

FE Week



SAVE ESF FOR LIKES OF BAD BOYS BAKERY

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MEET THE NEW FE POWER COUPLE AT THE TOP OF THE NUS

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ALLOCATIONS SHOCK: ESFA 'MISTAKE' SEES MASSIVE FIRMS LISTED AS SMALL

➤ FE's horror story continues as data 'uncertainties' leave corporate giants like Santander and IBM mislabelled as 'non-levy' paying

BILLY CAMDEN @BILLYCAMDEN EXCLUSIVE

See how they got it so wrong on page 3

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NEWS

Allocations shock: ESFA 'mistake' sees massive firms listed as small

BILLY GAMDEN
@BILLYGAMDEN

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

The allocations "horror show" has got even more alarming, after FE Week found the government has been wrongly categorising giant firms including Santander as non-levy payers.

Other smaller employers have meanwhile been classified as subject to the charge launched last month, despite their payroll being drastically short of the £3 million point from which firms have to shell out.

Providers this week received the detailed calculation of their allocations, for delivering apprenticeships to small employers from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Alongside this, the agency sent a letter to providers admitting the non-levy proxy they used is an "approximation using the best available data" and that there are "uncertainties in this data".

Many providers sent their calculations into FE Week, and we found several examples of huge employers being misclassified, as not having to pay the levy charge.

Banking giant Santander was listed as a non-levy paying employer, despite having UK staff costs of £700 million, according to its most recent set of accounts.

Similarly, Berkeley Group Plc, a large property development firm, has a payroll close to £200 million according to their latest accounts, but was also listed as non-levy paying. And charity Mencap was on the non-levy list even though their accounts show staff costs have hit £131 million.

Only businesses with a total payroll over

£3 million have to shell-out for the levy.

But the misclassification has also found small employers labelled as large.

One small provider told FE Week they found themselves classified as a payer, despite their payroll being "nowhere near £3 million".

Another provider sent FE Week their employer allocation spreadsheet, in which they identified seven that they claim were incorrectly labelled as levy payers, adding their impact was wrong by "as much as 70 per cent" and that "needless to say we are working on a business case to send to the ESFA."

After being shown the serious mistakes in employer classifications, Association of Employment and Learning Providers boss Mark Dawe said there was a danger of "irretrievable damage being done to employers, providers and apprentices as well as to the apprenticeship brand unless ministers take immediate action".

News of the faulty calculations is the latest government-inflicted blow to hit the sector, after lead providers learned in April that their May to December allocations amounted to a fraction of the costs of their current delivery.

Mr Dawe subsequently pleaded with the government for an immediate funding increase to prevent widespread "closures and redundancies", which was swiftly rejected.

FE Week then revealed last week that this "horror story", as labelled by Mr Dawe, had claimed its first victim.

A longstanding provider with 18 years' experience told us it would be forced to close within months, as a result of the massive cuts, while many other providers warned

Analysis: How we think they got it wrong

Our analysis suggests that the ESFA's classification mistakes stem from employer information provided by Blue Sheep, a specialist data company.

The ESFA has a licence for employer data, which is typically used to determine the size of an employer for funding purposes.

The database includes employer IDs as well as staff numbers.

We believe that where the staff number in the Blue Sheep database is below 150, the ESFA has classed them as non-levy-payers – choosing this figure based on the average wage of around £20,000, a sum which when multiplied by 150 equals £3 million.

For example, for Santander the employer

ID and staff number shown in the Blue Sheep database is 80 – thus classing it as non-levy-paying.

However, this is inaccurate information for the purposes of estimating total payroll at £3 million, as the database uses multiple employer IDs for one employer where they have multiple sites.

Therefore, a huge employer with lots of sites will have lots of employer IDs, each with a small headcount. Santander appears to have nearly 1,000 different Employer IDs.

The SFA's most recent expenditure sheet shows that it pays £371,000 per year for the use of Blue Sheep data and services.

they faced imminent disaster.

After being shown the ESFA letter to providers admitting there was "uncertainties" in the calculations data, FE Week asked the agency to explain how the non-levy proxy was arrived at, but the agency refused to comment.

It would only say the department had communicated to providers that if they believed their allocations had been calculated incorrectly, they should work it

through with their ESFA provider manager.

Mr Dawe told FE Week: "We were told there weren't going to be winners and losers out of this allocation process, because the same calculation formula was being applied to all main providers and colleges.

"But clearly these mistakes over employer classifications have resulted in unfair allocations. This is why AELP is calling for the ESFA to double the allocations now to providers."

Examples of employers classed by ESFA as small (non-levy) in their non-levy allocation calculation

Employer	UK payroll	UK staff
IBM	£1084m	14,604
Santander	£700m	19,863
Berkeley Group Plc	£200m	2,379
Mencap	£131m	8260

FE Week analysis, based on published UK annual accounts



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NEWS

Cross-sector campaign launched to replace £2.4bn ESF after Brexit

JUDE BURKE
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A consortium of major players across the FE sector has launched a bid to prevent huge Brexit-induced cuts to a European fund which supports learners who have fallen “between the gaps” of mainstream provision.

The European Social Fund is worth £2.4 billion between 2014 and 2020, and pays for hundreds of projects that boost skills and help the unemployed find jobs.

This funding tap is due to be shut off for good after Britain leaves the European Union.

In a bid to stop this from happening, the Learning and Work Institute this week launched a campaign backed by the AoC, HoLEX and the AELP, calling on the next government to invest “at least the same value” in locally-driven ESF successor programmes.

“Too many people in our country feel left behind, and as we leave the EU, it will become more and more pressing to grow our own skills,” said LWI’s chief executive Stephen Evans. “We simply can’t afford to lose investment of £500 million per year.”

ESF funding is administered between the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Department for Work and Pensions and the

Big Lottery Fund, which provides match funding.

Many projects with the ESFA, which are being delivered with the involvement of local enterprise partnerships, focus especially on young people not in education, employment or training.

Around 80 providers – a mix of colleges and independent training providers – have ESF contracts through ESFA that are currently worth a total of £440 million.

One of these is Calderdale College, which currently has £35 million in ESF funding for workforce development, supporting 13,000 employers and around 24,000 learners across seven local enterprise partnership areas.

Ebrahim Dockrat, director of external funding at the college, said that the withdrawal of ESF cash would “have a huge impact on the economy, employers, learners and ultimately some of the core programmes that we all deliver as FE institutions”.

He continued: “It supports the very learners that fall between the gaps of mainstream provision, and provides access to the mainstream for many low-skilled, low-wage people.”

David Hughes, AoC’s chief executive, said the ESF helped people “in the most economically disadvantaged parts of the country”. Any spending reduction would



“widen existing social and economic divisions”.

Dr Sue Pember, the director of policy and external relations at HoLEX, said the ESF had helped “provide a safeguard” against adult education funding cuts.

“If we lose the equivalent ESF funding, then Britain’s problems of poor productivity will continue,” she said.

EU funding expert John Bell, a senior partner at Curved Thinking, told FE Week one of the strengths of the ESF programme was that it allowed local areas to focus on the issues affecting them – which it had done “very effectively”.

“If it’s not replaced, the problem will be that everywhere in the country will effectively get a one-size-fits all approach from Jobcentre Plus, from the apprenticeship programme, so there’ll be very little opportunity to respond

appropriately to local need,” he warned.

A Conservative party spokesperson told FE Week that the government had “moved swiftly to offer guarantees” of ESF projects signed before the UK leaves the EU, following last year’s referendum. Any future spending decisions would be “taken by our parliament and our government”.

A Labour spokesperson said: “We recognise the vital role the ESF plays in Britain, and we will ensure there will be no funding shortfall as a result of Brexit.”

Other bodies signing up to the campaign include the Employment Related Services Association, National Enterprise Network, Careers England, Campaign for Learning, and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

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Election delay confirmed for adult education budget tender

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EXCLUSIVE

The results of the first ever procurement process for the adult education budget have been delayed until after the general election, FE Week can reveal.

The Department for Education confirmed that the announcement had been paused until after June 8 in an email sent to providers on May 9, via FASST, the online hub for organisations working with the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

FE Week first revealed that a delay was being mooted in late April.

The final decision was agreed by the DfE sourcing team, which in its statement said: “In the run up to a general election, the ESFA, along with all government departments, has to comply with a series of restrictions imposed on communication activities.

“The timetable for announcing procurement results for the AEB has been paused in accordance with these restrictions. We will provide an update after the general election.”

Providers that didn’t have to tender for AEB funding will already have received their allocations, but those relying on the process for their financial support are likely to be frustrated by the news.

This decision follows the controversy

caused by a separate pause on the massively oversubscribed non-levy apprenticeship procurement process.

On April 25, Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the AELP, called – fruitlessly – for a long-term pause on the whole AEB procurement process.

“The ESFA have just set a precedent for placing a pause on the non-levy apprenticeship procurement, so why not set aside the AEB invitation to tender for a year and give ITPs an allocation for the year 2017/18 essentially based on what they had before?” he asked.

It is understood that around 500 training

providers have applied for a share of the AEB, which totals around £1.5 billion.

However only around £250 million of the budget had actually been up for grabs through the tendering process, because colleges, local authorities and universities – which contract with the ESFA through a grant funding agreement – were not affected by the recent changes and were not obliged to tender.

The former Skills Funding Agency first wrote to independent training providers last autumn to tell them that their current AEB contracts would come to an end in July, and that they would not be automatically renewed as had been the case before.

FE Week reported in January that the SFA finally launched the resulting procurement process for such contracts for ITPs.

The ESFA then announced on April 12 that the decision over non-levy apprenticeship funding allocations had been paused to allow more time for the situation to be reviewed.

Providers had been bidding for a share of a funding pot worth up to £440 million, but interest in this funding stream was far higher than the government had anticipated, with actual bids amounting to around £1.6 billion – more than four times the sum that was available in the first place.





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NEWS

Manifesto plan to scrap fees and double funding pot

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Labour would stop charging adult learners for courses and scrap advanced learner loans if elected at the general election, it has revealed.

The party also plans to maintain the new apprenticeship levy, but would “introduce new measures to drive up quality”.

A spokesperson told FE Week that a Labour government would require the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to report “on an annual basis to the secretary of state on quality outcomes of completed apprenticeships, to ensure they deliver skilled workers for employers and real jobs for apprentices at the end of their training”.

It would also “shift emphasis from quantity to quality”, by measuring completion rather than apprenticeship starts, and through “focusing on higher NVQ level apprenticeships, committing to double the number of completed apprenticeships at level three by the end of the parliament (94,000 in 2015/16 to 200,000 by the end of the parliament)”.

“We will also protect the £440 million funding for non-levy payers on small and medium sized businesses, and see what more can be done in that area,” said shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden.

“We will also concentrate on recognising the needs of independent training providers, as well as general FE colleges.”

The shadow education secretary Angela Rayner echoed this in her keynote speech this week on Labour’s education plan, which she delivered at Leeds City College alongside leader Jeremy Corbyn.

She said Labour would ring-fence £440 million from the apprenticeship levy for small- and medium-sized businesses, as well as increasing capital investment to help colleges deliver planned new T-levels.

In its original release, Labour said it planned to “increase the adult skills budget to £1.5 billion by the end of the parliament”, the level around which it currently stands.

However, when pressed by FE Week, a party spokesperson confirmed that the plan was actually far more ambitious.

In fact, he promised that the adult education budget would actually be “increased by £1.5 billion”.

His words were echoed by Mr Marsden, who later told FE Week that “we will increase the ASB [adult skills budget] by £1.5 billion (not “to” £1.5 billion), so it will go up to £3 billion per year by 2021/22, the end of the next parliament.

“It will include extra funding for ESOL (English speakers of other languages) courses.

“The whole thing will be in order to fund the specific FE expansion ledges as part of our lifelong learning drive”.

Former top skills civil servant Sue Pember, who is now director of policy at adult learning provider membership body Holes, told FE Week: “We welcome Labour’s commitment to lifelong learning.

“It will interesting to see the policy in full and how it will fit within a devolved skills landscape.”

The party’s other key FE-related pledge was to restore the education maintenance allowance for college students.

A spokesperson explained: “Assuming the same proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds qualify for EMA as previously, the cost would be £582 million a year.”

These FE announcements are part of wider Labour plans to invest in a National Education Service, which it claims would “ensure no one is held back and create a more skilled workforce and productive economy”.

It would be funded from the £20 billion that Labour says would be raised by “reversing the Conservative Party’s cuts to corporation tax”.



Angela Rayner

Jeremy Corbyn

PA/WIRE

‘Real terms’ commitment to protect 16 to 19 funding

A “real-terms” commitment to protect 16-to-19 FE funding per pupil has been announced by the Liberal Democrats.

If elected, the party would over the course of the next parliament protect FE per-pupil funding at £660 million, and “invest in continuous professional development for teachers” through a £165 million cash commitment.

The party’s shadow education spokesperson Sarah Olney told FE Week: “This extra £660 million to protect FE will ensure that students are not taken for granted.”

A Liberal Democrat spokesperson later

clarified that this figure would only apply to 16-to-19 learners, but added that “we will be setting out other commitments to support adult learners in our manifesto.”

We also asked the party if it backed the Association of Employment and Learning Providers’ recent call for the next government to commit to four million quality apprenticeships during the next parliament.

“We welcome this ambitious target, and will be setting out our own plans to for an increase in apprentice numbers when we publish our manifesto,” the spokesperson said.

AoC calls on new government to restrict employer use of levy

The Association of Colleges has demanded new levy funding restrictions on employers in its new manifesto.

The document, which was unveiled this week, calls on the next government to commit to reducing “the proportion of the levy available to employers to 75 per cent”, and wants any resources freed up by this used to tackle challenges like improving quality, incentivising progression and addressing regional disparities.

It also wants the country to “move away from a numerical target for apprenticeship starts”, referencing the commitment made in the Conservative Party’s 2015 election manifesto to create three million



David Hughes

apprenticeships starts, which the AoC says has led to quality being sacrificed in a push to get as many learners on board as possible.

The AoC wants the nation’s new focus to be on job and career outcomes for apprentices, and improvements in productivity and retention for employers.

These demands are in direct contrast to the Association of Employment and Learning Providers’ manifesto, unveiled earlier this month, which wants the next government to increase numbers and commit to four million “quality apprenticeships” over the next parliament. The AoC also wants the

new government to encourage employers and incentivise colleges to “support more apprenticeships at level three as a minimum end-point and ensure they commit to 20 per cent off-the-job training for apprentices”.

Meanwhile, the Sixth Form Colleges Association wants an extra £200 in funding for each sixth form student in order to improve support.

It is making this call as part of its ‘Support our Sixth-formers’ campaign, and as the key demand in its own 2017 general election manifesto.

The additional investment would pay for improved mental health support, study and employability skills and careers advice – all vital services that sixth form providers have been forced to scale back due to what the SFCA has labelled “chronic underinvestment”.

“Increased investment is now urgently required to ensure that students pursuing A-level and other academic qualifications receive the sort of high-quality education and support they need to become healthy, happy, resilient and productive citizens,” said Bill

Watkin, SFCA’s chief executive.

The SFCA also wants a wider review of sixth form funding, and has hit out at the “disconnect” between the cost of delivering an academic curriculum and the cash providers are given to do this.

It has also urged the government to scrap VAT for all sixth form providers.

The SFCA’s campaign to have SFCs brought into line with school sixth form providers – which don’t pay VAT – resulted in the government’s 2015 decision to allow them to convert to academies in order to avoid paying the tax.

It now wants the government to extend VAT exemption to all SFCs, whether they’re academies or not.

Finally, the SFCA wants a competitive process for establishing new sixth form provision.

“The absence of a competitive, demand-led process has led to the creation of sixth form providers in areas where there is already an oversupply of good or outstanding provision,” it said in its manifesto.



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PROFILE

Introducing

EMILY CHAPMAN

New NUS VP for FE

ALIX ROBERTSON
@ALIXROBERTSON4

Emily Chapman has overcome depression and anxiety to be elected as the National Union of Students' new FE champion, a poignant reminder that challenges like these don't define who you are or what you can achieve.

The NUS' newly minted vice-president for FE will take up the role in July, marking a complete turnaround from her darkest days, when she was afraid even to leave her room to attend college.

She was brave enough to speak frankly about her experiences during last week's Mental Health Awareness Week, and the troubles she has conquered to reach this point suggest that, despite her modesty, she has the determination required to fill the space left by formidable predecessor Shakira Martin.

Emily was born in Edinburgh in July 1989, but her dad moved her to Blackwater in Hampshire when she was just 18 months old after her mum walked out on them.

She was often cared for by her grandparents while her dad was at work as a credit controller. It was in this job that he met her step-mum, whom Emily says is still "always there" for her.

But life in this quiet country town was disrupted when she moved to Leeds aged 10, the year her half-sister Keri was born.

She had been used to hiding behind her dinner lady grandmother at school in Hampshire, but starting year six in Leeds was much tougher.

"Socially I've never been very good; I didn't make friends very easily," she admits.

"I physically couldn't leave my room"

"I found school quite challenging. I was bullied from age five to 15 – more when I came up to Leeds because I was different."

She describes herself as a "lanky cockney girl" at the time. "I also have quite a high testosterone level and so I have dark hair that is quite prominent," she explains.

"I got things like 'Tina Turner' or 'Chewbacca'. I really suffered from it quite badly."

It was an incident at Pudsey Grange Secondary School that made Emily stand up for herself, when at age 14 a punch from another student almost broke her nose.

"It shook me into thinking 'why am I letting this happen?'"

Her "saviour" at the time turned out to be rugby league. She learned how to play and referee and the sport soon boosted her confidence.

"After that, if people did start bullying me again I'd give them stick back," she adds.

Joining both the student council and the school radio station were other ways to improve her self-esteem – and she soon became a media buff interested in politics.

"It was a way to be hidden but express yourself at the same time," she says.

This experience led her to study a BTEC national diploma in media studies at Leeds City College – but it was at this point in her life that "the wheels came off the wagon".

Her dad and step-mum moved to Spain in 2006, but Emily was "stubborn" and decided to stay in England by herself at just 17.

Desperate to find a secure friendship group, she began going out drinking. "I ended up in quite a bad depression. It was a very bad time," she says.

Between September and December of 2006 she stopped going into college and eventually couldn't face going out at all.

"I physically couldn't leave my room," she explains. "I didn't want to see the outside world."

After Christmas with her parents she worked up the courage to go back into college in January, but to her horror found she had been expelled.

Rather than walk away, she explained what had gone wrong and luckily, the college gave her a second chance.

She had to report to a tutor every other day, and was set up in sheltered housing with a counsellor who visited every week.

With this support she achieved an amazing "distinction-merit-merit" result from her diploma.

"It shocked some of my family members; they thought I could only get Es and Fs," Emily says.

A job on the checkout in Marks and Spencer's for a year brought more stability. Then she applied for a media and sports studies degree, receiving an unconditional offer from the University of Stirling to start in 2008.

But the path ahead was obscured again when, four weeks before she was due to start university, she found out her parents were coming back to England and getting divorced.

"My family was in disarray at that point," she says, admitting that the situation triggered struggles with socialising again.

"I was trying to buy my friendships. I kept borrowing money from payday loans, I didn't pay my bills and I tried to get credit cards so I could keep spending money."

Everything came to a head just a week before Christmas, when she was evicted after getting behind on her rent.

Emily chokes up as she explains having to call her dad to bail her out: "That broke my relationship with my dad quite badly. I'd let my family down on the money and I'd lied. I thought that I was being an adult and I could deal with it. I couldn't. That whole scenario basically broke me."

But despite feeling as though she had hit rock bottom, she found the determination to carry on.

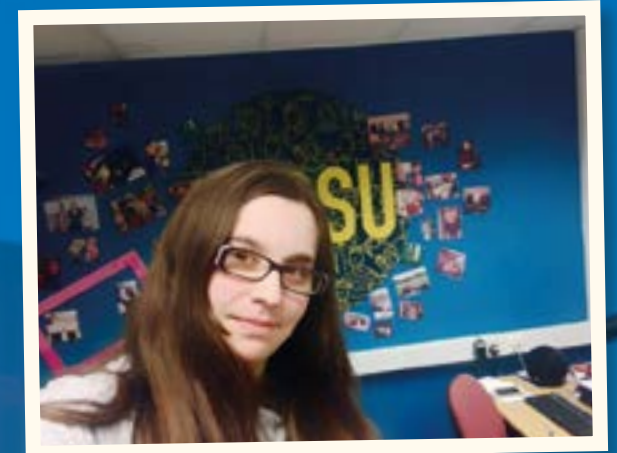
Just four months later, in April 2010, she found emergency council housing and a new job at Grosvenor Casino, back in Leeds.

"Work became my life. I thought 'if I'm in work I'll have money, and I have to have money to live'."

After two and a half years she moved to a new job at security firm Golden Crown Management, but was battling with an anxiety disorder and regular panic attacks.

"If you'd said to me at that time in 2012 that I would go on to be the next VP for FE at the NUS I would have laughed at you. I didn't want to be visible in any way," she says.

Jemina Puddleduck, my treasured item



The SU photo wall

The words of a close family friend, who was like an uncle to her, spurred Emily back into education when he passed away in February 2014.

"He always used to say to me, 'this year is going to be your year, I can feel it my girl'," she says.

"I used to laugh it off, but when he died it made me ask myself what I really wanted to do."

She took the plunge and returned to Leeds City College to start a foundation degree in law and criminal studies.

"It was a great feeling," she says.

At the college's higher education fair Emily had her first encounter with the student union – when a rep unexpectedly introduced her to the president, Craig Clements.

Craig became a mentor, helping Emily through a late diagnosis of dyslexia and partial dyspraxia at 25. Working with the union became a way to overcome her barriers, especially anxiety.

"I'm a lot better than I was. I've had a big group of people around me who support me. Shakira was one of them," she says.

They have been working together since Emily became president of LCCSU in March 2015. And while it has been her "security blanket", she is looking forward to moving on.

"Shakira and I are completely different people, but I'm really looking forward to working with her when she becomes the national president," she enthuses.

"We can continue the growth of FE. I've got big shoes to fill – I don't think anyone would disagree with me on that – but hopefully working with her I can do that."



A campaign shot promoting the need for student voice (I knew this picture would haunt me)



Me with the SU mascot, SU the meerkat

It's a personal thing

What is your favourite book?

'The Butterfly Lion'. I was with my family over the weekend and we were in Waterstones and I saw it for £7. I thought "I know this is a children's book and I'm turning 28 in July but I don't care, I'm buying it!"

What do you do to switch off from work?

I spend time with my family. I'm a very big dog lover so we've got quite a few dogs in my family and extended family. I enjoy going home and seeing my mum and the dogs.

What's your pet hate?

I hate negativity. I'm bad for it myself but I don't like this whole "we're not going to do it, we think it's going to fail before we start". You have to be realistic but you should have some optimism at the same time.

What did you want to be when you were growing up?

I wanted to be a sports journalist. In essence I wanted to be [BBC reporter] Tanya Arnold, who does the rugby league sports show.

Who do you most admire, living or dead, and why?

I admire anyone who has gone through bullying and come out the other side of it. It's one of those things that people can really suffer with and it can harm them. The #BeKind project [an anti-bullying campaign] that ITV's 'This Morning' show are doing at the moment is something that I'm very passionate about and would love to see more of, and I'll pledge to do more with that. Bullying has got so many evil forms now.

Who do you turn to in times of crisis?

I've got a circle of people I turn to. One of them is Craig Clements, the former president of LCCSU, who is basically my best friend now. Even though he hasn't been president here for two years he hasn't been very far away and I do speak to him every other day. If I've ever got a problem I can ring him. The other person would be my mum. If I need anything mum's always there at the end of the phone – even if she doesn't know what I'm talking about, which in terms of politics can happen quite often! She's always there ready to let me rant and to listen. I turn to mum in crisis mode.

What is your most treasured possession and why?

I think it's my Jemima Puddleduck toy. I've had it since I was a baby; it was given to me when I was born. It's 27 years old with a floppy head because I used to hold her around the neck and never let her go! She's always with me, even when I go away to national conferences I take her with me.

EDITORIAL

ESFA need to fess up to their 'mistake'



The Education and Skills Funding Agency has dug itself a huge hole. Incredibly, it's still digging.

As readers will know, it was in the interest of "stability" that it decided to pause the non-levy tender, after demand from over 1,000 providers well outstripped the paltry £440 million that was available.

Instead it is extending pre-May contracts until December, which left some relieved and others – those without direct access to any funding – disappointed.

But the sense of relief and pretence of stability hasn't lasted long, as the value of the contract extension appears well below expectation, in some cases by as much as 70 per cent.

The ESFA told providers this week how it arrived at these allocation figures, but still refuses to answer key questions about how much was dished out overall.

It has also refused to tell FE Week or providers how global firms have ended up wrongly classified as non-levy, so we've had to figure out for ourselves how the 'mistake' occurred.

While it's clearly unfortunate the data isn't accurate and that there isn't more funding for small employers, why refuse to fully explain how much and in what way it's been allocated?

Starving providers of funding is bad, but also keeping them in the dark is appalling.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

LABOUR AND LIB
DEMS #GE2017
PLEDGES TWEETS:

Graham Hoyle @GrahamHoyle2

A welcome if long overdue recognition of the value and importance of ITPs "as well as colleges" from Labour. No surprise it's from Gordon M.

David Hughes @AoCDavidH

Outcomes of apprenticeships much more important than starts, so pleased with @UKLabour @GordonMarsden L3 apps target of 200k

Ian Pryce @ipryce

Good the party wants to help FE & students but ideas are so badly thought through. Give us more freedom & money not more central control

Mick Fletcher @OldDitch

Helping students is not always the same thing as helping colleges. Seems that Labour might be prioritising the former

Owain Powell-Jones @owainpj

Funding? VAT on private schools like #Labour? What will be #LibDems education 'red lines' in coalition? #GE2017



Costs in question after Labour apprentice pledge

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The financial implications of Labour's pledge to cover apprentices' travel costs have been called into question, after the Conservatives labelled their costings a "total shambles".

A leaked draft version of Labour's manifesto committed to paying for apprentices' travel costs, "which currently run to an average of £24 a week – a quarter of earnings if apprentices are on the minimum wage".

FE Week asked the Labour press office to explain how much this would cost in total – as £24 per week works out at around £1,200 per apprentice every year, and the travel costs of all 899,400 apprentices who participated last academic year would therefore amount to just over £1 billion.

The party's spokesperson refused to comment on a leaked draft. However, FE Week also spoke to shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden, who previously committed to funding apprentice travel at FE Week's Annual Apprenticeship Conference in March.

This week, he told us that the "still-to-be-finalised" manifesto pledge would only actually cover transport for 16-to-19s, at a cost of around £99 million in the first year.

Nevertheless, a Conservative Party

spokesman claimed this was demonstrated that "Labour's manifesto is a total shambles".

Mr Marsden told FE Week: "The precise figures are still to be worked out, but we would be looking to assist 16-to-19 apprentices, at least on 50 per cent of the average figure that is being quoted, for travel costs and hopefully moving forward".

He explained that the figures "were based on the number of 16- to 19-year-old apprenticeship starts on last available data from March 2016".

"The figures were down on the basis of the latest half-year number of starts, which was 82,600," he added. "We doubled that to make 165,000. We then multiplied that by £1,200 to make £198,000,000, and halved it for 50 per cent – so £98 to £99 million."

Asked why only starts had been factored in, when it's natural to assume that all apprentices of that age-range would want to receive the payment, he replied: "The initial scheme will be based on new starts, and we would go from there."

By our calculations, the total number of 16-to-19s reported as participating in apprenticeships between August last year and January was 156,800. Going by the shadow minister's reckoning, if that were doubled and multiplied by £1,200, the final cost would work out at £376 million, or £188 million if halved.

This is the latest election commitment

problem to hit Labour.

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott came in for some stick last week for struggling, during an interview on national radio station LBC, to explain how much putting an extra 10,000 police officers on the streets would cost.

Later, the shadow education secretary Angela Rayner faced similar problems when asked, by the same radio station, for more detail on Labour's plans to plough £5.6 billion into schools.

Presenter Nick Ferrari asked how many children would be affected and criticised Ms Rayner for her reply, that it was a "significant" number.

Mr Marsden previously told AAC delegates the £24-per-week costing came from research by the National Society of Apprentices.

"This equates to a quarter of the salary of an apprentice who is earning the apprentice national minimum wage," he said.

NUS president-elect Shakira Martin told us this week: "I, and the [NUS-run] NSoA are delighted Labour included a commitment to supporting travel cost.

"It is especially exciting this commitment has come directly from NSoA's research. When there are some apprentices paying over half their wages on travel to and from their apprenticeship, it is clear the current financial support apprentices receive is not fit for purpose."

COMMENTS

Devastating impact of non-levy allocations 'horror show'

This is devastating disgusting and unnecessary, what is wrong with the Department for Education/ESFA or more specific Justine Greening and Robert Halfon. I'm sure a stop to this could easily be put in place, but as already mentioned it seems to be more of a conspiracy to crush training providers and especially subcontractors. The government should hang their heads in shame and I for one look forward to the cabinet reshuffle when possibly some MP's may get to feel similar to the many individuals they have caused devastation and unemployment to throughout this whole process.

Anne-marie Morris

Yet another kick in the teeth for the smaller providers, who have been the backbone to the primes, as sub-contractors.

Really disheartening to the apprentices and employers who are caught up in this mess.

No real MP's standing tall and shouting from the benches about the mess, and I don't see it following the Election either.

Kevin

Lowest ever percentage of colleges rated 'outstanding'

Inspection of outstanding colleges should take place on the same cycle as everyone else. Policy changes take place and others are judged on new standards. Maths and English are the prime example. Desk based analysis can give a false impression of the position of a college on the ground.

When we're all of the remaining outstanding colleges inspected? This needs a regular update as management and governance also change over the period of time. Safeguarding should be inspected regularly to ensure compliance.

George Trow



Principal - Carlisle College

(Salary circa £100k + benefits)

A fantastic opportunity to shape a well-established college in addition to leading in one of the largest educational, training and employability organisations in the UK.

Carlisle College – transformed into a 21st Century facility

The college is proud to have invested over £30 million at its city centre campus to create stunning facilities including state of the art equipment and resources that significantly expand the modern campus into a real learning community. From access courses to HND's, the college delivers an extensive range of higher and further education, professional qualifications and community programmes.

Carlisle College is part of Newcastle College Group (NCG); comprising of five Colleges, and two training providers, it is one of the largest and growing FE providers in the country. With a turnover of over £130 million and rated as "Good" in a recent Ofsted inspection, the group operates from over 61 locations to make a positive impact on more than 110,000 learners and 20,000 businesses across the UK.

As the new Principal, you will lead the overall development and performance of Carlisle College; providing inspiration, vision and effective management, as well as contributing to the strategic and operational development of NCG. Through effective leadership you will engage and motivate colleagues, harnessing talent to ensure ongoing excellence and innovation. Positioning Carlisle College as an elite education provider, you will ensure the growth of student numbers and increased brand awareness across Cumbria.

The successful candidate will be a visible and inspirational leader with the ability to create and embed innovative, forward-thinking strategies at both a local and group level. You will have robust knowledge of academic provision and a successful track record at senior management level.



Closing date: Sunday 4th June 2017
Final interview and assessment: Late June TBC

To apply for this role or to download an application pack visit: www.protocol.co.uk/carlisle

Protocol Excellence in FE

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role contact Ian Sackree 07795 271559 or David Beynon 07970 042334



Executive Director of Finance

MidKent College is a vibrant, strong and stable college with outstanding financial health. As the college repurposes its work with students, employers and local stakeholders a unique opportunity has arisen for a high calibre finance professional to join the college as a Senior Post Holder.

Our new Executive Director of Finance will need to be able to develop and implement financial strategies to ensure the college's financial strength is maintained whilst the college develops outstanding teaching and learning and excellent learning and employment outcomes for our students.

We are looking for someone with an excellent track record in financial management, high impact leadership abilities and high expectations of themselves and their colleagues.

For more information on this sector leading opportunity see our microsite: <http://midkentleadership.fea.co.uk>. We have retained FE Associates to support us in this appointment. For a confidential discussion please contact Samantha Bunn in the first instance on 01454 617707 or Samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk.

Closing date: Monday 5th June 2017 at noon
Interview dates: Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th June 2017



Assistant Principal Curriculum Heads of Department

Assistant Principal Curriculum
Health & Visitor Economy

Heads of Department

Art, Design, Performing Arts & Music
Hospitality, Catering and Tourism
Engineering & Motor Vehicle
IT, Media & Graphics
Construction Trades
Hair & Beauty

Competitive Salaries Offered

MidKent College is a vibrant, strong and stable college serving the communities of Maidstone and Medway. As the college repurposes its work with students, employers and local stakeholders a unique opportunity has arisen for a high calibre curriculum experts to join the college in a range of leadership roles.

For more information on these sector leading roles see our microsite: <http://midkentleadership.fea.co.uk>.

We have retained FE Associates to support us in this appointment. For a confidential discussion please contact Samantha Bunn in the first instance on 01454 617707 or Samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk.

Closing date: Monday 5th June 2017 at noon
Interview dates: Either 14th or 15th June 2017





Become an examiner with Cambridge

Cambridge International Examinations is growing and over 10 000 schools in more than 160 countries are now part of our Cambridge learning community.

We are welcoming new examiners across a wide range of the Cambridge curriculum but are in particular need of examiners for **Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level Travel & Tourism** as well as a range of languages. These include Marathi, Telugu, Urdu, Tamil, Sinhala, Hindi, Panjabi, Bengali and Gujarati.

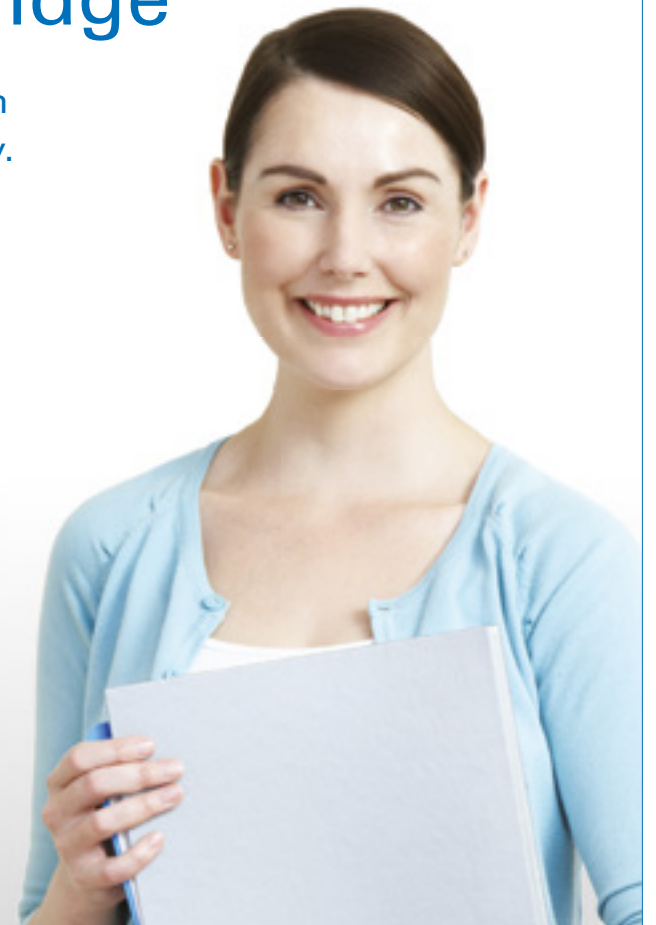
Applicants should have:

- experience of teaching 14-19 year olds
- good IT literacy skills (MS office applications or equivalent)
- successful applicants will require a PC and broadband to allow them to access Cambridge on-screen marking systems.

For more detailed information on the requirements for each role please visit our website.

We offer:

- a powerful insight into the teaching and assessment of Cambridge qualifications
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- the highest standards of training and support
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To apply to be an examiner visit www.cie.org.uk/makeyourmark



Exciting opportunities available

Waltham Forest College is a major provider of learning in North London. We are looking for talented prospective employees to join us in our pursuit of excellence in everything we do. We wish to appoint staff who are enthusiastic about education, are well qualified in their area of expertise, enjoy working with people aged 14 through adulthood and are prepared to assist in the further growth and development of this College.

If you feel you have something to offer and are excited at the prospect of a career at this College then take a look at our current vacancies.

Current lecturer vacancies:

Construction

Early Years

Plumbing

Psychology

Engineering

ESOL

Sociology

Teacher Training

Learning Manager for Access and Higher Education

We are seeking an inspiring, innovative, dynamic, enthusiastic Learning Manager to manage the curriculum. The role will involve managing a team of lecturers, while supporting learners to achieve their goal of progression onto a higher level course or into employment. You must be committed to equality and diversity, health and safety and safeguarding.

Workshop Assistant

Carrying out a wide range of duties within the Construction and Electrical facilities relating to the ACE Department, you will be supporting work shop sessions, including setting out tools, keeping areas clean and tidy and promoting excellent health and safety standards within these areas.

This role is term time and permanent.

For more information or to apply visit our Education Week Jobs webpage or email recruitment@waltham.ac.uk



An exceptional opportunity for an inspirational leader

Vice Principal: Curriculum, Performance and Innovation

c. £90k depending on experience

Kirklees College is a large successful FE college, operating across seven vocational centres and a number of community based centres across Huddersfield and Dewsbury. With an income of £40million we offer a broad curriculum to over 18,000 students across full-time study, apprenticeships and part-time courses. We enjoy strong support from partners in the communities we serve and know that our continued success depends on our ability to provide a learning experience that is second to none. We want the College to grow and flourish, based on a reputation for excellence and inclusion, serving the needs of students and employers. Having opened our exciting new Process Manufacturing Centre in Huddersfield we are continuing to work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authority to radically transform our provision in Dewsbury with 2 new centres currently under construction.

As our new Vice Principal-Curriculum, Performance and Innovation, we will expect you to work with skill, pace and commitment. We are seeking an inspirational leader who will play a key role in continuing our journey towards excellence. You will have a strong track record in curriculum innovation and quality assurance together with a creative and visionary leadership style and the ability to develop and implement holistic strategies, motivate a high performing workforce and leverage new opportunities. You will be working with a progressive, committed and supportive Board and senior leadership team who are ambitious for success. You will have the opportunity of reviewing, shaping and implementing the long-term strategy for the College. This post provides an exciting opportunity to deliver successful,

sustainable and meaningful change and to contribute to the College being clearly recognised as a beacon of excellence and inclusion.

If you have a proven track record of achievement at a senior level in the education sector and are passionate about the positive economic and social role that FE at its best can play then this could be the opportunity for you.

Please visit www.kirkleescollege.ac.uk/jobs and search under our latest vacancies page where you will find details on how to apply for this role and further information about this amazing opportunity.

If this sounds like the role for you, please do not hesitate to contact Marie Gilluley our Principal and Chief Executive for an initial informal discussion on 07816 539987.

Closing date: Wednesday 24th May 2017

The planned selection centre will take place on Tuesday 13th June and Wednesday 14th June 2017. Our senior leadership team is currently under-represented in all BME categories; we therefore particularly welcome applications from candidates within these groups.



Qualifications Manager

Based in the City of London

Salary c. £31,000 per annum depending on experience

Are you looking for an interesting job where you can use your interpersonal, analytical and project management skills?

You may have a background in an Awarding Body or similar education environment, worked in the financial services industry or are using the skills and experience we are looking for in your current job.

We are offering an exciting opportunity join to our growing organisation where you will be managing a portfolio of vocational qualifications including the design, development and lifecycle monitoring/review.

For more information on this opportunity and on the CISI, please visit www.cisi.org

THE JCB ACADEMY

ENGINEERING APPRENTICESHIP TUTORS (Mechanical, Welding or Bench Work)

Start date: Monday, 21 August 2017

Salary: £26,119-£39,023 per annum

The JCB Academy was established in September 2010, the first of a brand new kind of school in the UK, with a focus on delivering high-quality engineering and business education. We currently cater for approximately 580 full time students aged 14-18. We began delivering apprenticeships in 2013 and will have 170 engineering apprenticeship starts this summer across our programmes which focus around engineering specialisms particularly fabrication and welding, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering, at craft, technician and engineer levels.

We are looking for dynamic and inspirational individuals who are specialists in mechanical, welding or bench work and you will plan, deliver and manage the assessment of level 2 and 3 BTEC units. If you have experience and an engineering aptitude and can demonstrate you have the potential to deliver high quality teaching we would love to hear from you. This may be your first teaching position or you may be an experienced tutor eager for a new challenge and the opportunity to work in a unique environment.

Please contact **Alison** at Hays on **0121 236 4476/ jcbacademy@hays.com**

Closing date: 9am on Wednesday 17th May 2017

Appointments are subject to satisfactory references and an enhanced DBS check. The JCB Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

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Let Me Play Ltd were recently accepted onto the new **Register of Apprenticeship Training Organisations**.

Let Me Play have recruited a number of truly excellent people to help fulfil several new apprenticeship levy contracts now in place, however are still on the lookout for ambitious and knowledgeable staff to come on board as soon as possible.

The job roles we have remaining can be found to the right. All job roles are full-time and are based at our head office in Hammersmith unless stated otherwise. All job roles pay a competitive salary.

For more information and a job description, please e-mail **Nick Winham**, Recruitment Manager - nick@letmeplay.co.uk
No agencies please.

Or visit our careers website: www.lmpcareers-site.com

Our websites:

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www.lmpeducation.org
www.sportingeducation.org
www.apprenticetrainingagency.co.uk

Apprenticeship Levy Account Manager (Quality Assurance) -

must have IQA Level 4 or above.

Quality Assurance Officer -

must have IQA Level 4 or above.

Travelling TA Assessors -

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

Travelling Sports Assessors -

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

Travelling BA Assessors -

Bham/Manchester, Great Yarmouth, London/South East.

OUTSTANDING English and Maths staff WANTED!

Location: Huddersfield and Dewsbury

Salary: £24.15 per hour plus opportunity of scarce skills allowance (up to £33.41 per hour depending on current salary and specialist skills), excellent benefits package, 1000s of retail discounts and fantastic pension options.

Hours: Variable

Do you want to begin a truly rewarding career and make a real difference by training a new generation? Then this is the career for you!

Kirklees College is one of the biggest colleges in the country and we offer a vast range of courses and study options for applicants to choose from. Based in the heart of Yorkshire we have multiple learning centres across Kirklees, serving the local population, communities and businesses.

This is an exciting opportunity for bright, committed and innovative individuals who have 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 role is 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/or maths related subjects at any of the College centres and to develop programmes of study to meet the particular needs of our diverse range of students.

Successful candidates will have an English and/or maths qualification at Level 3 or above, or be willing to work towards if required. Candidates will also need to have a teaching qualification at Level 5 or above and be able to evidence up to date relevant CPD.

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

Should you require any further information regarding these vacancies please contact Mat Harte (Curriculum Team Leader – English) – mharte@kirkleescollege.ac.uk or Matthew Knight (Curriculum Team Leader – maths) - mknight@kirkleescollege.ac.uk.

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





English/ESOL Tutor

Contract Type: Part Time - Permanent

Section: Adult College

Salary (in £) £21.91 - £26.61 Per Hour TO1-TO5

Passionate, dedicated, making a difference. If this describes you, read on...

Are you passionate about English? Dedicated to teaching adults? Then we want you! The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham is the Local Authority's leading provider of adult and community learning graded "Good" by Ofsted in December 2016. Barking and Dagenham is a vibrant and growing Borough and the Adult College is committed to supporting its community to seize the opportunities this growth will bring. Come and join the team and start making a real difference today.

We are looking to appoint experienced Functional Skills English tutors with excellent success rates to deliver at Levels Entry 3 to Level 2 in a range of mainstream, vocational and apprenticeship courses (including Business

Administration, Supporting Teaching and Learning, and Health and Social Care).

We also have opportunities for experienced ESOL tutors to help develop our thriving Family Learning programme in the borough schools.

We offer flexible delivery hours including evenings.

The successful candidate should be qualified to level 4 and hold a recognised teaching and/or training qualification or will demonstrate a willingness to undertake this.

To apply for this vacancy, please visit: <http://bit.ly/2p5bNyz>

Closing date for applications 30 May 2017

Interview date (Week Commencing) 12/06/17

MGL GCSE English

Salary: £23,831 - £33,187

Calderdale College is seeking to appoint an outstanding practitioner who has the ability to deliver outstanding teaching and learning in GCSE English. The successful candidate will have experience in teaching English and a proven track record of high success. They will also have a strong desire to share a love of English and motivate and encourage students to reach their full potential.

To be suitable for this role you must have a first degree in English and PGCE teaching qualification.

The successful candidate will have the ability to contextualise English into relevant vocational programmes and have exceptional skills in curriculum innovation. A proven understanding of teaching and learning delivery methods including the use of innovative Information Learning Technologies, including e-learning, is essential.

A strong track record of managing and supporting diverse groups of learners through GCSE English programmes and a clear understanding of strategies for raising performance and using monitoring and evaluation processes to monitor student progress is essential.

The College will also consider new entrance to the profession who will be able to demonstrate, through interview, a high level of capability.

We are committed to safeguarding and promote the welfare of all learners. We expect our employees to share this commitment.

Please apply at the following link:

<http://www.calderdale.ac.uk/content/view/jobs>

Closing date: 23rd May 2017



www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk

Maths and English Tutor

We are recruiting across the London area for self employed English and maths Tutors.

Salary:
Competitive

Role:

Learning Curve Group require Tutors in maths and English to deliver a range of qualifications within our flexible learning portfolio at Level 1 and Level 2. All qualifications are nationally accredited through NCFE and include Level 1 certificates and functional skills at Level 2.



Are you:

A candidate who holds a degree, a teaching qualification and has a subject specialisation at Level 5?

We are also looking for an individual who is:

- Experienced in teaching and assessing in a post-16 environment
- Self-managing and flexible in their working approach
- Passionate about maths and/or English and experienced at delivering flexible learning programmes
- Proficient in IT
- Able to work on a self-employed, flexible basis

For more information, or to apply, please contact
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Or call:
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THE EDUCATION EVENT OF 2017

The FE Week Festival of Skills is an inspiring two day CPD extravaganza for professionals working within the further education and skills sector.

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.

This year's Festival of Skills will take place alongside the prestigious Telegraph Festival of Education at Wellington College.

Come and join the thousands of other Festival-goers who explore, celebrate, learn, debate and connect.

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EXPERTS



FE INSIDER

Shane Chowen, head of policy and public affairs at the Learning and Work Institute

What will replace the European Social Fund?

After Brexit, the government must replace the £500 million provided every year by the European Social Fund for people in disadvantaged circumstances, says Shane Chowen

It's only been a month since that windy Tuesday morning when the prime minister announced that the country will face a general election on 8 June. When parliament resumes on June 19, the new government will have to negotiate Britain's exit deal with European leaders.

But among talk of negotiations, "divorce payments", trade deals and "remoaning", the next government also has to find ways to align its domestic policy agenda to a post-EU legislature. The Conservatives want a great repeal bill to cut many EU laws from the UK.

The new government must also provide some clarity about the future of projects and provision currently in receipt of EU funding, specifically the European Social Fund.

The Brexit white paper, published in February, confirmed that projects funded through European Structural Investment Funds, which includes the ESF, that were signed before the 2016 autumn statement and which have end dates after the UK leaves the EU in 2019, will still be fully funded.

But £400 million-worth of projects currently cofunded between the ESF and the ESFA have an end date of March 2018 – a year before we're due to leave under Article 50 – and the 76-page white paper makes no specific reference to ESF at all.

Elsewhere, there are 19 open calls for proposals for projects funded through the current ESF programme through DWP: Enterprise M3 LEP is looking for projects to improve digital skills for unemployed people, Hertfordshire LEP has £1.5 million to invest in upskilling its health and social care workforce, and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP have £5 million available for projects to develop higher-level skills in key sectors.

These calls for proposals specify varying end-dates; some stipulate that projects have to be done by October 2020, and others "after three years", with the caveat that you could be told sooner at DWP's discretion.

Providers have the right to know where they stand. Users of the ESF span the private, public and charity sectors. They employ

specialist practitioners who work with often the most marginalised and disadvantaged across the UK.

At the Learning and Work Institute, the work we've seen done with ESF funding over the years through the Festival of Learning and the Adult Learners' Week Awards has been extraordinary.

Take Bad Boys Bakery for example. With support from ESF, this programme based in Brixton prison provides skills and work experience to offenders which improves their chances of securing a good job on release. That investment has also led to a dramatic cut in reoffending rates. On average, 47 per cent of ex-offenders reoffend within 12 months of release from prison. For participants of Bad Boys Bakery, that figure is just 3 per cent.

“Learners and providers have been offered no security or assurances at all on the future of their funding

Despite this, learners and providers have been offered no security or assurances at all on the future of their funding, which just isn't good enough.

The breadth of organisations that have signed up to the campaign to protect the kind of learning opportunities that the ESF currently provides following Brexit demands action. The country cannot afford to lose the £500 million that is invested every year in the life chances and opportunities for people in deprived areas, people with disabilities, older people and ex-offenders.

Replacing the ESF with domestic social investment must be central to the next government's economic and social justice strategies; whether that's "a country that works for everyone" or "for the many not the few".



SHAKIRA MARTIN

Vice-president for FE and president-elect of the National Union of Students

Let's give FE a voice

Writing exclusively for FE Week, Shakira Martin, the new president-elect of the NUS discusses her ambitious plans to represent students of all stripes by leaning on her own background in further rather than higher education

I sat down for breakfast with my two daughters over the weekend, back to normality after the rollercoaster of NUS National Conference. Finally, I had the chance to reflect on my journey, how my FE college gave me what I needed to put food in front of my kids and how my student union gave me – a black woman and single mother – a voice.

It was a conference where students – FE, HE and apprentices from across the UK – put their faith in me to lead the NUS as president. As just the second president to be elected from FE, following Toni Pearce in 2013, I want to continue to fight for the voices of the often forgotten FE learners nationally.

Since taking office in July 2015, the theme of my vice-presidency has been another bout of fundamental reform: I am sceptical of the reviews, but have fought and lobbied government through the NUS' #FEunplugged campaign to make sure the voices of learners are heard and our rights are protected.

As education was changing around us, we had to be at the table making the case for the future of FE we wanted to see. We needed to show what learner voices can do to those who have undermined them for years.

Since then, there have been announcements on possible funding for merging colleges, using loans from the treasury to plug the gaps in the sector, the insolvency regime, the post-16 skills plan and T-levels, the apprentice levy and a new Institute for Apprenticeships, which will take on colleges as well from 2018.

Even the terms 'further' and 'vocational' education were forgotten about in favour of 'technical education'. I'm surprised anyone is able to keep up!

So much reform in so little time carries huge risks. I speak to student governors who tell me that they have seen two or even three strategic plans for their colleges over the last two years, just to respond to the changing landscape. Providers are being given such little time to pause, plan and move forward.

We have to make sure that learners are not forgotten, but seen as equal partners to the needs business in an economy struggling

through a chaotic Brexit.

Our FE Unplugged campaign has taught us that debt is not solely an undergraduate issue. Learners are feeling the pinch through 19+ loans. Crucial grants such as EMA, disabled students' allowance and the adult dependants' grant have been cut over the last few years, putting up barriers for tens of thousands of current and potential students to the education they deserve.

“The general election gives us a great opportunity to put FE learners in the spotlight

The general election gives us a great opportunity to put FE learners in the spotlight. In the wake of the Brexit vote, work is being done to enhance vocational education, but my student movement wants big answers from political parties in this general election about how they will remove the barriers faced by so many to getting a decent education.

Last week, the NUS conference promised to run the biggest voter registration drive we have ever held – and as the president-elect, I plan to make sure we do exactly that over the next four weeks. The voices of every student must be heard at the heart of every election manifesto, and the NUS is running a #GenerationVote campaign across both FE and HE.

Whoever forms the next government will find me at the front of the queue to number 10. Alongside Emily Chapman, my excellent successor as VP FE, and the rest of my officer team, we will put a coherent case for strong, active student unions in every provider.

We will hold the new government to account over a Brexit which the majority of students didn't vote for, and we will amplify the voice of learners for a generation, both locally and nationally in a country that is forgetting to listen to them.

It was FE that gave me my voice. I want to work with the sector to make sure that it does the same for millions of others.

EXPERTS

Both Labour and the Lib Dems have made some pre-manifesto pledges on further education, but these should all be taken with a pinch of salt, says Gemma Gathercole

The opening salvos of the election campaign have been fired and now we're getting to the good stuff – well, at least for policy geeks like me.

The messages from Labour and the Liberal Democrats in their pre-manifesto – and leaked draft manifesto – pledges on education will, I'm sure, be welcomed by the sector.

FE features in the headline promises from both parties, although the pledges made by the Labour party go further to address the needs of the whole sector. Though the Conservatives are yet to release any commitments on education, it will be interesting to see their pledges.

One of my favourite quotes from the epic US political TV show 'the West Wing' is about campaigning: you preach to the choir, "because that's how you get them to sing". I wonder how much of these early indicators are designed to appeal to natural party voters and how much will actually cut through to the general public.

Labour's key pledges for education cover the full spectrum of the sector: there are promises affecting schools, colleges and universities – announcements that I'm sure will be welcomed broadly.

For the FE sector, there is a promise to restore the education maintenance allowance



GEMMA GATHERCOLE

Head of funding and assessment, Lsect

Party pledges meaningless?

and an increase for the adult skills budget.

The increase to the adult skills budget is sizeable: an extra £1.5 billion over the course of the parliament, to create a system of free lifelong learning. The announcement talks about providing courses for adults wanting to upskill and reskill. It's good to see that the shadow skills minister's contributions to the 'Save Our Adult Education' campaign have translated into election pledges.

In the announcement, the pledges were said to be funded by reversing the Conservative government's cuts to corporation tax, a figure it places at £20 billion. However, totting up the announcements in Labour's press release, I get a figure closer to £30 billion. It will be interesting to see the full breakdown in the manifesto when released.

The announcements from the Liberal Democrats focus on some familiar areas, including the protection of the pupil

premium that they championed in the coalition government. However, their pledges focus much more on the schools sector rather than full breadth of education.

A single pledge is made for FE; a promise to protect FE funding per pupil in real terms. While a welcome promise for a sector that has seen the impact of significant cuts in very recent memory, it is essentially a focus on 16- to 19-year-olds.

It remains to be seen what the Lib Dems propose regarding adult education or apprenticeships, which is also missing from these pledges. It seems as though we'll have to wait for the manifesto...

As with all pre-election pledges, they need to be taken with a pinch of salt; after all, the promises are made during a campaign, designed to win votes and more importantly, get people to the ballot box to allow them to take power.

But the hard part is that delivery needs to happen when in government and the fantastic thing about a forecast, as my accountant sister reminds me, is that it's only accurate until it's written down. It's quickly out of date, either for positive or negative reasons, as the economy is that it doesn't always perform as expected.

The actual policies that follow will be largely dependent on how the economy performs and/or how much a future government can or will borrow to meet their promises. After all, while "you campaign in poetry, you govern in prose".

“ It's good to see the 'Save Our Adult Education' campaign translated into election pledges

Of course, much of the detailed analysis of the affordability of any of these proposals can only come when we have the full manifestos so the full set of promises can be costed. I for one will be eagerly awaiting them, albeit from my sunbed on holiday.

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FE Week

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

Young plumber's pipe dreams



Piping up: Josh, right, with East Durham's Rob Hutchinson

A plumbing student has been crowned the winner of a skills competition in the north-east.

Seventeen-year-old Josh Wilkinson, who studies a level two EAL diploma in plumbing and heating at East Durham College, took first place in the North East Inter-College Plumbing Competition Final, as the only competitor to successfully build a fully watertight pipe circuit.

Students had four hours to build a complex pipe circuit, with their work scored on dimensional accuracy, pipework joints, soldering, clip spacing, machine pipe bending accuracy and watertight performance.

The challenge was taken on both by Josh and his fellow EDC student, Kyle

McCullough, also 17, who competed with students from the nearby Bishop Auckland College.

The competition was part of a series of inter-college challenges in the region taking place throughout the year, which challenge different vocational disciplines in an effort to build students' practical skills and increase their confidence.

"It was a very close-fought contest with only two points separating them all, but Josh emerged as the winner, being the only competitor to achieve a fully watertight pipe circuit," said Lecturer Tim Beasley.

"Congratulations to Josh, and everyone should be very proud of their performances. They are an absolute credit to their respective colleges."

POST DIAGNOSIS; Colour is reduced to whites and plant forms become spiky and harsh.

The cave-pod is a biophilia retreat where the sufferer's circle of support can meet to heal and re-energise. A soft lining of bung moss, seating to view the journey and curtain waterfall aid reflection and mindfulness

A ceramic stumpy surrounded by spiky planting in silvers and whites represents the pain of symptoms.

POINT OF DIAGNOSIS

The bridge represents the point of diagnosis, often devastating. The structure of the bridge shows the often hidden support of many who help MS sufferers get through the initial diagnosis. (3.4 Bridge schematics)

Hot temperatures exaggerate the symptoms for MS sufferers so cool colours have been used throughout the garden

A 'Top down hedge' of trailing plants atop a mesh fence represents the feeling of entrapment from symptoms of MS.

A semicircular wooden seat amongst softer planting represents the good days, where life with MS can be full and satisfying, reached by a 'Step of faith' from the pod.

Hard la of vario limestone photograph unifying

Plans for the new garden

The college's winning 2016 entry

Multiple sclerosis garden design

Horticulture staff and students at Derby College have designed a garden representing multiple sclerosis as their entry to BBC Gardeners' World Live.

More than 50 students have been involved in the design and building of the garden, which depicts the journey from diagnosis to life with the disease.

The garden will feature soft-flowering plants and spiky thistles to show the difference between good and bad days experienced by those living with MS, as well as a bridge and cave signifying the support available for sufferers of the condition.

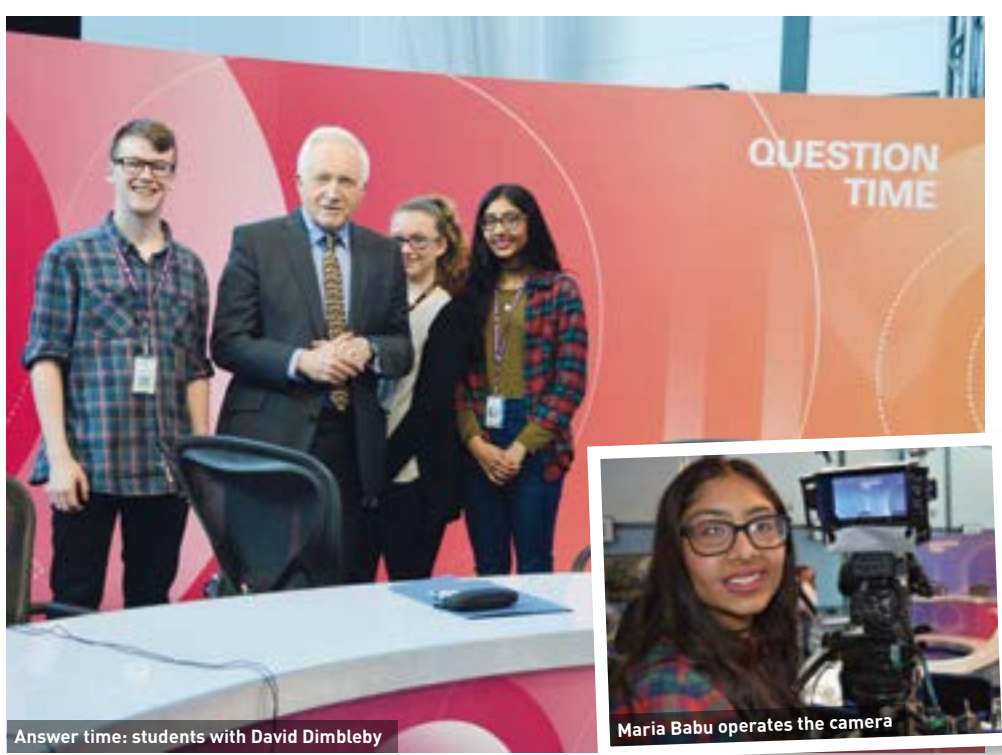
The college teamed up with the Multiple Sclerosis Society to design the garden,

entitled 'Journey to Hope', which will be submitted to the annual gardening event for consideration.

"Following our gold award at last year's BBC Gardener's World Live we were keen to do something even more ambitious this year," explained the college's horticulture lecturer Mike Baldwin.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of the work of the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the challenges, anger, pain and frustration facing more than 100,000 people affected by the neurological condition in the UK.

"It is our biggest project for many years, but we are confident that the results will be striking."



Answer time: students with David Dimbleby

Maria Babu operates the camera

Question time for David Dimbleby

A group of students from Wigan and Leigh College have gone behind the scenes of BBC's Question Time to see what a career in television might be like.

Students from the college's level three media course and A-level professional honours programme took part in backstage preparations and pitched questions to David Dimbleby during a script rehearsal.

During sound checks, the show's long-time presenter took the time to ask them about their studies and their interest in politics.

Students also had the chance to shadow camera operators, audio engineers and producers at the BBC during the rehearsal, to see how the programme was put together.

Maria Babu, a student on the A-level professional honours programme, said: "It was truly an incredible opportunity to be

involved in such a high profile television show such as Question Time. The BBC team were so supportive and willing to answer lots of questions about the technology used on sets and about the show. I got an amazing insight into the world of politics and television."

The college's professional honours programme offers students the option of studying a combination of A-levels and professional qualifications, along with work experience and internships.

"This has been an incredible opportunity for our students wishing to pursue careers within this industry," said Anna Dawe, the college's principal.

"This experience has been invaluable in providing them with opportunities to inform their career aspirations as well as engaging them in current affairs."

Going bananas for exam season

Blackpool Sixth Form College's student council has been on a mission to keep teenagers across the Fylde coast healthy during exam season – by giving out free bananas to those in need.

Each banana comes with a guide produced by the college as part of its 'Learn to Live' healthy eating campaign, and addresses how to deal with exam stress, with tips on ways to stay calm, healthy and hydrated.

The guide has been designed for year 11 pupils, and is being distributed across local schools, including Hodgson Academy, Unity Academy, Montgomery High School and Aspire Academy, in an effort to help students boost their grades and reduce stress levels.

"A group of our students took part in an experiment earlier in the year where they changed their habits for two weeks to see if it had a positive impact, said the college's associate principal Estelle Bellamy.

"Very quickly, they saw huge improvements in their concentration and focus. The student council are really keen to share what they have learned from their research into how learning improves with a healthy lifestyle."



What a nice bunch: the student council's Charlie Moore (left) and Josef Houldsworth

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP**Blood, sweat and shears at Lee Stafford hair competition**

Seven Lee Stafford Education partner colleges took part in a national hairdressing competition at London's L'Oréal Academy, and Chichester College came away with most of the accolades, reports Samantha King

Colleges from across the country have competed in the first ever Lee Stafford Education awards, an event open to any institution partnered with the hairdressing brand.

Students and staff from Chichester College, Peterborough College, Knowsley College, Abingdon and Witney College, South Tyneside College, Croydon College and Tresham College all took part, with Chichester romping home in first with three of the awards.

It was made 'college of the year' in recognition of standards reached by both students and staff, while Lauren Chater, a 17-year-old apprentice, won first place in the first year styling competition with her mermaid-inspired hair design, and the overall 'student of the year' award.

Lauren, who works at the Mark Lewis hair salon in East Wittering, said: "I was really nervous when we were travelling up to London – everyone on the coach was chatting but I was so quiet, which isn't like me at all.

"Once the competition started I just seemed



Lee Stafford, left, with the Chichester College staff team



Year 2 Winner -
Lucy Hill (Peterborough College)



Year 3 Winner - Ellen Takiyi-Berko (Croydon College)



Lauren Chater
(Learner of the Year)

to relax and spent the whole time talking to my model as I worked on her hair. I never thought I'd win, so I was really surprised when they called out my name.

"I thought it was a joke at first as I had seen the other people in my category and they were amazing!

"To go on and win student of the year was unbelievable, especially as I only started the course in September. I was in shock but I'm really happy and my family are very proud

of me."

Lauren's fellow Chichester students Jodie Mayer and Zana Kuklyte came second in the 'cutting and styling' and 'level three colouring' categories, though students from Peterborough College and Croydon College pipped them to first.

Alongside the college's three top prizes, hairdressing tutors Sam Morgan, Sam Lister and Sue Sweeney were presented with a pair of engraved gold scissors in recognition of reaching the highest standard of achievement possible in the partnership, by mastering 22

different hairstyling, cutting and colouring techniques.

"We have always believed we have an enormously talented team in our training salon – and this proves it," said Shelagh Legrave OBE, Chichester's principal.

"The awards given to our students and staff recognise the achievements and effort that they put in every day."

Lee Stafford, the award-winning celebrity hairstylist was also present and posed for photographs with the winners.

"I am fortunate and privileged to be working with so many talented college trainers who have dedicated themselves to developing the next generation of leading stylists," he said.

"The standard of work on show today is truly outstanding and the students should be incredibly proud of what they are achieving."

Since the results were announced, a further three colleges – North Kent College, Doncaster College and North Lindsey College – have signed up to become partners for the 2017/18 academic year.

Do you want to be in Campus Round-up?

If you have a story you'd like to see featured in campus round-up, get in touch by emailing samantha.king@feweek.co.uk



MOVERS & SHAKERS

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

The principal of York College, **Dr Alison Birkinshaw**, is to be the new president of the Association of Colleges.

She will take up the role alongside her current position and will take over from Ian Ashman on August 1.

Ms Birkinshaw began her further education career in 1984 and has sworched as assistant principal of Runshaw College, principal of Nelson and Colne College and most recently, principal of York College; all three were rated outstanding by Ofsted.

In 2012 she was awarded an OBE and this year received an honorary doctorate from the University of York for her services to FE.

"This role will allow me to act as ambassador for the sector, and I look forward to drawing the attention of ministers and others in government to the big difference colleges make to the lives of individuals, communities and employers," she said.

"I hope I can make a difference and live up to the expectations of my fellow principals, although I know that the work of previous

presidents will be a hard act to follow."

Her duties as president – which is a one-year term – will include promoting colleges to government ministers, meeting staff and students, and supporting the AoC's chief executive, David Hughes.

Mary Curnock Cook OBE has been named as the next chair of governors at Kensington and Chelsea College.



ALISON BIRKINSHAW



MARY CURNOCK COOK



GRAHAM GUEST

The college is currently evaluating potential merger partners, with the interim principal, Michelle Sutton CBE, describing Ms Cook's appointment as "exactly what the college needs at this time".

Last month, Ms Cook stepped down as chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service after seven years at the helm.

Prior to joining UCAS, she held the role of director of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, beginning her career doing secretarial work, working in the biochemical industry and then moving on to food and hospitality.

"One of our priorities in the merger is that we secure quality provision in the borough for both school-leavers and adults, combined with the efficiencies which will come from

being part of a larger organisation," she said.

"The magic of colleges is that they are the part of the education system that likes to say 'yes' to people's aspirations regardless of where they need to start and which study route they need to take to fulfil their ambition."

Graham Guest has been announced as the new principal and CEO of Telford College of Arts & Technology and New College Telford.

He will take the helm of TCAT and NCT with immediate effect, having previously been in post as deputy principal at Waltham Forest College.

The two colleges plan to merge and rebrand as Telford College on August 1; TCAT's interim principal Ian Clinton will remain in post until July 31 to support Mr Guest in the lead up to the merger.

Mr Guest has worked in education for 28 years, beginning his career as a lecturer in building services. He has since gone on to work for six further education colleges, alongside running his own training provider business.

"There have been great strides made this year and I will be looking to keep up the momentum and take the new college to the next level with the support of staff," he said.

"There is the opportunity to share best practice, knowledge and expertise from both sites and to build a strong and successful college in Telford."

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TAKING PLACE ALONGSIDE



FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: Michael Riches