

# FE Week

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ALIX ROBERTSON  
@ALIXROBERTSON4



# TERMINATED

- Major provider caught offering kickbacks to an employer red-handed
- ESFA ends Talent Training's levy contract following FE Week sting

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## NEWS

# AEB procurement results still haven't been published

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

The results of the first ever procurement process for the adult education budget are still – incredibly – unpublished, even though the government promised they'd be released once the general election wrapped up.

FE Week revealed in May that the Education and Skills Funding Agency had emailed providers via FASST, its online services hub for organisations working with agencies, to confirm the process would “pause” as a result of Theresa May's surprise call for a snap election.

The Department for Education's “sourcing team”, which sent the email to providers, said it would update the sector on when results would be published after the general election on June 8.

But more than two weeks after the election,

the ESFA is still refusing to say when it will publish the much anticipated AEB results.

FE Week first asked the agency for an expected date of publication on June 15, and followed up with a series of further enquiries both last Friday and the following Monday. A spokesperson finally responded that afternoon – but only to say that the results would be published in “due course” – something we already knew.

We have asked the agency for a more specific timeframe, but no spokesperson will give us any more to work with than “in due course”.

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

Mark Dawe, chief of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, previously called for a long-term pause



relating to the AEB procurement on April 25.

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

It is thought around 500 training providers will have applied for a share of the AEB, which totals around £1.5 billion.

But only around £250 million of the budget was actually up for grabs through the tendering process, because colleges, local

authorities and universities – which contract with the ESFA through a grant-funding agreement – were not affected by recent changes and therefore did not have to tender.

The Skills Funding Agency first wrote to independent training providers last autumn and told them that their current AEB contracts would come to an end in July, rather than having them automatically renewed as before.

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

Advertorial

## Area review: how can digital technology help your college transform?

Colleges are facing a tough period of transformation, with area review implementation presenting an unavoidable challenge for all, while for some, mergers will be an immediate concern.

As a result, FE leaders like you will be making big decisions that will affect the long-term future of colleges. Opportunities that technology can afford will be among the most important considerations at the start of any period of change, but where to start?

Whether you need to manage a merger, keep pace with the changing learning landscape, develop innovative teaching and learning practices or drive greater financial resilience, embedding digital technology is essential. After all, a digitally-savvy college is an attractive place to work and learn.

### Technology toolkits

As the UK's specialist education technology charity, Jisc is ideally placed to help. As a Jisc member, you can benefit from our expertise and a range of tailored digital solutions.

Jisc has already worked with a variety of colleges through the area review process and understands the complexities and challenges. To help, Jisc has produced a series of technology toolkits that will help you to understand the technology your college requires, depending on the current level of digital capability.

The products, services and solutions outlined in the toolkits act as a guide in order for you to cross-check in your own college whether you are taking advantage of these.

As the name suggests, the mergers toolkit ([ji.sc/fes-mergers-toolkit](http://ji.sc/fes-mergers-toolkit)) outlines ways that Jisc can help colleges join successfully and emerge from the process as efficient,

sustainable and high-quality providers of learning and skills. It gives impartial advice to address business-critical issues, ensure reliable, secure network access and maintain transparency on IT costs.

To hear insights and key learnings from colleges which have already gone through a merger, Jisc is running a series of free online briefings, with the first on 4 July. To register your interest, or for further information, email [training.technologies@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:training.technologies@jisc.ac.uk).

Jisc's transformational toolkit ([ji.sc/fes-technology-toolkit](http://ji.sc/fes-technology-toolkit)) is a trio of separate packages, where various digital solutions are grouped together. The basic package – the essentials toolkit – covers budget management, staff training, network security and resources for teaching and learning. The development toolkit adds technology to drive further efficiencies, while the innovation toolkit focuses on more top-line services and products such as learning analytics and migration to cloud computing.

### Area review: the digital challenge – a free event

On 2 October in London and 9 October in Manchester, senior leaders have an opportunity to see how digital technology can help achieve organisational goals and enhance the learning experience.

Aimed at colleges that have begun, or are about to begin, implementing area review changes, these free events will help to:

- Explore digital input at both strategic and operational levels
- Reflect on how digital technology is changing the way organisations operate
- Explore how to lead, manage and influence digitally-driven change across organisations and teams



- Reflect on the potential of digital for a restructuring facility bid
- Places are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Visit [ji.sc/events-feweeek](http://ji.sc/events-feweeek) to register.

### Delivering a great learning experience

Colleges can't afford to be complacent about the importance of embedding technology in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, as results of a survey Jisc commissioned earlier this year illustrate. The study, among 1,000 16- to 24-year-old learners, found that 74% of FE students think technology and digital know-how are important when choosing a course, 77% think technology is increasingly important in education, while 76% who think technology is increasingly important – think so because it allows them to submit work easily and makes life more efficient.

Key to the success of any investment

in technology is making certain that staff are competent and confident in using it, and again, Jisc can help. Jisc supports the development of digital capabilities through free Connect More ([ji.sc/connectmore-feweeek](http://ji.sc/connectmore-feweeek)) events. Taking place throughout June and July across the UK, these events are targeted at those who teach and support learning.

### Contact Us.

As a Jisc member, you already have a dedicated account manager who's available to talk through any area of interest outlined above - <http://ji.sc/fe-account-manager>. For merger support, you can contact a subject specialist via email to [consultancy@jisc.ac.uk](mailto:consultancy@jisc.ac.uk)

# Apprenticeship vacancies fall in May

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Fewer employers advertised for apprentices in the month that the recent major reforms kicked in than they did during the same month last year.

The news, revealed in new Department for Education apprenticeship vacancy statistics bulletin, will come as a blow to the government – as the levy was launched last month as a way to encourage more employers to use apprenticeships, in order to hit the ambitious goal of three million starts by 2020.

Simon Ashworth, the chief policy officer at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, wasn't surprised, and said the numbers "simply confirm what our members have been telling us over the last few weeks".

"Levy-paying employers are holding back on their starts and the predicted calamity with the size of the non-levy funding allocations is being realised," he said.

2,850 employers posted vacancies to the National Apprenticeship Service in May – a drop of 640, or 18.3 per cent, from the May 2016 total of 3,490 employers.

The figures also reveal a small drop in the number of advertised apprenticeships – which fell from 17,310 in May last year to 16,750 in the same month this year.

Overall, the number of employers looking

to take on new apprentices so far in 2016/17 stands at 28,050 – a drop of 2,550, or eight per cent, compared with the same period last year.

The total number of apprenticeships advertised so far for 2016/17 is also down – from 175,650 to 153,330, a fall of 22,320, or 13 per cent.

However, the picture is not quite as bad as it initially appeared to be.

The first set of figures published in the morning of June 19, labelled 'May 2017', indicated that apprenticeship vacancies advertised for the month had plummeted to just 70.

But after FE Week reported what appeared to be a catastrophic drop in vacancies, the DfE was forced to publish updated figures – labelled 'June 2017' – just hours later.

A spokesperson explained, before the second set of figures went live, that "the data published did not reflect the full vacancy figures for May, and was only for the first few days of the month".

Major reforms to the apprenticeship system, including the introduction of the levy, came into full effect from the beginning of May.

Large employers – those with an annual payroll of at least £3 million – are now subject to the levy, which is set at 0.5 per cent of their total spend on wages.

Smaller employers do not have to pay the levy, but – in most cases – they do now have to pay 10 cent of the cost of any apprenticeship training.

Mr Ashworth said these funding changes

appear to have affected some employers' willingness to take on new apprentices.

Feedback from AELP members indicated that "employers in some sectors are refusing to pay" the co-investment, while "in other sectors there is definitely a shift to high-value management training," which involves retraining existing staff.

It comes after many providers were given "derisory" allocations for delivering apprenticeships to non-levy paying employers for the eight months between May and December, following the government's decision to suspend the procurement process and extend existing contracts instead.

Many providers saw cuts of up to 80 per cent compared with the same period last year.

As a result, FE Week has heard from providers which are struggling to offer any new apprenticeships to non-levy paying employers.

When we asked the DfE if it was concerned about the falling number of vacancies, a spokesperson insisted the department was "focused on our plans to deliver three million apprenticeships by 2020, part of the biggest shake-up of skills for a generation".

In addition to increased investment in apprenticeships through the levy, she said the DfE had "been working closely with employer bodies, including the CBI, to help them and their members prepare to make the most of the opportunities available".

Month	Employers posting vacancies				Vacancies posted by month			
	2015/16	2016/17	Difference	% change	2015/16	2016/17	Difference	% change
August	3,730	2,900	-830	-22.3	17,250	6,340	-910	-5.3
September	3,460	3,810	350	10.1	25,490	18,660	-6,830	-26.8
October	2,860	3,140	280	9.8	20,140	15,250	-4,890	-24.3
November	2,730	2,920	190	7.0	15,180	13,660	-1,520	-10.0
December	1,790	1,720	-70	-3.9	10,540	9,150	-1,390	-13.2
January	2,870	2,530	-340	-11.8	16,700	14,140	-2,560	-15.3
February	3,040	2,780	-260	-8.6	16,580	14,470	-2,110	-12.7
March	3,310	3,180	-130	-3.9	18,880	20,950	2,070	11.0
April	3,330	2,220	-1,110	-33.3	17,570	13,960	-3,610	-20.5
May	3,490	2,850	-640	-18.3	17,310	16,750	-560	-3.2
June	3,920				20,050			
July	3,040				15,680			

# Prison education reforms locked out for another year

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

EXCLUSIVE

Reforms to prison education seem to be back on hold, as existing offender learning contracts are being extended for another year, FE Week has learned.

Currently, the offender learning and skills service (OLASS) is delivered by three colleges and one independent learning provider, whose contracts are managed by central government.

This state of affairs had been due to change in August, when prison governors were to have been granted powers to hire their own education providers.

However, according to Dr Paul Phillips, the

principal of Weston College, which holds the OLASS contract for south-west England, these reforms have been tabled until at least 2018.

Dr Phillips told FE Week that HM's Prison and Probation Service had informed him "that the existing OLASS contracts are to be extended for a further year from August 2017 to end July 2018".

While this is "subject to formal post-election confirmation from the Cabinet Office and the Treasury", Dr Phillips said, "the usual annual business planning process is underway".

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Justice, which manages the contracts, would not however confirm the extension.

"We are currently in discussions on the arrangements for academic year 2017-18," said a spokesperson.

The plan to hand over control of education to prison governors was first set out by Dame Sally Coates in her influential review of prison education, published in May 2016.

Prison governors, she wrote, should "have the freedom to design the right curriculum and choose the delivery arrangement that best meets the rehabilitation needs of the individuals for whom they are responsible".

She recommended extending the existing OLASS contracts – which were due to expire in July 2016 – for one more year until July 2017, after which she expected "we will move to all governors having full freedoms over the choice of education providers for their prisons".

Dame Sally's recommendations were accepted "in principle" at the time by the MoJ, which said that "implementation plans will now be drawn up".

The reforms even got a mention in the Queen's Speech last May.

She said at the time: "Prison governors will be given unprecedented freedom and they will be able to ensure prisoners receive better education."

They were not mentioned in this year's Queen's Speech, on June 21, in which the only nod to FE was a mention of "major reform of technical education".

Nina Champion, head of policy at the Prisoners' Education Trust, which works to support learning by people in prison, has now urged David Lidington, the new justice

secretary, to "make progress in implementing Sally Coates' recommendations".

But she warned that putting in place a new system for prison education "cannot be done in a hurry".

"There are many charities, organisations and employers who can play a vital role in improving the quality of prison education as well as offering opportunities for learning, training and employment after release, but only if the commissioning process is designed well to enable this to happen in practice," she said.

The OLASS system was first rolled out across the country in 2006 and the fourth round of contracts were agreed in August 2012.

The process was managed by the Skills Funding Agency until October 2016, when responsibility was handed over to the MoJ.

The four current contract-holders are Manchester College, Milton Keynes College and People Plus, formerly known as A4E, along with Weston College.

Manchester College delivers prison education in five regions: London, the north-east, north-west, Kent and Sussex, and Yorkshire and the Humber.

The east Midlands, west Midlands and south central are covered by Milton Keynes College, while People Plus holds the contract for the east of England.

All three providers declined FE Week's request for a comment on the contract extension.



Dame Sally Coates



## NEWS

# Colleges in dark over 16-to-18 performance data reporting rules

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EXCLUSIVE

Many colleges aren't managing to fulfil their legal duties to publish 16-to-18 performance data – apparently because they don't know they're required to.

The Department for Education decreed last year that, from March 2017, all providers – including colleges and sixth form colleges – had to publish five new 'headline accountability measures' on their websites.

Colleges, however, don't seem to have got the memo.

When FE Week checked the sites of the 20 biggest general FE colleges this week, we couldn't find the data anywhere.

We discussed our findings with the Association of Colleges, and its director of education policy David Corke implied in his response that colleges were unaware of the new rule.

"We will be working with colleges and DfE

to ensure colleges provide the information needed," he said.

DfE guidance for all 16-to-18 providers was first issued in June 2016, and outlines the five performance measures they must publish.

These include "the progress your students have made compared with students across the country" and attainment, shown by "the average grade your students get at key stage five" – both broken down by qualification type.

Providers must also set out the progress made by learners without at least a GCSE grade C in English and maths in these subjects.

The two other measures concern retention – the "proportion of students who get to the end of the main programme of study that they enrolled on at your institution", broken down by qualification type – and destinations, which means the "percentage of students who continue in education of training, or who move on to employment".

The measures were introduced for the

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Home > Education, training and skills > Running and managing a school > School governance > What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online

## Guidance

### What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online

From: Department for Education  
Published: 30 June 2016  
Last updated: 16 June 2017, see all updates  
Applies to: England

The information that all types of academies, free schools and 16 to 19 colleges should publish on their websites.

**School governance**  
Governors, pupil participation, federations, multi-academy trusts, guidance on external reviews.

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- [What maintained schools must publish online](#)

first time in this year's 16-to-18 performance tables as a way for colleges to assess how well they were doing – and also to compare the performance of different providers.

Colleges must also publish a link to the full performance tables for all providers.

This year's performance tables were issued in January, but did not include all the data until March – which is when the requirement to publish the information came into force.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, inadvertently demonstrated the scale of confusion: he himself had been under the impression that the rule was for guidance only, rather than mandatory.

"Including these five

indicators in isolation on a school or college website, without reference to the context of the local area, or comparisons with other providers, would not provide a meaningful summary of performance," he said.

"Ultimately our members are best placed to present this data in a format that parents and students can easily understand."

The DfE does not appear to be about to sanction providers for non-compliance; in fact, it appears at this stage to be focusing on spreading the word.

"It is the first year that colleges have been required to publish this data on their websites," a spokesperson said. "We will continue to work with the sector to increase its knowledge and understanding of what it must publish."



James Kewin

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INVESTIGATES

Terminated: Government ban lev

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

A major training provider claiming to have £130m of apprenticeship levy business has had its contract with the ESFA terminated, after an FE Week investigation found that one of its employees had been offering banned inducement payments to an employer.

Talent Training, based in South Tyneside, was caught offering cash amounting to as much as 20 per cent of government funding per apprenticeship directly to a firm considering whether to engage their services for training.

The money it claimed from the Education and Skills Funding Agency was meant solely for the purposes of training and assessing apprentices, but it was offering through an intermediary to hand as much as £200 in every £1,000 back the employer in question as a kickback.

The provider, which has now launched an internal investigation into the matter, appeared to try to circumvent strict government rules put in place explicitly to ban the practice.

FE Week was contacted by a whistleblowing employer, and secretly sat in on and recorded a phone call with a Talent employee during which the offer of an inducement was made.

We subsequently sent the information to Keith Smith, the director of funding and programmes at the ESFA.

The ESFA investigated, and a spokesperson told FE Week that “it is unacceptable for any training provider to abuse the system by offering employers cash incentives from the apprenticeship levy”.

He continued: “The ESFA has reviewed the information and taken action to protect the interests of learners and employers, by serving notice to terminate the levy agreement for Talent Training.

“The ESFA is taking immediate steps to contact levy employers that have made a

commitment with this provider.”

However, any non-levy apprenticeship contracts with Talent “have not been terminated”, he confirmed, adding: “As we have now served notice to terminate, we are unable to comment further on this specific matter during this time.”

This tough line has been backed by Association of Employment and Learning Providers’ boss Mark Dawe, who said: “The ESFA has been very clear that funding and taxpayers’ money should never be handed back to the employer in any form of unauthorised rebate or kickback, outside of the approved government incentive payments.

“Ultimately, anyone who is found to have

“

**The ESFA has reviewed the information and taken action, by serving notice to terminate the levy agreement**

broken or manipulated the rules should be held to account and dealt with appropriately by the ESFA.

“This appears to be the case in this instance, and it should send out a strong message to all providers and employers that abusing the system will not be tolerated.”

FE Week launched its investigation into Talent, which has insisted that no inducement payments have actually been paid to any employers, after we were approached by a concerned employer that asked not to be identified.

We were shown an email sent in March from Barry Waller, then national business development manager for Talent Training.

It said: “Just to make you aware, we offer a financial incentive to employers of around 20 per cent of their levy spends, if partnered with Talent Training. Based on your levy bill, this could be a good financial draw down if chose to work with TT?”

Another email was sent to the employer a day later, offering to “go further into the rebates and revenue generation aspects of our models in further detail”.

Intrigued, FE Week arranged to listen in – and secretly record – a telephone conversation between the employer and the Talent employee.

During this conversation, the employer was told that when using levy-funding, it would be paid 15 per cent of the price in cash, and that with some firms, Talent went as high as 20 per cent. When the levy pot was empty, Talent would switch to the co-investment model, and the employer would pay 10 per cent, though it would then be given this back in full.

Our anonymous employer then asked whether a co-investment employer would get both the 15 per cent back on top of the 10-per-cent co-investment refund.

The Talent executive replied: “Yes, exactly that”.

They continued: “There’s no reason why you can’t have a project which potentially could be worth £1 million, which is your levy.

“But you could have a £4 million apprenticeship campaign or apprenticeship programme, and you would get 15 per cent on the £4 million, but your levy is only £1 million, and you wouldn’t pay your 10 per cent on the additional £3 million, because we would reimburse that.”

The employer later emailed Talent to ask whether revised ESFA funding rules – published after the telephone conversation – would alter the arrangement.

The same Talent employee replied, with a senior employee copied in, that this was “nothing that would change our model or process”.

The ESFA revised its funding rules in March, specifically to ban inducements like this, which were increasingly rife across the sector.

“We have been made aware of some

emerging delivery models that are contrary to the policy intent,” it said on March 1.

“For example, some providers are offering incentives for employers by paying or refunding them for certain aspects.”

“

**It should send out a strong message that abusing the system will not be tolerated**

Two weeks later, the agency made the following announcement: “We have strengthened the rules to prohibit the payment of incentives, inducements by providers or refunds of co-investment of any kind.”

Then on March 20, provider funding rules were updated.

“You must not pay incentives or inducements or any other payment not authorised by us to the employer, in relation to any part of the apprenticeship programme,” they said.

Talent initially denied that it had done anything wrong, but after being presented with FE Week’s findings, a spokesperson conceded it had been “greatly concerned by these claims and conducted urgent enquiries”.

It indicated that any rule-breaking appeared to have been done by a single “rogue, junior employee”– who had now been suspended.

FE Week pointed out that a senior employee of the firm had been copied into relevant emails that outlined inducements. Talent’s spokesperson insisted that said this person “did not necessarily take note” of these emails.

The spokesperson added: “No contracts have been entered into with any employer based on the employee’s alleged activities and no inducement payments have been, nor will be, paid by Talent to any employer as claimed.”

David Harper, chairman of Talent Training, which has over 200 staff, then admitted he was “shocked to hear that alleged offers may have been made in order to win business”.

Mr Waller said this when speaking to the potential customer

“The [redacted] project is four times the amount of their levy, because the money that they’re going to generate is, you know, very substantial.”

“There’s no reason why you can’t have a project which potentially could be worth £1m, which is your levy, but you could have a £4m apprenticeship campaign or apprenticeship programme, and you would get 15% on the £4m, but your levy is only £1m, and you wouldn’t pay your 10% on the additional £3m because we would reimburse that.”

“We’ve got a lot of recruitment companies where... and we’re doing stuff to really help them... I mean, they’re not going to be in our main portfolio of clients... but in terms of local support, you’ve got a lot of recruitment companies who potentially have got a relatively small levy, but they’re kind of going full hog in terms of the development, in terms of upskilling their staff in whether it be recruitment or sales or customer service, or customer experience qualifications, because they’re not paying for them. They are generating a commercial return on each of the qualifications on a monthly basis. It’s great cash flow!”

From: Barry Waller  
Sent: 07 March 2017 1:06 PM  
To: [redacted]  
Subject: Levy Follow up

Good Afternoon,  
I appreciate I have not received anything back regarding potential partnership with regards to your impending levy bill , just to make you aware we offer a financial incentive to employers of around 20 % of their levy spends if partnered with Talent Training. Based on your levy bill this could be a good financial draw down if chose to work with TT.  
If I don’t hear back I will naturally not touch base again.

Kind Regards,

Barry Waller  
National Business Development Manager

Kind Regards,  
Barry Waller  
National Business Development Manager



## FESTIVAL OF SKILLS

# Start assessing as apprentices begin, providers told

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

**P**roviders need to assess new apprentices' skills as soon as they begin training in order to establish a baseline for measuring progress, the education watchdog has said.

Chris Jones, Ofsted's specialist adviser for apprenticeships, explained that the lack of qualifications within new apprenticeship standards has led to an "unintended consequence": trainers will miss out on information vital for tracking apprentices' development.

Speaking at FE Week's Festival of Skills on June 22, Mr Jones said: "If an apprentice is not doing a whole set of units as they go through an apprenticeship then all those

measures that we have in frameworks disappear.

"In a progress review with an apprentice, we can't say 'make sure next time I come you've finished unit 35' – it isn't going to work anymore."

In a couple of years, he suggested, there might not be any reliable national data to work with for apprenticeship standards.

The percentage of apprenticeships standards without qualifications is expected to rise.

In March, FE Week reported that more than a third of the apprenticeship standards the government had deemed ready for delivery involved no funded qualifications other than a final assessment.

While the standards had end-point assessments in place, they do not provide the apprentices with the chance to

accumulate qualifications as they move through their training – as was the case with the previous apprenticeship frameworks, he said.

In light of this, he advised providers in the audience to properly assess students' skills from the very beginning, so they would have a baseline against which to measure their progress.

Mr Jones added that this needed to go beyond just measuring English and maths, to give a clear indication of how capable the apprentice was in a range of areas relevant to the occupation before they began their course.

"It has to be much more about those starting points – it is vital that providers assess the knowledge and skills that apprentices bring with them," he argued.

"Too often, currently, the only

assessments that are recorded for an apprentice as they start their apprenticeship are their English and maths skills.

"Without qualifications to show a measurement of achievement in skills, what else are we going to use to measure that?"

Establishing a definite baseline would mean "then we all together can make a judgement about how far they've progressed from their starting points".

Mr Jones also said that, for Ofsted inspectors, the importance of learners' progress was "weighted equally" with actually achieving qualifications.

He spoke twice at the first day of FE Week's Festival of Skills, part of the Telegraph Festival of Education held in the beautiful setting of Wellington College, founded in 1859 in Crowthorne, Berkshire.

The event was attended by over 3,000 delegates on Thursday June 22 and Friday June 23.

Day one of the festival was introduced by the actor and comedian Hugh Dennis and also included a lively City and Guilds panel-quizz debate, chaired by managing director Kirstie Donnelly, who was incidentally celebrating her 50th birthday at the event.

Other sessions were led by Ben Blackledge, the director of education and skills competitions for WorldSkills UK, who spoke on 'Going for Gold in Apprenticeships', and FE Week's very own Nick Linford, who gave his best tips on finding efficiencies in 16-to-19 study programme funding.

Throughout the busy day, delegates were treated to live music, delicious food, including ice cream to match the stunning weather, and a wide range of engaging stands where they were able to meet the festival's exhibitors.

FE Week would like to thank everyone who attended or who took part and helped to make the occasion such a success.



Chris Jones

## Apprenticeship starts 'a quarter' of what they were before May

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
@ALIXROBERTSON4

**M**embers of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers have reported apprenticeship starts in May falling to around a quarter of what they were before the reforms kicked-in, according to the organisation's boss.

Mark Dawe gave eager listeners the latest on apprenticeships in a session at 2pm on the first day of the Festival of Skills. His speech included the warning over falling starts.

He said AELP doesn't "know the official figures yet, but it would appear there has been a dramatic fall in the number of starts in apprenticeships", because of the changes to funding in the apprenticeship reforms. Some providers have said their

apprenticeship starts have dropped to zero, he added, though certain sectors, such as digital, had continued to progress well.

Meanwhile, levy-paying employers were said to be taking their time to get off the ground, with many dipping their toes in the water through running pilot schemes.

Mr Dawe said this problem was being driven by concerns that small and medium sized employers were being pushed out of apprenticeship delivery, due to the introduction of the levy in April.

"We're seeing in the non-levy world, a number of pressures coming in," he said.

"Sectors are saying they are not going to contribute to 10 per cent employer funding, we're seeing funding being squeezed by the government at the moment so training providers aren't able to deliver as much as they used to and that's putting on downward pressure."



Mark Dawe



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INVESTIGATES

# FE Week analysis gets under skin

## Achievement rates at Learndirect fall under minimum standards

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
**@ALIXROBERTSON4**

The nation’s largest FE provider has been badly shaken by the changes in the way achievement rates are calculated, recording a 7.3 per cent drop that puts it below the government’s minimum standards. Learndirect’s achievement rate tumbled from 65.1 per cent in 2014/15 to just 57.8 per cent last academic year, according to national data released by the Department for Education on June 15. This brings it below the minimum standards threshold of 62 per cent, and should mean it will no longer be allowed to deliver apprenticeships until it improves. But in spite of its poor performance, Learndirect has still not been issued with

a notice of concern for failing to meet the minimum standard – even though it is 4.2 points below the threshold. “We don’t make comments on individual companies, but the list of our notices of concern is regularly updated by the ESFA and will continue to be regularly updated,” said a spokesperson for the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Learndirect is a giant in the sector, with almost 200,000 learners logged in its latest available Ofsted report from 2013, but it has had a rocky time in recent months. In May, FE Week reported that Learndirect employees had been informed that they were being placed in a month-long consultancy period. A concerned staff member contacted us to claim that they and their colleagues had been given the news via a “script” delivered in a

conference call, and were “expecting to lose [their] jobs in the next month or two”. FE Week asked Learndirect on the potential for job losses and where cuts were needed. “As a business we have offered GCSEs as part of our early-years offer,” said a spokesperson. “There has been a significant lobby to have mandatory GCSE requirements removed from the level three apprenticeship framework, with employers favouring the acceptance of functional skills qualifications. “As a result, we have decided to remove the GCSE offer from the Learndirect portfolio, while looking at our customers’ ongoing requirements for functional skills. “Sadly this may mean some colleagues will leave Learndirect.” The National Achievement Rate Tables for 2015/16 showed significant declines in apprenticeships performance for a number of providers – a drop which may have been caused by the DfE closing “loopholes” in the way the data is collected. FE Week’s analysis of the latest figures identified 18 providers whose apprenticeship achievement rates had fallen by 30 points or more between 2014/15 and 2015/16. The biggest drop was by 71.3 points, and half of those providers registering a decline

are at the moment rated ‘good’ by Ofsted. It is believed that many results will have been affected by the DfE’s decision in February to revise achievement rate figures, which it took in an effort to ensure any learners who disappeared or who did not have a completion status for their course were definitely recorded as a ‘fail’. Previous uncertainty over such learners had been artificially inflating achievement rates for around 10 per cent of providers. Now the latest adjusted data is in the public domain, FE Week asked Ofsted whether it would be suspending grades for these providers, in order to do a full investigation into the falling achievement rates. We also asked how the watchdog intends to protect the sector’s confidence in its inspection process without this kind of scrutiny. Ofsted didn’t answer the questions directly, but did issue a simple statement. “Ofsted can inspect any apprenticeship provider where there are concerns, including declining performance data. “This also applies to ‘outstanding’ providers. Ofsted’s risk assessment process takes into account all publicly available data and other intelligence and we keep this under review.”

Providers with 500 or more apprenticeship leavers in 2015/16 and 15 percentage point or more achievement rate fall

Provider Name	14/15 leavers	14/15 achievement rate %	15/16 leavers	15/16 achievement rate %*	% point fall
MARR CORPORATION LIMITED	1,370	91.9	3,750	60.5	-31.4
POSITIVE OUTCOMES LTD	1,150	79.4	3,300	49.1	-30.3
AGE UK TRADING CIC	1,300	66.7	2,050	33.8	-32.9
ASPIRE ACHIEVE ADVANCE LIMITED	540	82.0	1,930	65.1	-16.9
EQL SOLUTIONS LIMITED	950	75.8	1,880	55.4	-20.4
CORNWALL COLLEGE	1,680	72.0	1,820	52.8	-19.2
JOINT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP LIMITED	1,210	66.8	1,540	49.0	-17.8
QA LIMITED	1,050	86.2	1,530	70.2	-16.0
ROYAL AIR FORCE	1,010	94.3	1,420	75.4	-18.9
PDM TRAINING & CONSULTANCY LIMITED	1,050	66.3	1,390	38.5	-27.8
COMMUNITY TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED	550	74.9	1,320	42.5	-32.4
NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION	580	81.4	1,210	56.0	-25.4
IMPACT LEARNING & DATA SOLUTIONS LIMITED	470	93.2	1,200	72.1	-21.1
PROGRESS TO EXCELLENCE LTD	610	90.7	900	56.4	-34.3
THE DERBYSHIRE NETWORK	550	79.2	900	58.3	-20.9
COMPASS GROUP, UK AND IRELAND LIMITED	530	71.4	760	29.2	-42.2
OUTSOURCE VOCATIONAL LEARNING LIMITED	540	73.6	730	54.3	-19.3
ROCHDALE TRAINING ASSOCIATION LIMITED	390	87.7	640	70.1	-17.6
REDBRIDGE COLLEGE	680	78.4	630	56.7	-21.7
SPIRIT PUB COMPANY (SERVICES) LIMITED	360	44.8	610	10.2	-34.6
BLUE TRAINING (U.K.) LIMITED	560	59.8	590	4.1	-55.7
MARDELL ASSOCIATES LIMITED	770	73.5	590	48.2	-25.3
CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER LIMITED	240	62.7	560	0.2	-62.5
YH TRAINING SERVICES LIMITED	470	82.0	550	66.8	-15.2
A4E LTD	560	55.1	530	21.7	-33.4
B2B ENGAGE LIMITED	510	66.1	530	39.0	-27.1
SUNDERLAND CITY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL	310	72.8	530	49.3	-23.5
MOBILE CARE QUALIFICATIONS LIMITED	480	73.2	520	58.2	-15.0
STAFFORD COLLEGE	450	70.8	510	35.5	-35.3
BHS LIMITED	500	67.7	500	34.4	-33.3

Source: Analysis by FE Week from DfE National Achievement Rate Tables, published and available on gov.uk  
\* 2015/16 figures are the revised DfE methodology and providers ordered by largest leavers in 2015/16 first



# n of achievement rates for sector

## NCG and others blame IT ‘glitches’ for table absence

**ALIX ROBERTSON**  
**@ALIXROBERTSON4**

Providers have blamed “data glitches” for their absence from the latest national achievement rate tables.

The five colleges and one provider that make up Newcastle College Group are all absent from the 2015/16 tables published on June 15, as well as Croydon College and Middlesbrough council.

The six NCG members were supposed to have their achievement statistics published individually as part of a pilot project with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, but IT hiccups meant their fields were left completely blank.

NCG claimed that “glitches” had led to the information being “redacted”.

A spokesperson for the group told FE Week that it had been “working for the past year on a pilot project with the ESFA” to publish the data at an individual level.

“As part of the project, all the NCG colleges

now have their own UKPRN and separate funding schedules, with an aim of enabling data to be published at individual college level,” she said.

“This has resulted in some temporary glitches in the data, which will be resolved in time for 2016/17 publication of achievement rates.

“The ESFA therefore felt it would be an unfair reflection of NCG achievements and made the decision to redact some of the data for 2015/16 publication.”

She added that the five colleges and the training provider division Intraining which make up NCG “have all been inspected in the last 12 months and all have been rated Ofsted Grade two”.

The five colleges in question are Kidderminster College, Newcastle Colleges, Newcastle Sixth Form Group, West Lancashire College and Carlisle College.

Data from Croydon College was also absent from the tables.

A spokesperson for the college, which has an Ofsted ‘good’ rating dating back to 2014, said it

had moved to a new student records system in 2015/16 but that “in the transfer apprenticeship achievement was incorrectly reported”.

“The error was caused by the way the new record system coded some of the apprentices transferring from the old record system,” he said.

After the problem was identified the college worked with the ESFA to “identify the impact of the error on our achievement rates for 2015/16 and to rectify the error”.

“The college agreed with the ESFA that our 2015/2016 achievement rates should not be published as a consequence of the error.”

The error has apparently now been fixed, and would not affect future years’ achievement rates.

Achievement rates from Middlesbrough council’s adult and community learning service were also missing.

A spokesperson explained that in mid-2015/16, the learning service had merged the data from two management information systems into one.

When the service received its interim

results in December 2016, “it quickly became obvious that all apprenticeships and study programme learners had been counted twice, which impacted on the cohort size and more importantly for us on the success rate”.

“Quite simply, one learner record was open-ended with no completion and one had the completion – two records per learner,” he said – a problem he attributed to the different systems having a different unique number for each learner.

“After many conversations with the SFA data team and pursuing the complaints route we jointly came to an agreement that the Middlesbrough data would not be published for the 15/16 year.”

A spokesperson for Ofsted said that the inspectorate “does have access to 2015/16 performance data for NCG, Croydon College and Middlesbrough. This data includes a qualification achievement rate report for all three providers and a level 3 performance report for NCG and Croydon College.”

The ESFA declined to comment on the missing data.

Providers with 6,000 or more L3 qualifications for 16-18 year-olds

Institution Name	Institution Type	Qualifications	Retention Rate %	Pass Rate %	Overall Achievement Rate %
REIGATE COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,460	97	97.6	94.4
ESHER COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,280	98	96.2	94.3
WINSTANLEY COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	7,300	97	96.3	93.0
RUNSHAW COLLEGE	GFE College	8,630	96	96.2	92.5
AQUINAS COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,190	95	96.3	91.6
THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE FARNBOROUGH	Sixth Form College	11,690	96	95.4	91.4
GREENHEAD COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	8,850	96	94.8	91.0
PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	13,420	96	94.8	90.6
CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	8,420	94	96.6	90.6
LORETO COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	11,590	95	93.8	89.5
LUTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	7,090	97	91.9	89.1
QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,320	94	94.2	89.0
EXETER COLLEGE	GFE College	9,030	94	94.3	88.9
WYKE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,870	94	94.8	88.9
BARTON PEVERIL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	9,460	95	93.5	88.5
GODALMING COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,320	93	94.5	88.3
HEREFORD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	7,170	96	92.1	88.0
WYGGESTON AND QUEEN ELIZABETH I COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	8,140	97	90.7	87.5
XAVERIAN COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,610	93	93.3	87.1
TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE	GFE College	9,560	94	92.8	87.0
HILLS ROAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	9,980	87	97.7	85.1
THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE COLCHESTER	Sixth Form College	14,880	93	90.3	83.9
CHRIST THE KING SIXTH FORM COLLEGE	Sixth Form College	6,050	89	92.6	82.7
CITY AND ISLINGTON COLLEGE	GFE College	7,040	92	88.2	80.9
BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN COLLEGE	GFE College	6,930	93	85.4	79.7

Source: Analysis by FE Week from DfE Education and Training National Achievement Rate Tables, published and available on gov.uk  
Level 3 16-18 provision selected as an example of the performance data, and a category of particular interest to Ofsted

# £10m windfall hopes as HMRC caves over VAT

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

Colleges are to be exempted from paying VAT on important training supplies following a ruling by the European Court of Justice – and refund claims are expected to amount to £10 million.

The long-running dispute between Brockenhurst College and HMRC, centred on whether it had to pay sales tax on supplies for the college’s training restaurant, is still awaiting its final resolution in the UK courts.

But the tax office did this week confirm to FE Week that it had already accepted the ECJ’s decision, delivered last month, that supplies “may be regarded as closely related to the principal supply of education” and that they should “accordingly be exempt from VAT”.

A legal expert believes that the ECJ has set a costly precedent for the government, and HMRC has confirmed colleges can now start applying for refunds.

FE Week asked HMRC if colleges would be exempt from paying VAT for similar supplies and facilities, like hair and beauty salons, in the future.

“The court found that Brockenhurst’s

supplies of catering and theatre performances were not made to earn income, so were not in competition with other providers,” said a spokesperson.

“This is why they were exempt from VAT. HMRC will apply the guidance of the court to that case and to any other case in the same circumstances.”

HMRC also confirmed that colleges are now able to apply for refunds if they feel that they provide services in the same circumstances as Brockenhurst. These claims will be capped at four years and may be subject to verification, the HMRC said.

Noel Tyler, director of VAT angles, the VAT consultancy which advised Brockenhurst College, said he expected the refunds to reach up to £10 million.

“Colleges will absolutely be able to apply for refunds,” he said. “They will be able to go back four years and recover such claims.

“I would say anything up to £10 million will be claimed, anything from £20,000 to £250,000 for individual colleges.”

Limor Feingold, the vice-principal and director of finance at Brockenhurst College, said he was “delighted” by the ruling.

However, “questions remain with regard to the interpretation of competition and the VAT status of specific students”, he warned.



“As these questions will still have to be answered by the UK courts, the college is not yet counting its chickens in terms of VAT refunds from HMRC.”

In the European Court of Justice’s summary of the case proceedings, the judges also wrote that the ruling would apply “provided that those services are essential to the students’ education and that their basic purpose is not to obtain additional income for that establishment, by carrying out transactions which are in direct competition with those of commercial enterprises liable for VAT”.

The court agreed with the arguments made

on behalf of the college, that VAT was not due on the income generated from areas such as the training restaurants or hair and beauty salons, in which members of the public pay for services supplied by students as part of their courses.

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: “VAT is a complex issue and a big cost for colleges. It is helpful that HMRC has confirmed it will refund claims to colleges in a similar position to Brockenhurst, but some colleges may struggle to prove that their catering outlets are not competing with local commercial cafes and restaurants.”

# Merger collapse makes it a dozen area review failures

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

Yet another merger recommended in the area reviews has collapsed, as a planned link-up between two colleges in the north-east became the twelfth to be called off.

The news that Stockton Riverside College and Darlington College’s partnership was off the cards emerged this week, more than a year after it was first proposed in the Tees Valley area review.

Mark White, Stockton Riverside’s chair of governors, and Pat Howarth, the Darlington chair, said in a joint statement that the decision had been taken after “careful consideration and detailed discussions”.

“Both Darlington and Stockton Riverside College remain committed to working together, exploring collaboration and potential future partnership activity,” it said.

“But we feel the risk of a full merger at this point in time outweighs the potential benefits to students, stakeholders and staff.”

There’s an ongoing dispute between Darlington and its staff over potential pay cuts, which could see lecturers’ pay – but allegedly not that of the principal or senior managers – slashed by up to 10 per cent.

Members of the University and College Union had been planning to protest on June 21 over the proposals, but the demonstration was called off at the last minute, after the college

agreed to new talks.

The cuts were said to be due to “real financial challenges” being faced by the college, which are understood to have come to a head as a result of the merger.

Both colleges are currently rated ‘good’ by Ofsted, and theirs was one of three mergers proposed in the Tees Valley review, which ended in May 2016.

According to the report into the review, published in November, the merger would “improve the long-term financial sustainability” of the two colleges, and was “an opportunity to expand provision and to grow apprenticeship provision”.

It’s also the second of the three Tees Valley mergers to have fallen apart.

Hartlepool College and Hartlepool Sixth Form College had been set to join forces, until the SFC announced in March that it intended to join Sunderland College instead.

Other failed mergers include Bury College dropping out of a three-way link-up with the University of Bolton and Bolton College in April.

And FE Week reported in February that another Manchester merger involving Stockport, Oldham and Tameside College had been called off following intervention by the FE commissioner Richard Atkins.

Meanwhile, Tresham College and Bedford College have announced plans to merge this summer.

The pair, which both took part in the south-

east Midlands review, part of the fifth wave of the reviews, will form the Bedford College Group.

Bedford College was rated ‘good’ at its most recent Ofsted inspection in March 2014, while Tresham College received a grade four after it was inspected in June 2016.

Ian Pryce CBE, the current Bedford College principal, will take over as principal of the new group, while Ioan Morgan CBE, interim principal at Tresham College, will retire.

Mr Pryce said the merger would bring a

number of benefits, including expanding provision and protecting jobs at the two colleges.

“We are committed to the communities of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough as well as Bedfordshire and we plan to grow provision in all areas,” he said.

“The enthusiastic response we have had from employers, local councils, staff and students shows the community has the same ambition as us and that support will help enormously,” he added.







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EDITORIAL

This will send a strong message



The ESFA should be applauded for taking swift and tough action against Talent Training.

I expect this story and the associated concerns will be a hot topic at the upcoming AELP conference, but to be clear there can be no grey areas over how levy money should be spent.

It must all be used for training and assessment of the apprentice it's linked to, and any attempts to hive off cash through employer inducements has to be cracked down on.

The National Audit Office has already warned it is worried the reformed apprenticeship system is wide open to abuse.

Our investigation, which I'm extremely proud of, exposed one such attempt at foul play - involving a major independent provider that previously had a good relationship with the government.

Let's hope that lessons are learned through the internal investigation Talent is now carrying out.

The government and the sector as a whole must be on our guard. The new apprenticeships system, which has benefitted from a huge amount of welcome publicity and support from ministers, will be fatally undermined if the NAO finds widespread malpractice in the coming months.

Nick Linford, Editor  
news@feweek.co.uk

NO WORD ON AEB BUDGET TWEETS:

GrahamNOCN	@GrahamNOCN1
We must avoid the reforms grinding to a halt! Too much is at stake	
Simon Ashworth	@sashworth80
fast running out of time if contracting for August 2017 is still on the cards.	
Isa Mutlib	@isamutlib
"If" being the key word there... New minister - not sure what on earth could happen	
Eduk8Stoke	@Eduk8Stoke
Given Brexit, apprenticeships, FE & HE need investment to ensure that our people and our economy are best placed to take advantage.	
Jenny	@JHinkley24
A government in self inflicted chaos	
Maxine Jennifer	@maxinejennifer
Hardly a surprise	



Gold standard for 14 colleges with HE teaching

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

Fourteen FE colleges have achieved gold status for higher education teaching in the first ever Teaching Excellence Framework ratings.

The feat was doubly impressive for the sector's high achievers, as more than half of Russell Group universities – traditionally considered to be the best in the country – missed out on the best mark.

A total of 295 higher education providers are included in the TEF, which was conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Of the 106 colleges that took part, 14 were awarded gold, the best grade, while 46 achieved silver and 31 were rated bronze.

The other 15 received a "provisional" rating.

The TEF assesses higher education institutions on the quality of teaching and the outcomes they achieve, taking into account factors such as teaching quality, student satisfaction and graduate employability.

This is a trial year for the ratings, but they might in future affect the levels of fees universities are able to charge, and could be a measure on which students base their university choice.

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said he was "delighted" that the TEF "confirmed what we already knew – that colleges up and down the country are delivering high quality higher education which matches the best".

He continued: "This is the first set of full results for the TEF and I am sure that colleges and HEFCE will have learned a lot from the experience.

"We will work closely with the TEF team to ensure that the metrics and the assessment work well for colleges which tend to have more part-time and older students who are working whilst learning."

But other voices in the sector have opposed the new performance indicator. Sorana Vieru, vice-president for higher

education at the National Union of Students, said the publication of the TEF is "another meaningless university ranking system no one asked for, which the government is introducing purportedly in the name of students".

"The government has ignored the concerns of students, academics and experts across the country who have warned against the introduction of the TEF, arguing that its measurements fail to capture anything about teaching quality."

She added that until the measurements are addressed, "this ranking system is nothing but a Trojan horse to justify raised tuition fees and treat the higher education sector like any other market, to be ineptly measured and damagingly sold".

Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union, also came out against the TEF.

"The TEF is opposed by both staff and

student organisations and these results will have little credibility within higher education itself," she said.

"The fear is that students, beyond the UK in particular, will use these results as the basis for deciding which UK university to attend, which could damage some institutions."

A gold award in the TEF is given to providers who show the highest quality, silver is awarded for consistently exceeding national quality requirements in higher education, while bronze is reserved for those who meet the national requirements.

Madeleine Atkins, chief executive of HEFCE, said that the TEF measures things that "students themselves say they care about: high-quality, engaged teaching and a supportive, stimulating learning environment which equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their potential, and then to progress to a good job or further study".

Colleges awarded 'gold' in the TEF

- Blackpool and the Fylde College
- City College Plymouth
- The City of Liverpool College
- Cleveland College of Art and Design
- Exeter College
- Hartpury College
- Hugh Baird College
- Leicester College
- Middlesbrough College
- Solihull College and University Centre
- South Devon College
- Truro and Penwith College
- West Herts College
- Weston College of Further and Higher Education







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Our facilities are exceptional, providing our students with the latest industry standard equipment and access to innovative digital learning technology. We are Ofsted rated Good and well positioned to take advantage of the changes in the apprenticeship area. We have over 1,500 advanced apprentices in training and more than 400 students in Further Education programmes preparing for apprenticeships.

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#### Circa £120k package for an outstanding candidate

We are looking for an exceptional person for this unique and exciting role who can take us to the next stage of our development.

We are seeking a CEO with a passionate commitment to excellence, high achievement and productivity. This will be a hands-on role so experience in leadership, budgeting and partnership building is essential.

This is a terrific opportunity for someone who combines industrial and educational experience and has a record of innovative strategy building and strong practical management.

We also work closely with our Corporation Board, composed of high profile, influential figures from industry, community and business and together we are committed to ensuring that PROCAT continues its ambitious growth plans and maintains its high standards. You will work closely with the Board to set the strategic direction and educational character of the college, securing its long-term viability.

So, if you are a productive thinker and a natural leader with experience in FE and/or Industry, we would like to hear from you.

Join us and play a leading role in a college with momentum and ambition.

Closing date: Sunday 16th July 2017

Final interview: Mid August 2017

To apply for this role or to download an application pack visit:  
[www.protocol.co.uk/procat](http://www.protocol.co.uk/procat)

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

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We have retained FE Associates to support us in this important appointment. Potential candidates are encouraged to contact Samantha Bunn for an initial discussion. [Samantha.Bunn@fea.co.uk](mailto:Samantha.Bunn@fea.co.uk) or 01454 617 707.

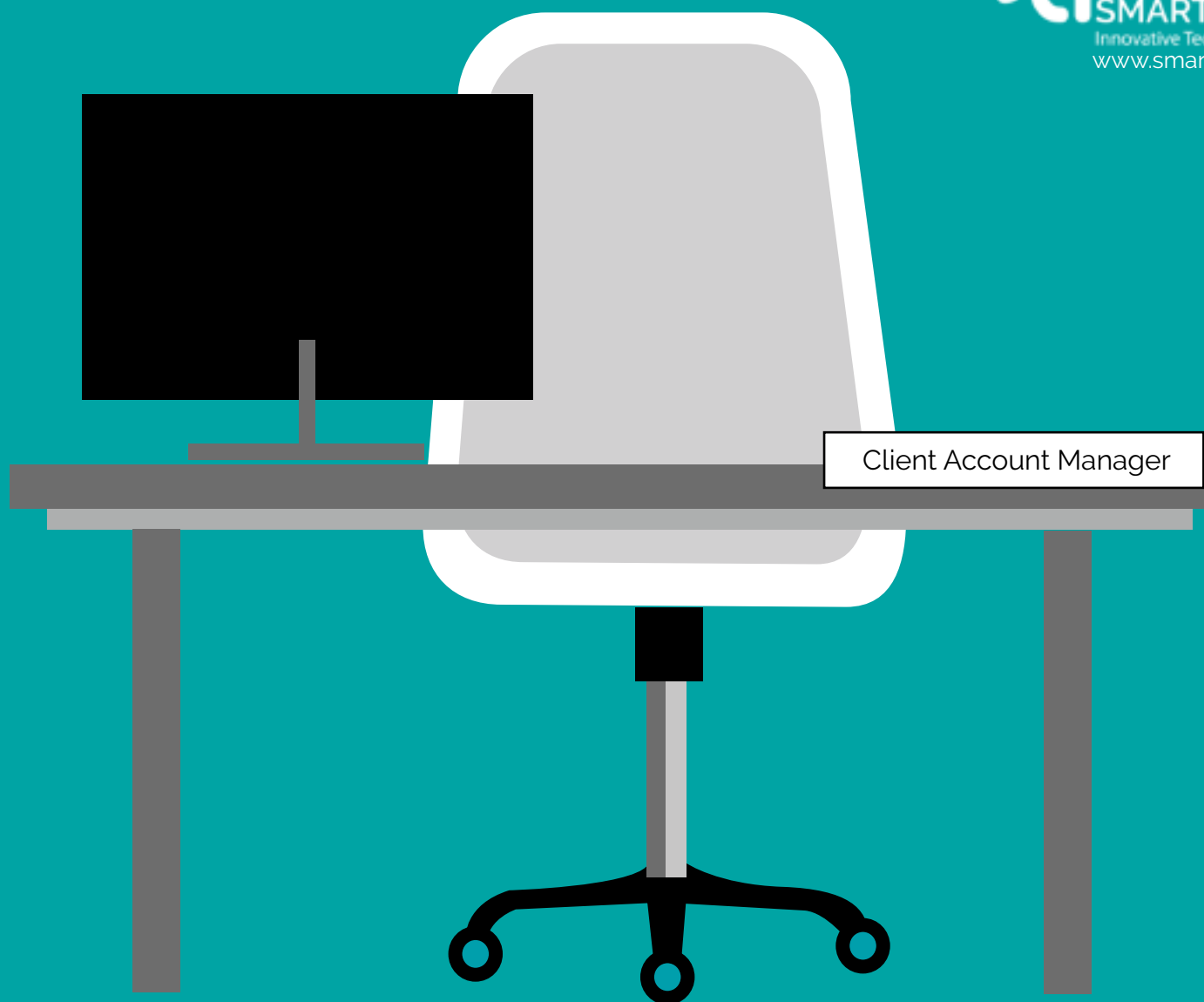
CLOSING DATE: 12 NOON FRIDAY 28TH JULY 2017

INTERVIEWS: 5TH & 6TH SEPTEMBER 2017

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## More than just a desk job.

Smart Apprentices are one of the 50 fastest growing technology companies in the UK; and to look after our fast growing volume of new clients using our Smart Assessor e-portfolio, we need to recruit additional Client Account Managers. As a national company we have Client Account Manager roles available in the North, Midlands and South of England.

You won't be sat at a desk all day as a Client Account Manager - you'll be out with your clients, maintaining and expanding relationships with your existing clients to ensure the wider use of SmartAssessor within all curriculum areas.

### Main Duties & Responsibilities:

- Proactively maintain monthly client contact
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- Deliver product training 1:1 and in groups of 12
- Engage with user Champions to promote best practice
- Ensure clients attend events

### Knowledge, Skills & Experience:

Organised, articulate, enthusiastic, intelligent, listening, presentable, likeable, tenacity.

### Track record of success & over achievement in:

- Exceptional client facing skills & communication
- Ability to develop relationships & work extensively at multiple levels
- Ability to self-motivate & multi-task whilst working independently

### Essential requirements:

- Experience as an Assessor & IQA in the FE/Apprenticeship sector
- User of e-portfolios - Smart Assessor usage desirable
- Delivery of group training
- Computer skills including Outlook, Word & Excel

For more information on this role and other career opportunities we have, visit our website [www.smartapprentices.com](http://www.smartapprentices.com)

To apply for this role email your cover letter and CV to [lisa.taylor@smartapprentices.com](mailto:lisa.taylor@smartapprentices.com)



## Interim Managers

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## Curriculum Interim Managers

In response to sector demand for interim managers for the next academic year at Curriculum Manager, Head of Department level and above, we are keen to hear from suitably qualified and experienced professionals to join our team of self-employed, associate consultants. You will be highly motivated and flexible, conversant with the issues facing FE and have experience of working in a successful organisation at Curriculum Manager / Head of Department level or above.

## Finance Interim Managers

We are also looking to increase our pool of self-employed financial controllers/Heads of Finance for both short term project based work and longer interim assignments. You will be a qualified accountant with management experience in a successful FE college.

For further information on these opportunities please contact Judith Richardson on 01454 617707 or email your CV to [judith.richardson@fea.co.uk](mailto:judith.richardson@fea.co.uk).

**Closing date Monday 31st July**

**Interviews to be held during August and early September**



**SHREWSBURY**  
COLLEGES GROUP



## Finance Director

Salary: £75,000 - £90,000

Shrewsbury Colleges Group is seeking an ambitious and highly motivated Finance Director to join its Senior Leadership Team. Shrewsbury Colleges Group is Shropshire's largest college and the largest sixth form college in the country with a turnover of £23.5 million. The College serves 3,250 16-19 year olds, 2,000 adults, 800 apprentices and 250 higher education students. In this role you will be responsible for financial control and management across the group, you will work with a team of finance professionals and in addition manage the College estate which is spread over three sites in Shrewsbury. More information about the role and how to apply can be found at the following link: [www.jobsatcollege.com](http://www.jobsatcollege.com)

### To apply

**Closing date is 2pm on Thursday 13 July 2017. Interviews for this post will be held on Tuesday 18 July 2017.**

If you are interested in the role but would like a discussion before applying please ring James Staniforth Chief Executive SCG on 01743 342500.



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Barnsley College is rated outstanding by Ofsted and has over 8,000 students across a wide range of Vocational, Part-time and Higher Education courses as well as A-Levels and Apprenticeships.

We are looking for three exceptional people to join our high performing management team to help us continue to deliver an outstanding experience for our learners in the following key roles:



## Head of Department – Hair, Beauty and Catering

## Head of Department – Business, Warehousing and Logistics

## Head of Department - Wigfield Farm

All posts will be spot-pointed within the range £41,102 to £44,899 per annum

The successful applicants will provide inspirational leadership to ensure outstanding teaching and learning, develop innovative curriculum design and delivery, and to deliver operational plans across their respective areas.

At Barnsley College, Heads of Department enjoy autonomy to deliver outcomes in their areas. The ability to initiate and manage change effectively and plan for growth and continuous improvement are essential requirements. Applicants should be able to clearly demonstrate how they would successfully manage departmental quality and budgets as well as establishing high levels of student and staff satisfaction.

The Head of Wigfield Farm will also drive the commercial strand of our Wigfield Farm site.

Candidates for all posts will be, or have the potential to be, outstanding leaders and managers with a thorough understanding of the key issues and opportunities facing the sector and their respective curriculum area.

Key benefits include 45 days annual leave entitlement (including bank and public holidays), access to the Teachers Pension Scheme and a commitment to support job related training and development.

For further information and to apply for any of the above positions please visit our website <http://www.barnsley.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies/>

**Closing date** for all posts is Wednesday 5 July 2017.

**Interviews** for the posts will take place between 17th and 21st July 2017.

*Barnsley College is committed to creating a dynamic and diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all candidates regardless of their gender, disability, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith. Disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.*

*The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.*



## Be part of a newly merged, dynamic college.

Furness College and Barrow Sixth Form College have recently merged enabling us to offer the full breadth of professional, technical and academic qualifications from entry to degree level. We have outstanding facilities over two campuses, experienced tutors and a wide network of employer partners which enable us to deliver the highest quality provision to young people, adults and employers in South Cumbria and beyond. We were rated as good by Ofsted in 2015, with outstanding provision in Engineering and Law, and our financial health in 2015-2016 was outstanding. We also became one of the first members of the Institution for Further Education earlier this year.

We are committed to providing students with a safe and secure environment, and therefore all appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks. We currently have some unique opportunities to join our committed management and teaching teams, and we are looking for exceptional candidates who will take a leading role in achieving our ambitious corporate objectives.

For further information about the role, including job descriptions and how to apply, please visit our recruitment site [www.furnesscareers.co.uk](http://www.furnesscareers.co.uk)

## Head of Business Development (35hpw)

We are South Cumbria's largest training provider, offering specific, dedicated expertise in helping organisations to gain a competitive advantage through bespoke development and training solutions. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced manager to lead our business and employment support team.

## Head of Maths and English (35hpw)

Maths and English skills are crucial to the success and progression of our students who often arrive at the college without a relevant qualification, and the growth, ongoing development and further improvement of Maths and English throughout our curriculum offer remain high on our agenda. We are looking for an enthusiastic and experienced manager to lead our Maths and English curriculum team, working towards outstanding.

## Curriculum Leader, Maths (35hpw)

The post holder will work alongside our Curriculum Leader for English, supporting the Head of Maths and English to embed Maths throughout the college curriculum, ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment are innovative and highly effective, and that students obtain the qualifications required to support their ongoing study and progression into employment.

## Marketing and Communication Manager (Maternity Cover, 35hpw)

We are seeking an experienced marketing specialist to lead and deliver our marketing and communication strategies and school liaison activities across our two campuses. The role is a driving force behind the college's corporate objectives of student success, business engagement and financial excellence.

## Lecturer Psychology (26.25hpw)

We are seeking to appoint a talented Lecturer of A Level Psychology. The successful candidate will be able to evidence a proven track record of achieving outstanding results and delivering inspirational teaching and learning. Able to demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for the subject area and the ability to engage, motivate and inspire students of all abilities, the post holder will have a commitment to maximising achievement, raising aspirations and exceeding expectations.



# Lecturer/Co-ordinator - GCSE Mathematics

**Salary:** £24,097.00 - £34,291.00 Per Annum  
**Hours:** Permanent, Full Time  
**Location:** Lewes



Enthusiastic, well-qualified and experienced professionals are required to join a committed Maths and English Team. The post involves the co-ordination of a small staff team and the GCSE re-sits. Teaching will be primarily GCSE but there may also be an opportunity for some A level delivery.

Applicants need to be effective team members who are prepared for co-ordinating an area of the curriculum with a view to raising standards and improving the student experience. Excellent communication and organisation skills should be matched with a proven track record of high quality teaching. Applicants should have a relevant degree (or equivalent), a teaching qualification, post-qualification experience and a student-centred approach to teaching and learning.

This post is subject to a DBS check.

**Closing date:** Monday 3rd July 2017 (by noon).

**Interviews:** Friday 7th July 2017 at Lewes campus.

## How to apply

For further details and to apply for this vacancy, please visit our careers page to complete an online application form

[www.sussexdowns.ac.uk/about/vacancies](http://www.sussexdowns.ac.uk/about/vacancies)



**English - Functional Skills and GCSE - ED/WAES/748**

**Maths - Functional Skills and GCSE - ED/WAES/749**

**Rate of Pay** - £27.00 per hour (with the opportunity to progress to £28.00 per hour)

Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) judged by Ofsted Inspection as "officially good and on our way to outstanding" is the largest local authority adult education service in London and one of the largest in the country. We offer a large and diverse programme of further education qualification courses and employer-based training as well as extensive community based provision. We have a diverse, enthusiastic student community, taught and supported by well qualified, dedicated staff. Our three main centres in Westminster are all modern, easily accessible and purpose built, offering high quality teaching and learning facilities.

We offer excellent employment benefits including a public sector pension scheme and opportunities for Continuous Professional Development.

We are looking for part time tutors to deliver on our growing English and Maths Functional Skills and GCSE programmes.

We offer daytime, evening and weekend sessions from entry level up to level 2 and we also have a growing GCSE programme.

Experience in delivering Functional Skills from Entry to Level 2 English/Maths and/or GCSE English/Maths to adults in discrete classes is essential.

Job description and application forms are available from [www.waes.ac.uk/vacancies](http://www.waes.ac.uk/vacancies)

Please state clearly in your application the areas/subjects you are able to teach and your availability.

**Closing Date: 3 July 2017**

## Lecturer in Functional Skills (English & Maths) within the Sport, PSO & Landbased Department

**The Sheffield College**

**18.50 hours x 52 weeks (0.50 FTE)**

### Salary Information for Lecturing Staff

Unqualified Range scale points 15-21 (£9,586 - £11,385)

Qualified Range scale points 23-31 (£12,078 - £15,283)

The Sport, Public Service & Land based department is seeking to appoint a well-qualified and enthusiastic individual to support the delivery of English and math's qualifications to our students. The posts involves teaching Functional Mathematics and Functional English to students on a range of vocational courses. You will also be expected to contribute to the on-going curriculum and team-development and take responsibility for aspects of provision within the department.

The successful candidate should hold a teaching qualification in Mathematics and/or English. Recent post-16 teaching experience would be an advantage but newly qualified teachers with appropriate teaching practice experience will also be considered. It is also essential to have good ICT skills with the ability to develop the use of VLEs.

You will also be an effective team player, be flexible and willing to take on new teaching challenges as new opportunities arise and become part of the growth and success of the department.

**Closing Date: 3 July 2017**

**To apply** please visit [www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs) and follow the links and complete the online application. For queries regarding the application process please contact Human Resources Team on **0114 2602623** or email [jobs@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@sheffcol.ac.uk) CV's not accepted.





## Lecturer in Functional Skills (English & Maths) within the Engineering Department

The Sheffield College

**37 hours x 52 weeks**

**Salary Information for Lecturing Staff**

Unqualified Range scale points 15-21 (£19,172 - £22,771)

Qualified Range scale points 23-31 (£24,157 - £30,566)

The Olive Grove Campus is a vibrant and successful part of The Sheffield College where high standards of practice and associated success rates are expected and achieved. We are seeking to appoint well qualified and enthusiastic individual to join the Engineering Department. The post involves teaching Functional Skills Mathematics and Functional Skills English to students on a range of vocational courses. You will also be expected to contribute to the on-going curriculum and team-development and take responsibility for aspects of provision within the department.

The successful candidate should hold a teaching qualification in Mathematics and/or English. Recent post-16 teaching experience would be an advantage but newly qualified teachers with appropriate teaching practice experience will also be considered. It is also essential to have good ICT skills with the ability to develop the use of VLEs.

You will also be an effective team player, be flexible and willing to take on new teaching challenges as new opportunities arise and become part of the growth and success of the department.

**Closing Date: 10 July 2017**  
**Interviews: W/C 17 July 2017**

To apply please visit [www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs) and follow the links and complete the online application. For queries regarding the application process please contact Human Resources Team on **0114 2602623** or email [jobs@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@sheffcol.ac.uk) CV's not accepted.

## Lecturer in ESOL x 2

The Sheffield College

**Hours: 37 hours x 52 weeks**

**Salary: £19,172 - £30,566**

The post involves teaching ESOL to students from Pre-Entry to Level 2. Furthermore, you may be required to deliver across the 16-18 Study Programmes and Adult ESOL/Employability courses of varying lengths. You will also be expected to contribute to the on-going curriculum and team-development and take responsibility for aspects of provision within the department.

The successful candidate must hold a teaching qualification and an ESOL Subject Specialism or equivalent. It is essential to have a working knowledge of City & Guilds ESOL Skills for Life exams, good ICT skills and experience of embedding numeracy and employability. It would be an advantage to hold a TAQA qualification or equivalent.

The successful candidate should demonstrate their ability to track and monitor student progress using various systems such as Promonitor. You must be flexible as teaching at one or more sites across The Sheffield College will be required. You will be an effective team player, be able to take the initiative in order to raise the quality and the standards of the department and share good practice. You will be ready to take on new teaching challenges as opportunities arise and become part of the growth and success of the departments and the College.

**Closing Date: 29 June 2017 at 5.00 pm**  
**Shortlisting: 30th June 2017**  
**Interviews: 12th July 2017**

To apply please visit [www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.sheffcol.ac.uk/jobs) and follow the links and complete the online application.



## OUTSTANDING English and Maths staff WANTED!

**Location:** Huddersfield and Dewsbury

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

**Hours:** Variable

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

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

This is an exciting opportunity for bright, committed and innovative individuals who have the ability to work with both mature and 16-19 year old learners as part of a large, dynamic and successful team within a well-established Further Education college. The purpose of this role is to ensure a high quality and relevant learning experience for all students on the courses.

The main responsibilities of the role will be to teach English and/or maths related subjects at any of the College centres and to develop programmes of study to meet the particular needs of our diverse range of students.

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

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

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

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



# ENGLISH AND MATHS TUTOR

**Reports to:** Education Manager, Let Me Play Education  
**Based at:** LMP Head Office, London  
**Salary:** Competitive

## Job Purpose:

The English and Maths Tutor will be developing and delivering functional English and Maths skills across a variety of programmes within Let Me Play Education, which can include Apprenticeship programme, full-time study programmes, Alternative Education as well as delivery within a number of Premier League football clubs cross London.

## Qualifications required:

Teaching Qualification- Minimum Level 4 Certificate in Education & Training and Qualified Teacher Status (Desirable).  
Must Hold A-B Grade GCSE in maths & English.  
Must be Degreed Educated within their chosen field.



**Closing date:** 31st July

**Interviews:** Immediately for the right candidate

**Start Date:** September 2017

**Apply:** Send your CV and cover letter to  
nick@letmeplay.co.uk



## Lecturer in Maths

**£24,149 - £28,815**

Hugh Baird College is a friendly, diverse and vibrant place to work where students and the local community are at the heart of everything we do. We have a reputation for providing high quality education and support for all learners and are seeking to recruit a high quality maths tutor to teach GCSE maths to 14 - 19 year olds and adults.

You will have the ability to motivate and engage a range of students with inspirational and innovative approaches to mathematics and be able to deliver high quality teaching and learning using practical, real life scenarios. A level 3 maths qualification or equivalent level skills is essential together with GCSE maths specialist teaching experience.

To apply for this role please visit [www.hughbaird.ac.uk](http://www.hughbaird.ac.uk) or call **0151 353 4449** or e-mail [vacancies@hughbaird.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@hughbaird.ac.uk). The closing date for this position is **Wednesday 5 July 2017**.

## Lecturers in GCSE English



**(Full time, Part time, Sessional opportunities)**

**Salary:** £23,364 - £33,275 (Subject to experience & qualifications, pro-rated for part time)

**Hours:** Full time, Part time, Sessional (Hourly Paid)

Judged Good with a series of Outstanding areas by Ofsted in January 2015, we are committed to achieving excellence for all our students. Inspirational teaching and the dedication of all our staff supports the continuing growth of our student success.

These posts provide the opportunity to plan and teach engaging GCSE English classes to students from our various College vocational areas and to contribute to the department's journey to Outstanding.

Successful candidates must be motivated, possess exceptional organisational skills, work well with colleagues and have a creative and innovative approach to enthuse our students to succeed. Ideally you will be qualified to degree level in English and will hold a full teaching qualification. Candidates will have an innovative approach to teaching and will ensure that lessons are designed to not only develop skills but that they connect to the industry which the students aspire to work in.

Successful candidates should be available to start 29 August 2017 in time for the 2017/18 Academic Year.



For full vacancy details and to apply visit our website <https://careers.esc.ac.uk> or contact the Human Resources department on 01737 772611 (option 3).





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# EXPERTS



NEIL  
CARMICHAEL

Former MP and chair of the  
education select committee

## Invest in skills: a Keynesian approach for the 21st century

Neil Carmichael told our sister paper Schools Week that before he lost his seat in Parliament, his next plan for the Education Select Committee was going to be “a big piece of work on training and skills”. Here he outlines his vision

When the United Kingdom leaves the European Union in 2019 the economy will require a significant overhaul to even come close to delivering our current standards of living. Indeed, a key test of the success of Brexit will be the impact it has on family and personal income.

This will be no small task when the UK’s relative economic success over the last 20 years has been shared by too few.

To her credit, the prime minister appears to get that a more interventionist approach may be necessary, and her government has already recognised this, in part, by formulating a new industrial strategy. It is rightly ambitious, and has encouraging parallels with the active economic management pursued by Edward Heath’s government as it prepared the economy for the opportunities that lay ahead as members of the European Economic Community.

Mr Heath’s endeavours were rooted not only in consensus politics but also in the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, at a time before monetarism was in vogue and when concerns about economic productivity were as paramount as the need for the economy to compete in export markets.

Keynes was an all-encompassing thinker who encouraged governments to invest in public areas in order to stimulate economic activity. This was often manifest in huge infrastructure projects, a theme that has seen a welcome return in the industrial strategy.

If we take Keynes as our guide, we must, of course, take into account the new economic circumstances we face. The education select committee recently visited South Korea and Finland, and its experiences provide a revealing insight into what might lie ahead for the UK economy as we leave the EU.

Both Finnish and South Korean economies were in dire straits at around the same time. Finland emerged from the Second World War shattered and adrift, while South Korea was created after another gruelling conflict saw the partition of Korea during the early 50s.

Both countries were unable to rely on natural resources or raw materials to rebuild their economies. But they came to the same conclusion: maximise the potential of their people. Their fledgling governments had an unerring focus and commitment to investing

in education and training as a way to drive economic growth and raise living standards.

Today, the success of this strategy endeavour is obvious to all as they have built innovative, productive and resilient economies. While both countries have encountered occasional economic bumps, their ability to respond effectively remains impressive and is an example many other nations would dearly love to emulate.

Returning to Brexit, one of the reasons Leave won the referendum was because of salient concerns over immigration and, in particular, the sense that jobs were going to foreigners rather than locals. There are, of course, record levels of employment in the UK but there was a truth to this charge – mainly due to a skills shortage that necessitated foreign labour to keep British businesses competitive.

The newly coined ‘just-about-managing’ designation illustrates this conundrum, as such people may often lack the skills to advance into higher-paid jobs.

## “The modern economy will require greater investment in teachers

To make the best of Brexit and, indeed, to address some of the primary factors in the Leave vote, the government should be considering a game-changing approach to education. Investment in the Keynesian way should be uplifted, alongside major structural reforms to ensure UK workers have the skills we need to push our economy forward. This could be a new brand of Keynesian economics fit for the decades ahead.

Our economy will benefit in multiple ways. Equipping our people with the skills and know-how to be successful in the modern economy will require greater investment in teachers and trainers – following in the footsteps of Finland and South Korea – and ensuring they are granted higher status.

The challenges are not new; governments and policymakers have grappled with them for some time. But more than ever we now have an obligation not to add a learning deficit to those in our country who feel they are already suffering from an economic one.



NICHOLA  
HAY

Director, Outsource Training and  
Development

## NART tables are not a reliable quality indicator

**Government should expect quality from the skills programmes it funds, but the National Achievement Rate Tables are not the only measure, argues Nichola Hay**

Today’s FE Week contains a full analysis of the government’s newest National Achievement Rate Tables 2015-16 for apprenticeships and education and training.

Our own company shows a 19 per cent decline in its achievement rate from the previous year, but I would argue taking that figure in isolation as an indicator of quality is dangerous, and I believe there may be other providers identified in the analysis who have good reason to feel the same.

In February of this year, as part of an overall grade two judgment, inspectors from Ofsted found that Outsource Training and Development was “ensuring good assessment practice which promotes a consistently high standard of apprentices’ skills. The quality of teaching and learning remains good.”

They also said that “your data indicates successfully reversing a short-term decline in apprentices’ achievement”.

This shows that while data will always be an important starting point that might prompt a need for further investigation, it is Ofsted inspections and ESFA risk reviews which should be the ultimate arbiters of a provider’s quality. Our NART numbers took a short-term hit because under the QAR data, learner transfers count negatively as leavers.

In 2015-16 Outsource had two cohorts of learners who were transferred for reasons that were taken in learners’ interests – even though they negatively affected our provider data.

In the first case, both the ESFA and an employer asked us to take on a group of engineering apprentices even though we don’t operate in the sector. We engaged a third party to carry out the technical delivery and an engineering assessor to do the assessment. When the third party was ready, the apprentices were transferred to that provider, but in the process, we were penalised in our QAR data.

The second case involved a contract that the employer put out to competitive tender. We were not prepared to deliver without a realistic employer contribution so withdrew from the contract. We worked closely with the incoming provider to transfer existing learners, ensuring that the learners were not disadvantaged and there was a seamless transition.

Ofsted looked at both cases and talked to the employers and learners involved. It agreed with us that when the transfer data was ‘removed’, Outsource’s QAR was above the national average. It accepted that the right action had been taken for learners – and for the right reasons, not just ESFA box-ticking.

This clearly shows that headline data on its own cannot tell the whole story – there is context for every cohort. There are also frameworks that always have high national success rates irrespective of provider, due to the nature of the sector and learner.

We want every apprentice from varying backgrounds of prior attainment to succeed across different sectors and levels. An individual provider’s QAR can be made up by a mix of apprenticeships, which is why AELP is asking Ofsted to consider national benchmarks for each standard and framework.

Rule changes this year for the data, particularly in respect of breaks in learning, have muddled the picture. It’s true that in some cases, BIL can disguise a poor success rate and it is right those providers should be challenged. However in many cases, there are valid reasons for a decrease in the rate, and we are seeing Ofsted’s risk-review approach identify providers where inspectors have subsequently gained a clear understanding of why the data has shifted.

## “Headline data on its own cannot tell the whole story

NART must not deter providers and employers from delivering challenging standards or recruiting disadvantaged learners, e.g. without English and maths, or from difficult backgrounds. Otherwise we will end up with a narrow range of on-paper high-quality apprenticeships that fail to fulfil what UK industry needs, and a higher set of barriers for those individuals who will need training most in a post-Brexit Britain.

The country should expect a lot from government-funded skills programmes, but we should have the right measures with the right understanding. NART can only ever offer a starting point.



## 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: ARE WE AN EFFECTIVE BOARD?

We are about to evaluate our effectiveness as a board. I am aware of the proformas available, but are there key questions we can ask, to help cut through what can otherwise feel like a bureaucratic exercise?

## Answer:

I know what you mean about board performance exercises; they can get very mechanistic. The Code of Good Governance for Colleges was about governance values as much as rules, but sometimes that is lost.

Demonstrating good governance is coterminous with college performance, so here are my key questions for determining whether a governing body is effective:

1. Was the agreed vision and plan implemented, and did the college meet your key targets of student recruitment, retention and achievement? How do you know?
2. Did you meet your financial forecast?
3. Were there surprises? Were divergences from the plan brought to your attention and mitigation agreed?
4. Do board meetings have a balance of support and challenge? When challenged do you get constructive, informative answers or is the behaviour defensive?
5. Can governors give five examples of where the board had impact?
6. Do board members leave a meeting feeling they have contributed to the discussion; are their views sought by the chair and does the executive react in a positive manner?
7. Does the board seek the views of students and staff and does the board act on them?
8. Do you correlate what you hear in meetings first-hand with visits and meetings with staff, stakeholders and students?
9. What does Ofsted say about the board?
10. What does the community you work in say about the governors and the college?

## Q2: MONITORING OUR HE PROVISION

We have a lot of HE students, some funded direct from loans and others in partnership with two universities. The universities monitor student experience and course performance but should we take an active interest?

## Answer:

Yes, is the simple answer. For those that are directly funded, you should have challenge and scrutiny processes and a robust system for reviewing the student experience. Your college may have taken part in the new HEFCE run Teaching Excellence Framework pilot, and if so would have just been told whether it was awarded with a bronze, silver or gold. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education sets out the quality code, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator how they deal with student complaints.

For students enrolled as part of a partnership agreement, you should revisit your agreement with the universities and review your responsibilities. Some universities expect you to conform to their quality policies and processes; others may

be satisfied for you to continue with your own. However, either way, the university is ultimately responsible for the quality of the partnership students.

You should also be briefed on the role of Office for Students. This new public body will be the market regulator in place of the HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access.

The areas you should consider are enrolment and retention: induction weaknesses often result in early drop-out. You should regularly review the HE student experience survey and see what it tells you about each course. Is there correlation between drop-out and how they rate their experience?

When thinking of the type of questions you should be asking, you should look at the Committee of University Chairs' material plus the guidance on the HE Leadership Foundation website.

## NOT TO BE MISSED

## SUMMER DATA CONFERENCE

MONDAY 3 JULY 2017, 10:00 - 16:00

LONDON

The Lsect Summer Data Conference has been running for 8 years, and in 2017 it returns to the beautiful etc venue conference centre by St Pauls in the heart of London.

For the first time the conference will have a theme – which is the apprenticeship levy reforms.

Taking place a few days before the ILR R11 data return, in particular this conference will help MIS staff learn from R10 (the first data return under the levy funding system).

The FE Data Conference typically brings together more than 300 ILR funding and data specialists to discuss funding, data quality, and the use of data to run efficient organisations and raise education standards. Data quality is becoming increasingly important for colleges, training providers, commissioning agencies, auditors and Ofsted. This means data needs to be accurate, complete, timely, valid, credible, reliable, consistent and relevant. These high profile conferences provide a vital opportunity to hear good practice and updates from the experts, as well as share experiences and meet other colleagues working with data in colleges and training providers.

Note: this conference will be of benefit to all apprenticeships providers returning a single ILR.

Register now at no risk (full refund for cancellations 7 days or more before the event) as this event has been fully booked in the past.

Places are expected to go fast, so register now to avoid disappointment. The fee is £265+ VAT per delegate (no limit per organisation), and bookings can be cancelled online a week in advance at no cost.

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# CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

## Ladybird Book used as recruitment tool



The great Bradfordian novel: Kristy and her book

A book created by an art student documenting her experience at Bradford College is being used to recruit future learners.

Inspired by an alumnus of the college, Ladybird illustrator Ernest Aris, BTEC art and design student Kristy Barrett created her own Ladybird book, called 'Kristy Goes to Bradford School of Art'.

The book, which she submitted as coursework, tells the story of her educational journey from a high school pupil to an art student at the college.

Copies of the book will be produced by the college and distributed to homes across the region, particularly to people who have

shown an interest in starting an art course in September.

"We were asked to design something about Bradford College and inspired by a past student," said Kristy. "I researched our famous alumni and discovered that Ladybird book illustrator Ernest Aris studied here in 1900.

"I feel really proud that potential new students will be receiving my book. I hope they like it."

Nikki Sheen, a course tutor for level three art and design, said: "When I was assessing Kristy's work I nearly cried as it made me so happy.

"She has written it herself and done all the illustrations. It's a beautiful piece of work."



They live: Wai, left, and Isabella with the 3D monster design

## Digital designers bring monsters to life

Interactive media students have brought primary school pupils' monster drawings to life using animation and modelling software.

A group of 25 schoolchildren from King Edward Primary School in Mansfield were asked to draw what they thought a monster looked like, with the designs then handed over to a team of student designers at West Nottinghamshire College.

The students, who are on BTEC level three and HND courses in interactive media, spent turned original drawings into digital 3D creations and revealed them to the pupils.

Year 3 pupil Isabella Rhodes designed the

Love-heart Monster, which was adopted by 26-year-old Wai Hung Tsang, who spent 15 hours bringing it to life.

Wai said: "When I first saw Isabella's creation, I thought 'what is that exactly?' – I hadn't seen anything like it before. But I began to analyse it and tried to visualise what it was going to look like in 3D form.

"I decided to turn the curly hair into a mane, and give it a sort of lion's head and a teddy bear's body, with love-heart wands in its hands. I'm pleased with how it has turned out, and even happier that Isabella has given it the seal of approval."



Where the magic happens: the college salon

The prize

## Hair-raising for cancer charity

Hairdressing students have raised awareness of male cancers by hosting a gentleman's-only fundraising day at their college salon.

The group from Leicestershire's Brooksby Melton College offered barbering services ranging from beard and moustache trimming to haircuts and scalp treatments.

For each treatment, the level three hairdressers asked for a minimum donation of £1.50, which will go to Orchid, a leading UK charity that funds pioneering research into testicular, prostate and penile cancers.

To date, the charity has awarded over £16 million in research grants.

Alongside treatments, clients were also provided with cake and refreshments, with everyone who made a booking in advance entered into a prize raffle.

By the end of the day, the team managed to raise over £100, exceeding their fundraising target.

Emma Balch, a hairdressing lecturer at the college, said: "Our aim was to raise between £50 and £100 on the day for the charity.

"The event also ties together well with their qualification, as they are required to organise a promotional event for one of their assessments."

## Growing for gold at Gardeners' World

A team of students and staff from Oaklands College have won gold for their garden design at BBC Gardeners' World Live.

The team from Hertfordshire took one of just three golds available in the 'Beautiful Borders' category, which recognises new and emerging talent within the industry.

Their design, called Garden Eden, included species of plants that were sown, grown and nurtured at the college's St Albans Campus, and woven around a willow frame centrepiece.

Judges also praised the garden for its nod to presenter Monty Don, with wooden versions of his dogs hidden in the foliage.

The group, made up of tutors and students

from the level three landscape construction and garden design course, also received an award for the best interpretation of the theme, which was this year based around the show's 50th anniversary.

It was the first time the college has entered the annual event, with plans to enter more frequently following their success.

Tee Robertson, the college's landscape construction and garden design coordinator, said: "To be at the show alongside other budding horticulture enthusiasts, colleges and fresh industry talent and be able to sing about our successes is fantastic.

"It's been an incredible first foray in to Gardeners World Live."



Nellie the dog

To a Tee: Tee Robertson (centre) with the award



CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

## Avid knitter attempts world record with giant needles

FEATURED  
CAMPUS  
ROUND-UP

An art student unveiled a pair of giant knitting needles as her submission to Wiltshire College's end-of-year exhibition and used them to attempt Guinness world record, reports Samantha King

Betsy Bond, a level three art and design student brought out two giant knitting needles – 4.4m long and 9cm wide – at her college's creative exhibition, which showcased work from courses such as creative media production, games development and music.

The 30-year-old student made the needles herself from drainage pipe filled with expanding foam, and transported them from her home to the college's Chippenham campus on a trailer.

The point of the needle and stopper were then made at the college, using a 3D printer.

With the needles, she hopes to break the world record for the world's largest working knitting needles, which currently stands at 3.98m long with a diameter of 8.25cm, and was set by Jim Bolin from the US in May 2013.

"I decided to go for the record as when I found out what it was, I believed I could beat it. I wanted to achieve rather than just



A crowd gathers to watch Betsy knit

Betsy, centre, with Mayor of Chippenham, right

aspire," she said.

"Bringing all the components together, finding materials, methods and getting aesthetics right, took a lot of talking to the right people, research and imagination."

As part of the record attempt, Betsy did a demonstration of large-scale knitting to the crowd, producing 85 stitches with 16kg of Stockinette – a stretchy fabric often used for bandages.

The mayor of Chippenham, councillor Mary Norton, was on hand to act as a witness to the record attempt.

She said: "I was thrilled to be invited but really couldn't picture in my head what giant knitting would be or look like.

I was even more shocked when I saw just how big the needles were, and have nothing

but admiration for Betsy and all her hard work. She is an exceptionally talented young lady."

It was in 2010 that Betsy first came across giant knitting, having been initially taught regular knitting by her mum Gillian when she was a child.

"I found out about giant knitting and how projects grew very quickly, which appealed to my impatient nature," she said.

"I started to knit in public places and it always struck up lots of conversation with strangers – some just curious and others wanting to have a go – which I love. Knitting has connected humans for centuries through practical applications and recreation.

"Through creating what I hope are the world's largest knitting needles I can

communicate more, create conversation, share and pass on traditional skills."

Until she decided to break the record, the largest knitting needles Betsy had used were 60cm long with a 4cm diameter.

Betsy – who returned to college to pursue art having previously worked in hospitality – has now submitted evidence of her attempt to the Guinness Book of Records, and is awaiting the official verdict.

## 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)



The leader of Trafford Council, **Sean Anstee**, has been appointed as Greater Manchester's lead for skills, employment and apprenticeships.

He will oversee plans to secure apprenticeships with better pay and career progression opportunities, and implement a university style application system.

He will also be responsible for upskilling local people and supporting the creation of jobs in the local area.

Mr Anstee has been leader of Trafford council for the past nine years, previously holding roles as the vice-president of the Bank of New York Mellon and relationships manager at the Royal Bank of Scotland.

"We need to give our young people a clear path to an apprenticeship and provide opportunities for them to set up a business or enter higher education," he said. "Everyone must have the chance to gain new skills so they can get on in life.

"I'll work with colleges, employers and people in every part of Greater Manchester to make sure our people have the right skills to get a good job and succeed."

Andy Burnham, Manchester's mayor, added: "If we are to ensure everyone in Greater Manchester has the chance to get on in life then skills, employment and apprenticeships need to be at the heart of our plans."

**Ashley Rose** has been appointed the new centre manager at North Shropshire College's Shipley campus in the West Midlands.

## Movers &amp; Shakers



SEAN ANSTEE



ASHLEY ROSE



MARTIN SIM

The campus, in Wolverhampton, offers a range of courses, from part-time floristry to its most popular full-time course, animal management, and houses over 50 different species of animals.

Mr Rose joins the campus as it looks to extend the qualifications it offers, including

basic IT courses at times that suit people with family commitments.

He will be working closely with business development manager Jo White to build existing relationships with local businesses, as well as cultivating new ones.

"The Shipley campus is a fantastic venue

with great facilities which is small and friendly and offers students of all ages a perfect learning environment, which is different to that of a bigger college," he said.

"We want to offer new courses in terms of qualifications and leisure courses and we want the local community to support us in achieving this."

The former principal of Salford City College, **Martin Sim**, has been appointed interim principal at Gateway Sixth Form College.

His appointment at the Leicester college follows the retirement of current principal Suzanne Overton-Edwards, after almost seven years at the helm.

Mr Sim, who led Salford City College to an Ofsted rating of 'good' during his tenure, will take up the role at Gateway College for an initial period of 12 months.

"Having started my career in a sixth-form college over 35 years ago, the invitation to return to the sixth-form sector and lead Gateway College was a fantastic opportunity," he said.

"I cannot speak too highly of the staff, learners and governors here at Gateway and their determination to provide quality provision for the young people of Leicester."

John Kirk, chair of the board of governors at the college, explained: "Martin impressed us with his passion for realising the potential in our staff and students and a desire to restore our 'good' rating at the earliest opportunity."





Apprenticeships:  
What's your  
biggest  
challenge?

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Attracting  
Apprentices:  
Where will they  
come from?

End-Point  
Assessment:  
How will you  
prepare apprentices?

## 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

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

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**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.  
Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk).  
Last Edition's winner: Craig Tucker, Halesowen College