

# FE Week

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## 'ALARMING': ESFA STILL GIVING ONE-MAN BANDS ACCESS TO MILLIONS



- Yet more firms approved to deliver apprenticeships with no track record
- Individuals with no website, office or employees given thumbs-up by ESFA
- Shadow minister fears repeat of ILA scandal and calls for investigation

Exclusive **BILLY CAMDEN** @BILLYCAMDEN

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## NEWS

# UTC founds feeder school against Baker trust's wishes

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

A university technical college that has struggled to recruit students is opening an 11-14 feeder school next door, despite opposition from the Baker Dearing Trust, which is responsible for overseeing UTCs.

The school, which will be called 'the Inspiration Academy@Leigh UTC' will open in September, operating on the same plot of land and directly opposite Leigh UTC in Kent.

It will be run by the Leigh Academies Trust (LAT), which already sponsors 15 schools in Kent including Leigh UTC.

The school will take 120 students per year who will follow a STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths)-based curriculum, and who will win an automatic place at the neighbouring 14-19 UTC.

Leigh UTC has struggled to attract students on its own since opening in 2014. It is rated 'good' by Ofsted but less than a third of places are filled and it experienced a 17 per cent drop in student numbers this academic year.

Stephen Leahey, who will lead both the UTC and the Inspiration Academy, said student numbers at the college "will go up as a result



Leigh UTC

of the new school".



Stephen Leahey

However the new system will go ahead without the blessing of the Baker Dearing Trust, which said it would not grant a licence for schools to operate as UTCs if they include students at key stage three, because "children should not be specialising under the age of 14".

It is this barrier which forced the Inspiration Academy to open as a

separate school, rather than simply creating an 11-19 UTC.

The trust sees the new system as a form of 11-19 UTC, though students are able to enter or exit the pathway at three ages – 11, 14 and 16.

If students reach the age of 14 and do not want to continue at the UTC, they will be offered a place at one of LAT's other secondary schools, which are all rated 'good' or better by Ofsted.

But Kevin Courtney, the general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said it

"does not make sense" to base a new school around efforts to preserve a UTC.

"The closure of UTCs up and down the country is evidence that this model of 14-19 education has failed. There is a danger here that decisions that will affect children's education are being made to support structures rather than learning."

Mr Courtney added that "potentially limiting" the opportunity for a "broad and balanced" curriculum at age 11 is "a backward step".

But Mr Leahey said that while the new school will have a "specific focus" on STEM subjects, learners will be taught a "broad and balanced" curriculum and will study art, PE, languages, and a "healthy minds" programme.

He told FE Week that children aged 10 and 11 already "have a passion for STEM" and it was a "no-brainer" to build a school that "meets that need".

A spokesperson for the Baker Dearing Trust said it hoped many pupils from the key stage three feeder school would want to move to Leigh UTC but "we would not wish them to feel that they were obliged to do so".

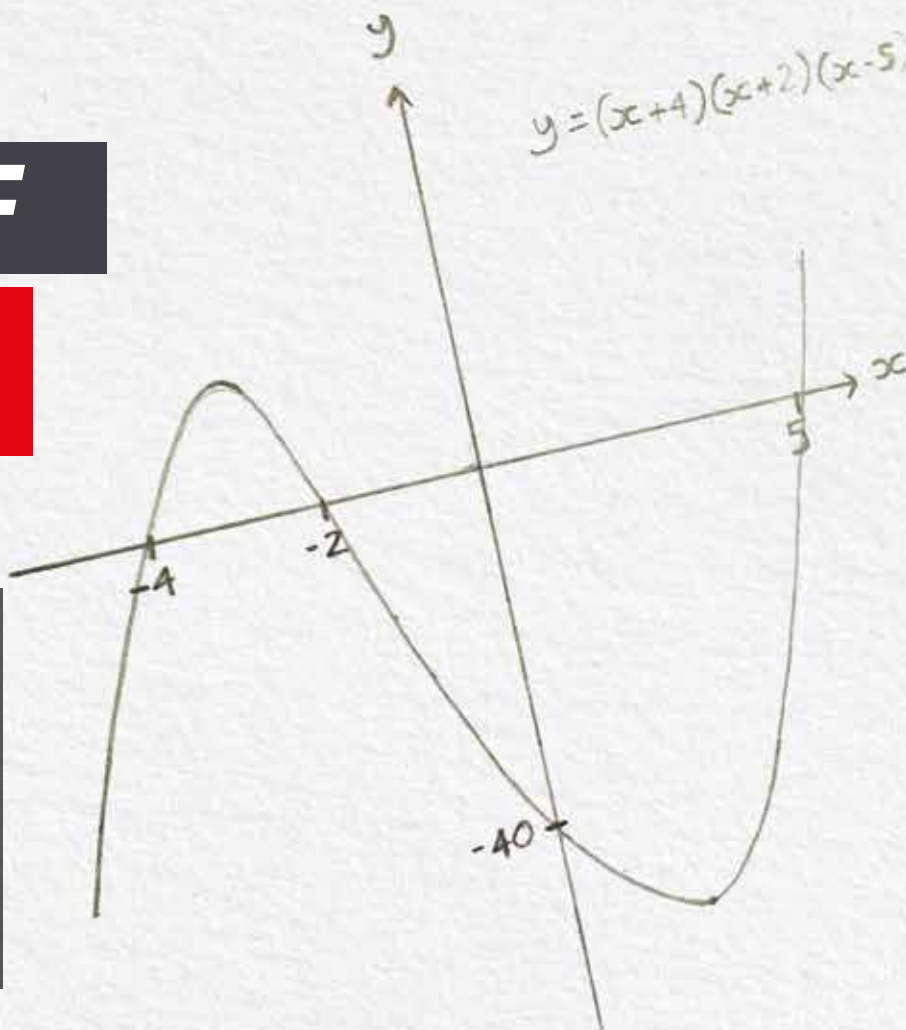
The first cohort of year 7s at the new 11-14 academy will initially start in Leigh UTC's building in September, with its new adjacent building due to be ready after Christmas.

See comment on page 14

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## NEWS

# Confusion for new providers over compulsory training

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

Hundreds of training providers don't know when they can start apprenticeship programmes, because the government has failed to inform them of the mandatory training they need to complete first.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency

has added over 500 companies to the register of apprenticeship training providers, but FE Week has found that none were told they would need the mandatory ESFA training that was first revealed in March at FE Week's Annual Apprenticeship Conference.

Over 800 providers attended the training in April, but the ESFA has never actually published details of this requirement, leaving many to wonder whether it had been scrapped.

Despite this, a Department for Education spokesperson confirmed to FE Week that the mandatory training was still necessary, and admitted the government would be writing to the new providers about it shortly.

Many organisations which classify as new apprenticeship providers on the RoATP have told FE Week that they are "confused" by this as they were unaware of the requirement.

The only communication any of them have had from the ESFA is the notification of their successful applications to the register on May 17 via the government's tendering portal Bravo, but there was no mention of mandatory training nor the date they could recruit funded apprentices.

The ESFA's updated RoATP web page notes May 17 as the date for delivery for new entrants – implying starts are acceptable from then, an undertaking impossible for new providers as they haven't yet completed the mandatory training.

An ESFA spokesperson told FE Week that "all providers" were "notified of the steps they need to take to set up with our systems and sign their provider agreement".

They continued: "Further communication will be issued shortly, including information about mandatory training and details of their provider manager who will be their point of contact in the ESFA."

In March, the agency's director of funding and programmes Keith Smith told delegates at FE Week's event that "any new provider

will be required to attend mandatory training", something that's "going to happen before any apprenticeship activity starts".

New providers would all "be case-loaded with an account manager in the agency" for "one-to-one sessions".

He said the agency would then take a "snapshot" of the new provider's delivery three to six months into their training, at which point they could potentially be taken off the register following a "pass-or-fail judgment".

FE Week understands that the training sessions for providers included in the first round of the RoATP was comprised of one-day sessions which included videos on how they can claim funding.

The mandatory training is only for those providers who have never had an agency allocation contract before.

As revealed by FE Week in March, the first round of the RoATP included many new providers who had no delivery experience whatsoever.

One person operating from a rented office in Knutsford, Cheshire had succeeded in getting their three companies, Cranage Ltd, Obscurant Limited, and Tatton Solutions Ltd onto the approved 'main route' register – even though none of them had run government-funded apprenticeships.

An Essex-based private provider was also accepted onto the RoATP despite only being incorporated in February last year, apparently from a residential property.



## College staff face 10% pay cut – but do management?

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

Staff at a college in the north-east are facing pay cuts of up to 10 per cent due to their employer's "real financial challenges" – although it's unclear whether senior managers will also see their salaries reduced.

Lecturers and staff have been warned that Darlington College's finances are in a perilous state, and a consultation has been launched on a controversial savings plan.

The college refused to show FE Week the consultation document – or confirm whether the pay cuts would also apply to senior managers.

Additional enquiries relating to whether the senior team was paid bonuses following the college's recently improved Ofsted rating, and whether there would be any bonuses this year, also drew a blank.

The University and College Union insisted that the cuts amounted to poor treatment of the staff who had transformed the college's Ofsted performance from 'inadequate' to 'good' – particularly if top managers do not share the pain of salary drops.

Speaking on behalf of its angry members,

UCU regional official Iain Owens told FE Week: "The people who delivered the improved Ofsted result are being rewarded with a pay cut.

"The principal's words about how difficult things are for everyone ring hollow, if she is not being hit with the pay cut or change in duties that she believes staff should suffer."

The FE commissioner visited two years ago, following an 'inadequate' verdict from Ofsted, and the resulting report recognised "a renewed energy to address the issues".

This positive view was confirmed in June last year, when Ofsted recognised widespread improvements by rating it 'good' overall.

"This has been a very difficult decision to reach and a very painful decision," principal Kate Roe told the Northern Echo. "However, the reality is the college faces real financial challenges, which won't go away. All cuts are painful no matter where you sit."

She added that the "savings" would not affect the choice of courses available to school leavers, apprenticeships or adult learners at the college – which was allocated just over £5 million for 2016/17 by the former Skills Funding Agency as of March.

"The declining number of 16- to 18-year-olds and the cuts in government funding mean we have had no choice but to do this,"



Ms Roe said. "We have started a consultation with staff and we are open to alternative suggestions."

The most recent accounts available for the college, which are published up until the end of July last year, indicated a positive balance of £6,045,000, but it is understood that the financial issues have come to a head due to the planned merger with Stockton Riverside College.

This was one of three mergers proposed through the Tees Valley area review of post-16 education and training. That review, part of wave one of the national programme, was just the second to complete in May 2016.

A proposed partnership between Redcar and Cleveland College and Middlesbrough College is still underway, though the link-up between Hartlepool FE and sixth form colleges has been called off.

## INVESTIGATES

# Glacial progress for colleges' apprentice delivery

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

Colleges deliver just one in five apprenticeships last year, meaning virtually no progress has been made in the 18 months since they were told to get more involved by the minister at the time.

This figure, based on FE Week analysis of data obtained by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers through a freedom of information request, exposes widespread failure to act on former skills minister Nick Boles' 2015 plea to Association of Colleges' conference delegates to stop letting independent providers "nick your lunch".

The data, from the Department for Education, shows that 74 per cent of all apprenticeship starts, or 376,940 of 510,070 made in 2015/16, were with independent training providers.

There were just 21 per cent (104,690) for FE colleges – one percentage point up from 2014/15.

The remaining 28,440 were delivered by local authorities, universities, sixth form and specialist colleges.

Put another way, for every 20 apprentices,

	Working as a prime		Working as a subcontractor		Total	
General FE colleges	96,180	27%	8,510	6%	104,690	21%
Private training providers	246,370	68%	130,570	88%	376,940	74%
Other	19,530	5%	8,910	6%	28,440	6%
	362,080		147,990		510,070	

15 were trained by ITPs, four at colleges and one elsewhere.

David Hughes, the AoC's chief executive brushed aside the lack of college progress, saying: "The next government should help employers of all sizes use apprenticeships, as part of their workforce development and ensure all apprentices get a great experience. Who delivers on the number of apprenticeships is less important."

AELP boss Mark Dawe argued that this low percentage was "no surprise", and insisted the government should not try and fix the market to benefit colleges.

"With the information available including Ofsted judgements, employers are perfectly capable of choosing a training provider, college or another type of provider that will be responsive to their needs," he said. "Let them get on with it."

The FoI data showed colleges had subcontracted around 40 per cent (64,930) of their apprenticeships last academic year.

Nearly one in three overall apprenticeships, or 29 per cent (147,320), were subcontracted.

FE Week invited a number of colleges that subcontract the majority of their provision to explain why they are not delivering the provision themselves.

Monica Box, the interim principal of Lambeth College, which only delivered 12 per cent of its 950 starts directly last year, said: "The college is working to increase the internal delivery of apprenticeships from 2017/18.

"This will take the form of a phased increase over three years and will be supported by staff development and quality improvement plans, that ensure the transition generates high-quality delivery."

A spokesperson for Newham College, which delivered 13 per cent of its 1,290 starts directly, said it took "a successful approach

some years ago, to subcontract apprenticeship provision, maximising its reach into local communities.

"The college group's apprenticeship capacity has increased, and it is now focusing on delivering more apprenticeships directly.

"The amount of partnership delivery has reduced and the planned direct delivery for the college group in 2017/18 is 40 per cent."

Mike Hopkins, the interim principal of Bournville College, which delivered 26 per cent of its 810 starts directly, conceded that it "has delivered a large proportion of its apprenticeship provision through subcontracting".

"But this will be changing as part of the merger with South and City College Birmingham, where there are no subcontracting arrangements," he added.

"As a merged college, we will continue to be committed to delivering high quality apprenticeship provision and we look forward to growing this area."

## Just three new recruits for chartered status

ALIX ROBERTSON  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The Chartered Institution for FE has recruited just one new college and two independent training providers in the last six months.

The two ITPs welcomed into the CIFE today are Steadfast Training Ltd, rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2014, and Skills Group, rated 'outstanding' in 2011. The identity of the new college member will be revealed next week.

The CIFE grants FE providers chartered status – which they hope will become a respected, sector-wide quality mark – if they pass its rigorous entrance process.

This requires evidence of qualities such as "an exemplary record of corporate governance", "satisfactory financial health", and a reputation for "honesty, openness and transparency" within the sector.

The three new additions will bring total membership of the 18-month old institution to just seven at present, alongside existing members Hawk Training, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Bridgwater College, and Furness College.

But CIFE chief executive Dan Wright said he is focused on dramatically boosting the body's intake, and plans for at least 80 members overall in the next two years.

The annual subscription fee for members who have achieved chartered status is



£5,000, but for interested parties there is also a £3,000 non-refundable fee to have an application reviewed in the first place.

Mr Wright acknowledged that in terms of outreach the CIFE had not got off to flying start.

"A lot was achieved in setting up the chartered institution, but in terms of getting out there and moving it forward, we had made some progress but we're beginning to see quite a lot of traction now," he said.

Alongside the three new members already approved, he says a further is "under review".

The Queen approved the grant of a Royal Charter to the Institution for FE in June 2015. The body opened for applications in November.



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# Conservatives and Labour spell out FE and

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

FROM FRONT

In a surprise move, the Conservatives say that, if elected, they will allow large firms to use apprentice levy funds to pay wages – in a manifesto that retains the commitment to three million starts by 2020.

The document, launched on May 18, also commits to a major review of FE funding, which could involve a look at the future of advanced learning loans.

But no commitment is made to expanding university technical colleges – a stark contrast to the party’s 2015 general election manifesto.

As part of a pledge to introduce a national retraining scheme, this year’s manifesto says: “Under the scheme, the costs of training will be met by the government, with companies able to gain access to the apprenticeship levy to support wage costs during the training period”.

The pledge will add further strain to the levy, which is also expected to be used to fund apprenticeship training in companies not subject to the charge.

And it remains unclear whether this would prioritise young apprentices, given concerns that employers could shun them over older and more experienced candidates.

There is nothing on how the party plans to support skills training for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and the manifesto is released amid concerns that providers are receiving much-reduced allocations for delivering apprenticeships to smaller non-levy employers for the next eight months.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said he was “a little concerned” about the wages pledge, and lack of apparent support for SME apprenticeships.

“The levy is going to transform skills and productivity among large employers, but growth in the economy is heavily dependent on SMEs,” he told FE Week. “We must ensure that enough funding from whichever source is being directed towards supporting the apprenticeships of these businesses.”

But the proposal was welcomed by Neil Carberry, the CBI director for people and skills policy, who said it was a “good first step towards creating the flexible skills levy that employers want to see: one which enables levy funds to be invested in a much broader range of training and associated cost and delivers the skills needed to boost growth and productivity in the economy”.

And David Hughes, the Association of Colleges’ chief executive, said the proposal “has merit”, although he warned it “must not result in employers reducing their own training spending”.

A Conservative spokesperson said the party believed the levy funds “should be sufficient to support wage costs”.

The new manifesto includes a promise to



Theresa May

PA/WIRE

“deliver on the commitment to create three million apprenticeships for young people by 2020” – the same target it set two years ago.

There is a commitment to “launch a major review of funding across tertiary education as a whole, looking at how students can get access to financial support that offers value for money, is available across different routes and encourages the development of the skills needed as a country”.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges’ Association, was “delighted” the Conservatives had promised to carry out a funding review.

“This should focus on the growing gap between the funding made available to educate sixth formers and the actual cost of delivering an academic curriculum,” he said.

FE Week has asked for further details about this review, and whether it will focus specifically on advanced learner loans, but did not receive a response before publication.

Take-up on advanced learner loans, first introduced in 2013, has been slow, with the system open to fraud.

There is no mention in the manifesto of troubled UTCs, which have struggled to attract sufficient learners to their post-14 recruitment model, in contrast to the 2015 manifesto which said “We will ensure there is a UTCs within reach of every city”.

## The key pledges for FE and skills from the Conservative manifesto include:

- Allowing firms to use levy credit to pay apprentice wages
- Achieving the target of three million apprenticeship starts by 2020 from the 2015 manifesto
- National Productivity Investment Fund, including £250 million in funding for skills by 2020 to boost productivity
- Double the Immigration Skills Charge for business employing skilled workers from outside the EU from £1,000 to £2,000 per employee
- Establish new institutes of technology, backed by leading employers and linked to leading universities, in every major

city in England. They will provide courses at degree level and above, specialising in technical disciplines, such as STEM, whilst also providing higher-level apprenticeships and bespoke courses for employers.

- Introduce a UCAS-style portal for technical education
- Introduce significantly discounted bus and train travel for apprentices to ensure that no young person is deterred from an apprenticeship due to travel costs
- Deal with local skills shortages and ensure that colleges deliver the skills required by local businesses through Skills Advisory Panels and Local Enterprise Partnerships working at a regional and local level.

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# and skills manifesto election commitments



**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

The next Labour government would make cost reductions and increase access, according to ambitious education pledges in its general election manifesto.

It would “introduce free, lifelong education in FE colleges, enabling everyone to upskill or retrain at any point in life”.

It would also “increase the adult skills budget by £1.5 billion”, up to £3 billion per year by 2021/22, according to the shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden.

If elected, Labour would “replace advanced learner loans and upfront course fees with direct funding”, to make FE courses “free at the point of use” – including English lessons for speakers of other languages.

These changes would bring FE and skills in line with the party’s pledges for higher education – where Labour aims to “reintroduce maintenance grants for university students” and “abolish university tuition fees”.

**The key pledges for FE and skills from the Labour manifesto were as follows:**

- Scrap fees and loans by doubling the Adult Education Budget to £3 billion
- Restore the education maintenance allowance for 16- to 18-year-olds
- Abandon Conservative plans to build new technical colleges, redirecting the money to increase teacher numbers in the FE sector
- Share the broad aims of the Sainsbury Review, but ensure vocational routes incorporate the service sector as well as traditional manufacturing
- Improve careers advice and open up a range of routes through education, striking a balance between classroom and on-the-job

training

- Give the sector investment in teachers and facilities, to allow it to become a world leader
- Encourage cooperation and leadership across colleges and sixth forms, improving curriculum breadth and quality
- Set a target, backed up by funding, for all FE teaching staff to have a teaching qualification within five years
- Extend support for training to teachers in the private sector
- Increase capital investment to equip colleges to deliver T-levels and an official pre-apprenticeship trainee programme
- Maintain the apprenticeship levy and 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
- Set a target to double the number of completed apprenticeships at NVQ level three by 2022
- Give employers more flexibility in how the levy is deployed, including allowing the levy to be used for pre-apprenticeship programmes
- Guarantee trade union representation in the governance structures of the Institute of Apprenticeships
- Protect the £440 million funding for apprenticeships for small-and medium-sized employers who don’t pay the levy
- Set targets to increase apprenticeships for and representation of women, people with disabilities, care leavers and veterans
- Consult on introducing incentives for large employers to over-train numbers of apprentices to fill skills gaps
- Reverse cuts to Unionlearn
- Set up a commission on lifelong learning tasked with integrating further and higher education

## Lib Dems pledge to double firms hiring apprentices

**JUDE BURKE**  
@JUDEBURKE77

A boost to the numbers of businesses taking on apprentices is the central plank of the Liberal Democrats’ skills policy – in contrast to the other parties’ focus on apprentice numbers alone.

The pledge would see the number of companies employing apprentices shoot up from 190,153 to just over 380,000.

**The key pledges for FE and skills from the Liberal Democrats’ manifesto include:**

- Doubling the number of employers taking on apprentices

- Creating individual accounts for funding mature adult and part-time learning and training, and ensuring all adults have individual access to all necessary career information, advice and guidance
- Developing national colleges as national centres of expertise for key sectors, such as renewable energy, to deliver the high-level vocational skills that businesses need
- Working with the Apprenticeship Advisory Group to increase the number of apprentices from BAME backgrounds, ensure gender balance across industry sectors and encourage underrepresented groups to apply.
- Identifying and solving skills gaps such as the lack of advanced technicians by expanding higher vocational training



like foundation degrees, higher national diplomas, higher national certificates and higher apprenticeships.

- Ensuring that all the receipts from the apprenticeship levy in England are spent on training, aiming to fund a wider range of types of training.

- Aiming to meet all basic skills needs including literacy, numeracy and digital skills by 2030.
- Facilitating across the UK an effective and comprehensive system for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning and qualifications.

INVESTIGATES

# What now for struggling\* colleges t

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

When they were launched in July 2015, the area reviews were expected to result in a huge number of college mergers.

The former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills made it clear that the aim of this mass rethink of nationwide post-16 education and training was to create “fewer, larger and more resilient” colleges.

Early predictions from the then-FE commissioner Sir David Collins were that the number of colleges could drop by a third once the process was over, with up to 80 mergers taking place.

But by March this year the prognosis from his successor Richard Atkins was for “50-ish” mergers.

And published reports into the first three waves of the reviews, which involved 138 colleges and 70 sixth form colleges, revealed

firm recommendations for just 37 mergers – a number that is likely to fall even further.

FE Week analysis has revealed that more than a quarter of these proposed mergers – 11 of the 37 – have either fallen through or changed since the reviews ended.

It’s not always clear why these unions aren’t working out, and in many cases, the colleges involved simply won’t say.

But when a college partnership falls apart, the weaker party is often left needing to find another merger partner just to secure its future.

This could be because of poor finances, a bad Ofsted rating or because the college is too small to survive in the longer term.

We’ve outlined the 11, and highlighted the party that could find itself in this position – as well as any further plans the college might have.

\* Not all of these providers are struggling – but as we move into a world in which colleges will be allowed to go bust, there could be trouble ahead for any one of them.

## Mid-Cheshire College

The Cheshire and Warrington area review recommended a four-way merger that has since unravelled.

Grade two South Cheshire College and grade three West Cheshire College merged at the end of March.

But grade four Mid Cheshire College and grade three Warrington Collegiate opted to pair up separately – even though both have financial notices of concern, and the FE commissioner recommended last year that Mid Cheshire should “seek a merger with a strong partner while there is time to do so”.

We asked Mid Cheshire why it chose



Warrington as a merger partner, but did not receive a response.

Ofsted score:	FE Commissioner:	Notice of concern:	Revenue (2014/15):
Grade 4	Administered status	Financial health, inspection, minimum standards	£12.7 million

## Stockport College

A link-up involving Stockport, Oldham and Tameside colleges was one of two mergers to come out of the Greater Manchester review – but this was scrapped following intervention by the FE commissioner at grade four Stockport in December.

The college, which has been in administered status since 2013 and is in precarious financial health, is now planning to join forces with grade two Trafford College, with a merger date set for December 31.

Transition principal Dr Mike Potter told FE Week that Trafford was its “preferred partner” for a number of reasons including location and



“meeting the skills needs and specialisms” of the area.

Ofsted score:	FE Commissioner:	Notice of concern:	Revenue (2014/15):
Grade 4	Administered status	Financial health, inspection, minimum standards	£22.8 million

## Bury College

Grade three-rated Bury College was set for an innovative merger with the University of Bolton and Bolton College, as recommended by the Greater Manchester area review.

But, as reported by FE Week, the college was recently dropped from those plans, with the sticking point being that it would not be able to merge on the terms originally agreed.

Principal Charlie Deane confirmed that the college – which recently lost the ‘outstanding’ Ofsted rating it held for nearly a decade – was still financially “very strong” and planning to “remain standalone for the foreseeable future”.



Ofsted score:	FE Commissioner:	Notice of concern:	Revenue (2014/15):
Grade 3	No intervention	None	£33.4 million

## South Staffordshire College

A merger between grade three South Staffordshire College and grade one Walsall College would mean the latter’s financial strength would “impact positively” on South Staffs, according to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire area review report.

But earlier this month, the college told FE Week the merger was off as the costs “outweighed the benefits to the learners and the wider communities we serve”.

It subsequently announced plans to close one its campuses, in Cannock, as a cost-saving measure. But when FE Week asked if it was planning to seek another merger partner the



college declined to comment, citing “political sensitivities”.

Ofsted score:	FE Commissioner:	Notice of concern:	Revenue (2014/15):
Grade 3	No intervention	None	£25 million

## Hartlepool Sixth Form College

A merger between grade two Hartlepool Sixth Form College and grade two Hartlepool College of FE was recommended through the Tees Valley area review. But in March the SFC announced it was planning to join forces with Sunderland College instead – but refused to say why its plans had changed.

At the same time, it was hit with a financial notice to improve from the ESFA, and was subsequently visited by the SFC commissioner.

His report deemed the SFC “unviable on a standalone basis” and he pressed for it to merge with Sunderland “as a matter of urgency”.



Ofsted score:	SFC Commissioner:	Notice of concern:	Revenue (2014/15):
Grade 2	In intervention	Financial	£5.9 million



# What tried and failed in bid to merge?

## Lakes College West Cumbria

The Cumbria area review ended with a recommendation for grade two Carlisle College and grade three Lakes College to merge to create a "large, financially sustainable and resilient" institution that would "benefit from economies of scale".

But Carlisle – which was handed a notice of concern from the ESFA in November – rejected this in favour of joining Newcastle-based NCG in April.

FE Week asked Lakes College if it was seeking another merger partner, or planning to go it alone, but it declined to comment.

However, at the time the proposed merger



was called off, the college said it had "full confidence" it was "sustainable".

<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 3	No intervention	None	£13.4 million

## Waltham Forest College

FE Week reported in April that a planned link-up between grade two Barnet and Southgate College and grade three Waltham Forest College – recommended through the east and west London reviews – had been called off.

Penny Wycherley, Waltham Forest's principal, told FE Week that the college was seeking a new partner.

She explained the college did not have to merge but "in the light of the area review process and long-term sustainability we believe we ought to".

A call for expressions of interest had



generated "quite a degree of interest" and she was confident the college would decide on a future partner in June.

<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 3	No intervention	None	£21.3 million

## Guildford College

Grade three Guildford College and grade one Farnborough College emerged from the area review process with plans to merge, after taking part in separate reviews.

The Surrey review report made it clear that remaining standalone "would not be in the best interests of students" at Guildford, which currently has notices of concern for both financial health and minimum standards.

Despite this, plans for the link-up have reportedly been put on hold. A spokesperson for the college told FE Week that the merger would be discussed at its corporation meeting this week.



<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 3	2014 – out of intervention 2015	Financial health, minimum standards	£35.3 million

## Doncaster College

The Sheffield area review ended with a proposal for grade two Doncaster College to merge with grade one Barnsley College – but this was swiftly rejected by governors at Doncaster.

The college has since announced plans to join grade two North Lindsey College, having had "informal discussions" about a possible merger since last year, according to a college spokesperson. Among the benefits of the new merger was the ability to "establish a skills infrastructure that supports the economic connections across an east-west corridor from the Sheffield City region to the Humber", she said.



<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 2	No intervention	None	£30.1 million

## Stanmore College

Previously troubled Stanmore College, which bounced back from a grade four to a grade two in 18 months, emerged from the west London area review with a recommendation to link up with three other nearby colleges – Harrow, Uxbridge and West Thames.

But the college turned this down in favour of a merger with grade one West Hertfordshire, which had been the college's preferred option following an FE commissioner-led structure and prospects appraisal.

However, as reported by FE Week, this partnership was dropped just three months after it was announced. We asked if the college



had any plans to seek a new merger partner, but did not get a response.

<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 2	Administered status	Inspection	£11 million

## West Thames College

A proposed merger between grade three Harrow College, grade one Uxbridge College and grade two West Thames College – as recommended through the West London area review – went out for consultation in October.

According to the consultation document the merged organisation would "provide a strong financial profile that ensures its sustainability and growth".

But that three-way merger subsequently became a two-way, as West Thames dropped out of the proposal. It's not clear why, or what its plans are now, as the college declined to comment when FE Week asked.



<b>Ofsted score:</b>	<b>FE Commissioner:</b>	<b>Notice of concern:</b>	<b>Revenue (2014/15):</b>
Grade 2	No intervention	None	£22.5 million

# INVESTIGATES

# Assessment organisations put to the test

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

End-point assessment has been a huge source of anxiety for providers across the sector this year, amid a growing scandal over the glaring lack of apprentice assessment organisations approved to deliver the new tests.

Every apprenticeship standard approved for delivery must now include an EPA carried out by an independent organisation listed on the government's register of AAOs.

But there aren't enough AAOs – a state of affairs that's increasingly worrying to FE Week readers – so we decided to carry out

a mystery shopper exercise to see what the customer experience was like.

We first reported on delays to government approval of AAOs in April last year, when only 13 had been cleared to deliver EPA for 23 of the 88 apprenticeship standards ready for delivery at the time.

Then Dr Susan Pember, a former senior civil servant at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, stepped up in June 2016 to say it was “morally wrong” to start an apprentice on a course without having the end-point assessment in place.

Her comments made waves, and in October – when it was revealed that almost 60 per cent of apprenticeship standards were still without – others from the sector expressed their worries

about the EPA process.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, described EPA as “a nightmare” at the time.

Apprenticeships and skills minister Robert Halfon provided cold comfort to a now-panicking FE sector when in November 2016 he said he was “pretty sure” no apprentices would reach the end of their course without an AAO in place.

And in December, FE Week analysis showed that 78 standards were still without an AAO – just over half of the total approved for delivery. Currently 105 out of 163 have an AAO in place.

For our investigation, FE Week chose one of

the apprenticeship standards with most starts – the level two ‘customer service practitioner’ – and contacted each of the AAOs approved to deliver EPA for this course.

We called up pretending to be a college with apprentices on roll who were ready to do their EPA, and asked each organisation to explain what service they could offer.

All of the companies contacted were regulated awarding organisations as well as approved AAOs, though they had been approved for delivery of EPA for different lengths of time.

Based on our customer service experience and the details provided by each AAO, we have rated them out of five stars – check out the results below.

Customer services standard AAO	Star rating out of 5	Mystery shopping experience	EPA price per apprentice
City & Guilds	★ ★ ★	Basic information clearly accessible on website, a guidance pack is available for centres on how to prepare apprentices for EPA, able to speak to a member of staff over the phone for details after two attempts, subsequently received email with clear and detailed factsheet on the apprenticeship standard and EPA, service will be available from July.	£580 - £100 per apprentice for EPA registration which releases on-programme materials and £480 at EPA reservation (fixed price)
Pearson Education Ltd	★	Basic information clearly accessible from website, offer an EPA toolkit. Service available from September. Very difficult to get through to someone who could answer questions about EPA over the phone, on hold for 10 mins, passed around to others who were unable to deal with enquiry. Left details but enquiry was not followed up. Information gathered from press office instead. Pearson said: “We are very grateful to FE Week for highlighting their experience to us and disappointed that on this occasion the quality and speed of our customer service was not to the high standard we attempt to ensure.”	From £550
Innovate Awarding Ltd	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Website has a full page on background information about EPA, including videos and FAQs via a link on the homepage. Relevant member of the team was out when first called, but they called back promptly to discuss. Provided full EPA proposal via email with link to a webinar with further details. Able to allocate an individual assessor to each customer. Information about individual standards not found on website.	£450 per learner but could negotiate if there's more than one learner with an employer (Website lists various factors considered in price, including location)
NCFE	★ ★	Website has a clearly marked section for end-point assessment with detailed information. Offers contact details for an “EPA team”. Prices for different standards declared online. Ready now. Offering pre-programme guidance and support material for learners at ‘mock assessment’ stages. Has live cohorts of learners on the standard now. No response on EPA team phone number. Reception said a call back would be arranged in 24-48 hours. Called back next day to follow up and repeat request was noted but still no one to talk to. Information eventually gathered from press office.	£400
Active IQ	★ ★ ★	Some information on the website but quite general. Email address for requesting more info. Called Friday and was told the person I needed to speak to was out and wouldn't be back in until Tuesday. Called on Tuesday and spoke to someone who was helpful. Had the basic information and offered to arrange for a specialist to come and visit. New to EPA so details are still being finalised. Would aim to provide learning documents for EPA from the beginning.	Customer Service Practitioner - £400 Included in this price: - Apprentice End-point Assessment toolkit - Employer/Provider toolkit - Qualified experienced assessment team
BIIAB	★	EPA not mentioned on website home page. Found some brief details under trailblazer apprenticeships tab. Relevant person was not in the office when I called, but received a call back within 24 hours. Was told BIIAB prefer to arrange a face to face meeting to discuss full details, rather than over the phone. After mystery shopping was revealed, received following quote from Gareth Phillips, commercial director, BIIAB: “A lot of the things we are doing at this time are commercially confidential. We only do work based learning and we will discuss the delivery and Quality Assurance of Standards and EPA processes holistically. We are very happy to meet and share our approach with our Providers and Employers and to go through all the details including pricing. Currently, we've probably done more than anybody else. We truly understand this and at the moment we are creating resources for our providers and employers. We have several hundred centres out there so we are trying to support them directly through these very difficult early days.”	Undisclosed
Highfield	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Good experience on website - EPA is one of main options to click on for home page. Useful video explaining the EPA service available. Details of purpose built IT system developed to schedule EPAs. Description of how EPA works and list of standards. Able to speak with someone easily via calling the switchboard. Very well informed and helpful. Lots of detail clearly explained. Emailed over a thorough textbook of information on meeting regulations and legislation for the standard, a trailblazer specification and a detailed pitch for EPA services. Will provide a customised plan (including pricing) for each customer based on their individual needs.	£365 per apprentice. Price is based on “the employer/training provider providing a suitable venue/room for assessment”. Can group learners for EPA which may bring down the cost per learner.
iCQ	★ ★ ★ ★	Some general information available on the website. Able to speak with someone easily and promptly over the phone. iCQ provide a flexible, browser-based system for recording learner's progress. Also developed a web video tool to conduct remote professional discussions, which could potentially be used for practical observations. iCQ added to the Register of Approved Assessment Organisations in past two weeks. Information sheets are being developed for each of the end-point assessments and will be available in the next week.	Cost - £400 per apprentice
NOCN	★ ★ ★ ★	Some information on website under different headings. List of standards available. Could not speak to someone directly over the phone but received a call back within 24 hours. Very well informed and helpful. Flexible about when and where for EPA, though practical observation will be in workplace. Aim to get involved early in the process, while maintaining independence. Provide a handbook to clarify information for provider/employer. Detailed, informative brochure sent over via email promptly. Phone number shared for direct calls if follow up needed.	£588 per apprentice – Possibility for negotiation with large cohorts or more apprentices that can be assessed in a single day. Prices broken down into component parts of the EPA - if test is failed there is a resit charge, but only for specific part that was failed (not whole amount).
SkillsFirst	★ ★ ★	Very easy to find information on website, clear details. Linked to gov.uk website. List of standards available. Unable to speak to relevant member of staff on first call, but he was available on second call and was helpful. EPA can be booked online when ready and an assessor will be allocated. Independent assessor will also visit the apprentice in their workplace to conduct the observation and professional discussion. Offered the opportunity to attend a briefing on July 5 at the SkillsFirst head office in Birmingham to learn more (free of charge).	Information on cost will not be available until the end of next week - in the process of being confirmed.

# Customer service test in our mystery shop

## Summary of the standard

The customer service practitioner apprenticeship standard is a level two apprenticeship, which takes a minimum of 12 months to complete.

In the role, apprentices must "deliver high-quality products and services to the customers of their organisation".

According to the standard, this can be "delivered from the workplace, digitally, or through going out into the customer's own locality".

Apprentices are also expected to "demonstrate excellent customer service skills and behaviours as well as product and/or service knowledge when delivering to your customers".

The customer service practitioner apprenticeship standard is the third most popular standard this year, while the equivalent framework is the seventh.

The standard was developed by businesses including Boots, British Gas Services, BT and Superdrug. It falls under funding band six, which means a maximum of £4,000.

Knowledge requirements include "knowing your customers" and "understanding the organisation", while examples of skills needed are "communication" and "personal organisation".

Apprentices on this standard will be required to have or achieve level one in English and maths, and to have taken level two in English and maths tests before completing their apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship should be reviewed after a maximum of three years.

The government is phasing the withdrawal of old apprenticeship frameworks to be replaced by the new standards, and is currently consulting on the removal of a fourth batch.

## Customer Service Practitioner in numbers

Age group	Predicted apprenticeship starts on standard		
	In the first academic year (August 2015 to July 2016)	In the second academic year (August 2016 to July 2017)	Per year once fully established
16-18	4,800	5,900	7,000
19+	18,500	21,000	25,000

Source: Assessment plan

Age group	Apprenticeship starts on standard between August 2016 and January 2017	Apprenticeship starts on framework between August 2016 and January 2017
16-18	10	2,250
19-24	17	2,630
25+	490	3,170
Total	517	8,050

Source: Statistical First Release.

## End-point assessment details

The EPA for this standard comes in three parts: an apprentice showcase, a practical observation, and a professional discussion.

These elements have weightings of 65 per cent, 20 per cent, and 15 per cent respectively, and the observation and discussion should take one hour for each.

The apprentice showcase allows candidates to present examples of their development over the training period, and can be assessed face to face or remotely.

The practical observation must include customer interaction, and should enable the apprentice to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and behaviour in situations such as "dealing with a customer complaint" or "handling a general enquiry". As a minimum, the observation should cover "presentation, equality, interpersonal skills, communication and personal organisation".

The professional discussion should take place between the apprentice and the independent assessor after the observation.

It should be an opportunity for the assessor to ask any questions they may have and explore aspects of the work in more detail – especially with regard to scenarios that didn't come up

during the observation.

The apprenticeship includes pass and distinction grades, which are determined by the EPA.

To gain a distinction, the apprentice must meet the pass criteria and also consistently perform above the required level for the role.

There should be an opportunity for apprentices to resubmit work or to be reassessed, if any part of the EPA is not adequate when first completed. Further development should be provided before any retakes and practice runs for the EPA are recommended.

External Quality Assurance for the EPA for this apprenticeship standard is delivered by Ofqual.

## Innovative EPA plans

or remotely".

The apprentice may choose to deliver a presentation in person, or could submit a digital report, storyboard or journal to the assessment organisation instead.

FE Week's research revealed that some assessment organisations are looking at innovative ways to deliver the minimum one-hour practical observation by using technology to carry out this part of the assessment remotely as well.

iCQ in particular showed a range of different uses of technology to streamline the process.

It provides a flexible, browser-based system called "iLearner", which includes e-portfolio and funding management tools to track the progress of the learner.

This system will also include option to book into an online diary when the apprentice is ready for EPA.

iCQ recently developed a web video tool, to allow reviews or gateway meetings between the employer, provider and apprentice to take place remotely.

These web videos can be recorded and time and date stamped.

The intention is to use the iLearner web video tool to conduct remote professional discussions, and iCQ also told FE Week it "anticipates using this tool for practical observations". This is "subject to external quality assurance organisation agreement".

Active IQ also said "assessment can be carried out remotely via video or in person", but was unable to give further detail on how this would work in practice before the time of going to press.



The assessment plan available for this standard, which was published last August 1, recommends the use of technology in the EPA process.

The aim is to make the process more efficient and more convenient for employers.

The plan says: "Employers within the sector have strongly expressed that EPA methods should be flexible, and where possible delivered virtually due to the impact of demand fluctuation on the quality of customer service within the sector."

The apprentice showcase, for example, can be "assessed face to face

Assessment Method	Weighting	Duration	To achieve a pass	To achieve a Distinction
Apprentice Showcase	65%	After a minimum of 12 months on-programme learning	100%	You must meet all of the pass criteria AND 70% of the distinction criteria
Practical Observation	20%	Minimum of 1 hour	100%	You must meet all of the pass criteria AND 80% of the distinction criteria
Professional Discussion	15%	1 hour	100%	You must meet all of the pass criteria

## EDITORIAL

## The Conservatives continue to peddle a lie



The Conservative manifesto has repeated the pledge from 2015 to “deliver our commitment to create 3 million apprenticeships for young people by 2020.”

This target description remains at best grossly misleading, and now they’re repeating it two years later, I think it’s fair to call this a lie.

Why? Because in reality they are aren’t only counting “young people”.

Last year just one in four apprentice starts (26 per cent) were under 19, compared to nearly half (44 per cent) aged 25 or over.

In fact, last year nearly a quarter (23.8 per cent) of apprenticeship starts were aged 35 and over, of which 3,560 of them were aged 60 and over.

All these adults (the majority of apprentices and likely not new in jobs) are being counted towards the 3 million target, despite maintaining a manifesto commitment to 3 million apprentice starts for “young people”.

And as reported months ago in FE Week, the evidence is building that it’s employer demand for young apprentices that will suffer, under a new ‘employer-led’ levy funding regime in which the employer must financially contribute.

Take a look at the standards pilot before May. Latest figures for the already popular level two customer service standard show 560 starts between August and January.

How many of them are going to those under the age of 19?

Ten. Ten out of 560 is less than 2 percent!

The government won’t be able to claim they weren’t warned about the worsening position for young apprentices.

But the least they could do is stop peddling this manifesto lie.

**Nick Linford, Editor**  
news@feweek.co.uk



### TORY MANIFESTO TWEETS:

**James Kirkup** @jameskirkup

#ToryManifesto Full review of tertiary education funding to treat FE, technical education and HE “fairly”. This is very good news.

**Skills&Employability** @GESkills

£1bn extra funding for schools in England. Will this help fill the skills gaps post Brexit? #torymanifesto #skills17

**Semta** @SemtaSkills

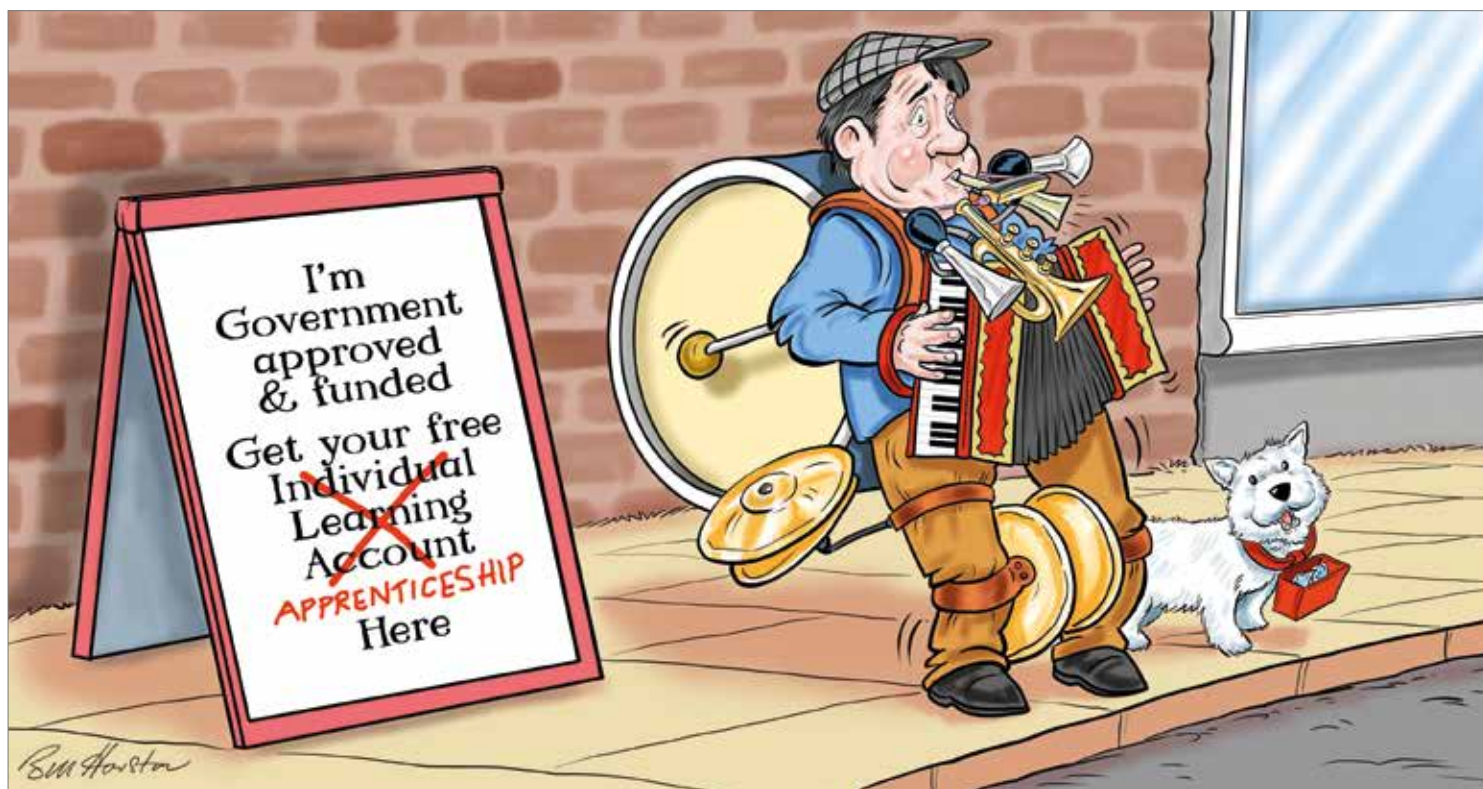
#ToryManifesto pledges 1m more disabled people in work thru digital tech & flexible working. Opportunity for #engineering #ukmfg?

**Eurethius Pellitier** @Theo137

#LabourManifesto: Free Lifelong Learning  
#ToryManifesto: Scrap Vocational titles intro T-Levels, Employers at the Heart of Education  
#GE2017

**Alicia Kearns** @aliciakearns

Investment in technical education will make a fundamental difference to our country’s future and opportunities for all #torymanifesto



## ‘Alarming’: ESFA still giving one-man bands access to millions

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
@BILLYCAMDEN

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

**L**abour has demanded an investigation into the way providers are selected for the register of apprenticeship training providers – after a new company with one employee run from home made it onto the list.

The updated register was published this week by the Education and Skills Funding Agency – and Learn for Free Ltd, which was established less than three months ago according to Companies House, is among 507 organisations joining the 1,708 that were announced in March.

This firm has no apparent experience of running government-funded apprenticeships, and has one director and no office address other than that of a semi-detached house in Birmingham.

It also has no website or landline, with only a mobile number listed on the UK Register of Learning Providers website.

Meanwhile, another provider deemed high-quality by the ESFA with its appearance on the RoATP is G4S Care & Justice Services (UK) Ltd – which is rated ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted.

The shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden has called for the selection process to be investigated. “The examples you have uncovered are alarming and all too typical of some of the ones not picked up quickly enough in the past by the agency,” he told FE Week.

“Even though we are in an election period the minister and his officials need to look very rapidly at this and take action.”

FE Week phoned Learn for Free’s director, Yasir Idris, to congratulate him, and double-check whether his company had any track record with apprenticeships. He hung up without answering any questions, and ignored our attempts at further contact.

Nottinghamshire-based G4S, which was given a grade four Ofsted rating in September 2013, has now been listed as an employer-provider, which means it can deliver training to its own apprentices.

Its most recent monitoring visit from Ofsted, in October 2014, found it was only making “reasonable progress”.

Its head of learning and development, Jane Shannon, said a recent partnership with Derby-based training provider Babington College, which is also on RoATP as a main provider and has a grade two from Ofsted, has “stepped up our skills provision”.

“The registration of our UK and Ireland business as an apprenticeship training provider recognises our new partnership with Babington, and will enable colleagues across the country to access nationally recognised qualifications, develop expertise and build a career within our industry,” Ms Shannon told FE Week.

There is no suggestion that either G4S and Learn for Free have done anything wrong.

In March FE Week found that one person

operating from a rented office in Cheshire had succeeded in getting three new companies, Cranage Ltd, Obscurant Limited, and Tatton Solutions Ltd onto the RoATP – with no track record on government apprenticeships.

Yet skills minister Robert Halfon claimed in the same month that his department was “giving employers the confidence to do business with high-quality training providers”.

The ESFA told FE Week that new providers, including G4S and Learn for Free, would be subject to “mandatory training” before being allowed to deliver apprenticeships.

This process was announced by the ESFA’s director of funding and programmes, Keith Smith, at FE Week’s recent Annual Apprenticeships Conference.

But fears remain that there will be a repeat of the fraud which plagued Individual Learning Accounts, as warned by the National Audit Office last September.

The failure of that scheme – which was scrapped in 2001 after abuse by unscrupulous providers led to a reported £67 million fraud – was blamed on poor government planning and risk management.

The NAO report highlighted how ILA funded “learning providers were free to market their services to prospective customers, and the scheme encouraged many new providers to enter the market.”

Problems arose from this “market-led initiative” as “providers were not fully accredited or quality assured.”

### COMMENTS

#### Pay cut row at struggling north east college

Just imagine what they are doing to subcontractors.

It’s the money that they draw down that is paying the curriculum staff wages probably

Strikes me as a very punitive way of dealing with financial issues. I’ve been through some major financial turnarounds, and pay cuts for staff have never been on the menu.

M thexton

#### Breaking: Labour manifesto plans for FE and skills unveiled

Really welcomed the point related to adult learning including ESOL be free at the point of entry however.....

nothing about ensuring the valuable Voluntary Community Sector is encouraged bearing in mind the work it carries out often ‘underground’ as a subcontractor – all about colleges.

Robert Bruce

#### Allocations shock: ESFA ‘mistake’ sees massive firms listed as small

We too have this silly error for our company we are a care group and all our homes have their own employer ID so all the homes are classed as non-levy, we as the company who pay the wages across the homes are levy payers but on enrollment of an apprentice (it’s not happening we have decided to quit apprenticeships) it would show we also needed to co invest as the home is non levy!! What an absolute mess this all is and if things don’t change we too will most likely be closing the training centre

Cassie Roberts

Louise



# 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](http://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](mailto: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**

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Hospitality, Catering and Tourism  
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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](mailto:Samantha.bunn@fea.co.uk).

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





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## Assistant Principal Curriculum

Salary: £47,801 - £50,702

Permanent, Full-Time

Ruskin College is an adult residential college offering further education and higher education. The College has a strong commitment to social justice and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum is a new and strategically important position. The successful candidate will lead the following areas: the whole College curriculum, business development, quality assurance and improvement, and teaching and learning. The Assistant Principal will be an effective self-starter with the ability to lead a team and deliver exceptional outcomes for our student body.

For an application form and further details contact Laura Cozier by email on [lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk](mailto:lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk)

Closing date: Midday on Friday 26th May



## Programme Manager Further Education

Salary: £35,608 - £38,896

Permanent, Full-Time

Ruskin College is an adult residential college offering further education and higher education. The College has a strong commitment to social justice and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

The Programme Manager for Further Education will lead a strategically vital function in the College. The successful candidate will offer a depth of experience, the ability to lead a team, provide curriculum innovation and embed exceptional practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

For an application form and further details contact Laura Cozier by email on [lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk](mailto:lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk)

Closing date: Midday on Friday 26th May



## Programme Manager for Higher Education

Salary: £35,608 - £38,896

Permanent, Full-Time

Ruskin College is an adult residential college offering further education and higher education. The College has a strong commitment to social justice and the empowerment of individuals and communities.

The Programme Manager for Higher Education will lead a strategically vital function in the College. The successful candidate will offer a depth of experience, the ability to lead a team, provide curriculum innovation and embed exceptional practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

For an application form and further details contact Laura Cozier by email on [lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk](mailto:lcozier@ruskin.ac.uk)

Closing date: Midday on Friday 26th May

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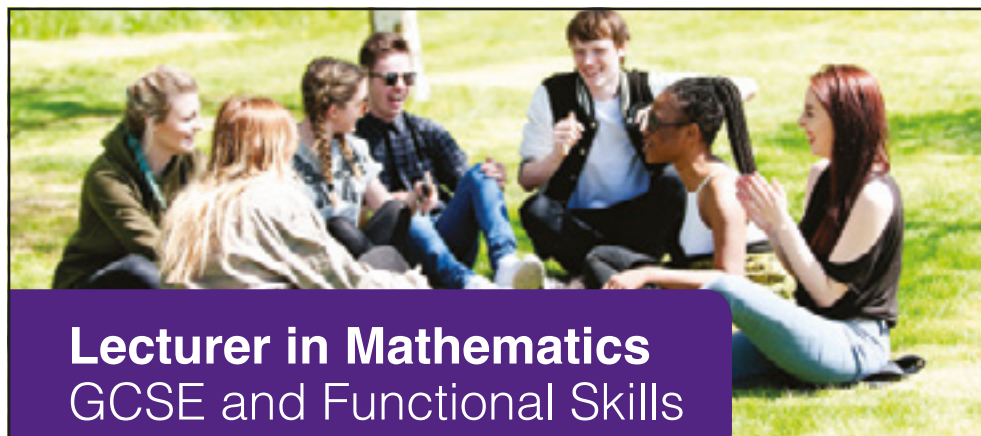
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Ref: LIM

Closing date: 12 noon, Monday 5th June 2017.

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

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**Section:** Adult College

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**Interview date** (Week Commencing) 12/06/17

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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.

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**Closing date:** 23rd May 2017

CALDERDALE COLLEGE



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## EXPERTS



# ALAN WOODS OBE

CEO of awarding organisation VTCT

## Apprenticeships: I've started so I'll finish...

Apprentices need to understand why completion is so important, and this needs to be led from the top, says Alan Woods

The phrase 'I've started so I'll finish' might be commonly associated with University Challenge presenters, but it also articulates a mental resolve that should be adopted by young apprentices.

When it comes to the national apprenticeship agenda, the spotlight has firmly focused on the number of new starts the government will commit to. The recent Association of Employment and Learning Providers manifesto, for example, suggested an increase from three to four million in the next parliament.

While getting young people into apprenticeships is crucial in terms of securing employment and creating a skilled workforce, these outcomes are dependent upon one critical factor: the completion of apprenticeship programmes.

The real measure of success in apprenticeship reforms is not in the number of new starts but in the number of completed programmes, and as such, it is vital that the next government commits to improving this.

The most recent figures show that in 2015/2016, only 67 per cent of apprenticeships were completed. To increase this rate, learners need to be shown that apprenticeships can be engaging, worthwhile, and ultimately rewarding.

If we are to achieve this, the learner perspective must be at the heart of initiatives, rather than allowing the national narrative to be too employer-led, or economy-driven.

Apprentices' voices have been somewhat drowned out in all the industry noise. We hear so much about skills gaps identified by employers – particularly in the STEM sector – which are perceived to be the answer to improving the UK economy.

But learners pursuing other types of apprenticeship have to see the value of completion. We need a top-down recognition of all apprenticeship routes, rather than a STEM-centric approach. If a learner is made to feel that their skills aren't appreciated, that their chosen career path isn't important, or that they won't meaningfully contribute to the economy, it can beg the ultimate question: what is the point?

Incentivising a learner to complete an apprenticeship needs to hinge on more than just conceptual support, however. There needs to be a real, tangible end-goal: in short,

an apprenticeship needs to represent a direct line of sight to a job.

This clear pathway sometimes gets lost in tactical employer positioning. An individual can often be encouraged to undertake the next level apprenticeship immediately after completing their current one, effectively establishing a type of permanent apprenticeship position.

“**Deliberate manipulation of the apprenticeship system needs to stop**”

In many cases, this is not about providing the apprentice with a substantive job at the end, but so employers can be seen to be doing apprenticeships. This deliberate manipulation of the apprenticeship system needs to stop, or else we risk entire cohorts of disillusioned apprentices who see no apparent end in sight. We need to make sure that employers and training providers are wholeheartedly committed not just to ensuring the learner passes the course, but actually gets a job at the end of it.

With that in mind, we need to raise the collective ambitions of everyone involved in apprenticeships. Employers should be encouraged to see apprenticeships as an opportunity to retain the very talent they have nurtured; providers should in turn deliver a programme of excellent teaching that meets employer set standards; awarding organisations need to make sure quality is upheld and duly recognised. The commitment of all these individual players will ensure that learners are reassured that they are at the centre of a process which is primarily about helping them.

Getting young people into apprenticeships should be celebrated, but we need to remember that crossing the finish line is just as important as starting the race. The way to facilitate this is by ensuring that all routes are valued, and that all routes lead to job opportunities with market rates of pay.

The number of completed programmes will serve as the only meaningful indicator of the success of government reforms.



# SAM PARRETT

CEO of London South East Colleges

## UTCs should recruit at 11

To circumvent the problem of recruitment at 14, LSEC is setting up a vocational free school – a UTC in all but name. Sam Parrett argues that UTCs should be allowed to start at 11

Another week, another story about a failing UTC.

Seven of them have now closed their doors and 60 per cent are rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' by Ofsted, so many young people are missing out on the pioneering education they deserve.

The former prime minister David Cameron famously called for "a UTC in every single major town", and the concept of employer-sponsored, specialist and technical education for young people is indisputably a good one.

With the country's ever growing skills gap likely to be impacted further by Brexit, the need for high-quality technical education has never been as great.

So why, despite pumping millions of pounds into buildings, marketing and excellent headteachers, are many UTCs failing to recruit?

One barrier is that, in a country where the age of transfer has mostly been 11, it is a challenge getting parents, students and teachers to opt for a move in Year 10. Such transfers will usually happen only if the child is not getting on at school, as opposed to a conscious decision for a well performing student to move.

We at LSEC have first-hand experience of this challenge. We established our own direct entry 14-16 technical academy in 2014, offering 14-year-olds a real alternative to a traditional school route. Students were able to choose a vocational specialism (engineering, hospitality, childcare) to study alongside rigorous GCSEs in academic subjects.

We reached out to headteachers, explaining who we were and what we could offer. We had hoped schools would then offer impartial advice to their students about the options and act in the best interest of each individual.

Sadly, the reality is that we were viewed as alternative provision. Instead of attracting children with a real passion for vocational learning, in the main we have been seen as the ideal place for schools to offload students unlikely to pass their GCSEs who would ultimately pull their original schools down the league tables.

This meant we were unable to recruit with integrity and realise our key vision: to offer local 14- to 16-year-olds a high-quality vocational alternative.

Despite this, we absolutely maintain our

belief in career-led pathways, working closely with employers to provide young people with industry experience.

In 2014 we were approved by the Baker Dearing Trust to develop a health and wellbeing UTC in partnership with a major local employer and university partners. After some detailed scoping work, and with the benefit of our experience, we approached BDT with the suggestion of allowing us to pilot a new 11-19 model of UTC. We were confident this approach would turn what is a great concept, into a viable and successful school model.

“**We have been seen as the place for schools to offload students**”

Our proposal was duly turned down by BDT, on the basis that UTCs are strictly 14-18. This was despite our plan to keep all the key elements of the UTC concept, including the employer/university sponsorship and a curriculum offer with the post-14 specialism.

We also embraced the innovative teaching methods and pedagogy showcased by the UTC movement, via employer-led projects and the extended day incorporating enrichment and homework time.

Yet despite our obvious passion, our proposal was rejected. I feel this was extremely short-sighted and would question why BDT hasn't been put under more official scrutiny in relation to recruitment challenges at 14 and the sustainability of UTCs.

We remain undeterred and are now instead setting up a specialist vocational free school in Bromley, which we expect to open in 2020.

This will be a high-performing school for 11- to 18-year-olds specialising in the science, health and wellbeing industry. It is supported by key employers and will help address the shortage of secondary school places in the area as well as skills gaps within this expanding industry. In other words, a UTC in all but name.

In the majority of cases, our education system is simply not set up to allow transfer at 14 to succeed.

If only BDT would accept this, I have no doubt UTCs would be thriving – offering young people the real technical alternative employers are crying out for.

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Reeta Chakrabarti  
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## EXPERTS



## ADRIAN ANDERSON

Chief executive,  
University Vocational Awards Council

# ESFA is jeopardising degree apprenticeships

The ESFA's approach to the allocation of apprenticeship funding for non-levy employers undermines the apprenticeship reforms and specifically, degree apprenticeships, says Adrian Anderson

The apprenticeship reforms put the employer in the driving seat. Employers develop apprenticeship standards that define the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for an occupation, and they decide which to use to develop the performance of their workforce.

A key feature of this approach has been the development of standards for higher-level occupations, in particular the new degree apprenticeships. This is hardly a surprise: to be competitive, employers and the UK economy need to invest in developing higher-level skills.

Degree apprenticeships have been encouraged by government, LEPs and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. For individuals it's good news: they offer a debt-free route to and through higher education to the professions, and appeal to individuals who may in the past have been put off by the debt associated with HE. It ticks the social mobility box, and demonstrates to any parent, young person or teacher that apprenticeships aren't just about low-level skills or for those who don't go to university.

Unfortunately there's a problem: the Education, Skills and Funding Agency. It has based its recently announced allocations for funding for non-levy paying employers on historic patterns of apprenticeship delivery rather than patterns of future employer demand and the apprenticeship standards developed by trailblazers. Yet degree apprenticeship is a new type of provision, requiring new providers – specifically higher education institutions.

Regardless of future demand and the effort involved in applying to the register of apprenticeship training providers and tendering, HEIs without a prior SFA apprenticeship contract have not received funding to deliver degree apprenticeships to non-levy paying employers.

For HEIs on RoATP with a prior SFA apprenticeship allocation, the new allocation has been negligible because degree apprenticeships are a new programme and the ESFA is basing allocations on historic provider patterns of delivery. Any ESFA claim that apprenticeship budgets follow employer demand is untenable. Existing providers with extended contracts

cannot simply step in to deliver degree apprenticeships. There will be gaps in the provider base and substantial occupational and geographic gaps in provision.

The situation is made even more bizarre when the Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund is considered. DADF funding was allocated, through a competitive tender process, to support the development of degree apprenticeship provision. The ESFA allocation process means some HEIs that have developed degree-level provision may not be able to deliver starts from September. Non-levy paying employers that have worked with such funded institutions could be denied access to the higher-level skills provision their business needs.

“**ESFA has put the non-levy paying employer back in the passenger seat**”

It's also interesting to contrast the apprenticeship offer for levy-payers with non-levy paying employers. Levy-payers will be able to use apprenticeships that are of maximum benefit to them and degree apprenticeships could boom. In contrast, non-levy paying employers' use of degree apprenticeships will be severely restricted.

Big business and the public sector can invest in and use any apprenticeship it wants, but a non-levy paying organisation will have its choice contained and skewed towards the apprenticeships delivered by the ESFA's existing provider base. The ESFA has put the non-levy paying employer back in the passenger seat.

The University Vocational Awards Council has raised these concerns with both the ESFA and IfA, and outlined options that would ensure non-levy paying employers can use degree apprenticeships.

We await a response. The ESFA must demonstrate its commitment to the higher-level skills agenda in general and degree apprenticeship in particular. It must also ensure SMEs have access to the degree apprenticeships they have been promised, which are critical to the future success of their organisations and in turn, to the productivity of the UK economy.



## DAME RUTH SILVER

Founding president of the Further Education Trust for Leadership and co-chair of the Skills Commission

# Too much flexibility, not enough foresight

Decades of policy turbulence have left a sector that is resilient but not necessarily forward-looking, and this needs to change, says Ruth Silver

All three major parties have launched their manifestos, with Labour and the Liberal Democrats committing extra funding to colleges, while the Conservatives pledge to 'give Britain the technical education it has lacked for decades'. All recognise FE's critical role in improving Britain's low productivity

This attention is all very welcome, of course, in a sector subjected to continuous reform over several decades, and which has seen its funding cut and its curriculum narrow.

In tough and unpredictable times, it is gratifying to see politicians finally groping their way towards a genuine vision for the future of a sector they have often struggled to properly understand or appreciate.

It is crucial that the sector and the politicians responsible for it are forward-looking in their thinking. There is no doubt that FE and skills currently face a complex array of issues, from area-based reviews to localisation, which rightly absorb the attention of its leaders. But it is increasingly clear that fundamental new challenges are emerging, which can only be addressed by seeing beyond the day-to-day concerns that have, for many years, been a barrier to far-sighted sector leadership.

This is not to point any finger of blame at sector leaders. Decades of restless policy turbulence and ministerial churn have resulted in a sector that is resilient, flexible and seriously good at stretching resources – but not necessarily used to scanning the horizon for the trends that will shape provision in the decades to come.

That is why the latest report from the Social Market Foundation and the Further Education Trust for Leadership, called 'Rising to the challenge: the further education and skills sector over the next decade', matters.

It outlines some of the key competitive challenges FE and skills will face, and proposes a number of ways in which the sector might make a place for itself in a diverse and increasingly competitive market.

These challenges include increased competition from schools and universities as budgets dwindle and EU student numbers decline, the changing role of employers in driving the skills system, and the development of educational technology.

To these we might add the UK's ageing population and the changing face of a labour market increasingly characterised by self-employment and intense global competition for skills.

“**Our sector is bright enough and bold enough**”

The OECD's 'Skills Outlook 2017' report, also published this month, has meanwhile highlighted the urgent need to invest in the skills of adults and young people, particularly in those higher-level specialised skills that are necessary to compete in global markets. It also stresses the importance of a wide curriculum and 'skills for social progress' including so-called 'soft skills' such as communication, organization and readiness to learn.

So while there are challenges for the sector in this new environment, there are also huge opportunities. Brexit will inevitably mean a much greater need for homegrown talent, particularly in highly skilled professions in which we have previously tended to rely on immigration, mostly from Europe, to plug skills gaps. The case for a strengthened role for the sector post-Brexit could not be clearer, though it must still be made.

The SMF argues that the sector must evolve in response to these challenges, with colleges and independent providers rebranding themselves as 'local champions and engines of social mobility', and transitioning from 'physical learning and physical estates to virtual learning'.

The report, finally, calls for greater security of funding and stability in policy to support the sector in realising its potentially central role in this brave new world. For some time now, public policy in this area has been headed in the wrong direction, reducing funding where greater investment is required and shrinking the curriculum to focus on a narrow definition of employability alone.

We are at a point where there is more risk in remaining the same than in accepting the need for change. But I believe that if we can get the policy environment right, our sector is bright enough and bold enough to rise to the challenges.



## EXPERTS

## Dear Dr Sue

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



## Q1: ADVICE FOR CHAIRS

I am new to FE but have chaired a charity and found the National Council of Voluntary Organisations useful. Where should college governors look?

**Answer:**

Colleges are exempt charities and the Charities Commission website should be your first port of call.

You already know about the NCVO, but you will also find pertinent items on the Institute of Directors website.

The most useful FE-specific source is the material funded by the Education and Training Foundation, which sits on the Association of Colleges website.

There is also a new organisation on the scene called the Association of Chairs, with a useful document called Chair's Compass.

## Q2: JOB SHARE

My role as chair of governors is becoming more substantial as I work full-time. I have a governor colleague who wants to job share. Is this possible?

**Answer:**

While not widely practiced in FE, school governing bodies have had the co-chair option for a while.

First you need to check your instrument and articles to see whether it expressly disallows co-chairing. If not, I see no reason

not to proceed. However, the board would need to ensure any arrangement does not lead to a loss of clarity in its leadership. In order for role-sharing to work, there needs to be transparency and trust and probably some work with the clerk to produce a formal programme on who does what.

## Q3: ELECTION ADVICE

As we receive most of our funding from public sources, are there any election guidelines for governors to follow?

**Answer:**

Colleges are exempt charities and the Charities Commission has produced a clear guide. Campaigning and political activity can be legitimate and valuable activities for charities to undertake.

**“ Charities can campaign for a change in the law where such change would support the charity's purposes**

However, it must be undertaken by a charity only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes.

Unlike other forms of campaigning, it must not be the continuing and sole activity of the charity.

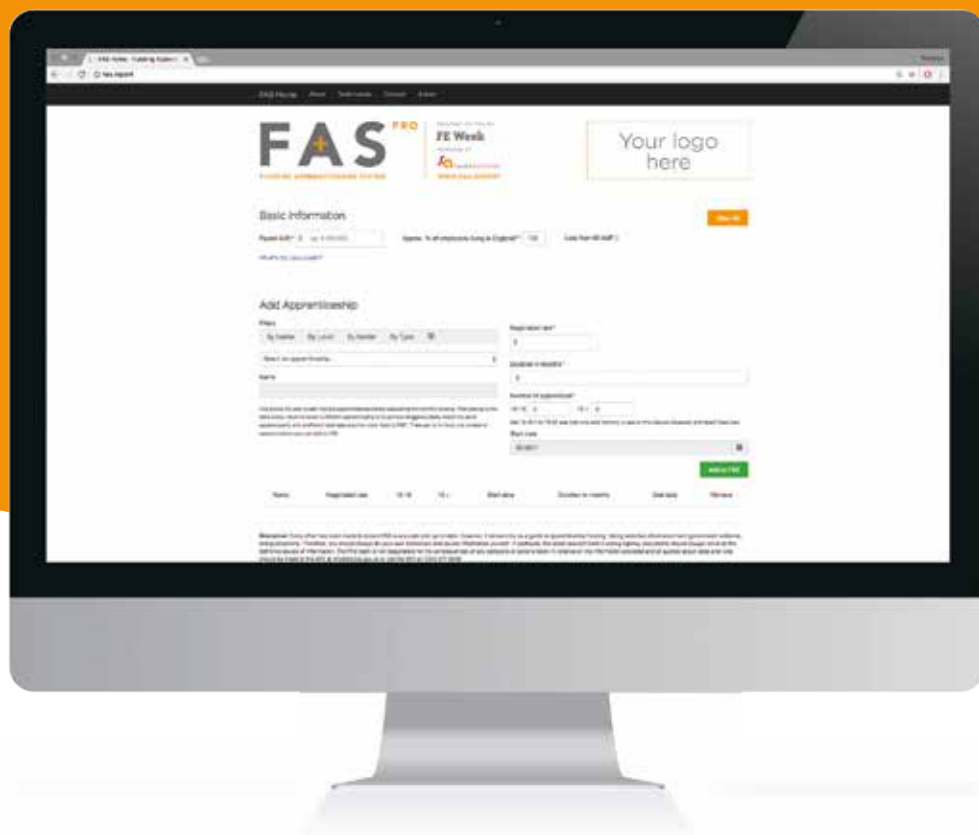
Charities can campaign for a change in the law, policy or decisions where such change would support the charity's purposes.

Therefore, as long as you are even-handed, don't financially support in any way and/or do not try to influence results, there is no reason why as a trustee or governor you cannot make your views known to prospective MPs.

Ensuring the financial stability of your college is a clear part of your role and prospective MPs need to know what impact government policy or proposed policy changes have on colleges.

Remember any material used must be factually accurate and have a legitimate evidence base.

# It always pays to go professional



Since its launch over 10,000 forecasts have been run through FAS. FAS is a tool for employers and providers to plan apprenticeship delivery and forecast funding for starts in England from May 2017. FAS has certainly earned many fans thanks to its superiority over other tools such as the Government's DAS tool.

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## CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

# Budding florists set to bloom



(L-R) Rebecca Hough, Kate Whelan, Sarah Coughtrey, Emily Deacon, Hayley Smith, Christine McElroy and Dandy Ellison

A team of floristry students has been chosen to represent the British Florist Association at the world-famous RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The seven Moreton Morrell College students won a national competition to mark the BFA's 100th anniversary with their design for a floral feature, which they will display in the show's floristry zone.

The design will be made up of 6,000 fresh-cut flowers, used to create a 2.5-metre-tall '100', with portraits of British florists incorporated into the piece.

The students, studying a level four higher diploma in floristry, are now preparing to begin the build at Chelsea ready for the official

press day on May 22.

Emily Deacon, who submitted the final design on behalf of the team, said: "Although it was my drawing that was chosen, it was definitely collaborative as we were all putting in our ideas."

"When we heard we that it was our design that was selected we were ecstatic as Chelsea is so prestigious."

Brian Wills-Pope, chair of the BFA said: "We are thrilled that Moreton Morrell College are helping us celebrate the 100th anniversary. Their installation for Chelsea looks set to be an absolute showstopper!"

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show runs between May 23 and 27.



Ruth Dyga, 16

Learner accommodation in the 70s

Ruth Dyga

## College uncovers forgotten archives

A specialist college in Gloucestershire has uncovered old archives revealing what life was like for its disabled students five decades ago.

During preparations for its 50th anniversary celebrations, staff at National Star College uncovered old record books from when the college first opened in May 1967.

There were just 10 students at the college when it opened, with disabilities including cerebral palsy, polio, spina bifida, severe asthma and learning difficulties, who were then referred to as 'slow developers'.

Students who had the ability to drive were taught to operate three-wheeled Invacars, and physiotherapy came in the form of sports such as hiking, weight-lifting and swimming.

Former student Ruth Dyga enrolled at the

college in 1969 aged 16. She had cerebral palsy, but remained undiagnosed as her doctor had not heard of the condition.

"My main aim was to be independent," she said. "If I hadn't gone to National Star I wouldn't be where I am now, in my own home."

The college now caters for students with physical disabilities, acquired brain injuries and learning difficulties, with facilities including a hydrotherapy pool and acquired brain injury and rehabilitation unit.

"From the beginning, National Star's belief has been that, with high quality and specialist support, people with disabilities can realise their aspirations," said David Ellis, the chief executive of the college.

"We believe it is about what people can do, not what they can't."



Students with Alistair Sutherland, right, and Pam Reeves, a friend of St Lukes

Rhys Day and Callum Barstow-Lewis at work

## Pupils remembered with steel tree

Fabrication and welding students have created a memorial tree to help a local special needs primary school commemorate pupils who have passed away.

The team of students from North Lindsey College created an eight-foot tree structure out of steel after being approached by St Luke's Special Primary School in north Lincolnshire, who wanted a way to remember former pupils. It took four months for the students to build the structure, which has individual leaves on which the school can engrave names.

The students completed the tree in their own time, with material donated from local

steel and welding firms.

Alistair Sutherland, the headteacher at St Luke's, said: "I think the tree looks absolutely brilliant and the students have done a fantastic job; it's far better than I could expect and I can't wait to see it on the school grounds."

Fabrication and welding students Callum Barstow-Lewis and Rhys Day both helped work on the tree.

"It has been challenging but nice working as a team and for a real cause," they said. "We just hope everyone else likes it as much as we do."

## Farmers field hazards

A farming charity has paid a visit to Abingdon and Witney College agriculture students to warn them about the hazards faced by farmers.

Over 70 students attended the talk, which included practical demonstrations on hazards such as being crushed by livestock, falling from ladders, unsafe practice with a chainsaw and limb entrapment in a tractor.

The talk was given by the Farm Safety Foundation after figures from the Health and Safety Executive revealed that 15-20 per cent of worker fatalities happen in agriculture.

"The agriculture industry has high

accident rates," said Petra Martin from NFU Mutual. "In fact it is six times higher than construction. By teaching students' good practice we hope to produce a trickle-up effect where new entrants to the industry teach the older workers best practice."

"I found each of the four safety sessions very informative and interesting," said Antony Davis, who is studying the level two agriculture course. "Especially the tractor power take-off, as it highlighted how a split-second mistake can be life-changing. It's highlighted to me the importance of listening during these training sessions."



Bad luck is the least of your worries

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

# Animal café eases the daily grind

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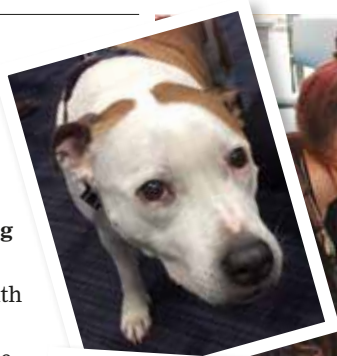
A college chaplain has initiated a monthly animal café as a way of making connections with students and staff, as well as helping them to relieve stress, reports Samantha King

Halesowen College's multi-faith chaplain, Hazel Charlton, wanted to find a way to make herself more accessible, so she came up with the idea of hosting a monthly animal café.

Snakes, rabbits, guinea pigs, lizards and dogs are just some of the guests who now frequent the campus coffee shop at the West Midlands college, and students can enjoy the animals' company while also having a platform to talk about what's going on in their lives both in and out of college.

"The idea is that animals are a good stress release, and it also makes me more accessible," said Rev Charlton.

"It's a chance for people to come in, say hello to the animals and de-stress a bit. I can approach them and say 'Are you ok?', 'How's the course going?' or 'Anything you're worried about?'. The idea isn't to offload at that particular time, but it's just to make contact and inform students and staff there is a chaplain around for them."



Animal magic: Students meet the café's furry guests

Regulars at the animal café

Hazel Charlton, left, at the animal café



Beginning in January this year, the sessions take place on the second Tuesday of every month and have already received glowing feedback.

"Somebody said they had been waiting for it all day, and another said they'd been waiting for it all their life," Rev Charlton said. "I thought that was quite interesting really, that they're coming, seeing the animals and just completely relaxing and being themselves."

"They're just in the moment, and sharing that moment with an animal,

which is lovely. The animals are not interested in exam results. It's a delight to see people's reactions."

While the majority of animals involved reside in the college's animal care unit, a number of lecturers have been bringing along their pet dogs, who have proven to be among the most popular attendees.

Mark Dugmore, the manager of the animal care unit and a lecturer at the college, said "Everyone loves a dog.

"With the snakes we weren't sure how the wider student population would take them, but there

was a mixture of fear and fascination, and a lot of curious people coming in not sure if they wanted to meet them and handle them, but they warmed up to them and people got over long-standing fears as well."

In order to keep the animals safe, animal care technicians are on hand at the café, looking out for any animal that may be beginning to show signs of distress.

"If we feel like they've had enough we take them out straight away," added Mr Dugmore. "It's no good for the users of the café if the animals are freaking out. They've got their own private spaces to go into as well, whether it's a carrier or a tray from an enclosure so they could hop around in there and approach people only if they wanted to. We take their welfare very seriously."

"We don't want to put the students' stress onto the animals. That would defeat the object really," joked Rev Charlton.

## 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](mailto:samantha.king@feweek.co.uk)



## & MOVERS SHAKERS

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

The educationalist **Dame Asha Khemka DBE** has been made deputy lieutenant of Staffordshire.

Ms Khemka, who is principal and chief executive of West Nottinghamshire College, was appointed by Her Majesty's lord-lieutenant of Staffordshire, Ian Dudson CBE KStJ at a ceremony last week.

The title is awarded to people who have served their local community or have a history of public service in other fields.

In the role, she will support the lord-lieutenant with his ceremonial duties throughout the year, including representing him at civic and voluntary events.

In 2009, Ms Khemka was recognised for her services to further education with an OBE in the new year's honours list, and received a damehood in the 2014 honours list, making her the first woman of Indian origin in 83 years to receive the title.

She also received the accolade of 'Woman of the Year' in 2014, from then prime minister, David Cameron.

Of her newest title, she said: "As a long-

standing resident, I am proud and humbled to be asked to represent the Staffordshire lieutenancy and serve the place where I have lived for almost 20 years.



DAME ASHA KHEMKA



DENISE BROWN



ALEX SCOTT

It is a huge honour to be appointed as a deputy lieutenant of the county that I love so much."

**Denise Brown** is to be the next principal and chief executive of Stoke-on-Trent College.

She takes up the role from her current position as vice-principal of South Essex College, where she was responsible for updating the college's courses to suit the needs of students.

Ms Brown began her further education career in 1988 as a lecturer and policy advisor at London's Newham College, becoming principal in 2010. She stepped down in 2014,

moving to her current position as vice-principal at South Essex College.

She said "I am really looking forward to working with the very able and dedicated staff at the college and getting to know Stoke-on-Trent better.

"The city reminds me very much of my home town of Oldham – a place of rich industrial heritage surrounded by beautiful countryside populated by warm, friendly people."

Neil Bromley, the college's chair of governors, said "Denise was chosen, following a rigorous selection process, because of her wealth of experience, her expertise, authority and passion for education. She was exactly the kind of person we were looking for."

**Alex Scott** is the new principal of Itchen College in Hampshire.

He joins the college from Brockenhurst College, where he was vice-principal for ten years, before which he had been deputy principal at Barton Peveril College, having joined first as a teacher and worked his way up through the ranks.

"I am excited to be joining the college, returning to the area of Southampton where I spent my childhood," said Mr Scott. "I have waited for the position of principal at Itchen Sixth Form College to become available for a number of years."

He will replace interim principal Vanessa Cass, who returns to her previous post as deputy principal.

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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

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

**Difficulty:**  
**EASY**

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

**Difficulty:**  
**MEDIUM**

**Solutions:**  
Next edition

### Last Week's solutions

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

**Difficulty:**  
**EASY**

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

**Difficulty:**  
**MEDIUM**

### Spot the difference

To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**  
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**Last Edition's winner: Lesley Ellis, Inter Training Services Ltd**