year on year until all the new technical routes are available in 2022, at which time the additional annual investment



GEMMA GATHERCOLE

Head of funding and assessment,
Lsect

There's a hitch in the £500 million promise

will be "over £500 million".

At this point I tried not to think of the emperor's new clothes, but unless someone made a change to the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act without telling me, the next general election is in May 2020, so we've only had £100 million promised in this parliament – and the rest cannot yet be taken for granted.

“
I tried not to think
of the emperor's
new clothes

The extra £100 million that comes in 2019/20 will be vital in securing the effective implementation of the new technical routes.

Anyone who has experienced a change programme in the sector before (and we've had a few) will know that there will be expenditure across many budget lines, from potential equipment costs to ensure that colleges can deliver the new employer-designed standards, to CPD for the workforce, to marketing and promotion of the courses, to working with local employers and critically, to developing relationships for work placements.

These placements will present a significant challenge. When I speak to any member of staff from a school, college or training provider that is involved in finding work experience placements, they all tell similar stories of hard work, many conversations, multiple knockbacks and difficulty reaching the right person within organisations.

Work experience placements are hard to find. Even the Treasury press release on the budget announcement reinforced

the challenge of the more substantial work placement that will form a mandatory part of the technical route.

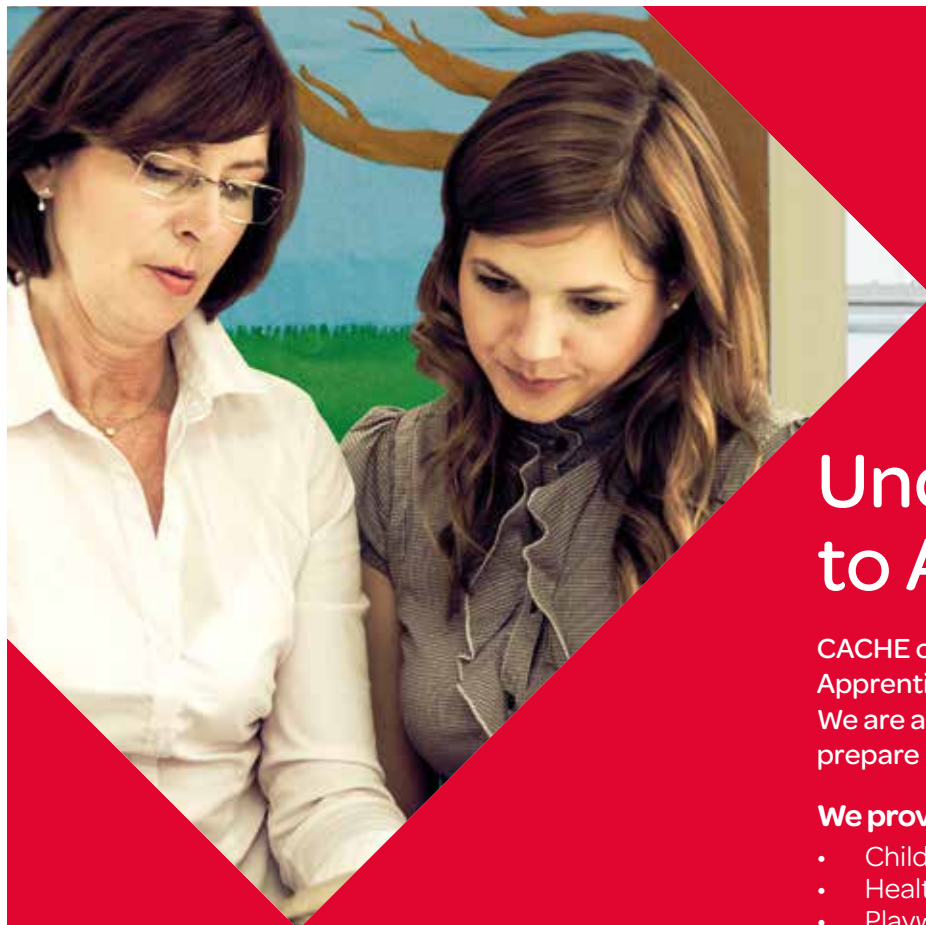
It stated that "66 per cent of employers consider work experience important for those entering the labour market, yet only 30 per cent offer work experience".

I don't think anyone would argue about the value of experience in the workplace or the impact that a good placement can have, however, there was nothing in the release that would suggest ways of overcoming existing barriers.

The recent Institute for Fiscal Studies report reminded us that "alongside many policy changes, 16-18 education has been the only area of education spending to see reductions in resources as a result of recent spending reviews". This has created a challenging financial settlement.

However welcome the additional funding is, the apprenticeship reforms have shown us the relative cost and complexity of some employer-designed models. Those involved in the design and development of these new technical routes must consider the cost implications of these new courses, or else the additional investment could end up being spent on the wrong things.

And for those in the sector offering A-levels or applied general qualifications, the budget announcements offered little respite. The additional funding is explicitly linked to the implementation of the technical routes. So that bigger story from the IFS report still contains stark warnings.



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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

East Durham is a cut above



Cream of the crop: Angela, centre, with the team

Students from East Durham College's hair and beauty department have won eight medals at the Association of Hairdressers and Therapists regional finals.

Twelve colleges from across the north-east of England competed in a range of different disciplines at the event, including hairdressing, barbering, beauty and make-up.

East Durham's student team picked up three first-place gold medals, three silvers and a bronze, with level two hairdressing student Abbey Johnson receiving the Bobby Mukabaa memorial award.

The first place wins went to Abbey Johnson for ladies' evening hair, Laura

Burnham for gents' long hair finish and Natalie Lofthouse in the nail art category.

Craig Harman, Joleen Hope and Tyler Thirwell Johnson took home silvers in the gents commercial, fantasy and face painting, with Charlotte Quinn and Laurie Borgesson taking bronze in the team bridal category.

Angela Johnston, the hairdressing lecturer at the college, said: "Competition is an integral part of the training our students receive, preparing them for the world of work by building their confidence, resilience and self-belief."

The AHT national finals will be held on the 13th March at Blackpool's famous Winter Gardens.



Students snap a selfie

Sparsholt College is liked and shared

Hampshire college has been awarded the title of top college in the UK for its social media at the 2017 Edurank Awards.

Sparsholt College took the award for 'social media performance of the year' as well as 'best Instagram performance' at the ceremony, which recognises and celebrates the use of social media in education.

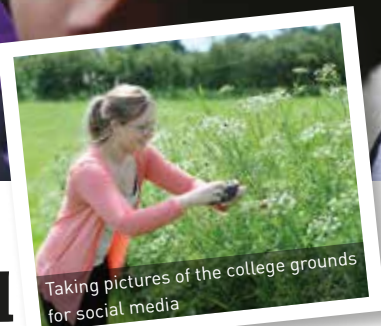
The college currently operates across five social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, with more than 11,000 followers on their Facebook page alone.

In order to maintain engagement, social media staff have implemented their own

hashtags on Instagram, encouraging students to share pictures taken around the campus, as well as sharing interviews with students and videos.

Meg Bullock, the college's digital marketing officer, said: "It's the images captured by students that give a real insight into college life. I initiated the hashtag #studentview on Instagram and this has proved to be one of our most powerful tools.

"We are disciplined about keeping our content levels up and sharing information that's relevant and interesting for parents and businesses, as well as current, future and past students."



Taking pictures of the college grounds for social media



Scrumming it: England players train at the college

Rugby stars go back to school

The England rugby league team has announced its move to a new training base at Hopwood Hall College, where students were invited to watch one of the team's first training sessions.

Currently ranked third in the international stakes, players from the team will be using the facilities at the Manchester college as their new training ground.

They will use the same facilities as the students on the BTEC and diploma rugby courses, including access to the on-site gym, fitness suites and extra rugby pitches at the college's Middleton campus.

The move comes as the team gears up for the start of the rugby league World Cup in

October, where they will take on reigning champions Australia in their first game.

Lee Registe, a student taking a BTEC level three in sport and rugby league at the college, said: "It was unbelievable being able to see the England Rugby players up close and personal like that. It was really inspiring seeing them, an unforgettable morning."

Kyle Amor, who plays as St Helens' prop forward, said: "Part of our role as players is to inspire the next generation of fans. We're here first and foremost to train, but encouraging a new fan base or setting an example to the rugby students is really important to all the players."

NAW livestream attracts more than 10,000 viewers

A careers advice broadcast saw around 10,000 people tune in from across the UK when it was streamed online.

The livestreamed video, entitled 'the Big Assembly', was orchestrated by work experience provider Work Pays, and was shown as part of National Apprenticeship Week 2017.

Young people, parents and employers from around the country registered to watch the 30-minute broadcast on March 7, which discussed the benefits of vocational training, and was introduced by apprenticeships and skills minister, Robert Halfon.

The video showed films of apprentices and featured work they had created themselves, as well as live Q&As with advisors.

The estimated figure of 10,000 viewers was

reached by asking a sample of the schools streaming the broadcast how many pupils were watching, with many showing the video during whole-school assemblies.

The event was part of a world record attempt to host the largest online careers advice seminar, but fell far short of the 5,000 official logins required to take the title, with just 1,809 from 200 schools and colleges.

Helen Richardson, managing director of Work Pays who produced the Big Assembly, said: "We didn't quite break the world record because that relied on logins and you could have hundreds of children watching on one.

"However, we more than doubled our target for the number of young people who actually watched the video, which is great news in terms of spreading the word."



(L-R) Would-be record breakers: Liam Jackson, Charlotte Potter, Helen Richardson and Prue Day

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King***Formula 1 pits apprentices against pupils**FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

A global competition that challenges young people to make their own Formula 1 cars has launched a category for engineering apprentices to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week. Samantha King reports

Regarded as one of the largest ever global STEM initiatives, Formula 1 in Schools operates in over 40 countries, challenging young people aged 11 to 19 to work in teams and engineer their own small-scale cars.

Now for the first time, the challenge will open up to apprentices, with a brand new professional apprentice class for competitors in the UK.

Andrew Denford, founder and chairman of F1 in Schools, said: "Through F1 in schools we try to attract more students into engineering careers. Apprenticeships are desperately needed by the supply chain, not only in Formula 1, but in automotive businesses throughout the UK."

There are currently three classes in the competition: an entry class for beginners, a development class, and a professional class for more experienced students, alongside which the new apprenticeship category will sit.

The professional and apprentice class is likely to see 14- to 19-year-olds from schools and colleges pitted against each other, and Mr Denford suggested a strong female presence could work in favour of teams, despite the potential differences in experience.

"Our last four world champion teams



The fast lane: the 2016 national finalists at Silverstone

have been managed by girls. If school and apprentice entrants can get some females on their teams it will really be a level playing field. I'm not sure who would win between them.

"It's a brand new thing we're launching so we're not quite sure what will happen."

To enter, students must form teams of three to six, before developing business plans and using state-of-the-art technology to produce model cars powered by CO2 canisters, which form an integral part of the competition process.

Competitors are judged on the speed of their cars, scrutineering, marketing and how much sponsorship they secure, as well as teamwork

ability – and are required to give presentations on the processes they go through.

With regional, national and global heats, rewards for successful teams include tickets to the British Grand Prix, tours of the McLaren factory and scholarships and bursaries to some of the UK's top engineering universities.

Denford explained "If you win the UK national competition [held at the Silverstone circuit], the team gets tickets for the British



The scaled-down cars

Grand Prix, a visit to the formula one team, and two half bursaries for UCL engineering.

"They've also got a chance to enter the Randstad Williams engineering academy who come and hand pick the best 10 from the world finals."

David Hill, director of apprenticeships at the Department for Education, said "Formula 1 in Schools is a brilliant example of how apprenticeships can work across many sectors.

"Apprenticeships are not just a unique way to progress in work and life but a fantastic way for employers to improve the skills base of their businesses, and I am delighted that F1 in Schools has embraced National Apprenticeship Week and apprenticeships in such an exciting way."

The new apprentice category will receive its official, national launch at the 2017 UK finals of F1 in Schools, held at the Silverstone Circuit on 29 and 30 March, ready for the 2017/18 season.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

Lucy Maggs has been appointed assistant principal at Callywith College in Cornwall.

The new college is due to open in September in association with Truro and Penwith College, where she currently works as a programme team leader for student services.

She will share the assistant principal position with Jon Grey, who was also recently appointed.

Her main responsibilities will include leading on student support, and she says she is "looking forward to being a part of all the individual student success stories".

During her time at Truro and Penwith, Ms Maggs taught health and social care across A-level, extended diploma and foundation degree courses, held the role of programme team leader, and most recently managed student services.

Speaking of the college, she said: "Callywith will give the opportunity to raise life chances for young people in north and east Cornwall. Such outstanding local

provision on their doorstep enables local young people to achieve qualifications that will widen their opportunities for the remainder of their lives."

Andy Berry has been appointed the new principal of Bridgwater and Taunton College in Somerset.

The college was recently rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and has received a

total of 13 National Beacon Awards from the Association of Colleges for its innovative practices.

He will take over the role following the retirement of current principal, Mike Robbins, at the end of the academic year.

Mr Berry is currently vice principal at the college, a role he has held for five years.

The future principal says he's most looking forward to working more closely with "the fantastic staff team", adding: "These are exciting times for the towns of Bridgwater and Taunton, and for Somerset generally.

"I fully expect the college to continue playing a significant role in supporting economic development through the provision of high quality academic, technical and skills programmes for our

students and employers."

Derek Randall, chair of governors who led the recruitment panel, said "We anticipate that his appointment will also ensure continuity in our progress towards achieving our ambition of becoming a world class education and training organisation".

Julie Richards has been appointed chief executive of the Chesterfield College Group.

Ms Richards, who was formerly deputy principal of Chesterfield College, began the new role at the beginning of March.

She will develop the way further and higher education is delivered, as well as working closely with the wider community.

Ms Richards has worked in the further education sector for almost 30 years, working in colleges and private providers across England, spending the last 20 years in senior management roles.

She first joined Chesterfield as executive director of business enterprise eight years ago, to lead on the development of apprenticeship provision and services to employers for the college group.

She has a strong connection with the college, after studying there at the age of 16, and returning in 1990 to undertake her teacher training qualification.

Speaking of her appointment, Ms Richards said: "Helping students progress and reach their potential, and supporting employers to grow and develop the skills they need for both now and in the future, will always be our prime objective."



LUCY MAGGS



ANDY BERRY



JULIE RICHARDS

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FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: **Lesley Ellis, Inter Training Services Ltd**