

FE Week

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REVEALED: OVER £200M AEB UNSPENT

► **'Frustrated' AoC boss holds crisis talks with ESFA after colleges massively undershoot their adult education budget in 2016/17**

Exclusive **BILLY CAMDEN** @BILLYCAMDEN

See full investigation on page 10

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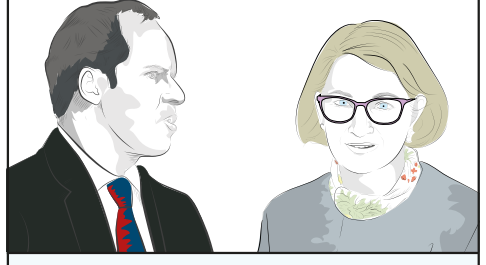
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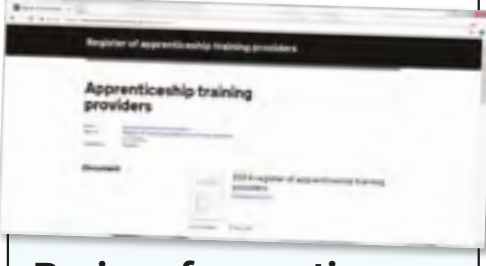
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NEWS

Grenfell community rage over college site sell-off

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Leaders of a college that sold its main campus to make way for housing ahead of a planned merger have been shouted down and slow-clapped at a heated public meeting.

The site on Wornington Road, one of Kensington and Chelsea College's two main campuses, was sold for £25.3 million to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea last year under a lease-back deal.

The local authority has outlined controversial proposals to demolish the building for housing, in a deal which would at best result in greatly reduced teaching space for the college. But this has become controversial since the fire at nearby Grenfell Tower in June, which killed at least 80 people.

Huge numbers of campaigners including Edward Daffarn, who escaped the blaze, college staff and students, and residents packed out a public meeting attended by FE Week this evening at Bevington School, in West London.

The college's chair of governors, Mary Curnock Cook, also a former UCAS boss, and the new principal, Dr Elaine McMahon, were repeatedly shouted down and slow-clapped when they tried to speak.

One woman shouted: "Do you have no aspirations for the people here? Do you think our children have no IQ?"

Ms Curnock Cook replied that she thought the "absolute purpose" of FE was to help people who needed it, and that "no decisions" had been made about the fate of the campus.

Addressing related concerns about the college's plans to merge with Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, she added: "When I took on this role [in May] it was made absolutely clear to me that this college could not thrive and probably no even survive without merging".

This provoked shouts of "lies" led by Mr Daffarn, who claimed during his own speech that KCC had been run down for years to clear the way for "asset stripping".

The meeting had to be postponed beyond its planned 6.30pm start time because so many people were queuing outside, and those seated were asked to shuffle their chairs forward to allow more people to squeeze in at the back.

It was held by the college to address concerns that the loss of the Wornington campus would effectively spell the end of adult education for the poorer people in the area, many of whom had lived



The packed meeting room

in Grenfell tower, and who it was claimed were being driven out of the area by "social cleansing".

As tempers flared, another angry resident questioned the motives behind the sale of the campus and why the college had not asked for more than £25.3 million, which she said was a serious bargain judging by today's property prices.

"During my time here so far, I have seen that local people really want the college to remain here and so do we," Dr McMahon told the crowd.

The college leaders were unable to appease the angry room, and at one point a man shouted "enough" and stormed to the front telling Ms Curnock Cook to sit down, which she did.

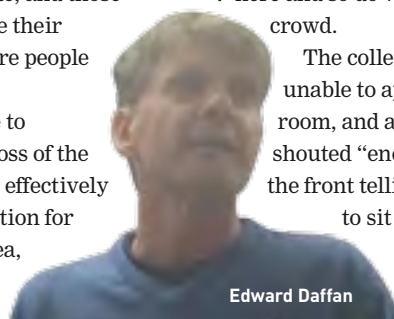
He then urged everyone in

the room to stand for a minute's silence for those who died in the Grenfell fire, which was respected.

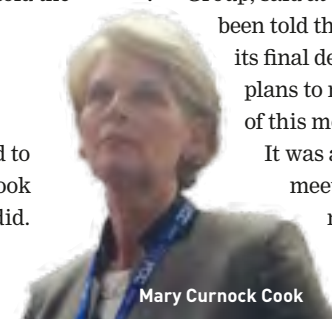
FE Week reported last week that campaigners had met privately with Dr McMahon and Ms Curnock Cook, to raise concerns both about Wornington's future and the planned merger.

KCC subsequently refused to confirm what was said in the meeting, but Mr Daffarn, speaking on behalf of the Grenfell Action Group, said at the time that campaigners had been told the college had "pushed back" its final decision on whether to assent to plans to redevelop the site from the end of this month until December 30.

It was announced at tonight's meeting that any decision on redevelopment was now likely to be pushed back even further.



Edward Daffarn



Mary Curnock Cook

Institutes of Technology plans outlined at last

NICK LINFORD
@NICKLINFORD

EXCLUSIVE

Two years and three skills ministers since the Institutes of Technology were announced, FE Week last week exclusively revealed the process and timeline ahead of their launch in 2019.

IoTs were first mooted in the productivity plan in July 2015, which said "the government anticipates many colleges will be invited to specialise according to local economic priorities" and "some will be invited to become institutes of technology".

In documents that have been "agreed by ministers" and seen by FE Week, and which are due for publication this week, the DfE has set out details of the way the IoT invitation process will work.

It will be calling on those interested to complete a short form emailed to institute.technology@education.gov.uk by October 31.

Even though the DfE has repeatedly said the plan is to "establish high-quality and prestigious institutions", in truth it involves a relatively small three-year wave of capital funding, mainly for existing colleges.

The "successful bidders will receive the right to call themselves 'institutes of technology'", and funding "for capital investment to support high-quality, industry-standard facilities

and equipment" and to "cover new-build investment or upgrades and improvements to existing assets".

Much like the ill-fated 400 Centres of Vocational Excellence scheme instituted for colleges during the tenure of the Learning and Skills Council, the new equipment is expected to come with IoT plaques and kite-marks for websites and email signatures.

Delivery will "be through partnerships of employers, FE and HE", and to get the IoT kite-mark and capital funding, applicants should "have employers at the heart of their leadership and governance, and in the design and delivery of curriculum".

"They will focus particularly on technical (eg science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills at levels four and five but will extend to degree level and above (level 6+)," it stated.

FE Week understands the delay to the policy was to enable synergy with the T-level policy concept launched in the July 2016 skills strategy, followed by the industrial strategy in January 2017 which promised to fund IoTs with £170 million in capital funding over three years.

The first IoTs are expected to open in 2019.

The IoT invitation documents have now been uploaded to the lep network website.

You can access them here:

<http://bit.ly/2fU8Yh0>

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INVESTIGATES

What happened after the disaster

JUDE BURKE
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EXCLUSIVE

The apprenticeships giant First4Skills went bust in March after its skills funding was pulled due to an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating. Around 200 staff lost their jobs, while around 3,700 learners were affected, and 14 subcontractors found themselves without a prime. Jude Burke looks into what has happened since.

Six months after First4Skills' collapse, 97 per cent of its erstwhile learners have been found new training providers.

But the future is less rosy for more than 50 learners being trained through one of its 14 former subcontractors, Lionheart in the Community, after its contract was moved to another provider that has since gone bust: Talent Training.

Talent was disgraced in June after an FE Week exposé found it offering banned inducement payments to an employer.

Its apprenticeship agreement was terminated by the ESFA and it went into administration in early September.

Lionheart has now complained of being left "in limbo", and having to endure a

First4Skills in numbers

Learners at time of liquidation	3,700
Apprentices transferred to other providers to date	3,550
Other types of learners transferred to date	Unknown
Subcontractors	14
Creditors	329
Total realised by administrators	£1,544,195
Debt repaid by the SFA	£591,778
Debts repaid by City of Liverpool College and Shared Educational Services Limited:	£154,587.23
Administrator's fee	£251,822
2016/17 apprenticeships allocation/adult education budget allocation	£15 million/£383,000

"nightmare situation" of not being paid since January [see box out below left].

A Department for Education spokesperson said only one subcontract had been transferred to Talent, and claimed that the number of learners who had been on First4Skills' books in Liverpool when it went bust was much lower than had been reported, at just 3,700.

Of those, "3,550 apprentices were moved over to other providers", they said.

The remainder didn't transfer for a variety of reasons, including some who didn't want to continue with their studies.

"When providers are issued with a closure notice, we make sure to work with the provider and employers to put safeguards in place and ensure no apprentices lose out as a result of the contract ending," he added.

It is not clear how long it took for the apprentices identified by DfE to be switched. A former First4Skills employee claims

apprentices were still waiting to be transferred up to three months after the provider folded, although FE Week has been unable to verify this [see boxout].

It's also not clear if the number of learners transferred to other providers included adult learners as well as apprentices.

The provider had a 2016/17 apprenticeships allocation of £15 million, and an adult education budget allocation of £383,000.

The administrator brought in to wind it

"Nightmare" when Talent Training collapsed

Lionheart in the Community, based in London, delivers apprenticeships in business administration, customer service, health and social care, children and young people's workforce, hospitality and retail, and had a subcontract value of £190,440.

A "nightmare" situation got worse still after it transferred its subcontract to the now-disgraced Talent Training.

Like many people in the sector, Alice Piller-Roner, its head of work-based learning, first heard about First4Skills' collapse when FE Week broke the news that Friday.

But it was the following week before she received any official notification from the Skills Funding Agency, even though LITC had been subcontracting for First4Skills for two and a half years.

"That's when the whole drama started," Ms Piller-Roner said, as they were given just 48 hours to find an alternative prime for the 98 apprentices on programme at the time.

"The whole issue started on the Friday, and they gave us until Thursday on the following week – but we did it," she said.

However, the contact name and number LITC had been given at the SFA suddenly became unavailable – "as in the phone number was no longer valid as of the following Monday" – so she had no idea if their proposal had been accepted.

After a period of calling and emailing the agency, LITC was able to get "initial approval"

in April for a new prime – Talent – to take on board its learners.

But, she said, an official phone call to Talent to confirm the arrangement "never arrived".

In the meantime, one of LITC's employers got in touch with the SFA directly and was told "it had all been sorted and that now our centre was delivering under the umbrella of Talent".

"That completely destroyed our relationship with employers. It makes us look like idiots," she said.

It took intervention from the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, and LITC's own contacts at the SFA via its loans contracts, before it finally got confirmation that it could transfer its learners to Talent in July.

But now LITC is "back in limbo" because Talent went into administration itself earlier this month.

While all of this has been going on, LITC hasn't received any funding – in fact, Ms Piller-Roner said the last payment it received was in January.

The situation was "extremely difficult for the business", and management were "only getting paid half our salaries".

"We didn't feel like we could or should abandon our learners because of our mission as an organisation," she said.

While LITC's apprenticeships delivery has taken a hit, Ms Piller-Roner said that, despite everything, she remained confident that "we will definitely manage to get through this".

Smooth apprentice transfer to JGW Training

JGW Training, based in Derbyshire, delivers primarily digital marketing and management training with some business administration, with a subcontract value of £950,157.

Less than 24 hours after FE Week broke the news of First4Skills' demise, Chris Ash, JGW's director, was already in communication with the SFA.

"I was having email communication with them over the weekend, which they were responding to instantly," he said.

In fact, Mr Ash had nothing but praise for the support he received from the SFA "right from provider-manager upwards", all focused on "trying to get things resolved as quickly as possible".

JGW Training had around 200 apprentices on programme funded through First4Skills at the time it collapsed.

He was able to transfer around half of those learners to its own direct contract, but had to find a new provider for the other half.

With the help of the SFA, Mr Ash was able to organise a new prime for the remaining apprentices "within a week" – although the process of transferring the contract took longer.

But "not one learner suffered as a result of the process", Mr Ash insisted.

"Every single one of our learners funded through First4Skills continued to be supported in exactly the same way as they had been before the administration process," he said.



Trous collapse of FIRST 4 SKILLS ?

down revealed in April that the firm had £705,150 in the bank at the time of its demise.

A final contract payment of £670,000 had been due from the SFA by the end of March, but hadn't been paid by April.

The delay was attributed to the SFA's review of apprenticeship grants to employers paid by First4Skills.

But when FE Week asked the agency about this delay in August, we were told that "the ESFA considers this matter resolved"; this is corroborated by the administrator's second report in July, which shows a payment from the agency of £591,778.

An intercompany debt of £81,167 also appeared in the April report, owed to the firm by its majority shareholder, City of Liverpool College, along with £412 owed by Shared Educational Services Limited, a subsidiary of the college.

However, by July, "further investigation of the transactions" between First4Skills and SESL meant the arrears had ballooned to £74,354 - but City of Liverpool declined to comment.

In total, the amount realised by the administrators - including cash in the bank, money owed by the SFA, intercompany debt and other assets - stood at £1,544,195.

But related costs amounted to £390,594 -

including a cool £251,822 in administrator's fees.

A spokesperson for the administrator, RSM Restructuring Advisory, said its remuneration was drawn from "asset realisation in accordance with approval obtained from creditors".

She claimed the firm was working to "agree creditors' claims", but that none had yet been paid.

First4Skills' creditors - of which there are 329, according to the April report - will "receive dividends" although the amounts still have to be confirmed, she added.

The April report estimated that £155,644 was owed to preferential creditors, relating to "employees' arrears of wages and holiday pay", and indicated they would be paid everything owed.

The former First4Skills employee, who did not want to be named, told FE Week that he and others had been paid statutory wage and redundancy claims.

FE Week contacted all 14 subcontractors, which were owed a combined total of £558,983 in April, to find out how they'd been affected by the collapse.

Of those willing to comment, all bar one said they were still waiting to hear how much money - if any - they would get back.



However, one told FE Week that - contrary to what the administrators told us - they had been paid.

A spokesperson for the Challenge Network, which held a subcontract worth £1,239,057, said it had "worked closely with the administrator to claim funds owed to us".

The majority of subcontractors that spoke to FE Week told us they'd been able to transfer all their learners to new primes, with no break in their studies.

Three-month wait for learners

First4Skills' learners may have gone as long as three months without being trained, a former member of staff has informed FE Week.

The ex-employee, who asked not to be named, said "there were some I know that weren't trained for about three months" after it went bust in March.

The company's demise had come as a "shock" even to those who worked there, they said.

Staff were told of the company's fate on the Friday via letter, after being sent home from work earlier in the week, he said.

They and other staff members had received wages and redundancy payments they were owed - but were told they wouldn't be getting any unpaid expenses.

"I was owed something like £500, and got nothing," he said.

The whole situation had left them feeling "very disappointed, very bitter, and shocked".

Wednesday, 1 November 2017 | The Principal Hotel, Manchester



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12 months on

The AELP Autumn Conference, sponsored by City & Guilds, will take stock of the roll-out of the apprenticeship levy so far and so it is no surprise that AELP has invited employers to offer their viewpoint.

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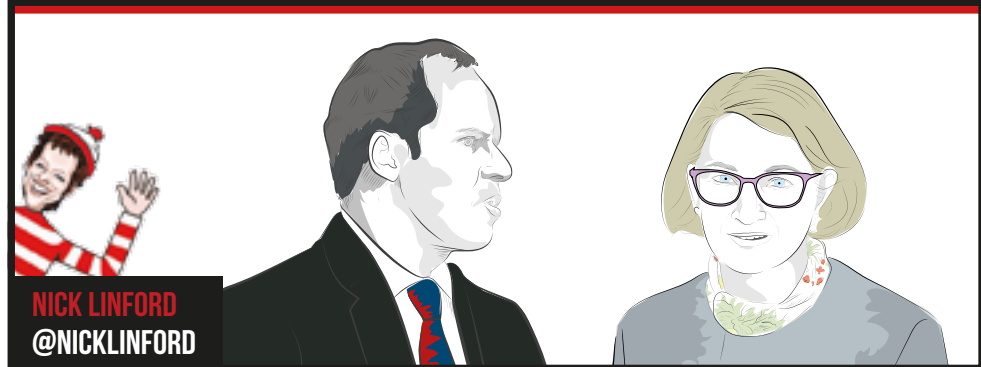
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- Martin Dunford OBE, Skills Training UK & AELP
- Adrian Rowley, Grafton Merchanting GB
- Richard Marsh, Kaplan
- Jennifer Coupland, DfE
- Alex Richards, WTPN
- Elizabeth Pawlowski, Carillion
- Lucy Hunte, Health Education England
- Clare Howard, Natspec
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*Further Government officials attendance will be confirmed shortly

EDITOR ASKS

Can mega colleges ever be too big to fail?

EDITOR ASKS...



NICK LINFORD
@NICKLINFORD

Spielman: Sector must be ready to soak up fallout from closures

With colleges across the country pressured into mega-mergers and the government dishing out special treatment to the ailing FE goliath Learndirect, FE Week editor Nick Linkford asks Ofsted's chief inspector Amanda Spielman about whether a provider can ever be too big to fail.

The trend towards huge merged colleges is creating a whole new set of problems for those who have to oversee them.

Key among them is whether such giants, the constituent parts of which are often miles apart and offer a massive variety of provision, should be considered untouchable, like banks during the financial crisis.

Ofsted's boss does not think so; she believes the market needs to be reformed to allow the rest of the sector to "absorb" the aftershocks of a big failure.

"For a properly functioning market that provides security, you need to make sure that there's capacity to absorb the failure of any one provider," said Amanda Spielman. "It's about making sure that you've got capacity to absorb failure."

Mergers of two, three, four and five colleges would not become a problem for Ofsted, she says, if they are treated like multinational corporations.

"For the very big entities, there's an analogy with audits in other sectors," she says.

"Multinationals are huge companies which get

audited, and at the end of the day you look at the main operating units.

"They're all audited individually, and consolidation is the kind of model that will have to be thought about with some of these very large emerging groups."

On the subject of additional funding for Ofsted to help it cope with its expanded responsibilities,

When asked about funding for Ofsted, to cope with added inspection responsibilities, she concedes that the inspectorate is doing a lot more with a lot less.

"The spending review settlement means I think we have about 30 per cent less resource than we had in 2010," she admits. "We've had to develop different models, different ways of risk assessing and looking forward."

You need to make sure that there's capacity to absorb the failure of any one provider

She adds that inspection "isn't just a thing", but has a purpose.

You therefore have to design systems "according to what purpose you're expecting inspection to serve, what kind of risks it's

helping to manage", she says.

But the systems aren't fit for purpose right now, especially when applied for example to mega-colleges, right?

The topic of campus inspection has already been floated

"They're evolving," she replies. "I believe they are fit for purpose."

"The topic of campus inspection has already been floated," she adds, discussing an idea that came up six months ago with Ofsted's deputy director for FE and skills, Paul Joyce.

He said plans for "campus level" inspections, which would involve different reports for separate local college campuses that exist within a large merger, were under "active" consideration with the Department for Education.

Back in March, Ms Spielman herself discussed the evolving challenges with inspecting increasingly large college groups. So how can the inspectorate possibly be expected to give them an overall judgement?

"The most useful way of reporting on a large, diversified, multi-site college is not necessarily the same as a smaller one," she admits.

Merged goliaths spreading across the capital city

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

In a damning article on page 12, education expert Professor Frank Coffield has claimed in no uncertain terms that Ofsted's inspection methods for large, merged colleges are "unjust". But how many of these mega-mergers are there? FE Week takes a look at the capital, where super-sizing has taken hold with a vengeance.

Even before the London area reviews ended last November, the capital's colleges had already begun to consolidate, and the process is only getting faster now the reviews are over.

The biggest is the Capital City College Group, formed in August 2016 when City and Islington College merged with Westminster Kingsway College.

City and Islington College earned £44 million in 2015/16, according to Education and Skills Funding Agency accounts, while Westminster Kingsway brought in £36.5 million – giving the new 27,000-learner group a combined income of £80.5 million.

If plans for the College of Haringey, Enfield

and North East London to join it go ahead in November, the new entity would enjoy a further £29.9 million added to its bottom line, based on 2015/16 figures – for a very healthy total of £110.4 million.

Another central London mega-college formed at the same time, this time when Hackney Community College joined Tower Hamlets College, creating New City College.

It welcomed a third member, Redbridge College, in April, adding a further 3,000 learners and bringing the total to around 15,000. A fourth college, Waltham Forest, has begun working collaboratively with the group, although it has no plans at this stage to formally join.

Hackney's 2015/16 income stood at £24.6 million, with Tower Hamlets bringing in £19.1 million and Redbridge £14 million – giving the group a combined turnover of £57.8 million.

Carshalton College, Kingston College and South Thames College meanwhile merged this August, forming South Thames College, which has 22,500 learners.

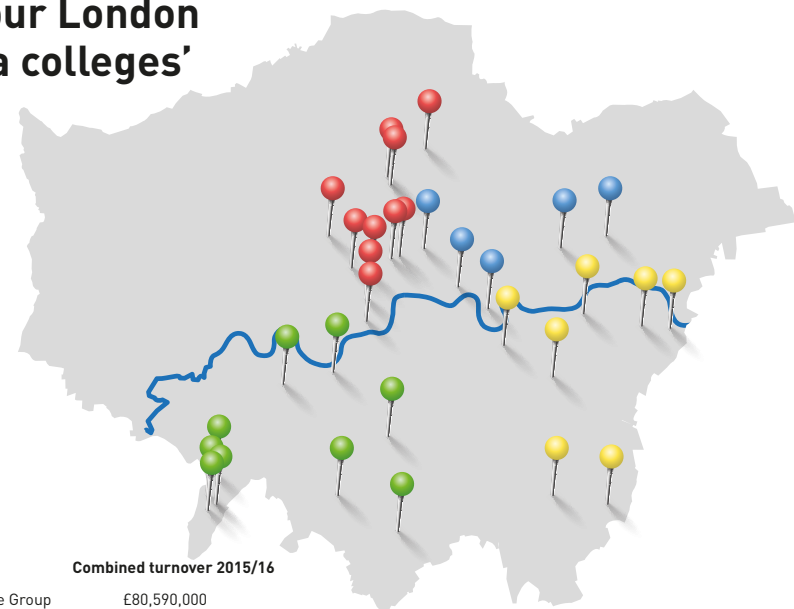
Based on 2015/16 figures, the new group has a combined turnover of £73.9 million: £33.9 million from South Thames, £27.3 million from Kingston, and £12.6 million from Carshalton.

The smallest of the capital's mega-mergers

is made up of three colleges from south of the river, Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich, which merged in August 2016 to form London South East Colleges. The group may only have a mere 13,000 learners, but it still brought in nearly £50 million in 2015/16.

Another giant college is on the horizon, at least if controversial plans for Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, which has a £42.9 million turnover, to merge with £9.2 million Kensington and Chelsea College go ahead.

The four London 'mega colleges'



Key:	Combined turnover 2015/16
Capital City College Group	£80,590,000
New City College	£57,814,000
South Thames College Group	£73,858,000
London South East Colleges	£48,576,000

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Details of T-level tendering timeline revealed

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education is moving forward with a detailed new timetable for the implementation of T-levels, FE Week understands.

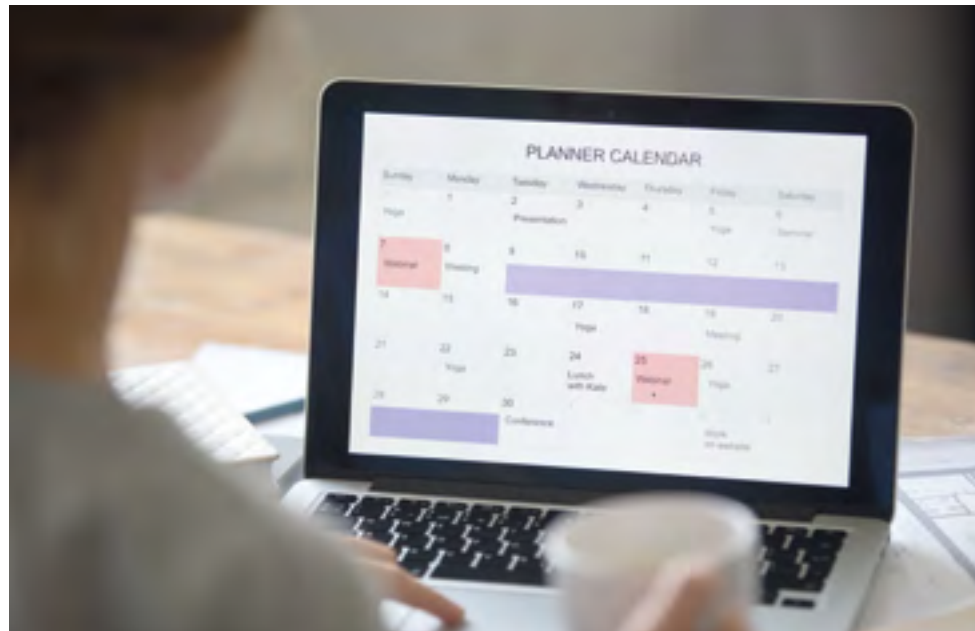
A fresh schedule was laid out during a series of private briefing events, run by the DfE for awarding organisations this week.

According to an FE Week source, the new timeline sets out plans for procuring organisations to be licensed to award the new qualifications.

In July, the skills minister Anne Milton announced a delay to the implementation of T-levels, pushing their introduction back until September 2020, a year later than planned. That announcement also meant the DfE's planned consultation was pushed back until "the autumn".

In the DfE's presentation to awarding organisations this week, the new timeline says the consultation will be released in "late 2017", and the government's response will be available by "spring 2018".

Meanwhile, the DfE also confirmed it is ploughing ahead with plans for one awarding



organisation per qualification.

The procurement process for each AO has been set out over a series of general stages. FE Week understands the process will start in "mid 2018", with the announcement of successful bids in "late 2018" – although it is not clear whether all routes will be procured at the same time.

Successful organisations will then develop

qualifications during 2018 and 2019 and will need to seek qualification approval from the Institute for Apprenticeships, whose remit will be extended to cover technical education in April 2018.

Plans to proceed with single awarding organisations may come as a surprise to the sector, given the criticism the approach received in research published in July, which

the DfE had itself commissioned.

The report, written by Frontier Economics, concluded that limiting access to a single AO may create a "risk of system failure" both in the short- and long-term.

FE Week understands that presenters at the events to awarding organisations this week were specialists in government procurement, rather than qualifications specialists.

These information events come shortly after the DfE tendered for T-level information events targeted at providers. The tender, which closed on September 20, will provide at least seven full- or half-day events between October 9 and December 15.

There was no confirmation at the event of which routes or pathways would be included in the first phase of implementation.

According to our source, the DfE said it intends to start with three pathways – with each route expected to have between three and five pathways – which would be decided by which areas are able to proceed first. FE Week understands that information should be available in advance of the consultation.

Delays in announcing plans for the pathways may have been impacted by the delay to the advisory panels, which we reported in July.

Review of apprentice provider list planned

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

The government is already planning to review its register of apprenticeship training providers, but not until the new window for applications has closed.

The ESFA offered training providers a third chance to get onto the register at the end of September, but admitted in its weekly update bulletin that this would be the last time before a review.

It wrote: "This will be the final time the register opens before we intend to review it to ensure that it continues to offer employers confidence that those listed can deliver the highest-quality apprenticeship training."

FE Week has covered ongoing concerns with the RoATP since it was first published in March, when it was criticised about the numerous small and inexperienced companies that approved to deliver apprenticeships, including 48 "new organisations without a financial track record".

A ban on companies with no financial track record from applying is likely to be on the agenda for the review.

The first two windows saw the number of registered providers directly receiving government funding for apprenticeships more than double, from 837 last year to 1,879 in May.

It has also worried Ofsted and Ofqual, which now have to regulate this explosion in providers and assessments

Meanwhile, even though hundreds of

approved providers with little or no track record have undergone mandatory training to allow them to deliver apprenticeships, promises made in June by Keith Smith, a senior ESFA official, that inexperienced providers would receive audit visits by September have not been honoured.

FE Week understands that one-to-one audits for new providers will begin next month.

In a letter sent to a twice-unsuccessful applicant in September, the skills minister Anne Milton meanwhile admitted that the ESFA was "working on improving the quality of its communications".

"I sincerely apologise for any conflicting information you may have been given about the opening of the RoATP," she wrote in the letter, seen by FE Week.

"The ESFA is working on improving the quality of its communications, and feedback like this really helps it to know where it needs to improve."

The system has also come in for criticism from Ofsted's chief inspector Amanda Spielman, who spoke to FE Week about the impact that the number of new providers would have on the inspection service back in March.

"We have very limited information but it is clear there are a lot of would be new entrants, a lot of people with very limited experience



and potentially quite a lot of fragmentation," she said.

"What that will actually translate into in terms of who gets contracts and actually starts providing apprenticeships isn't entirely clear. I suspect that a lot of those registrations will be optimistic things that may never translate into actual learners on the ground."

The first register saw a number of established providers fail to make it onto the approved list, including Bournemouth and Poole College, Hartlepool College and every single one of Birmingham's general FE colleges.

Amongst the successful providers, there were three new companies with no track

record at all on government apprenticeships, and which were run by one man from a rented office in Cheshire, and one training academy which had ceased trading by the time the register was first published.

Although many established providers that failed the first time around made it onto the second register, which opened for applications in March and was published in May, they were joined by several more one-man bands. These included one company with no previous experience registered to a semi-detached house in Birmingham.

The application window will close at 5pm on Friday, October 27, and the updated list is expected to appear in January 2018.



Headline sponsor



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Programme and details of the confirmed seminars can be found at www.awarding.org.uk/conference-awards



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Finalists announced for FAB 2017 Awards

We are delighted to announce the finalists for the FAB 2017 Awards. The Awards recognise the contributions made by awarding organisations and their employees to education and skills in the UK over the past year.

Stephen Wright, FAB Chief Executive, says: “This year we received record number of entries for the Awards and the standard was exceptionally high.”

Congratulations to all our finalists. The winners will be announced at the FAB Awards on 19 October 2017.

FINALISTS

Awarding organisation of the year

sponsored by Coelrind

- Aim Awards
- Ascentis
- FutureQuals
- Training Qualifications UK (TQUK)
- VTCT

Qualification of the year

sponsored by Cirrus Assessment

- Agored Cymru – Level 4 Diploma in Data Analytics
- Ascentis – Level 1 Award in Understanding British Values
- ILM – Level 3 Diploma for Managers
- Open Awards – Level 2 Award in Skills for Teaching Independent Travel Training
- SFEDI Awards – Passport to Enterprise and Employment

Team of the year

sponsored by PSI

- ABE – ABE Portal
- NEBOSH – Qualification Development Team
- Sports Leaders UK – Relationship Management Team
- VTCT – Qualifications and Assessment Team

Individual of the year

sponsored by Gordon Associates

- Nigel Barraclough, Quallsafe Awards
- Terry Fennell, FDQ
- Julie Hyde, NCFE
- Jenny Newton, Open Awards
- Kelly Venter, Training Qualifications UK (TQUK)

Innovation of the year

sponsored by British Council

- Digital Assess – CompareAssess
- IMI – MOT Testers
- The London Institute of Banking & Finance – Qualification: Lessons in Financial Education
- World Chefs and City & Guilds – Digital Credentialing
- YMCA – Y-Mark: A revolution in marking

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Revealed: £200m adult education budget unspent

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

FROM FRONT **EXCLUSIVE**

FE providers failed to spend a giant chunk of the adult education budget over the past academic year.

A staggering £200 million remains unspent, which will raise eyebrows among many private training providers, who were forced to tender for a slice of just £110 million in the recent AEB procurement exercise while their competitors like colleges and councils were exempt.

Multiple sources have confirmed to FE Week that around 13 per cent of the £1.5 billion AEB budget went unspent in 2016/17 – a situation sector leaders described as “worrying” and “frustrating”.

Certain individual colleges have underspent by nearly three quarters of a million pounds, further enraging private providers which have been crying out for more cash.

The shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said our findings formed part of a “systemic set of problems that we are seeing all the way through to the dispersing of adult and higher skills funding” and insisted that the government needs to “urgently review the whole process”.

“There have been enough problems and difficulties already with the recent tender,” he added, calling on his ministerial counterpart Anne Milton to “take action”.

Changes to European Union law meant this was the first year the Education and Skills Funding Agency had to procure the AEB, but only for private providers.

The measly £110 million tender has

been catastrophic for many ITPs; one 10,000-learner community learning provider in Somerset had its funding slashed by 97 per cent.

A group of aggrieved private providers have since threatened legal action against the way the government handled the procurement. FE Week understands the ESFA was still working on a way out of the debacle at the time we went to press.

AELP boss Mark Dawe told FE Week that the £200 million underspend was the “final piece of evidence” that proved the government should “start a transitional shift to full procurement of the whole budget, with greater prioritisation to meet the Brexit skills challenge”.

“The fact that the recent tender was six times oversubscribed tells you all you need to know about demand for the programme,” he said, pointing out that the size of underspend could be used to treble allocations to independent providers.

Even as the tender fiasco was in full swing, Canterbury College managed to underspend its £3.2 million AEB allocation by a little over £660,000 in 2016/17. Its principal, Graham Razez, said this was mainly due to the “very competitive educational environment in Canterbury”.

Tresham College in Kettering meanwhile failed to spend £350,000 of its £2.65 million allocation, which it blamed on “fewer referrals from Job Centre Plus than predicted”.

East Coast College and Hopwood Hall College also admitted they underspent by £212,000 and £152,000 respectively.

David Hughes, the AoC’s chief executive, said he has been discussing the underspend



with the ESFA to “help them understand how frustrating this is for colleges”.

He told FE Week there was “no surprise” the underspend was this large and said 2016/17 had been the first year in which new ESFA rules “restricting the types of students, courses and activity that could be funded” took effect.

He insisted that the “need is out there, but the restrictions are too severe”.

Last week, FE Week reported that roughly £1 billion-worth of advanced learner loans had gone unspent since 2013.

In a cagey statement, a Department for Education spokesperson said: “The performance of the AEB is closely monitored by the ESFA, working with the sector.

“The final figures for the AEB funding year performance will be published in the usual

way [in June 2018].”

The DfE does not however release the true underdelivery, because it applies a “three per cent tolerance” to its published figures.

This means that if a college, for example, delivers £9.7 million out of a £10 million allocation one year, it would keep the full £10 million.

While £200 million is a huge underspend, it is not as much as the £630 million that went undelivered by providers in 2011/12.

FE Week revealed at the time that nearly 17 per cent of the government’s £3.8 billion AEB allocation, previously known as the adult skills budget, went unused that year.

Mr Marsden said the government should be “worried” about any underspend of this size because it stems “from their own inability to prioritise adult learning in the first place”.

EDITORIAL

THE QUESTIONS-WITHOUT-ANSWERS PILE-UP

Since June, when Anne Milton took on the brief of skills minister, we’ve had all our interview requests either ignored or rejected and questions not fully addressed or answered.

In August a series of significant policies descended into chaos, from the special treatment given to Learndirect to the unfairness of the AEB tender. The minister was nowhere to be seen or heard.

The Financial Times described the AEB tender outcome as creating a “topsy-turvy world where losers end up winners, and where ‘winners’ end up on the brink of insolvency.”

And the chair of the Public Accounts Committee has asked the National Audit Office to investigate the handling of the Learndirect saga.

At a time of major uncertainty and scandal the FE sector needs visible and open leadership.

So if you happen to bump into the minister at the Conservative Party conference or elsewhere, we have 10 questions you might want to ask her on our behalf - I hope you have more luck than me!

1. Before it was allocated a further £45m for Adult

Education Budget funding, when did Learndirect Ltd withdraw its tender and why?

2. Did the ESFA advise Learndirect Ltd to withdraw its AEB tender in order to allocate it the £45m outside the procurement process?

3. Why does the DfE refer to the Learndirect Ltd AEB contract as being gradually wound down, when it is permitted to use the additional £45 million to recruit new learners?

4. Why does the DfE say Learndirect Ltd contracts “will be terminated at the end of July 2018” when there is no Notice of Early Termination nor contract termination of any kind?

5. How come the DfE says it is protecting the Learndirect Ltd Life in the UK contract, but the Home Office claims always to have “detailed contingency plans which cover a number of possible scenarios, including where a supplier ceases trading”?

6. How can it be consistent for the DfE to say it is “entirely wrong” to suggest Learndirect Ltd has been given special treatment but it still wants to protect the Life in the UK

contract with the Home Office?

7. When and why did the ESFA change the AEB procurement rules for failed and non-bidding providers, such that the maximum allocation went from £589,148 to 75 percent of the 2016/17 allocation (£45 million for Learndirect)?

8. The Somerset Skills & Learning AEB tender was successful, but its allocation has fallen from £3.4 million to £111,000. After at least two meetings with four concerned MPs representing constituents in Somerset, has the ESFA subsequently applied any special treatment?

9. Why are local authorities and colleges excluded from the AEB tendering process and allowed to keep up to three percent of funding for courses they have not delivered?

10. Why does the AEB consistently underperform and what will happen to the unspent millions?



LABOUR CONFERENCE 2017 TWEETS:

John Morgan @JMorganTHE

Corbyn focusing on FE in speech maybe aimed at redressing some of the imbalance in manifesto plans for education funding.

Dr Vicky Duckworth @vicky_duckworth

V. True Education has a hierarchy across the UK. Time to get behind FE if there is to be a challenge to an inc division in society

The Edge Foundation @ukEdge

We welcome the principle of ‘Integrating academic, technical and other forms of learning....and treating all with equal respect’ #Lab17

Gethin Jones @gethtj_jones

She’s championing huge investment in education from childcare to FE More determined principled women like Rayner in politics pls

Tom @tommog

I see your £1billion are raise you 50 billionty trillion-finity...seeing as we are all talking random play numbers. #lab17

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

DIRECTOR - STAFF & QUALITY SERVICES

From £73,000 per annum

Following the retirement of the current post holder, we are seeking to appoint a new Director of Staff & Quality Services to this highly successful College. Our ideal candidate will have a successful track record of quality and curriculum management within a further education context, with strong proven leadership and management skills.

Bridgwater & Taunton College was formed by the merger of Bridgwater College and Somerset College in June 2016, creating one of the largest colleges in the country with a turnover of £53m, 1,600 staff and 20,000 students. The College is the winner of 14 AoC Beacon Awards, a second Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2016, and TES College of the Year in 2016. The College owes much of its success to two fundamental philosophies which it is expected that anyone joining the College will share: students come first and all staff employed at the College are team players.

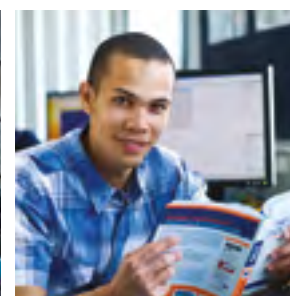
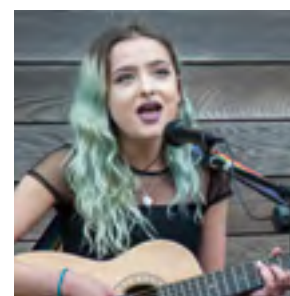
The successful candidate will be expected to make an important contribution to the nine strong Senior Management Team, providing strategic leadership across quality, human resources and MIS and other associated support functions. You will need to be innovative, enterprising and energetic, and enjoy very effective working relationships with colleagues, students and employers alike. You will also need excellent communication skills and high levels of stamina for this demanding and highly rewarding role.

In return, we offer a highly competitive salary depending upon experience and an exceptional opportunity to lead this high performing Area of the College, supported by a professional and positive team who are dedicated to achieving educational excellence.

For more information and to apply visit <https://jobs.bridgwater.ac.uk>

Closing date: 12 Noon – 13 October 2017

Interview dates: 31 October & 1 November 2017



Winner
FE college of the year



Beacon Award Winners
14 times

This is an exciting time to join **ABC Awards**, **Certa** and **emfec** part of **The Skills and Education Group (SEG)**. Our mission is the advancement of skills and education to improve the lives of individuals. SEG benefits from more than one hundred years of collective experience. Our member organisations offer high-quality services, support and representation to the education and skills sector locally, nationally and internationally through our partnerships.

We are proud of our team and are currently looking for people who share our passion for the advancement of skills and education in the following posts:



ABC Awards

Certa

emfec

Head of Access to Higher Education

Salary: £45k - £50k (according to ability and experience)
Location: Wakefield
Closing date: 5.00 pm on Monday 9 October 2017
Interviews: Wednesday 18 October 2017 in Wakefield

We are seeking a professional and skilled Head of Access to HE to join the Skills and Education Group Senior Management Team.

You will manage, direct and develop an effective and efficient Access to HE provision within a secure and confidential environment and be the authoritative point (Responsible Officer) of contact for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in relation to all Access activities.

With excellent leadership and management skills, you will have experience and knowledge of Access to HE provision and of working in a regulated environment. You will be committed to high standards of quality and seek to continually improve systems and processes.

If you are interested in working for an organisation where you can directly contribute to its continued success please visit <https://skillsandeducationgroup.org.uk/work-for-us/> or contact **Tracy Roser** on **0115 8541628** or tracyr@skillsedugroup.co.uk for further details.

Qualifications and Assessment Development Manager

Salary: £30k - £35k pa (according to ability and experience)
Location: Nottingham
Closing date: 12 noon on Thursday 12 October 2017
Interviews: Tuesday 24 October 2017 in Nottingham

We are seeking a Qualifications and Assessment Development Manager to expand our Nottingham based team.

Your key responsibilities will include managing the review and development of a portfolio of qualifications and supporting materials. Working with stakeholders and consultants to manage the lifecycle of development projects as well as proposing and developing assessment strategies including e-enabled systems, keeping to regulatory requirements.

You will have experience of different types of assessment methods and practices used within the 14-19 and 19+ education sectors, as well as excellent communication skills and a high level of attention to detail.

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We do not accept late applications. **No agencies please.**



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New College – New Leadership

Be part of an exciting newly merged college!

With an annual turnover of £40m, the newly merged South Cheshire College and West Cheshire College operates across three state of the art campuses and two local authorities, employing over 700 staff and making a positive impact on more than 11,000 students and 1,400 apprentices.

With combined excellent achievement rates, a solid financial platform, significant on-going investment in both college estate and staff, this new FE college for Cheshire has an exciting future ahead. The college will continue to provide innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, an exceptional working environment as well as contemporary equipment and facilities.

Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality

Salary C: £90K & Relocation Support

We are looking for an outstanding, innovative FE Leader to join our College Executive Team and be our new Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality, providing executive leadership for our Crewe campus.

You will have led a broad range of Curriculum (including A Levels) in a successful Grade 2 College and have been a successful College Nominee. A clear grasp of curriculum planning and efficiency with a quality focus is vital to this role. We are investing in leadership at all levels and you will inspire and lead the curriculum team chosen to take the college forward.

Reporting to the Principal and Chief Executive, this is a unique opportunity for an ambitious and talented leader to shape and influence the future of the new College and the region as a whole.

Closing Date for Applications is 9am on 16th October 2017

Assessment Centre will be held on 2nd and 3rd November 2017 at Crewe Campus.



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

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

Director of Learner Services

Salary: circa £55,000



Halesowen College is a very successful tertiary further education college located in Dudley in the Black Country. We are seeking to recruit a candidate who shares the College's values and commitment to learners and can lead the learning support functions to be outstanding.

The College's aim is to recognise the individual needs of learners and put in place support and direction through the delivery of an inclusive portfolio of provision from entry level to higher education.

You will be joining a successful College Leadership Team and have specific senior responsibility for a range of learner service and support departments including the

line management and functional activities of: Learning Support (EHCPs); IAG; Careers; College Counsellors; School Liaison; Library and Learning Centres. The role includes lead responsibility for safeguarding and the College's approach to students' Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare (PDBW).

Closing Date: Monday 9 October 2017 at 1400 hours

Interview Dates: Monday 16 October and Tuesday 17 October 2017



Director of Curriculum, Quality and Continuous Improvement

Salary: £60,000 to £65,000 per annum plus Benefits

Location: National Role, based Central Manchester

Access to Music (AtM) is the leading 'creative college' operating nationally through its network of delivery centres, and offers study programmes across a range of creative subject areas including - Music Business, Music Performance, Music Technology, Artist Development, Games Design and VFX together with Higher Education 2 year 'accelerated Degree' programmes in Birmingham. We also support a large network of subcontractors offering a varied curriculum in subjects such as Performing Arts, Sports Coaching, Music Technology, A-Levels and Traineeships

We aim to be the number 1 destination for learners wishing to study for careers in the creative industries, by building on and developing our existing curriculum portfolio and by significant learner growth across our national FE, HE and work based delivery network.

Acting as nominee and taking the lead in preparing AtM's Self-Assessment Report for the organisation, to Ofsted inspection, HEFC QAA and other external standards requirements; your role is to ensure robust curriculum, quality assurance and

improvement practices which deliver an outstanding teaching, learning, training and assessment experience for all students and one which delivers the best possible outcomes for learners.

You will be a key member AtM's Executive team, playing a full part in the strategic direction of the business, requiring you to embed and work to AtM's values; working with **Professionalism**, taking **Responsibility** for your actions, and giving **Respect** to clients and colleagues alike.

If you are a commercially savvy, results driven curriculum and quality professional, leader, and qualified teacher in the lifelong learning sector, with the ability to influence, inspire and motivate colleagues, employers and students to meet AtM's strategic objectives we want to hear from you.

Apply online with your cv at www.accesstomusic.co.uk/jobs We particularly welcome applications from women and ethnic minorities who are under-represented at this level.

DIRECTOR OF QUALITY



St Helens College

SALARY: circa £50k

St Helens College is one of the largest further and higher education providers in the Northwest, with a proven track record of providing quality education since 1896. St Helens and Knowsley Community College will shortly merge on 1 November 2017 to form a College Group with c.10,000 students and an annual turnover of £38 million

As a result of the upcoming St Helens College and Knowsley Community College merger we are seeking to appoint a Director of Quality. This is an exciting new opportunity for an exceptional individual to proactively lead and manage the College Group's quality activities, ensuring performance improvement where required.

The successful candidate will lead on the annual quality improvement and general quality assurance processes across the College Group. You will need to demonstrate your success in managing quality for all types of provision (including sub-contracted provision) and will focus on ensuring consistency in approach and substantial and sustained quality improvement activities across the College Group.

The successful candidate must:

- Have experience of engaging staff to work within quality assurance systems to improve teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes
- Have a track record of working with awarding bodies to monitor, ensure active engagement and improve provision
- Have successful experience of supporting organisations to meet the requirements of regulatory regimes e.g. external audit, inspection bodies
- Have excellent knowledge of Awarding Body requirements in meeting assessment and verification requirements
- Have strong knowledge of quality systems within the further and higher education sector
- Hold a degree level qualification/professional qualification.

For more information and to apply for this role, please visit:

<http://www.sthelens.ac.uk/careers-with-st-helens-college>

Closing Date: 4th October 2017



....from good to outstanding

English and maths Lecturer Opportunities (full and part time)

Salary up to £33,311 per annum

Bolton College is looking for ambitious, talented, enthusiastic Lecturers of English and maths to join our flourishing team.

Bolton College is a 'Good' and improving College. In 2015/2016 we had the best outcomes in FE for young people in Greater Manchester. The College is also renowned in Greater Manchester as being a friendly and supportive employer. Staff at the College enjoy excellent CPD opportunities in the context of a whole institution ethos of placing teaching, learning and assessment at the heart of all we do. Our staff and learners are our first priority! Exciting times are ahead following our recent 'Good' Ofsted inspection and our plans to merge with the University of Bolton in 2018.

This is a great opportunity for inspiring Lecturers to further improve our outcomes for learners in GCSE, Functional Skills, Core English/maths and Community Learning. You will hold a relevant degree and a recognised teaching qualification. Applications from NQTs are welcome.

For an informal discussion please contact: Sue Lambert, Head of English and Maths, on 01204 482 562.

An application pack, including a job preference form, can be downloaded from our website by accessing (www.boltoncollege.ac.uk), by email request to: personnel@boltoncc.ac.uk or by telephoning 01204 482 106.

Closing Date: 20th October 2017. Interview Date: 6th and 7th November 2017

Job Ref: 028-18

We welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undertake a Disclosure Barring Service Check.





Business Development Manager

Peach Orator is looking to engage a full time **Business Development Manager** who is:

- Experienced in sales within the training sector
- Able to build and utilise networks
- Familiar with funded training and apprenticeship rules
- Able to sell full cost training programmes

Location - Flexible to work nationwide / Ideally South Yorkshire Based
Salary - dependent upon track history

Self Employed / Freelance

Peach Orator is looking to work with **Leadership & Management Trainers & Assessors** who are:

- Capable of delivering inspiring and motivational Leadership and Management training programmes
- Familiar with ILM standards & apprenticeship framework
- Able to work with groups and individuals to develop their leadership potential
- Able to deliver levels 2, 3 & 5 qualifications

Location - UK wide
Salary - per learner / flexible

Self Employed / Freelance

Peach Orator is looking to work with **Education Training Professionals** who are:

- Up to date with latest Ofsted Common Inspection Framework
- Familiar the latest changes and developments within the schools sector
- Able to deliver training from a suite of short and long term development courses including
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May also have existing training programmes that can be marketed to our clients
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Salary - per day / flexible

To apply:
Please send your application to:
sarah.brooks@peachorator.co.uk

Contact Details:
Sarah Brooks
01226 246583
sarah.brooks@peachorator.co.uk

Self Employed / Freelance

Trainer / Assessors for Level 2 & Level 3 Apprenticeship in Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools

Applicants must have:

- Experience of working within the school environment
- Certificate in education or equivalent
- Assessors qualification
- Familiarity with the apprenticeship framework
- Capability of developing literacy, numeracy and ICT

Location - UK wide
Salary - per learner / flexible

Subject Team Leader: Maths



Location: Chaffron Way
Salary: £26,216- £33,232 Pro rata
Campus hours: 19.25 hours per week, 52 weeks per annum

We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced Maths Lecturer / Teacher to join our Milton Keynes College team on a part time basis.

We are seeking a Maths subject leader who keeps values at the core of their teaching. Someone who is committed to our ethos of working in partnership with individual students to ensure everyone achieves their full potential. In support of this you will plan and deliver inspirational, engaging maths lessons to ensure our students participate and develop their skills to enable them to progress and achieve.

The successful candidate will be a talented, highly motivated and enthusiastic GCSE Maths Subject leader, you will contribute to the delivery of our ambitious vision within the Maths department. The ideal candidate will have the ability and drive to inspire diverse groups of young people to achieve their full potential.

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

The Maths department is a dynamic and versatile team that delivers inspiring and engaging lessons across the whole College. We work closely with the curriculum areas in order to create English and Maths sessions that relate directly to the students' vocational qualifications. We deliver excellent courses to meet the needs of around 2000 students on campus whilst maintaining a supportive and inclusive environment. We already have two Curriculum Innovation Leaders who work at the forefront of staff development and curriculum structure ensuring that the English and Maths team are spearheading excellent delivery of the latest specifications to equip our students with the relevant skills to thrive and achieve.

If you would like to have a confidential discussion about this role, then please contact the Recruitment Team on **01908 637269** or by email to HRCampus@mkcollege.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/joblist/campus-based-vacancies>
Email: recruitment@mkcollege.ac.uk

AoC Annual Conference & Exhibition 2017

14 - 15 November, The ICC Birmingham

There are only **six weeks to go** until the premier further education event of the year begins. In addition to an exceptional programme of distinguished speakers and numerous opportunities for debate, discussion and networking, a key part of every AoC Annual Conference and Exhibition are the breakout sessions which provide a platform for delegates to get granular with issues directly affecting their college. There will be **39 breakout sessions** across the two days this year, with some of the highlights listed below.


Breakout sessions day one

- Everything you need to know about college funding
- Good practice in supporting students through transition to technical education
- Apprenticeship matters - Transition, funding, delivery (I can't get no) satisfaction: Improving staff satisfaction and morale in choppy waters
- Higher level (4 and 5) technical education and the Institutes of Technology

Breakout sessions day two

- Inside the mind of your customer: How levy-paying employers are designing their programmes and how colleges can help
- Governance: Getting to 'good'
- Planning for technical education reforms: A local approach
- Intrinsic quality - The strategic embedding of maths and English for maximum success

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EXPERTS

FRANK
COFFIELD

Emeritus professor of education,
UCL Institute of Education

Justice for our further education colleges

Having spent considerable time examining Ofsted's methods, Frank Coffield claims they are invalid, unreliable and unjust.

While "unjust" may seem like a strong way to describe an Ofsted inspection, I have a clear example to illustrate it. Take its grading scale, which attaches one adjective, such as 'outstanding' or 'inadequate', to a large FE college with 20,000 students, 1,000 staff and 30+ departments. This is a statistical absurdity, because research has repeatedly shown that there is always great variation within an individual college and one adjective cannot capture complexity, diversity or contradictions.

The area reviews are creating even larger colleges, for instance Nottingham, which now has 40,000 students. That Ofsted can or would judge such a huge enterprise by applying one summary term to it is, I repeat, unjust.

Ofsted has had 25 years to improve its methods but, despite numerous changes, it is still unfit for the present, never mind the future. Using Ofsted's own scale to evaluate its performance, I would probably award it no more than a grade three; it 'requires improvement'. But that would be to treat Ofsted as unjustly as it treats educators; it would discount, for example, its role in challenging poor practices, monitoring national standards and its record in closing illegal schools. Complexity has to be responded to with complexity.

We could and should be doing so much better. We need not only a better model of inspection but a better system of education. I am, however, reminded of the preacher who advised: "If you are awakened at midnight with a vision of how to save the world, do us all a favour and go back to sleep." I will therefore restrict myself here to introducing ideas for a new model of inspection.

Let us revisit the admirable work carried out by the Further Education Funding Council in the 1990s. Instead of assigning a grade to a college, the main curriculum areas were assessed separately; dialogue between assessors and assessed was promoted by having a college nominee participate in the inspection process, including the inspectors' meetings. An inspector was also attached to each college before, during and after inspection to ensure that inspectorial knowledge was accurate and their

recommendations acted on.

Inspection has a legitimate and necessary role in education. My aim is to move it from a concentration on summative assessment (judging the measurable outputs of education such as test results) towards a balance of both formative (improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment) and summative assessment. That shift needs to be based on educational principles such as education seen as growth (do students leave college as lifelong learners?), trust rather than fear, challenge matched by support provided by Ofsted, dialogue, and appreciative inquiry, which gives pride of place to everything that gives life to a college when it is at its most effective.

"We need not only a better model of inspection but a better system of education"

I want to help Ofsted by recommending that its remit be drastically reduced, by making it genuinely independent of government and by reintroducing a system of local and national inspectors, working hand in glove. In this way inspectors would once again become respected colleagues, acting as the cross-pollinators of tough ideas and novel practices in a joint search with tutors for improvement.

None of the above will happen unless tutors and college leaders begin to demand change. Ofsted may appear to colleagues as a remote and punitive arm of government, but in fact it belongs to all of us who pay for it. We have a right and a duty to call, not for tinkering at the edges, but for radical reform. This is the essence of an open, democratic society that offers its citizens the freedom not only to think differently but to demand justice.

Frank Coffield's new book, *Will the Leopard Change its Spots? A new model of inspection for Ofsted*, is published by UCL IOE Press.

LESLEY
DAVIES

Principal, Trafford College

GCSE guinea pigs won't lose out

The first few years of any new qualification are carefully monitored, so your GCSE students haven't been hurt, says Lesley Davies

My overriding priority as a college principal, when I think about my students' exam results, is that everyone is treated fairly. This year we were all grappling with major changes to most qualifications, particularly GCSEs. How could we as college leaders be sure that our 2017 GCSE students weren't disadvantaged as guinea pigs on the new 9-1 GCSE qualifications? And were our resit students doubly disadvantaged because they sat a different A*-G qualification 12 months before?

Before moving to Trafford, I was the responsible officer for Pearson's Edexcel qualifications, so I know how the exams industry deals with these issues. Grade boundaries for GCSE, AS and A-level qualifications are set using an approach called "comparable outcomes". This means that, at national level, if one year's students are of a similar ability to the previous cohort, we would expect similar results in a particular subject.

The experts who write exam papers always try to make sure they are at the same level as previous years, but regardless of whether exams turn out to be slightly harder or easier from one year to the next, the system aims to ensure that students receive the grade they deserve, whichever year they sit their exams. There have been well-publicised plans to align key lettered grades to the new numbers for reformed GCSEs, so an A is aligned to the new grade 7, a C is aligned to the new grade 4 and G is aligned to the new grade 1.

Comparable outcomes is not a statistical fix, whereby five per cent of students get a 9, and 10 per cent an 8 and so on; exam boards use statistical information about the students sitting their exams and historical data about results in each subject area, and balance it with the views of subject experts to set grade boundaries.

During this period of significant reform in GCSE and A-level qualifications, comparable outcomes ensures there is stability in the system and creates an anchor between the old qualifications and the new.

As a reformed qualification beds in over time, factors such as familiarity, growing

availability of professional development and support resources, increased teacher confidence, greater numbers of past papers and so on, can all contribute to improvements in cohort performance. But at the start, there can often be a dip in cohort performance, known as the "sawtooth effect".

Ofqual has recently published a study into patterns of performance seen after the 2010 and 2011 reforms to GCSEs and A-levels, which showed that changes in average grade boundaries roughly follow the expected sawtooth pattern. Students and teachers took around three years on average to become familiar with the content and style of the new tests.

In the summer of 2017, we saw the first wave of reformed GCSE Maths and English and reformed A-level qualifications assessed for the first time, and these provide a useful example. Grade boundaries were in some

"At the start, there can often be a dip in cohort performance"

cases set slightly lower than in the previous year. In the case of GCSE English and Maths, we had nearly 1,000 students sitting these exams, and significant changes to level of demand, content and assessments impacted on performance. In the case of some A-levels, coursework no longer contributed to the final grade, while in subjects such as science and psychology, more mathematical content was included.

Without using the principle that at national level roughly the same proportion of candidates should achieve each grade as in the previous year, a significant number of learners would have suffered from that lack of familiarity in the system – and might perhaps even have lost their university place as a result.

So we might see grade boundaries in the first couple of years of a new qualification set lower than in subsequent years, but this should build your confidence that the system will ensure students are not disadvantaged.

EXPERTS

We've had a bit of clarity on the new IoTs, but Mick Fletcher doesn't want to pop any corks just yet

The DfE's latest on the Institutes of Technology doesn't deserve three cheers – but it maybe warrants one and a half. The half is for the additional investment in FE: any extra cash is welcome though the sum is so small compared with the needs of the sector that a full cheer is out of the question.

More important is the confirmation that the new Institutes will build on existing infrastructure. After the Tories' flirtation with focusing IoTs on universities, common sense has prevailed and the new institutions will promote rather than compete with existing colleges. It's a small but sensible step.

“The sums involved are far too small

Although it is a positive, results will likely still disappoint because the IoTs come freighted with unrealistic ambitions. There is more than just the normal hype associated with any loosening of the Treasury's purse strings: people seem to expect that a small number of IoTs will lead a total transformation in higher technical and professional education (HTPE), will deliver a step change in the production of higher-level skills and



MICK FLETCHER

Founder, Policy Consortium

Our unrealistic expectations for the Institutes of Technology

revolutionise attitudes to sub-degree-level higher education. It won't.

The sums involved are far too small. A total of £170 million spread over three years can do some good but no serious observer will see it as transformational. Moreover any impact will be further diluted by the approach we're taking to develop IoTs: bids will be sought from consortia.

No doubt work is already under way to develop the “correct” type of consortium: a high-profile employer as figurehead, other employers promising support that will likely

prove to be moral rather than financial, a big FE college coordinating the action as a hub and linked with a host of smaller colleges and training providers which reckon their best chance at a piece of the action is as a spoke. Once the hub has made a symbolic investment and each of the spokes has taken its modest cut, the impact will be minimal.

The DfE expects that, in addition to capital investment, any “transformation” will be driven by designating some institutions as “institutes”. This is likely to be undermined by the consortium approach. When one of

the new national colleges, seen in some ways as prototypes for IoTs, describes itself as “a network of hubs” one can envisage how collaborative IoTs might develop. Like the Centres of Vocational Excellence promoted by the Learning and Skills Council some 15 years ago, giving them new titles will do no harm, but there'll be little lasting change beyond a few plaques in college foyers and further confusion with nomenclature.

The DfE seems to envisage HTPE being delivered in a limited number of institutions with distinct specialisms – a set of monotechs recruiting nationally. In practice HTPE is far more likely to thrive if it is available widely and on a part-time basis. It is not the case that the demand for most types of provision at levels four and five is geographically circumscribed.

Moreover, adopting a delivery model that looks very much like full-time undergraduate HE seems most likely to cause defection to the more benign funding and regulatory regimes of the HE sector. One has only to look at where almost all our art colleges and many agricultural colleges have gone in recent years to see the potential temptation.

Finally, the idea that to raise the status of technical and professional education requires a further stratification of institutions is a peculiarly English approach. It would be better to allow HTPE to grow naturally in a wide range of FE colleges than attempt to pick winners. To do so would add to the reputation of the sector as whole rather than give status to some at the expense of others.

Labour Party Conference reaction

Labour's proposed new National Education Service could impoverish colleges and disadvantage learners, claims Professor Bill Wardle

Jeremy Corbyn's speech to the Labour conference included a rallying call that should alarm the education community, particularly colleges: the establishment of a National Education Service, offering free college education courses to all.

The watchwords “free, universal and empowering” echo the founding principles of the NHS. Corbyn's proposal to rebuild society anew has been made against a backdrop of escalating global competitiveness and shifts in the use of technology and its effects on employment. Others have considered this political and economic theorem, including Lord Sainsbury, but Labour's approach lacks consideration of implementation or consequences.

The Labour Party is in an abstract, even indiscriminate, bidding war, finding a “solution” for colleges along the lines of Angela Rayner's boast that Labour triumphed over the Conservatives on HE tuition fees.

Colleges ought to be very worried. First, how will we afford free tuition? There could be raids on other budgets, unless new money is created via magic money trees or new taxes. The depletion of school budgets, as has happened in Scotland to fund higher education fees, might be of lesser concern to colleges than the fact



BILL WARDLE

WAW Consulting

Keep colleges out of politics

that “free to all” might in practice mean “free only to those allocated a place”.

Scottish college education stayed publicly funded but the effect was reduced student numbers. Stark priorities were enforced and there were curriculum and institutional casualties, via forced mergers. Provision shrank away from the spectrum currently imagined by Corbyn and became controlled and confined. Part-time students, and work-based, employer-focussed programmes, disappeared.

Second, free provision is expected to enable all individuals to have the skills to move to higher, technology-focused levels. This is virtuous, but it does raise massive questions about investment, coherence and comparability across the sector. One of the biggest challenges for the NHS is how to achieve consistency across the country.

Will our preoccupation with waiting times for access to surgical services shift to one for access to courses based on higher skills and promising high-value employability? The NHS

“Colleges ought to be very worried

is a fantastic concept, but shackled with the necessary practicality of coexisting with other forms of separately funded provision.

Colleges have thrived on competition, and the sector is growing, becoming stronger and developing an identity. If it is now expected to receive all-comers and, at the same time, equip them with the skills of the modern knowledge

economy, how does it square this with its current role as the perennial bulk-carrier for those who have underachieved at school?

Growth is meaningful only if it is managed, and managed by the professionals. What will worry colleges is how their funding is sourced, the potential reintroduction of an allocation system, and the levels of investment required to reengineer the curriculum.

Over the last 15 years, colleges have taken successful business decisions (and some bad ‘businesses’ have disappeared) and their balance sheets reflect their operational position and related capital investment and borrowing. Uncertainty over funding brings reflexive risk-aversion on the part of colleges and banks. Colleges have developed a sound business model, based on growth rather than neoliberal dogma.

College business plans will be thrown by a centralised system, more so since it is a flawed one. The focus on colleges would need to be accompanied by a new level of rigour regarding school outcomes. The silence on university tuition fees is disappointing and perplexing. In one sense, the raised level of expectation on colleges means that their budgets must be ring-fenced.

While Labour's new national plan for education has shone a spotlight on colleges, it leaves schools and higher education in the shadows – not to mention apprentices. A truly national perspective would have been holistic but also recognised phases and the obligations on each phase. The speech mixes up expectation and entitlement but without spelling out the curriculum revolution, and the funding structures and investment shifts necessary to give credibility and confidence.

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

AA award makes South Cheshire grin



The college team collect their award

South Cheshire College's on-site restaurant, Academy, has been named AA College Restaurant of the Year 2017.

The training restaurant and deli received the accolade at the annual AA hospitality awards in London, which recognise excellence in catering across the UK.

Three college restaurants were shortlisted for the award, including Fareham College's Avenue 141 and The Brasserie at Milton Keynes College.

As part of judging, the restaurant teams were asked to produce a three-minute video promoting the hospitality course at their college, and to design a business venture for

Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge.

It is only the second year the hospitality awards have recognised college restaurants, with Runshaw College's Foxholes restaurant winning last year.

"We hope that our reputation in the Cheshire community continues to grow and attract talented chefs who can now train at the best college restaurant in the country," said Mark Parsons, director for retail, commercial, engineering and the built environment at South Cheshire College.

"This is an absolutely fantastic achievement for all the team and students who work at the Academy."



In the driving seat: Garry Lyon, left, and Steve Willmer

Getting back on their soapbox

The reigning champions of an annual charity soapbox derby will attempt to defend their title this week.

Barnsley College won the 'most creative cart' award at last year's Bluebell Woods soapbox derby in Rotherham with their Fireman Sam-themed car, and their new entry is based on the character of Tow Mater from the Pixar film Cars.

The college is hoping to win one of the three prizes available, 'most creative cart', 'best dressed entry' or 'the highest amount raised', and will compete against 39 other carts in a race through Clifton Park in Rotherham.

The cart was made by Steve Willmer, a

tutorial learning mentor in the college's business, warehousing and logistics department and will be driven by staff members Garry Lyon, Kerry Alexander and Joanne Potter.

The soapbox derby is a fundraising event organised by Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice, which cares for children and young adults with life-shortening and life-threatening conditions.

Last year, the college raised over £750 for the hospice.

"We're extremely proud to be a part of this event and fundraising for an amazing charity that will hopefully make a difference," said Mr Willmer.



Natasha watches the gig from her hospital bed

Music to their ears

Media students from Chesterfield College have helped children in hospital experience a live concert through a unique work experience opportunity.

Students helped to livestream a gig by indie band The Sherlocks from the O2 Academy Sheffield for nine seriously ill children being cared for at Sheffield Children's Hospital, while the band delivered personalised messages to the patients during their set.

Accompanied by staff to help with production, the students filmed the gig at the venue, which was then accessible to the patients in hospital in real-time via iPads.

The project was initiated by a US charity, the Melodic Caring Project, which films and streams live music events and concerts to hospitalised children.

The charity, which has been running in the US for almost a decade, has now recruited college students and staff to lead a UK branch of the initiative, as it attempts to reach more patients in the future.

"We are thrilled to be working with Chesterfield College and its students," said Levi Ware, the charity's cofounder. "Their unique skills, talents and relationships will enable us to reach far more children than we ever could on our own."

Reaching the squeezed middle

A new research project is looking at what skills and competencies middle leaders need to succeed in their line-management roles.

The project, led by a researcher from the School of Education and Childhood Studies at the University of Portsmouth, is looking for middle managers in further education to fill out an online survey, and will use the results to develop a competency framework to better support middle leaders.

Stephen Corbett, who is behind the project, said: "Middle management was an area I felt can be overlooked.

"We invest a huge amount of time in

teacher training, but we don't necessarily invest in the next stage of somebody's career. We seem to bypass that and put a lot of effort into senior leadership training, but the middle is often missed."

The anonymous survey will ask participants – who should be in a role with line-management responsibilities – about the training they received prior to starting in their positions, and what skills they felt they already had.

The survey will close at midnight on December 1. You can access it here:

<http://bit.ly/2ysCQrE>



Stephen Corbett

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King***Chichester College's Kenyan charity triumph**FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

After 20 months of fundraising, a Sussex college has raised more than £82,000 to help build a school in one of Kenya's poorest areas, reports Samantha King.

The new Walk Centre Primary School in Nakuru – one of the largest cities in Kenya – has been a long time in the planning, but finally came to fruition with the help of Chichester College.

After running regular volunteering trips to the area during the summer, the college's student experience manager, Lisa Humphries, made a commitment to help a local education charity build a school for children living in Nakuru's slums and rubbish dumps.

"I sat down and promised them £70,000 to build a school and then I had to go and do it. There's a group of staff that visit regularly, and when we came back we won everyone over," said Ms Humphries. "Then Brexit happened and building costs happened, so we actually had to raise £80,000."

The whole college got behind the project, with fundraising events ranging from skydives, cake sales and a Four Peaks challenge, to selling roses on Valentine's Day.

One of the more unconventional efforts was a sponsored fire walk, which challenged 24 volunteers, including the college's executive principal Andy Green, to walk barefoot across hot coals.



The new school

Lisa with pupils



Executive principal Andy Green

"We knew it was going to be a massive challenge, but we are all about changing lives through learning, and what better way to do that than provide a permanent school that will change the future for a generation of Kenyans," Ms Humphries explained.

One of the new school's 10 classrooms is named after Josh Skinner, a Chichester College student who died in 2005.

His family donated money to the fundraising effort through the Josh Skinner Memorial Fund, and his parents visited the school in Kenya along

with college volunteers to help paint the classroom's walls.

Alongside its classrooms, the brick-built school in Nakuru has an office, a toilet block and a school hall, and it will be the first proper building many of its new pupils will have set foot in.

The launch of the new school was attended by the city's minister for education, local families and headteachers from government public schools, who will help teach at the new primary, while the Chichester College volunteers were guests of honour.

Alex Maina,

founder of The Walk Centre, said: "Lisa and I talked about what I would like to see happen with the centre, and I told her I'd like permanent classrooms – built of brick, not tin. I'd like to develop the centre into a school to help more children, but I didn't think it would be possible to raise the money."

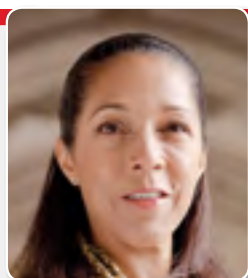
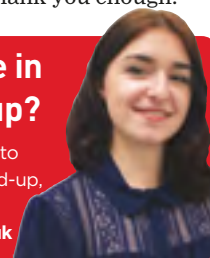
"She said 'we can do that' and now it's like a miracle. We can't say thank you enough."



Alex Maina & Lisa Humphries

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

**Helen Grant MP**

Chair, Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network

Start date September 2017

Concurrent job

MP for Maidstone and the Weald

Interesting fact

As a young woman, she was the under-16 judo champion for the north of England and southern Scotland.

**Peter Bramwell**

Principal and CEO, Coventry College

Start date September 2017

Previous job

Principal and chief executive, Guildford College

Interesting fact

In a previous career, he won an award for 'most interesting expenses claim' for refuelling a client's helicopter.

**Gavin Freed**

Chairman, Firebrand Training

Start date September 2017

Previous job

CEO at Interserve plc

Interesting fact

Freed is an avid follower of North American ice hockey, and his own UK playing career spanned 37 years.

**Andy Price**

Business development manager, e-Quality Learning

Start date September 2017

Previous job

Training and support team leader for Heart Systems Ltd

Interesting fact

He once met the Dalai Lama by accident.

**Shane Chowen**

Area director for the east and west Midlands, Association of Colleges

Start date October 2017

Previous job

Head of policy and public affairs at the Learning and Work Institute

Interesting fact

If he had lost the election for president at City College Plymouth student union in his time there, he would have joined the RAF instead.

Movers & Shakers

...

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FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**

Solutions: Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty: **EASY**

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

Difficulty: **MEDIUM**



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