

FE Week

'CUTS HAVE CONSEQUENCES'

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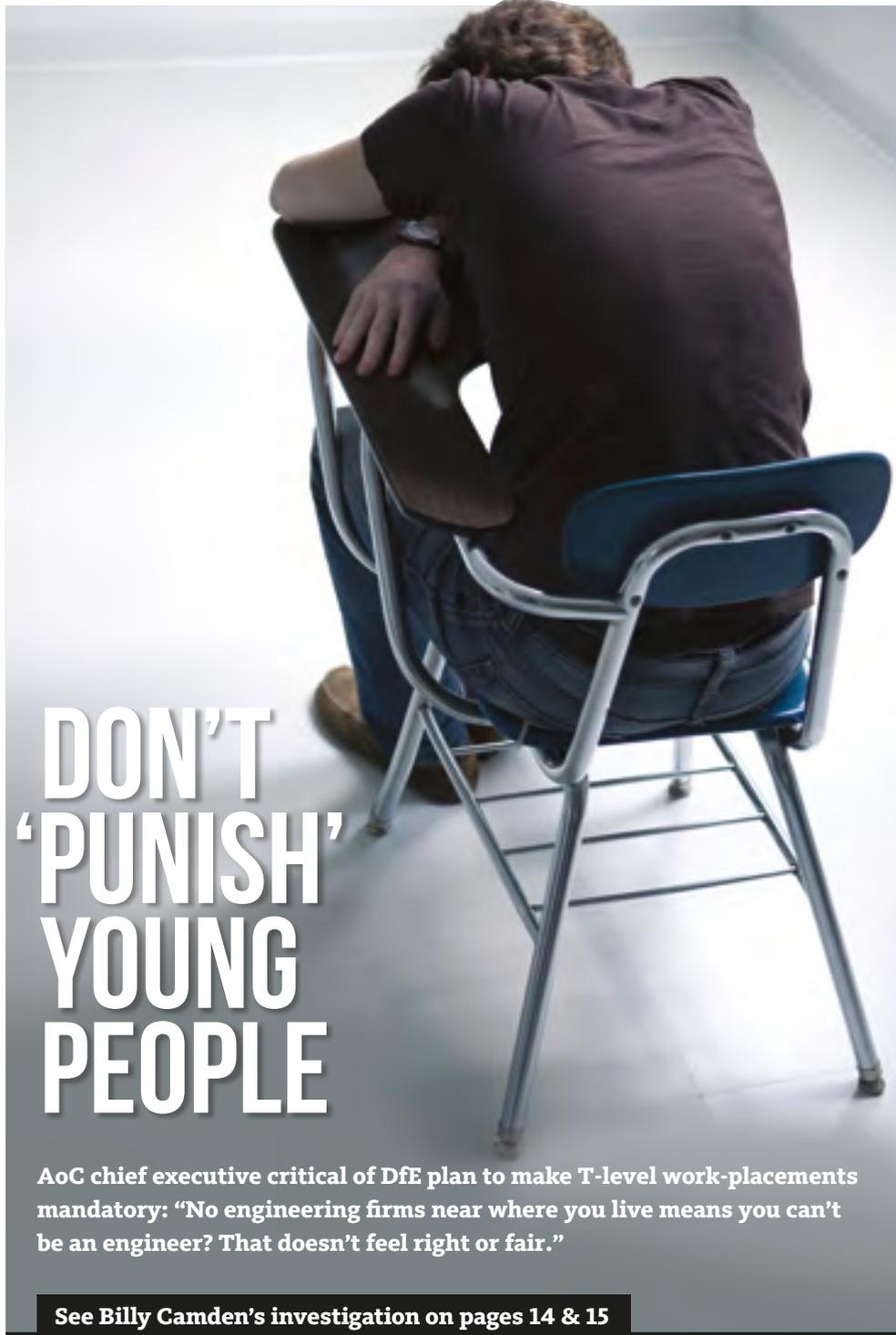
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FROM PRINCIPAL TO COMMISSIONER

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DON'T 'PUNISH' YOUNG PEOPLE

AoC chief executive critical of DfE plan to make T-level work-placements mandatory: "No engineering firms near where you live means you can't be an engineer? That doesn't feel right or fair."

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COLLEGES AT TIPPING POINT

- > Ofsted expected to confirm fall in grade profile for third year in a row
- > Chief inspector tells MPs that "funding inequality" and "reforms in practically all areas" could be the cause

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA_AK

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Slow start for £700m merger support fund

Around £600 million of the cash available to colleges for post-area review restructuring remains unallocated- the application deadline has been extended. So far, just 10 colleges have been handed a total of £120 million from the restructuring facility.

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'Colleges must support FE research'

The principal of Central Bedfordshire College has called on colleges to "take the initiative" on FE research. FE Week follows up by checking out the opportunities currently out there - and why it should matter to sector leaders in the first place.

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NEWS

Ofsted returns as Learndirect fights for survival

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Ofsted has completed its first monitoring visit at Learndirect, as the provider attempts to improve on its 'inadequate' rating before its funding ends next July.

The nation's largest FE provider has been under the microscope ever since it shocked the sector with a grade four that seemingly came out of the blue.

FE Week can reveal that inspectors returned last week for the first time since the debacle unfolded, and will continue to monitor its progress until a full inspection is conducted next year.

"These visits are common practice for providers we have previously found to be 'inadequate'," a spokesperson told *FE Week*. "Ofsted will monitor and reinspect it within 15 months of publication of its last full inspection report. A monitoring visit report will be published on our website in due course."

Learndirect also published its full accounts for the 18-month period up to January 31 this week, in which it noted "in the absence of an improved Ofsted grade" the ESFA would not continue funding its adult skills provision after July 2018 – money which this year amounts to around £45 million.



However, Andy Palmer, the provider's chief executive, hinted last week that the ESFA may decide not to terminate the funding if Learndirect improves its grades.

"At this moment in time, the ESFA has confirmed that funding for adult skills provision will not be available after July 2018, due to the Ofsted grade four," he told *FE News*. "However, the company is focused and determined to improve this position to a grade two within the current financial year."

Both the ESFA and the Department for

Education declined to comment on the notion.

Learndirect's accounts did however leave major question-marks hanging over its future, after figures showed how its long-term survival hinges on the success of its sister companies, including Learndirect Apprenticeships (LDA), over the next 12 months.

Its parent company, Pimco Holdings Ltd, is saddled with debts of £48.5 million, on top of a loan of £2.9 million from Lloyds Development Capital (LDC), both of which need to be paid

back in November 2018.

There is a further loan from LDC of £48.8 million which will be repayable in May 2020.

The accounts did suggest Learndirect was still a "going concern", and in order to survive, Pimco has secured a "working capital facility" of up to £5 million from its bank lenders, which will be available until November 30, 2018.

Pimco's ability to repay, refinance or extend these loans will depend on the performance of its subsidiaries – Learndirect Ltd, LDA, and Learndirect Professional – over the next 12 months.

While the government currently stands by its commitment to terminate Learndirect's funding in July 2018, the provider said it would "continue to reduce the exposure that it has from costs related to delivery of ESFA-funded learning" by reducing its numbers of delivery centres and staff.

In the meantime, alongside the DfE, it is currently under investigation by the National Audit Office after a referral from the Public Accounts Committee.

The NAO will look into claims the DfE gave Learndirect special treatment, allowing it to keep its contracts for much longer than usual despite its grade four.

The outcome is expected to in "winter 2017-18", while the PAC is also planning to hold a subsequent hearing on the fiasco.

No sign of Conservatives' apprentice travel discounts

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Six months after the Conservatives committed to cutting travel costs for apprentices in their election manifesto, there is no evidence the policy is near to being implemented.

It was one of the major FE policies included in the Conservative manifesto in May, when the party pledged to "introduce significantly discounted bus and train travel for apprentices" in an attempt to make the qualifications more attractive to people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

But even though the Tories are still in government, *FE Week* has found no evidence to show the commitment is being implemented.

A spokesperson for the Department for Transport would only admit that it had started "exploring options" for discounted travel for apprentices.

They would not release any more details or give a timeline of when an actual policy might be introduced – plans will be set out "in due course".

"As per the government's manifesto commitment, we are clear that we do not want the costs of travel to deter young people from undertaking an apprenticeship," said

Department for Education spokesperson.

In the meantime, the number of people taking up apprenticeships is dropping at an alarming rate.

The total apprenticeship starts for May, June and July fell 61 per cent compared with the same period last year.

The National Society of Apprentices, an arm of the National Union of Students, hit out at the government's lack of urgency in delivering discount travel, which it said limits the type of apprenticeships on offer to people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"It is a huge problem when the type of apprenticeships that apprentices can access is limited by their ability to access public transport," a spokesperson told *FE Week*.

"It is a huge problem when an apprentice is paying over half of their wage on travel to and from their apprenticeship.

"The cost and availability of public transport for apprentices is causing massive issues and the NSoA is disappointed that the government is not treating the issue with the priority that it deserves."

Angela Rayner, Labour's shadow education secretary, said that with "so many apprentices trying to get by on low wages and with limited support", the government "must do more to ensure that everyone, whatever their background, can access high quality apprenticeships".

Huge shortfall prompts extension to £700m fund

JUDE BURKE
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Around £600 million of the cash available to colleges for post-area review restructuring remains unallocated – prompting the Department for Education to extend the application deadline.

Just 10 colleges have so far been allocated a combined total of £120 million from the restructuring facility, and the Association of Colleges has blamed the slow take-up on “a lack of transparency”.

The Department for Education would not say who the successful applicants are, but *FE Week* has identified five of the beneficiaries (see table).

English colleges were originally given up to six months after their final area review meeting to apply for funds, but new guidance says they now have until September 2018.

The DfE denied this meant the fund had failed.

“The restructuring facility will run until March 2019 – as has always been the case – so we would not expect it to have been fully spent at this point,” a spokesperson said.

He added that “10 colleges have benefitted so far with many more applications under consideration”.

“We will publish updated figures in due course as the programme continues to March 2019,” he said.

David Hughes, the AoC’s chief executive, warned that a “lack of transparency” over the fund was “a problem”.

He said the facility was not “being accessed as quickly or effectively enough by some colleges”, and for those that had been successful “it’s taken too long”.

He urged the government to “tell the sector where you’ve got in terms of what you think is a good position to put a college as a result of restructuring fund support”.

“Colleges that might be able to apply are probably not applying, because they’re not sure if they’re eligible, or if it would work for them, and I think that’s a bit of an issue,” he explained.

The newly updated guidance says: “If you are considering submitting an application despite it being more than six months since your final area review steering group meeting this is likely to be possible.”

Contrary to the DfE’s claim that an explanation for the delay was included in the new guidance, no specific reason has been given.

It does, however, note that previously-requested extensions “have usually been agreed to ensure that the restructuring in the sector is effectively planned”.

Elsewhere online, the Education and Skills Funding Agency’s most recent progress report on the restructuring facility, posted at the same time as the guidance mentioned 47 applications had been made by October.

Restructuring facility - six of the 10 colleges sharing £120m

Beneficiary	Colleges involved	Area review	Date of merger
Greater Brighton Metropolitan College	City College Brighton and Hove Northbrook College	Sussex	31/03/2017
South Cheshire College and West Cheshire College	South Cheshire College West Cheshire College	Cheshire and Warrington	31/03/2017
East Coast College	Great Yarmouth College Lowestoft College	Norfolk and Suffolk	01/08/2017
Chichester College Group	Chichester College Central Sussex College	Sussex	01/08/2017
South and City College Birmingham and Bournville College	South and City College Birmingham Bournville College	Birmingham and Solihull	02/08/2017

“As at October 2017 we have received 47 applications for the restructuring facility. This includes 25 sixth-form colleges which have or plan to convert to academy status, the majority of which have not and do not expect to receive any funding to support this conversion,” it said.

“We have received 22 applications to support restructurings within the college sector. Ten have been fully approved to date with a total allocation over £120 million up to March 2019. A further four have received compensatory funding for VAT on change of ownership. Total spend to October 2017 is over £60 million.”

The restructuring facility, first announced in March 2016, is part of a package of support for colleges to help them implement recommendations arising from the area reviews.

The five beneficiaries *FE Week* identified were all part of mergers that went through this year.

It’s not clear who the remaining five successful applicants are; though they may be colleges that have yet to merge or which are implementing other area review recommendations.

The cash, available as a loan, is designed to help with restructuring activities such as a merger.

In addition to area review recommendations, *FE Week* understands the cash can also be used to implement a merger brokered by the FE commissioner.

The facility is separate from the transition grants, worth between £50,000 and £100,000, which were available to colleges to bring in the skills they needed to make the changes, or in other words, consultants.

The pot amounted to £726 million, with £12 million of that set aside for transition grants, a figure revealed via an *FE Week* Freedom of Information request in December 2016, after the DfE repeatedly refused to tell us.

In August the DfE published details of all the transition grants it had awarded to date, which totalled £5.6 million, including £1.04 million meant to support mergers that had since failed or significantly changed.

Later that month *FE Week* reported that a planned merger between Reaseheath College and North Shropshire College had been called off after they failed to secure funding from the restructuring facility.

Apply to the Restructuring Facility

Depending on the availability of bank funding and the financial position of the colleges undertaking restructuring, an application may be made to the Restructuring Facility for a loan to support implementation of an area review recommendation. Specific guidance has been published explaining how to apply to the Restructuring Facility.¹⁰

Applications to the Restructuring Facility should be made within six months of the date of the final Steering Group meeting. Due diligence should be completed in advance of applications to the Restructuring Facility. Funds are likely to be released in tranches based on the achievement of milestones and compliance with any covenants set as part of the contracting process.

2016: DfE sets original six-months application deadline

AoC wants funding made available after 2019

The Association of Colleges wants cash from the restructuring facility to be made available beyond 2019.

It made the call as part of its 2017 autumn budget submission, in which it also said the application process should be shorter.

David Hughes said there was a “tail of organisations” that “could benefit from the facility” but which are running out of time.

These are colleges “we need to help them recognise what restructuring they need to do, for which the facility could be really helpful,” he said. “I don’t think that’s their fault.”

The budget submission warned that “without policy changes” only part of the fund would be

spent by 2019.

Restructuring has proved to be “more complicated than was anticipated”, and applications to the facility “take more time and money than necessary”.

Mr Hughes said the Department for Education and the Treasury “have been trying to construct a new way of working, and it’s taken some time”.

“They’ve taken a private sector approach and they’ve tried to adapt that to fit the FE sector,” he said, although he added that “they’ve learnt a lot along the way”.

The AoC’s submission asks the Treasury to “review it, extend it, make it more transparent, more it easier to access”.

Timing

The Area Review guidance stated that Restructuring Facility applications were expected within six months of the final Area Review steering group meeting. Where extensions have been requested to date these have usually been agreed to ensure that the restructuring in the sector is effectively planned. All original deadlines have now passed. If you have contacted us about preparing an application, we will have agreed a deadline with you. If you are considering submitting an application despite it being more than six months since your final Area Review steering group meeting this is likely to be possible and you should contact the Transactions Unit to discuss your potential application, including the timing.

As set out in the Area Review guidance, funding is available up to March 2019. In line with Managing Public Money it is often necessary for expenditure to take place in advance of the drawdown of funding. In addition to this, the robust governance and legal documentation processes, especially in the case of mergers which have several

2017: Extension given in DfE guidance

“

I would definitely recommend BTEC – it provides the perfect combination of hands-on experience and academic work.

Maryam Taher

Studying Biomedical Sciences at the University of York, Overall BTEC Student of the Year 2017, BTEC Applied Science

A portrait of Maryam Taher, a young woman wearing a green hijab and a white lab coat, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft-focus green.

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INVESTIGATES

FE 'practitioner research' moves

New network kickstarts cross-sector co-operation

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

As one college principal puts out a call for greater support for practitioner research, moves are afoot to create a "meta network" of FE research organisations to facilitate collaborations on the ground. So what can principals do to support more research – and why does it matter? *FE Week* takes a look.

Around 30 bodies – including the Learning and Skills Research Network, the National Education Union, the Education and Training Foundation and others – met recently to discuss a "meta network" of FE research organisations.

The idea behind this network is to allow practitioners to share work and collaborate – which, according to Andrew Morris, co-founder of the LSRN, could bring a number of benefits.

He described it as a place where information about research could be brought together, providing "tremendous scope for collective communication of work and of best practice" and "increasing the chances of collaboration" – which in turn could bring in vital funding.

Meanwhile Ali Hadawi, principal of Central Bedfordshire College and the only college representative on the board of the Association for Research into Post-Compulsory Education, has exhorted his peers to "take the initiative and embed research within our colleges".

In an exclusive piece for *FE Week* (page 9) he calls on fellow principals to "actively support college practitioners to engage with local universities". "Practitioner research", which involves lecturers testing ways to expand or improve their normal teaching practice, is not widely carried out in FE, according to Ruth Silver, chair of the Further Education Trust for Leadership.

She described this research as "idiosyncratic and individually based" but with the potential to be "amplified geographically".

"The seeds are there, it just needs a brave gardener to get it going," she said.

The Education Endowment Foundation, which was set up in 2011 with a £125 million investment from the Department for Education to support research in schools, had its remit expanded in 2016 to include post-16. It is running three trials on



Dame Ruth Silver

GCSE resits, and also offers funding to FE practitioners – although this is reserved for "high-potential programmes" across "multiple post-16 settings".

This can make it hard to access, Mr Morris explained. "One of the huge problems with FE research is that it's so fragmented," he said. "There are so many small operations going on; that it doesn't secure big funding from big organisations very easily."

Two research centres have also been established in recent years, looking specifically at post-16 education and training: the Centre for Vocational Education Research at the London School of Economics, and the Post-14 Education and Work Centre at the University College London Institute of Education, both founded in 2015.

"The seeds are there, it just needs a brave gardener to get it going"

The Further Education Trust for Leadership has been dedicated to developing leadership of thinking in FE since 2013 – which includes funding former Association of Colleges chief executive Martin Doel's "public policy" FE and skills professorship at UCL IoE.

But why should colleges engage more with research?

According to Paul Kessell-Holland, head of partnerships at the Education and Training Foundation, which runs a practitioner programme, research allows colleges to create a "bespoke" solution to tackle their own problems. "The most effective way to improve outcomes for your own learners is to spend time getting to know them in a research context," he said.

Rania Hafez, co-chair of the London and South-East LSRN, argues that framing practitioner research as a focus on "scholarship" rather than on "more articles in obscure journals" or "quantifiable outcomes" is vital to improving teaching and learning.

Challenging regulators is a primary focus for Mr Hadawi, who wants a research body from the FE sector to have power to "challenge Ofsted or policymakers".

But FE practitioner research faces a number of challenges, including a lack of time and research culture within FE, fragmentation and underfunding.

According to Gary Husband, a former FE lecturer who now works

Education and Training Foundation practitioner research programme

This programme, worth around £250,000 a year, provides funding for FE staff to engage in research that would benefit teaching and learning or management of their institution.

Around 50 places are on offer on two programmes, a one-year course leading to an MA short-course qualification, and a two-year MPhil qualification.

The funding covers all the costs of the programme, which involves a commitment of around three residential stays of three days each per year.

Paul Kessell-Holland, the ETF's head of partnerships, acknowledged that there will be some costs to the college in terms of staff time away.

"It works in a similar way to an MBA, where you're expected to work on your own business, and that's one of the benefits of letting a member of staff do it," he explained.

www.et-foundation.co.uk/

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West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium

The consortium was set up as a joint venture company in 2016 by seven colleges: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds City, Leeds College of Building, Shipley and Wakefield, with the specific remit of bidding for and managing European Social Fund projects.

Rachel Mather, research and development manager for the consortium, said she worked with the different colleges to deliver "skills interventions" that made use of labour market information and social information from organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Social Mobility Consortium.

This might have meant ensuring that seasonal workers have "the right skills for the requirements of the region where there's job availability to secure additional employment", but it also meant looking at "other issues and barriers" for people in "precarious work" such as childcare and other caring responsibilities.

www.westyorkshirecolleges.ac.uk

FE Research Meet

Modelled on the more established Teach Meet for school teachers, this aims to bring together people involved in FE research to discuss what they're doing and to share their findings.

Jo Fletcher-Saxon, an assistant principal at Ashton Sixth Form College, is one of the organisers.

"I see the FE Research Meet model as a move to open up a space for those who work within the sector," she said.

She wants to give them "the opportunity to undertake some research or practitioner inquiry in their setting to have a place, space, infrastructure and network within which to share those findings".

The idea is proving popular – bookings for the next event in June 2018 have already exceeded the "20 or so" she'd expected. Proposed topics for discussion include the use of technology by recently trained FE teachers, and online teacher learning communities.

@JFletcherSaxon #FEResearchMeet

at the University of Stirling and sits on the ARPCE committee, many research grants require a university to be involved, which can make it "very difficult" for FE institutions to get research-specific funding – although some is available through the Education and Training Foundation's practitioner research programme.

Learning and Skills Research Network

This entirely volunteer-run network is the granddad of FE research networks, having been around since 1997, despite receiving no funding.

The network runs two national workshops a year, one in the spring and one in the autumn, and also has a number of regional groups.

The spring meeting focuses on a policy-related issue, while the autumn one looks at "different aspects of practitioner research – universals rather than specifics", according to Andrew Morris, the network's co-founder.

These include "how to make your research have impact and how colleges cultivate a culture of research".

Examples of research carried out by LSRN members include using data to measure the effectiveness of different teaching and learning strategies.

Mr Morris said there are "a few hundred" people involved with the network either through its meeting or its termly newsletter, though this is growing, with two new regional groups being set up this year.

lsrn.wordpress.com/ a.j.morris@ucl.ac.uk

Mr Husband said partnerships between colleges, research organisations and universities, as suggested by Mr Hadawi, would give people in FE the "skills needed to do good quality research", and mean they could apply for funding.

"All it needs is a few brave individuals to lead the way," he said.

ment gathering fresh momentum

ALI HADAWI CBE

Principal, Central Bedfordshire College

The art of encouraging FE research

It's time the sector took control of its own destiny, argues Ali Hadawi

Over the years, my sense of frustration with how policymakers and regulatory bodies view further education colleges has only increased. It can be disheartening that the wonderful impact of FE on individuals, society and the economy is not widely acknowledged.

One way to manage this is to claim people don't understand FE, or that policymakers don't care, or that Ofsted is out of touch. But I believe FE has the potential to construct a new reality for itself, in which it leads the debate.

The sector needs a unified, evidence-based approach to informing practice in teaching, learning, assessment, improvement, management, leadership, engagement, change, impact, productivity, skills gaps... the list is endless.



There is much research, with a robust evidence base, by practitioners and academics in and on FE, but it too often remains in an academic bubble, as highlighted by Martin Doel in his recent interview with *FE Week*.

For example, there is academic research to show lesson observations do not, in themselves, lead to improvement in practice. But the sector doesn't use this, as far as I am aware, to work with Ofsted on coming up with a better methodology for judging quality.

Rather than waiting for the DfE to tell us that our practice should be informed by research, we need to take the initiative and embed research within our colleges.

There are several bodies already involved and each plays a valuable role. We have for example the Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education, the British Education

Research Association, the Learning and Skills Research network, Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning and the British Educational Leadership and Educational Research Society, to name but a few. The Education and Training Foundation and the Further Education Trust for Leadership also engage in research.

Colleges need not only to be better plugged in, but to see ourselves as part of the same continuum. Whether curriculum managers, assessors, lecturers or principals – we should see research as an important part of our business.

"FE research too often remains in an academic bubble"

I was recently chagrined to find that one of our lecturers was conducting – and funding – a doctorate off his own back. This is our failing as a college, for not having clearly communicated that we are keen to support research and would welcome requests for funding.

If we actively support college practitioners to engage with local universities in researching relevant areas of policy and practice – whether it be assessment mechanisms, funding methodologies, leadership, or teaching and learning practices – within five years we could have a body of evidence with which to challenge

Ofsted or policymakers.

Along with FETL's creation of the public policy professorship at UCL IoE, there are positive steps towards greater communication between the college and university sectors.

Earlier this year, I was invited to join the board of the Association for Research in Post-Compulsory Education, as their only college principal. It recognises the need to engage with the practitioner base; we must now engage and recognise the need for this work.

The DfE recently launched its research schools programme, allocating significant funding to support the application of research in schools, and encourage them to apply for funding to conduct their own projects.

Colleges could react by complaining once again that we are being left out, or we could take the initiative and do it ourselves.

Some steps colleges could take include:

- Communicate to staff that you welcome research proposals – we get a 50-per-cent fee waiver for any member of our staff doing a higher degree at our local university
- Set up a committee to handle these requests
- Engage with your local university's education department – and encourage their researchers to spend time in real world of FE
- Reach out to the research organisations above to see how you can feed into them

In short, if we're going to influence policy, we need to take control of our own research agenda.

Interview: Rania Hafez

CATH MURRAY
@CATHMURRAY_

Ofsted needs new 'scholarship' measure

There's a simple way Ofsted could boost colleges' engagement with research, according to the co-chair of the London and south-east Learning and Skills Research Network, and that is by including it as a measure of good management.

"I would like more principals to reach out by allowing scholarship spaces for their staff," explains Rania Hafez.

"Ofsted just needs to make it a requirement of management to be truly supportive of scholarship."

I meet Hafez in a vaulted hall at the former Royal Naval College occupied by the University of Greenwich, where she is programme leader for the MA in education. She considers herself one of several "stowaways" in higher education – academics based in HE institutions, who are actually "FE, heart and soul".

She has also been a visiting research fellow at the University of Derby for six years, and insists that "research should not just be about more articles in obscure journals that no one is going to read". In fact, she considers "research" almost the wrong word – preferring "inquiry" or "scholarship".

While "quantifiable outcomes" have



their place, she says, "you don't fatten a pig by weighing it".

A former FE lecturer and manager, she waxes lyrical about the "wonderful things happening in the classroom every day" but argues that teachers need more time to read and debate: "I would like to see libraries full of books, not only for students, but for lecturers."

"You don't fatten a pig by weighing it"

She expands on the theme: "We too often treat research like a science project. We think that if we keep researching, we're eventually going to discover the new penicillin. But teachers as experts is one area that we're not really valuing."

Passionate about the need for reflection to inform practice, Hafez is adamant colleges can facilitate this at minimal cost.

FE institutions could, for example, "create spaces – both in time and place – to develop communities of practice".

"Lunchtime discussions can be a collegiate, safe place to discuss what is and isn't working in the classroom, and share ideas," she suggests.

"If research isn't informed by proper intellectual inquiry, it will just be weighing the pig."



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Michelle Theophilus
Business Studies Teacher, Stanley Park High

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Key themes of careers strategy revealed

PAUL OFFORD
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The skills minister has set out the four main themes of the government's widely anticipated careers strategy, in a speech to the Careers Education and Guidance Summit.

Anne Milton told the event in London this week that the strategy would be published "shortly".

"I am tremendously grateful for the work that you do," she told delegates. "That is why I want to give you a first insight into the careers strategy. I know many of you in this room have been waiting a long time.

"It will be an important document that will set out what government will do to ensure that everybody has access to the right advice at the right time. A clear and accessible document, setting out the part we will all play in achieving this vision."

The first theme is ensuring a "high-quality careers programme" in every college and school.

This will be largely achieved, she said, through making the eight "Gatsby benchmarks" the "bedrock of our careers strategy".

These markers, set out in the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's good career guidance paper, suggest linking curriculum learning to



Anne Milton

careers, and learning from career and labour market information.

The second pillar is making sure employers "are an integral part of our approach".

She claimed that the Careers and Enterprise Company had made "outstanding progress".

"There are now over 2,000 enterprise advisers working with over half of the schools and colleges in England providing support to develop a careers programme," she said. "They use their networks to help pupils get

more experiences of the world of work and provide insight into the key skills needed by local businesses."

The CEC has been backed by more than £70 million of government funding, and boasted of working with over 700 schools and colleges last July.

But it has been criticised for its poor engagement with colleges – as opposed to schools which are generally viewed as the organisation's priority.

The Careers and Enterprise Company, which was set up in July 2015 to connect young people with the world of work, has been reticent to release details of the colleges it works with.

After repeated enquiries last year, *FE Week* was refused access to the information on "data protection" grounds. When we were finally given a list, it revealed a postcode lottery for FE coverage: 15 LEPs were not covered, and London was completely absent.

The third theme will be "tailored support".

"Personal guidance from a qualified adviser can have a real impact," said Milton. "I know that the careers profession has experienced many shocks in recent years and that organisations such as Careers England and the Career Development Institute are working tirelessly to raise the profile and status of the profession."

Finally, she said the careers strategy would also seek to make the most of the "rich sources of information about jobs and careers that exist".

She admitted that such "information sources can be difficult to navigate and those who could most benefit from them are sometimes unable to".

"The government already publishes data on students' destinations," she added, "but we recognise that more needs to be done to make the data easier to interpret."

Lauener taking charge at Student Loans Company

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

Peter Lauener will take over as head of the Student Loans Company later this month, after its chief executive departed suddenly.

According to a statement on the SLC's website, the outgoing boss of the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Institute for Apprenticeships will begin his new role on November 27.

He will remain in the post until a permanent replacement for Steve Lamey is recruited.

"Following investigations into allegations about aspects of his management and leadership, the SLC has decided to terminate Mr Lamey's contract as chief executive officer," the SLC said in a statement.

"The SLC and its shareholders expect the highest standards of management and leadership and these were not upheld by Mr Lamey during his time in this role."

Mr Lauener will take charge at SLC at a challenging time for the loans system.

The treasury committee has launched an inquiry into "the student loans system and related financial implications", and *FE*

Week revealed in September the tiny take-up of FE loans.

A Freedom of Information request demonstrated that 58 per cent of FE loans funding – amounting to almost £1 billion – had not been spent since 2013.

Mr Lauener has enjoyed a storied career in the civil service, especially recently.

He held the role of Education Funding Agency chief executive before he took on the top job at the Skills Funding Agency in November 2014.

They merged into the Education and Skills Funding Agency earlier this year, where he remained in charge.

He was also appointed shadow chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships last September.

Eileen Milner, former executive director of customer and corporate services at the Care Quality Commissioner, was announced in August as the ESFA's new chief executive.

She will take over this month, and there will be a short period of handover with Mr Lauener before he steps down.

But there is still no word on who will replace Mr Lauener at the IfA; *FE Week* reported last month that the search for a new boss was still ongoing, six months after it began.

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INVESTIGATES

Ofsted ratings decline for colleges

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

EXCLUSIVE

More than one third of English general FE colleges are currently rated less than 'good' by Ofsted, whose boss has refused to rule out funding as a root cause.

In its annual report next month, the inspectorate is expected to show that their overall ratings have plummeted for the third year running, and that just 69 per cent were rated 'good' or 'outstanding' in 2017.

The findings back up Amanda Spielman's recent comments to the education select committee, when she admitted that colleges "have the biggest funding challenge" and said Ofsted had seen "disappointing outcomes" in FE.

"We have seen a deterioration at a time when school outcomes have been stable or increasing slightly, but it is a correlation," she said. "I cannot definitively conclude that it is a causative effect."

She added that colleges are dealing with "an enormous amount of work" and "a big challenge" as they face "reforms in practically all areas."

Ofsted's annual report is due next month, and is likely to address this decline in standards.

Last year's report warned that "many general FE colleges face a period of continuing turmoil".

The Association of Colleges' chief executive, David Hughes, wants more funding for colleges in this month's budget and said a "rise in rates to reflect the true costs of delivering high quality further education" is needed.

"It is clear that the annual real-term cuts in income for colleges, combined with challenges created by constant reform, mean it's often difficult for colleges to make necessary and sustained improvements," he added.

Although he accepted there had been "a number of disappointing inspection judgements", he warned that Ofsted's statistics are based on a "risk-based approach" of returning to the same colleges.

FE Week's own analysis shows that sixth-form colleges and independent learning providers were rated 'good' or 'outstanding' 81 per cent of the time, a massive 12 percentage points ahead of colleges.

The ratings slump continues an annual

trend which has seen the number of high-achieving colleges fall by 10 per cent in just three years, after a high of 79 per cent in 2014.

Over the last academic year, 18 colleges that were previously grade one or two declined to grade three or four, including Blackburn College and Bury College, which both slumped from 'outstanding' to 'requires improvement', and Hereward College of FE which fell from 'good' to 'inadequate'.

Just nine colleges improved to a grade two, including Stanmore College and Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, which both climbed up from a grade four rating.

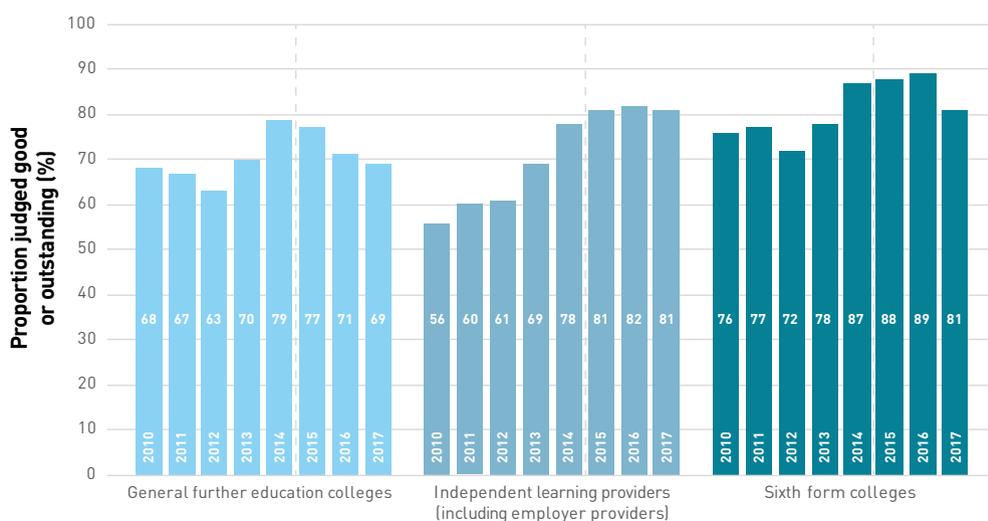
A spokesperson for the DfE said there are

"many high-performing, innovative colleges across the country" but acknowledged that "there is more to be done to ensure we have the same standard across the board".

"We have taken steps to champion high quality further education and put in place new funding and support to target weaker colleges and help them improve," she said.

This includes the National Leaders of FE programme, launched last month as part of a package of support unveiled over the summer, which also includes a £15 million college improvement fund, as well as an expanded role for the FE commissioner and more support for FE teachers over the next year.

Figure 17: Proportion of post-16 education and skills providers judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection



1. The main providers of 16-19 education are included on the above chart, with the exception of school sixth forms
2. Figures for 2015 onwards are not comparable to previous years. A different methodology has been used to calculate the percentage

Source: Ofsted annual report 2016 Figure 17 and analysis of Ofsted management information by FE Week for the year 2017.

18 colleges in 2016/17 fell to requires improvement or inadequate	Grade awarded in 2016/17	Previous grade
Peterborough Regional College	3	2
Carshalton College	3	2
St Helens College	3	2
Northampton College	3	2
Wakefield College	3	2
Southampton City College	3	2
Blackburn College	3	1
The Manchester College	3	2
The College of West Anglia	3	2
Bury College	3	1
East Berkshire College	3	2
Preston College	3	2
South Staffordshire College	3	2
Henley College Coventry	3	2
Hereward College of Further Education	4	2
Stoke-on-Trent College	3	2
Middlesbrough College	3	2
Bournville College of Further Education	3	2

Nine colleges in 2016/17 improved to a grade two	Grade awarded in 2016/17	Previous grade
South Essex College of Further and Higher Education	2	3
Milton Keynes College	2	3
Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College	2	4
Canterbury College	2	3
New College Stamford	2	3
Bolton College	2	3
Stanmore College	2	4
Solihull College	2	3
Wigan and Leigh College	2	3



Nick Linford, editor of FE Week, will next week announce and present an overview of this year's college ranking tables at the Association of Colleges' annual conference and exhibition.

FE Week will also be publishing the results in a special edition, which will be sent to readers on Wednesday 15th November.

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FE Week

Colleges exposed as funding cuts bite

Sixth-form colleges reach tipping point

Sixth-form colleges have been driven to “tipping point” and exist on “starvation rations”, the body that represents them has said, after *FE Week* exposed a sharp drop in top Ofsted grades.

Although they still perform better than general further education colleges, our analysis shows an eight-point fall in SFCs with a grade one or two between 2016 and 2017.

Until 2017, the number of SFCs receiving the top two grades had climbed every year since 2012, rising from 72 per cent five years ago to an impressive 89 per cent in 2016.

But figures to September this year show the proportion rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ has dropped to 81 per cent.

The Sixth Form Colleges Association’s deputy chief executive, James Kewin, said Ofsted’s boss Amanda Spielman had acknowledged there would be a “tipping point” at which funding levels start to harm quality at the SFCA conference in June.

He told *FE Week* that it is “very possible we have now reached that point”.

“Colleges have done everything they can to protect exam performance and in doing so have had to cut back on the support services

they can offer students,” he said.

“But the two are inextricably linked, and outcomes will inevitably dip if colleges are forced to exist on starvation rations.”

Despite the fall, the SFCA believes the sector is “still performing extremely well”, given that over 80 per cent have the upper two grades.

This week saw two SFCs fall from grade ones in just two days: John Ruskin College in Croydon and King Edward VI College in Stourbridge.

In 2016/17, eight sixth-form colleges fell from the top two grades to the bottom two.

Among these were Holy Cross College in Bury, which fell from ‘outstanding’ to ‘requires improvement’, and Leicester’s Gateway SFC which dropped from ‘good’ to ‘inadequate’.

During the same period just two colleges climbed into the higher tier: Strode’s College in Surrey, and Bilborough College in Nottingham, which both rose from grade threes to twos.

A survey published this week by SFCA found that the cuts to 16-to-19 funding have forced two thirds of colleges and schools to ditch extracurricular activities and student support.

‘Outstanding’ Fareham is ray of light

In better news for the sector, a third general FE college has been rated ‘outstanding’ in the space of six months.

Fareham College’s principal Nigel Duncan said he was “absolutely thrilled” with the result.

Mr Duncan said staff at Fareham had worked “incredibly hard” and “gave their all” during the inspection, which saw them climb up the ratings from a grade two.

“Staff performance is consistently outstanding and student behaviour exemplary – what more could a principal ask for?” he said. “I am so proud to lead such an amazing organisation.”

The sector had waited 14 months for an ‘outstanding’ grade for a general FE college, until two were published in the space of two weeks in June. These went to Dudley College and Grimsby Institute Group.

Fareham College, in Hampshire, is a general further education college that taught over 3,000 learners last year. It was allocated roughly £4 million by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in 2016/17.

It recently opened a second campus in

Lee-on-the-Solent, in collaboration with large regional employers, which provides technical and professional training in a range of engineering specialisms such as automotive, marine, aeronautics and motor sports.

The report praised the college’s “excellent and well established” partnerships with employers and the “excellent support and challenge to the senior leadership team” provided by governors.

It added that students made “very good progress” in achieving qualifications.

“Practical teaching for students on study programmes and for apprentices is of very high quality and closely aligns to apprentices’ work place roles and responsibilities,” inspectors wrote.

“Teachers are highly experienced in their vocational subjects and they use their skills and enthusiasm to inspire students and apprentices to progress and achieve.”

Although this is great news for the college, because it is only moving up from ‘good’, its change of rating will not increase the overall proportion of colleges classed as good or outstanding (see left).

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NEWS

ESFA threatens to bring forward ILR deadlines

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The ESFA has threatened to move the deadlines for individualised learner records (ILR) forward because it reckons too many providers submit on the last day.

The threat has sparked anguish from colleges and ITPs across the country – and one disgruntled person has even asked the agency not to “keep beating us with a stick”.

“Providers continue to submit their ILRs on the last day of the data submission period, or submit multiple files within the return window,” said the ESFA in an online update bulletin on its FE Connect portal this week.

“As previously advised, if providers

continue to make late or multiple file submissions, we may need to consider bringing forward the monthly ILR deadlines.”

The data is used to determine public funding, and bringing forward the deadline would be a stretch for providers, as it is currently due on the fourth working day of every month.

The bulletin also implied that multiple files shouldn't be sent, as providers should concentrate on getting submissions right first time.

Many users labelled this unreasonable, given that the system is designed to be used in this way.

“Please ensure your individualised learner records (ILRs) are submitted as early as possible in the returns window, and apprentice data is only submitted when



it's been matched and agreed with your employer (to prevent validation errors),” the bulletin read.

Several people spoke out on FE Connect. “We really have enough to worry about these days in FE so please ESFA, think about your communications and work with the industry to make it better. Don't keep beating us with a stick,” wrote one user.

“It would cause issues if they were to shorten the window, it's not open for enough time during the month as it is in my opinion,” another warned.

“I submit multiple times throughout

the month to keep on top of things,” said another.

The ESFA could not explain how shortening the deadline would help providers complete the necessary work.

A spokesperson stressed that multiple submissions were not banned, and recognised the need in “certain situations”, but said there had been an increase that could be avoided.

Current submission numbers are up to an average of 4.2 submissions per provider (4,424 files from 1,042 providers), from 3.8 the month before (3,374 files from 890 providers).

New name for resurgent UTC - but it ditches the brand

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
@PIPPA_AK

A university technical college which clawed its way up two Ofsted ratings in eight months has denied distancing itself from the UTC movement even though it has removed all mention from its name.

Once known as UTC Cambridge, the 14-to-19 provider has rebranded as the Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology as it joins Parkside Federation Academies, a multi-academy trust.

Its principal insisted the college was not trying to “take away from the UTC movement” but said the decision had been made because “so many people in our local community didn't know what UTC Cambridge stood for”.

An *FE Week* investigation in March revealed that, out of 20 UTCs inspected by Ofsted up to that point, only nine were rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.

The UTC movement began in 2010, and five more have opened this September, bringing the total to 49.

But many of the technical providers have failed to attract enough students to be viable, largely due to issues with having to recruit at 14, and eight have so far closed.

A spokesperson for the Baker Dearing Educational Trust, the driving force behind the UTC project, said that although providers typically include “UTC” in their name, in local circumstances boards can choose to do otherwise.

Ms Foreman accepted that UTC “could” have been included in the new name, but

said they were more concerned about having a name that “shared our vision” of science and technology specialism.

“We are still a part of that movement and still proud of being at UTC, but it's hard for a UTC to get themselves known and get across what they do. People understand better now,” she said.

She added that being part of Parkside Federation Academies would provide much needed “security”.

“We were a small college trying to manage on our own, and that was a part of the reason for the ‘inadequate’ rating,” she said. “We're putting that rating behind us. We

are on a journey and getting a lot of positive feedback.”

The BDT spokesperson praised the college's turnaround, but denied that it was distancing itself from the brand.

“In the case of the Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology, the Parkside Federation have made a dramatic impact and turned the UTC around after a difficult start,” they said.

“The governors have decided to change the name of the UTC as part of a relaunch. They are fully aligned with the UTC ethos and are an active

and valued member of the UTC programme.”

UTC Cambridge had been criticised by the regulator for ineffective leadership, management and safeguarding in a report published in November 2016 following an inspection the previous September.

However, the college was awarded a grade two across the board after an inspection in May 2017 praised leaders including Ms Foreman who became acting principal in November 2016 and head teacher in April.

The report, published in June, made UTC Cambridge the first of the 14-19 institutions to come back from a grade four.



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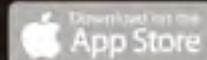
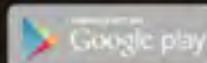
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INVESTIGATES

Are T-level reforms set to falter t

AoC pleads 'don't punish' young people as feasibility explored

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

The Association of Colleges has asked the government not to “punish” young people by making 315-hour work placements mandatory in T-levels, as officials begin to explore whether the policy is feasible.

Apprehension about a tough compulsory component planned for the new “gold standard” technical qualifications has been rife across the sector since initial plans were released last July.

The Department for Education only advertised for researchers to find out whether the idea could actually work in practice on October 30, ending the tender just eight working days later.

The terms of the contract, worth £96,000 to the winning firm, explained that the required qualitative research should “explore the extent to which employers are able to offer work placements, taking account of their size, industry and occupational area”.

It added that “typologies developed should outline employers’ current capacity to offer work placements and barriers” to them doing so across all 11 classroom-based T-level routes.

DfE guidance suggests that it expects 180,000 work placements per year, each with an average length of 50 working days, within a range of 45 to 60, lasting a minimum of 315 hours.

Officials have so far been clear on their approach; “no work placement, no certificate”, was the phrase used by Sue Clarke, the DfE’s qualification policy lead, at a DfE T-levels awareness event run by the AoC last week.

But the association’s boss, David Hughes, believes the rule will limit young people’s choice as it stands, and wants a change.

“There is the need for some T-levels to be delivered without the work placement in a route specific work setting,” he told *FE Week* in an exclusive interview ahead of the AoC conference (see page 16 for more).

“The danger of it is you limit people’s choices to what they can attend on a local basis in labour markets that are sometimes very limited in scope.

“You might not have engineering, manufacturing and creative, for example, where you live, so does that mean you can’t do any of those? That doesn’t feel right or fair.”

He said the government should “not punish the young person just because their local labour market doesn’t allow them to do something they are passionate about”.

A commitment for 315 hours would be a massive step up from the current two-week work experience period, and is considered one of the most challenging aspects of T-levels, which will be phased in from 2020 and fully rolled out from 2022.

Penny Wycherley, the principal of Waltham Forest College, echoed Mr Hughes’ concern and pointed to what she called an “unhelpful assumption” that underpins the rule: “that one size fits all in terms of ease in finding these work placements”.

“You can’t give a universal judgment on the work placement position for students in different curriculum areas,” she told *FE Week*.

“Catering and hospitality are fine, easy to get placements, but try and get one into electrical or public services, and you

are in a different ball game because of health and safety and the rest.”

Gordon Gillespie, Lewisham Southwark College’s vice-principal, added that he is worried about the feasibility of fitting in 10-week work placements alongside the academic parts of T-levels – an issue on which Mr Hughes has also previously been vocal.

“There is the need for some T-levels to be delivered without the work placement”

“Using the summer breaks, Easter and other holidays for placements could be an administrative challenge for colleges, but 10 weeks cannot be taken out of teaching time,” he said. “It would be impossible to deliver curriculums in that case.”

Persuading thousands of businesses across England to offer the work placements is another issue, and something which is likely to require financial incentives.

A survey of more than 1,000 small businesses in England released last month by the Federation of Small Businesses showed that only six per cent would be willing to offer work placements under current plans for T-levels.

Mike Cherry, the FSB’s national chairman, said that for T-levels to work there “needs to be clear incentive and guidance” for small businesses to offer placements.

He added it would have “made more sense” to undertake research into the feasibility of this rule “before announcing plans for lengthy work placements”.

Justine Greening revealed in July that £50 million would be available from April 2018 for “capacity building”.

The DfE has conducted other research into work placements, and one project delivered by The Challenge Network is now being piloted (see box).

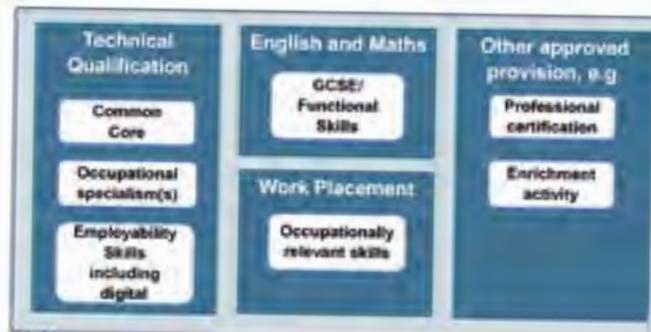
One other project, conducted by the Learning and Work Institute, has not provided easy reading for ministers, after it found that employers may already be experiencing work placement fatigue before T-levels even kick in.

A DfE spokesperson said that T-levels will include a high-quality work placement so students “can apply their learning in a real workplace environment”, which will ensure they have the “skills and knowledge that employers and the country needs for the future”.

The tender closing date for the new research into employer feasibility for work placements was November 8. The contract will start December 4 and end May 31, 2018.

T level structure

T levels and more than just a qualification and will build on study programme principles.



Department for Education

... and will include substantial work placements

Employers are often not satisfied with the skills of school/college leavers – so students can’t secure employment in the area they have trained for

The 2016 Skills Plan said that:

“...every 16 – 19 year old learner undertaking a college-based technical education route will be entitled to a high quality, substantial work placement”

Successful completion of this work placement will be a requirement for full certification of a T level

...no work placement, no certificate!

Department for Education

What are T level work placements?

Very different from work experience... both are vital but have different purposes

Work experience

- 1 – 2 weeks
- Aim to help students gain general ‘employability skills’
- More of a ‘work taster’ – the first exposure to a working environment

Work placements

- Minimum of 45 days
- Occupationally specific – focused on developing practical and technical skills
- External – placement should be with an external employer in a real life working environment

Department for Education

Department for Education slides

Work placement pilots delivery under-way

Around 2,500 students currently on vocational courses will pilot the 45-day minimum work placement rule this academic year, before the T-levels debut in 2020.

The Challenge Network won a contract in February to design and create “high-level principles and models” for proposed placements, and is now delivering this work at 21 FE providers across the country.

During the design phase, the network said it had involved over 150 employers and providers through interviews and workshops, as well as focus groups for learners.

It is hoped the pilots will help the DfE to “identify what good

placements should look like” in all 11 routes, and identify “specific challenges and ways of overcoming these before the implementation of these routes”.

“It will also support providers and employers to prepare for and make the shift to offering the substantial, longer-term work placements expected as part of the technical education routes,” a spokesperson for the network told *FE Week*.

The pilots started at the beginning of this term and will end in July 2018.

The results are expected to be released in autumn 2018.

through lack of work placements?

STEPHEN EVANS

Chief executive, the Learning and Work Institute

Support for employers will need to be in place

Employers want to make the new T-levels work, but they will need clear, practical support, writes Stephen Evans

The new T-levels will rely on employers in a number of ways: to help shape content, deliver work placements, and, by getting these right, giving them credibility in the labour market.

The scale of the ask is clear: the government expects around 180,000 work placements per year for T-level students. These will be substantial, lasting 45-60 days with a 315-hour minimum – longer than many employers are used to.

But it's not just T-levels



where we're asking employers to engage, lead and offer work placements. The same also applies to apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience, schools, higher education, and work placements for those out of work and supported by Jobcentre Plus.

Employers have found themselves in almost as many driving seats as Lewis Hamilton.

Given this, are we – to overstretch the analogy – heading for a high-speed crash?

The good news is that lots of employers really want to help. Learning and Work Institute research showed that employers are positive about the idea and want to be involved. They are keen to help young people, and they see the value of helping to develop

the talent pipeline.

However, they are concerned about how it would all work in practice. Our research also highlighted a clear risk of employer fatigue from the range of initiatives they are being asked to be involved in. Ultimately the employers we spoke to care less about the names of individual initiatives, and more about meeting their future skills needs and supporting the next generation.

“We've had a lot of so-called once-in-a-generation changes in the last 20 years”

Making sure that we have the right number of placements in the right place at the right time will also be a challenge, particularly in rural areas – matching the supply of work placements in each sector to the demand from learners. Provision of placements today varies by sector: it's more common in childcare and health and social care, but less so in sectors with higher levels of self-employment like construction.

We found that financial incentives would have limited impact; employers told us they wanted to be involved and that dealing with other factors, like hassle, bureaucracy, and lack

of support, were more important.

I think there are three areas where we need to prioritise action to turn employer interest into engagement:

1. Make it simple. Many employers are put off if things get overly complex – after all, they've got businesses to run. We need to be upfront about what we're asking and make it easy to take part. This also means fitting around what works for employers, and being flexible with timetabling.
2. Offer support. Lots of the employers we spoke to wanted clear guidance about what makes a good work placement and support for putting it in place.
3. Join things up. What we ask of employers for T-levels needs to be joined up with what is being asked around apprenticeships, traineeships and so on. This includes coherence of language; different departments and programmes have different definitions of what a work placement or work experience is.

As others have pointed out, we've had a lot of so-called once-in-a-generation changes in the last 20 years. But this does feel like a moment in time. The spotlight is on the technical education reforms and many other changes are underway. Employers are willing to play their role in developing the workforce of the future, but they will need clarity, support and coherence to make that a reality.

JO MAHER

Principal, Boston College

Extra travel cost must be covered for rural areas

The government must cover the additional travel costs of T-level work placements to ensure rural colleges are not at a financial disadvantage, argues Jo Maher

At some point between the T-levels work placement pilot and the latest published government guidance, there seems to have been a change in thinking about how travel costs are to be funded.

On face value it's little more than a hint, but if it's indicative of the government's direction, it could devastate the work experience programme for rural colleges.

Here's the issue: the recent capacity development fund (CDF) documentation included a line indicating that the government would not be opposed to some of the funds being used for student travel in rural areas.

Student travel is not programme capacity development, however, and leaving rural colleges with no option but to draw from the

CDF to subsidise travel would be a double hit.

Several FE institutions are taking part in a pilot placement scheme this academic year, part of the T-levels development process.

They will then inform the Department for Education's guidance on what good placements look like.

I was involved in setting up one of these pilots, which included a separate budget line for travel, perfectly logical given that travel costs can vary wildly, depending on the proximity of the college to its partner employers.

The CDF has taken a different approach. Available from April 2018 to July 2019 to build up capacity and capability for “substantive work placements”, it will be allocated “based on the number of qualifying students in the 2015 to 2016 academic year, at a funding rate of £250 per

qualifying student”.

Yet it states that “for some students, particularly in rural areas where the placement may require additional travel, using some of the funds to support student travel and subsistence would be acceptable”.

Rural colleges face particular challenges in this area. Not only do their students often face long journeys to college and work placements – they are also hampered by the timings and availability of bus services.

Some students may have to travel for an hour into town, where the college is located, then take another bus to the employer. Some bus routes finish around 5pm, causing problems for students getting home at night.

Meanwhile, the fact that rural colleges often lack access to large employers in close proximity compounds the travel difficulties and increases oversight costs.

Boston College, for example, is located in an area with 96.3 per cent small businesses, most of which will be able to take no more than one student at a time on work placement.

Meanwhile, we have to use the CDF to develop relationships with several hundred new employers.

The requirements on what must be delivered using the CDF are stringent – and rightly so. The development phase must include occupationally specific work placements delivered

to a “structured work plan”, which are “adequately supervised” and monitored by site visits, for no fewer than 10 per cent of the number of qualifying students.

But £250 per student will already be tight. It must cover planning and relationship building, any personal protective equipment, visits and support, on top of transport costs.

“Some students may have to travel for an hour to college, then take another bus to the employer”

We are keen to make this process work – and despite all the challenges of building new relationships with hundreds of employers, we are putting our backs, hearts and souls into the endeavour. Which is why this perceived change is so concerning, because it appears to be structured in a way that will severely disadvantage rural colleges and those working with small employers.

We can draw hope from the fact that T-levels are still in the development stages. If the government is intent on its 45-day minimum work placements, it must invest sufficiently into the programme to enable all colleges to provide a quality learning experience for all students.



EDITORIAL

Mandatory work-placement madness



I'm sure when the DfE came up with the idea to make the substantial T-level work-placement mandatory and call it an "entitlement", it was done with good intentions.

But in the real world, they should not need to commission research to confirm what we all know: it's simply impossible.

Will all T-level routes and related occupations, from engineering to legal and financial, have sufficient employers in all parts of the country to offer the placements?

It's obvious to me and others that the answer is no, which means we will be creating a post-code lottery, and some young learners will not be able to follow their career choice.

David Hughes at the AoC is therefore right to seek a rethink from the DfE.

And the obvious lesson, as highlighted by the Federation of Small Business, is that the policy should follow the research, not the other way around.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@afeweek.co.uk

'OUTSTANDING' FAREHAM COLLEGE TWEETS:

Richard Atkins @RichardAtkins2

Excellent news and congrats for @FarehamCollege. Encouraging for colleges that more 1s and less 4s recently; next challenge is less 3s and more 2s #FE success

Nicola Codd @NicolaCodd

Congrats to @FarehamCollege #nigelduncan and all his team

Susanna Lawson @SusannaOneFile

Fantastic news @FarehamCollege that is 'outstanding' news!! Congratulations from everyone at @OneFileUK

People 1st @p1stgroup

Huge congrats to @FarehamCollege, one of our hospitality #accredited colleges, on achieving an outstanding Ofsted rating! #Future #Talent

Robert Halfon @halfon4harlowMP

In my former role as Skills Minister saw many good and outstanding @AoC_info Colleges transforming lives and providing ladder of opportunity for those from disadvantaged backgrounds for education, training, skills and jobs

Two conference rules when meeting the minister

1. Don't mention
 - 16-18 funding is inadequate
 - adult funding is inadequate
 - funding restrictions causing problems
 - apprenticeship cash-flow problems
 - no capital funding for years
 - lots of colleges are facing massive debts
 - generally there are lots of problems

2. Be upbeat

AOC

We can't be seen as a sector that complains all of the time about things



AoC boss talks tough over management apprenticeships

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

David Hughes has "serious concerns" about the unstoppable rise of management apprenticeships and the consequent lack of opportunities for young people.

In an exclusive interview with *FE Week* ahead of the AoC's national conference next week, the organisation's boss warned that FE would end up with a "polarised system" if the numbers taking apprenticeships in management continued to balloon.

"You end up with more and more degree-level apprenticeships which are inaccessible to people who aren't already in decent jobs," he said.

"I, for example, could do an MBA funded through the apprenticeship levy – and I think that is wrong. If the AoC wants me to do an MBA then the AoC should pay for me to do it. Now I don't think they do, by the way, but my development shouldn't be through what I still see and view as a public fund [the apprenticeship levy]."

FE Week revealed last month that management has soared in popularity to become the second most common apprenticeship framework.

According to government statistics, it had 46,640 new starters in 2016/17, a figure which grew to 64,480 when counting standards.

The figures gave further validation to fears raised by other sector figures that

the apprenticeship levy would encourage businesses to use funding for management courses for existing employees instead of offering lower-level apprenticeships to young people.

"I know employers say they own it, but to me it is a tax that pays for the apprenticeship programme which should be about productivity and about social mobility," Mr Hughes said. "That really worries me, that polarisation."

The AoC boss told *FE Week* he was also "seriously worried" about the government's new Institutes of Technology, which are set to launch in 2019.

"They are too much looking at level six, where partnerships are led by universities, whereas I think it should be more starting at level three and ran by colleges," he said.

"Having higher levels as a potential endpoint is fine but actually the big trick is how we persuade people currently of the working age who actually don't have the skills that are going to work in the next 10 years to invest in themselves to do some training."

He said that any bids from colleges to become IoTs should require a partnership with a university, but that there is a difference between "a partnership led by colleges with progression to university" and something that's "university-led with a little bit of progression from levels three, four and five", and that the former "what we need".

He discussed his fears about the government's restructuring fund (page 4) and the mandatory work placement

component of T-levels (page 12).

But despite his various concerns about the technical education reforms, Mr Hughes said he wants delegates at the AoC's conference next week to be "upbeat".

"And what does that mean practically? I think the rub, the really important bit, is the sector needs to get its attitude to FE and to the government right," he said.

"We can't be seen as a sector that complains all of the time.

"Of course the funding is inadequate, we know the procurement around apprenticeships is really difficult and the reforms are causing all sorts of cashflow issues, adult funding is inadequate, the restrictions on what you can fund are really causing problems.

"There isn't enough funding and support for people who want to do levels three, four and five, there is no capital funding and hasn't been for years, lots of colleges are facing massive debts from previous capital. There are lots of problems.

"We could talk about those for two days and we could walk away feeling really bad or we could put those aside, not forget them or pretend they don't exist, but start talking about what the country needs in terms of skills in the next five to 10 years, particularly because of Brexit.

"And who will deliver on that? Much of the delivery around social mobility and productivity and skills shortages will come from FE colleges, that is a massive opportunity and we have got to see that."

COMMENTS

'Don't forget FE in the budget' demand sector leaders in open letter

We need unions to act to protect working conditions especially being eroded! In my department, management have squeezed in more classes, doing the minimum guided learning hours for BTEC classes and asking us to do a huge amount of marking outside of paid hours. This is entirely now unsustainable and I am considering cutting down my commitment to education now.

Rohan Ranasinghe

Huge spike in higher level apprenticeship commitments

Is this huge increase really a surprise, given that FE Colleges and universities start the bulk of their courses in September? The overall number of higher apprenticeships is still fairly low, but hopefully we will see a hike in starts over time.

Resham Gill

Learndirect accounts reveal huge debts and an uncertain future

Too big to fail mentality still rife. Too difficult to fix, therefore let 1000s of learners continue with a grade 4 provider and suffer the ongoing consequences. All the fancy words in the world and re-jigging of business model / structure doesn't change the fact that it's a load of public money down the drain & people's lives being negatively affected.

Lurch



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More information can be found on our microsite:
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Interested candidates are welcome to have an initial discussion with Samantha Bunn at FE Associates (01454 617 707).

Closing date for applications:
Noon Tuesday 12th December 2017

Interview date:
Wednesday 10 January 2018



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Salary: £36,794 - £42,266 per annum
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Fixed Term - 24 months

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The role will require external and internal liaison and communication to ensure that all apprenticeships and skills related contracts are compliant with required regulation and funding rules. This will include working with University Registry, internal and (where required) external legal advisers, Finance, Quality, Academic Partnership, Marketing and Communications teams as well as Faculties. It will also include working with employers and other main providers and/or sub-contracted providers and/or apprentice assessment organisations.

You will have the capability to develop, manage and monitor apprenticeships and skills contracts that are compliant with required regulation and funding rules as well as all due diligence requirements. You will be able to liaise effectively with Faculty teams to ensure that all contracts are developed in accordance with the agreed business case for delivering apprenticeships and skills provision. You will also be able to develop and deliver effective training for University Service and Faculty staff regarding contracting requirements for apprenticeships and skills provision. You will need to be able to report on and oversee the quality of contract management services, to respond to identified issues to ensure that the University's, employer and partner needs are being met effectively.

If you have any specific questions on this job please contact Darryll Bravenboer on (020) 8411 5479.

To apply please visit the Middlesex University website.

Closing Date: 21st November 2017



Middlesex University is working towards equality of opportunity.



Apprenticeships and Skills Operations Manager

Salary: £36,794 - £42,266 per annum
CAS2
Fixed Term- 24 months

Building on the University's leading reputation for professional and work-integrated learning, higher and degree apprenticeships, Middlesex aims to provide high quality higher education that meets the skills needs of employers while enhancing social mobility and access to the professions. We are looking for a high performing Apprenticeships and Skills Operations Manager to be responsible for ensuring the effective operation, coordination, development and quality enhancement of University Services Area systems and procedures to support the development and delivery of higher and degree apprenticeships and other skills related provision.

You will require excellent organisational, liaison, cross-functional team working and communication skills to ensure that the University's provision of apprenticeships and skills is of high quality. This will include working with University Registry, Finance, Quality, Academic Partnership, Marketing and Communications teams as well as Faculties. It will also include working with employers and other main providers and/or sub-contracted providers and/or

apprentice assessment organisations to ensure that the University's provision is meeting employer needs and compliant with required regulation.

You will have the capability to prepare, plan, implement effective operational systems and procedures bringing to bear your knowledge and experience of apprenticeships and skills related provision. You will also have responsibility for the development and delivery effective training for University Service and Faculty staff to support the implementation of new systems and procedures. You will need to demonstrate a positive and proactive mindset that supports ongoing quality enhancement of the University's provision while managing and addressing issues that are identified responsively and effectively.

If you have further questions about this exciting opportunity please contact Darryll Bravenboer on d.bravenboer@mdx.ac.uk

To apply please visit the Middlesex University website.

Closing Date: 21st November 2017



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National Adult Education Budget Operations Manager



Hiring: National Adult Education Budget Operations Manager, Full Time Permanent

Location: North West with a National Remit

Salary: £30,000 - £40,000

Deadline: Friday 1st December 2017

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If you think this exciting opportunity sounds right for you, or you would like to find more about the position, please email your CV and covering letter to emma.storey@b-skill.com

www.b-skill.com



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Full Time Permanent Post
Salary Range £75,000 - £78,000



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The post holder will act as the lead during Ofsted Inspection and will deputise for the Principal in her absence. They will have significant influence over the curriculum and leadership of the College and undertake project work relevant to the role.

This post will be of interest to senior leaders from Sixth Form Colleges, Schools/Academies or Further Education Colleges who are committed to supporting students to maximise their full potential. The successful applicant will be joining the College at a very exciting time as it moves from being a standalone Sixth Form College to an academy within the East Norfolk Multi Academy Trust.

Potential candidates may wish to have an informal discussion with the Principal, Dr Catherine Richards, and/or arrange a visit to the College.

The above vacancy closes at midday on 17 November 2017.
The assessment process will be held on 30 November 2017 & 1 December 2017.

Job description/person specification and details of how to apply can be downloaded from our website: www.eastnorfolk.ac.uk/jobs

Essential requirements

- Honours Degree (2:1 or above)
- Recognised teaching qualification
- Sound understanding of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework in areas relating to teaching and learning, student outcomes and leadership and management
- Expert knowledge of teaching, learning and assessment
- Successful experience of leading, performance managing and empowering and developing staff in a Sixth Form College, High School or FE College
- High quality leadership and management skills
- Confident communicator with excellent numeric, verbal and written communication skills including ability to negotiate and influence successfully
- Autonomous leadership style with ability to make clear and transparent decisions and accountable for own decisions
- Able to create effective and collaborative relationships with professional association and trade union representatives.

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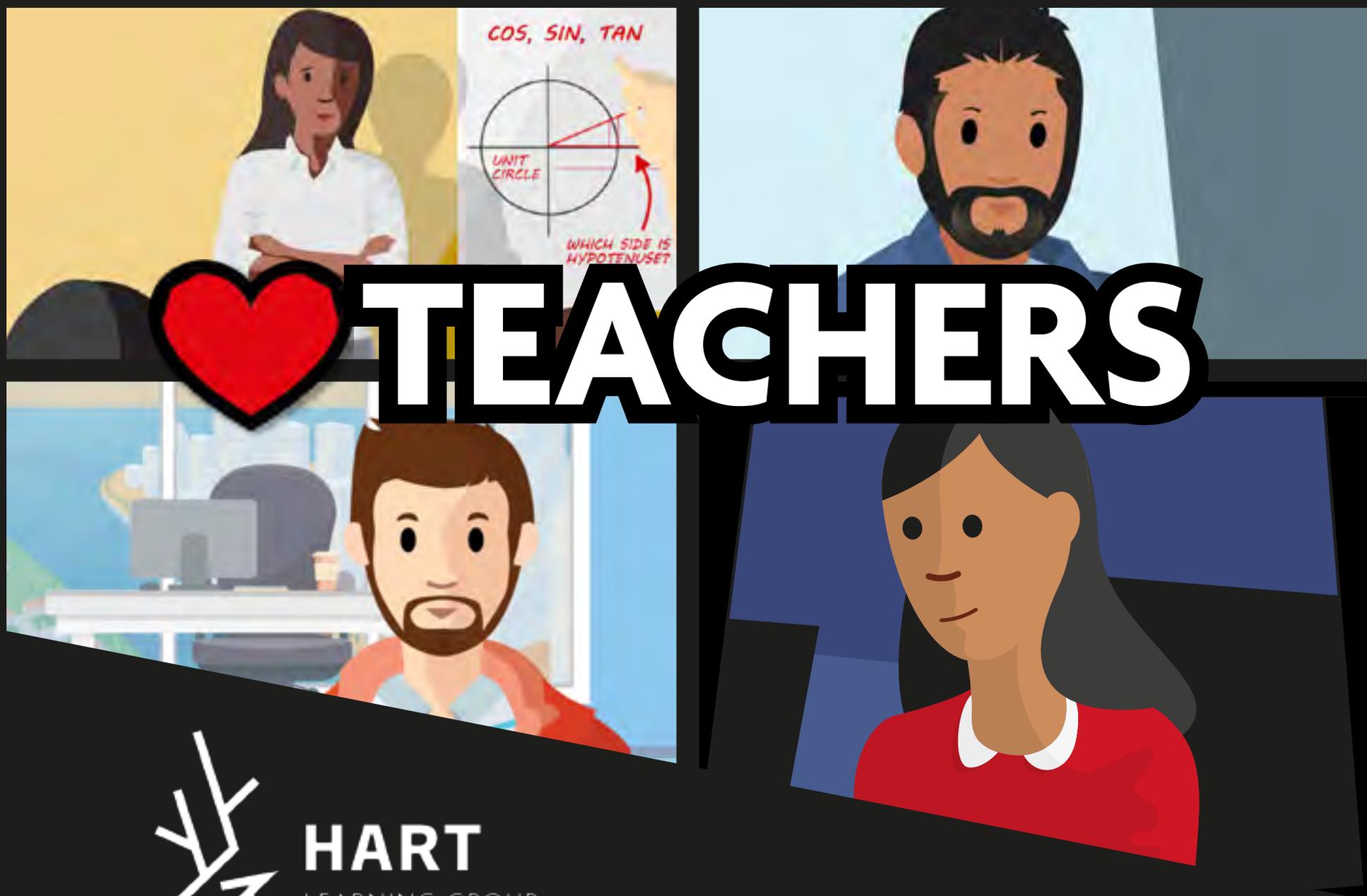
About you

Please view the person spec for details of what we are looking for at: <http://bit.ly/2m4wYUb>

How to apply

If you are interested please visit our website for application details: <http://bit.ly/2m4wYUb>

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Essential for the Role:

- Relevant vocational or professional subject specialist qualifications
- Recognised teaching qualification, Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong
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Closing Date: 17th November 2017

Interview Date: w/c 20th November 2017

www.hounslow.gov.uk



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Assessment Centre: 11th and 12th December 2017

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Our Assistant Director will support staff across the college to deliver the best contemporary teaching, learning and assessment practices whilst securing the best outcomes for our students.

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Please contact Samantha.Bunn@fea.co.uk or call [01454 617707](tel:01454617707).

Closing date for both roles:

Friday 24th November 2017 at noon

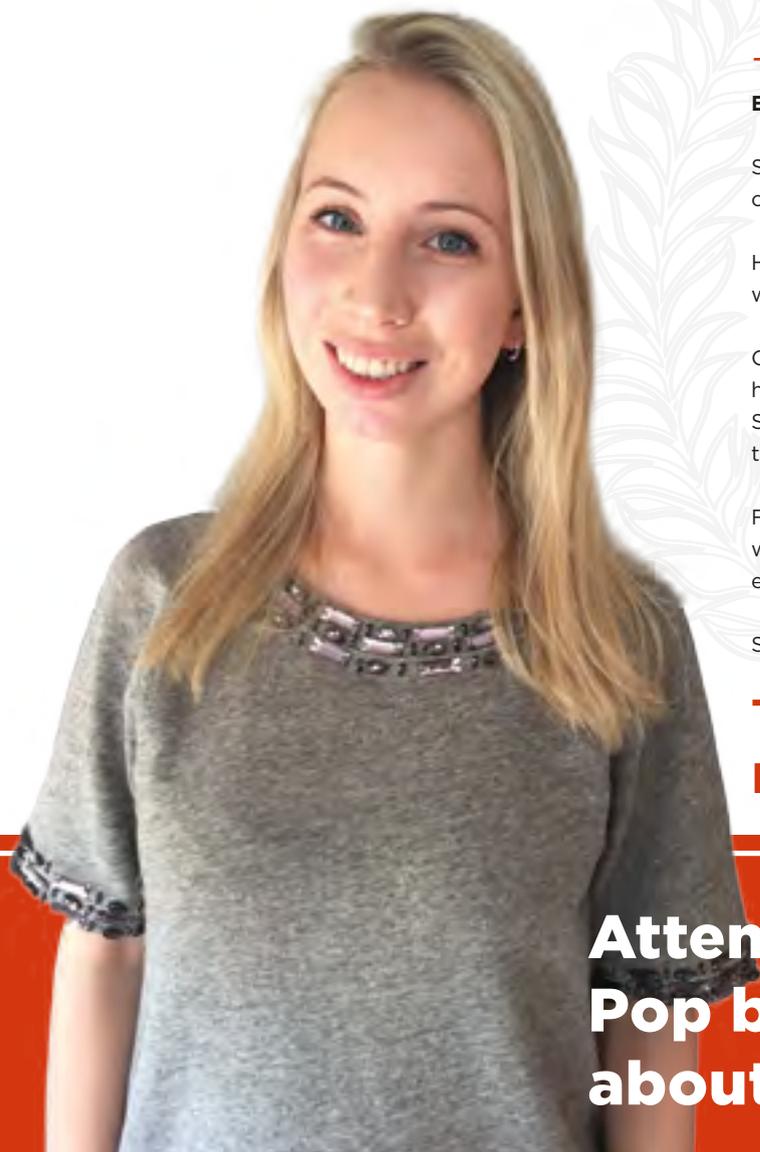
Interview Dates:

Vice Principal: Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th December 2017

Assistant Director: Monday 11th December 2017



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EXPERTS

Nick Linford considers the extent to which poor college performance can be blamed on government interference and a lack of investment.

If Ofsted inspection reports are to be believed, we should be very concerned that the college sector has been going downhill for three years in a row.

This week we've crunched the figures and revealed that its annual report is expected to say next month that the proportion of 'good' or 'outstanding' general further education colleges will fall to 69 per cent.

That means nearly a third of colleges are classed as failing their learners, so what's going on?

“**Investment in colleges is long overdue and desperately needed, now**”

Constant reform

For several years now Ofsted has warned of the policy complexity faced by colleges, saying in its annual report last year: "Area reviews, reforms to apprenticeships and the 'Post-16 skills plan', following Lord Sainsbury's review, are all very significant projects that



**NICK
LINFORD**

Editor, FE Week

Constant change and funding inequality have consequences

will see fundamental changes made to the further education and skills system. With both performance concerns and ongoing large-scale changes to the system, again this year many general FE colleges face a period of continuing turmoil."

Since then, the new chief inspector Amanda Spielman hasn't shied away from highlighting the challenges colleges face from wide scale reforms. Answering questions from MPs on the education select committee last week, she said that compared to schools, colleges have "a much more complex job to make sure that there is the right pathway for everybody, with changes in qualifications, programmes of study, apprenticeships and reforms in practically all areas, keeping your handle around seeing people through the existing and introducing the new ones. There is no question – it is an enormous amount of work for colleges at the moment and a big challenge."

And while "we've never known so much

change" is an often repeated sentence at FE conferences, it is likely to be heard more than ever at the AoC conference next week.

So, the Department for Education and five skills ministers in as many years perhaps need to recognise that constant reform of rules and policies is translating into poor provision for learners.

Funding inequality

As a former college curriculum planner myself, I've seen first-hand how a lack of financial resource makes it impossible to deliver a high quality curriculum.

And this resource is being squeezed for all colleges, with 16-to-18 funding rates stuck at 2013 levels despite ever-rising costs.

As a result, and as a recent survey conducted by the Sixth Form College Association has corroborated, many colleges have been forced to increase class sizes, reduce teaching time and cut student support.

This may help balance the books, but it would be very surprising if Ofsted hadn't found the learner experience was starting to deteriorate.

The chief inspector seems all too aware of the potential significance of funding levels on quality, telling the education select committee that "colleges have the biggest funding challenge".

And when asked by one committee member about the "consequences of the funding inequality post-16", she said "we see quite disappointing outcomes at inspection for FE, compared with pre-16", and would not rule out funding inequality from being to blame for this "correlation".

Putting it bluntly, the college sector is being left behind when it comes to resources, and no amount of T-level planning will improve the outcomes for learners today.

The budget at the end of the month is an opportunity for the chancellor to recognise that colleges are at a tipping point.

In practical terms, and as a minimum, money should be found to increase the 16-to-18 per-pupil funding rates by £200, as the Support Our Sixth-formers (SOS) campaign wants.

FE Week has officially joined the campaign, joining big beasts like AoC, ACSL, SFCA and NUS, because every year that the funding rate goes unchanged represents ever deeper real-terms cuts.

And these disappointing Ofsted outcomes increasingly suggest the sector has reached that tipping point.

All the evidence points to a simple fact: additional investment in colleges is long overdue and desperately needed, now.

Richard Atkins reflects on a year at the helm of one of the most important jobs in FE, and what is to come

In April last year, I retired after 21 years as a college principal, and planned to work less and relax more. By the end of October I had started work as the second FE commissioner, leading a small team of former principals, vice-principals and finance specialists to provide support and intervention to colleges, on behalf of the apprenticeships and skills minister. Helping colleges in difficulty to improve is a tough job – but having been a principal, I know leading a college through that change is even harder.

And it has certainly been a year of change! In January we moved from BIS to the DfE, and in March we completed the 37 area reviews, giving me an input to policy development. A lot has been achieved. Intervention focuses on improving colleges that are 'inadequate' or have failed financially. On the first we have seen very major progress: the number of 'inadequate' colleges halved over last year – and three have progressed to 'good'. Seeing this progression has been hugely rewarding, and is a great testament to the leadership teams.

As for financial health, when I arrived there were a number of colleges with problems that felt intractable – often high levels of historic debt. The area reviews have really made a difference here: the colleges that I was most worried about have now either already merged with a stronger partner or are well on the way.



**RICHARD
ATKINS**

FE commissioner

My journey from college principal to commissioner

I know restructuring is challenging and things do not always work out as planned. In a number of cases my team has been involved in adjusting recommendations. What matters to me is that we ultimately get good solutions. We have a limited window, while we have government restructuring funding, and before the insolvency regime, to support colleges to improve. It is really important that leaders test their financial plans and are confident of a future with no exceptional financial support.

The big change to what I do over the next year will be engaging with colleges at an earlier stage. When I began, it was clear that while intervention is effective, it's much better to support improvement earlier, reducing the impact on learners and the cost of turnaround. Justine Greening's announcement in July, for an expanded commissioner role, a strategic

college improvement fund and national leaders of further education, was a really positive development.

“**The number of 'inadequate' colleges halved over last year**”

My team will now be undertaking "diagnostic" visits to colleges at risk. These will have a different type and tone of visit from intervention. My team will be working

with chairs, principals and senior teams to implement effective improvement strategies. We are not just making recommendations, but will bring real resources to bear.

I am excited to work with some of the best current principals, who will help improve quality at colleges across the country. While principals will be appointed as national leaders, they bring the wider expertise of their colleges to the table: FE colleges are highly complex organisations.

I am sometimes asked by colleagues in the sector what differentiates the FEC team from Ofsted or the ESFA. While we work closely and have excellent relationships with both, I believe our role is distinctive. As a non-statutory group of FE and sixth-form college specialists, we assess and recommend improvement strategies and processes for colleges in sticky situations.

We combine support with strong and informed challenge and we are not afraid to recommend significant change if that is appropriate. Our expertise lies in governance, leadership and overall institutional viability and success, and we do a different job to Ofsted or the ESFA. We very much enjoy sharing best practice across the country and drawing on our experiences of improving colleges elsewhere.

I am thoroughly enjoying my third career, and providing a role model for the DWP's "work longer" campaign. My team and I are very much looking forward to working with more senior staff to keep up the improvement in quality, financial sustainability and reputation of this fantastic sector.

EXPERTS

Based on her upcoming research, Sallyann Baldry explains how colleges and training providers should be preparing for end-point assessment

End-point assessment is the testing at the end of an apprenticeship that is set, administered, marked and graded by an organisation that wasn't involved in its delivery, either as training provider or employer.

“EPAOs are working incredibly hard to be ready for the expected gold rush next summer

Each standard has an assessment plan describing what is required for the EPA. The majority of standards have only one approved assessor (known as an EPAO), although there may be more waiting in the wings, as every month sees another handful of organisations join the register and approved EPAOs are increasingly extending their range. Some standards already have good coverage, with management at level three, for example, having nearly 20 EPAOs.

Here are some tips for providers during each of the stages.



SALLYANN BALDRY

Apprenticeships consultant,
Federation of Awarding Bodies

End-point assessment: what you need to know

Choosing your EPAO

There is no need to stick with the EPAO named when initially registering an apprentice; there may be more to choose from by the time the apprenticeship is completed.

The employer decides which EPAO they want to work with, but the lead training provider contracts with them, on their behalf.

Registration

Providers will need to check that the EPAO is ready to offer the EPA, confirm fees and procedures, and complete registration. Fees are not always online, as they may be quoted on the basis of volume of apprentices or, if using raw materials, based on a variable market price.

Drawing up a contract

Contracts are not standard so each EPAO will have different terms. The Federation

of Awarding Bodies has produced advisory guidance including template contracts for its members but many EPAOs will create their own.

Preparing for tests

Providers can expect a 10- to 12-week lead-in time after an apprentice is booked before the first test takes place. They must carefully check eligibility criteria, ID authentication requirements and send copies of certificates, for example in maths and English, well in advance of the test date. The onus is on the EPAO to ensure each apprentice is eligible; if they get it wrong it might invalidate the whole EPA.

Some assessment plans specify a fixed time between different parts of the EPA, so it's essential to plan well ahead with the apprentice's employer to ensure work commitments can fit in around the tests. It's

not uncommon for practical skills tests to last six hours; one even runs over 2.5 days. Some EPAOs have set up regional testing hubs, which could be some distance away, so the apprentice may need help with travel arrangements.

Find out if the EPAO has any practice tests or guidance on preparation. EPAOs I spoke to this summer are producing guidance for the apprentice, the provider and the employer. If electronic testing forms part of the assessment, check now that your CBT equipment is compatible, find out if remote tests must be recorded and that your kit is up to the job.

Communication

EPAO websites are in their infancy and some are yet to go live. Some EPAOs have not dealt with colleges and training providers before so may not use familiar terms. However, it is a government stipulation that an EPAO “promotes itself to employers to support informed employer choice”. The apprentice may also receive direct communication from the EPAO, in which case it is important the provider information is consistent.

Knowing what to expect of your EPAO is key. The completion of your apprentices' studies is in their hands; they will apply for the certificate for the apprentice, assuming they pass the EPA. They are responsible for the internal quality-assurance of the process but they are also subject to external scrutiny from EQA.

In short, EPAOs are working incredibly hard to be ready for the expected gold rush next summer, but providers need to do their homework now to put in place a process that takes account of the complex requirements of end-point assessment.

NOT TO BE MISSED

UPCOMING EVENTS

APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING - CRITICAL UPDATE SIX MONTHS IN

LIVERPOOL

DATE: 29 NOVEMBER 2017
TIME: 10:00 - 15:30

LONDON

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2017
TIME: 10:00 - 15:30

BIRMINGHAM

DATE: 5 DECEMBER 2017
TIME: 10:00 - 15:30

YORK

DATE: 13 DECEMBER 2017
TIME: 10:00 - 15:30

Places are expected to go fast, so register now to avoid disappointment. The fee is £265+ VAT per delegate (no limit per organisation).

FE Week gold members will receive £50 off the cost of this event (gold membership must be in the delegates name).

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.

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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*



Students handle the heat

You'll never cook alone

Liverpool Football Club's executive head chef and catering team have given aspiring chefs from Hugh Baird College a masterclass in stadium catering and hospitality.

The group of students from the college's L20 hotel school met with the club's top chef, Chris Marshall, and hospitality manager John Hollywood, who offered up some advice on working front of house.

A tour of Anfield's catering facilities was followed by a Q&A session where students found out about the club's behind-the-scenes workings, as well as the skills that are required to cater on a large scale.

LFC's catering team also paid a visit to the college the following day, to help students prepare and deliver a dining experience to paying guests.

"To have a tour of the Anfield facilities and then to work with their teams and receive one-to-one advice from them has given me an invaluable insight into the sporting catering industry at one of the biggest football clubs in the world," said student Averyll Green.

The LFC catering department is currently helping colleges across Merseyside and St Helen's to give students a chance to work alongside the club's top chefs.

The revolution will finally be televised

An apprentice has made history at the BBC by becoming the youngest ever person to report on the News at 10.

Twenty-year-old Izin Akhabau was among the first ever group of digital journalism apprentices taken on at BBC News in 2015, and has now presented a report on spoken-word poetry.

The apprentice scheme attracted over 3,000 applicants, and just 10 were selected for the 18-month course, which culminates in a diploma accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists and allows participants to work in departments including BBC Politics, Newsnight and BBC News.

"It has been amazing to work with the team from the Six and Ten, and learn a new skillset," said Ms Akhabau. "In the future, there are so many things I want to learn how to do, including coming back to work at the BBC full-time."

The BBC took on another 22 apprentices in October, and 10 have started at local radio stations, and 12 at network news.

"Izin's story was superb," said Paul Royall, editor of BBC News at Six and Ten. "She reported with flair and imagination and brought an original story to the Ten. We hope to see her again."



Reporting for duty: Izin Akhabau

Not all heroes wear capes



(L-R) Event host Mich Turner, Food Hero Paul and former student Adam Yeomans

A member of staff from Chesterfield College has been hailed as a hero at the fifth annual Chesterfield Food and Drink Awards.

Paul Maude, the college's hospitality and catering career pathway leader, was presented the 'food hero' award by a former student, for his dedication both to the hospitality industry and his learners, organising work placements for them at venues like Wembley Stadium and Jamie Oliver's restaurants.

Mr Maude, who himself studied at Chesterfield College and helps organise

catering for the awards, once made a hazelnut meringue for Princess Diana, and has served food to guests including Joan Collins and fashion designer Zandra Rhodes.

"I love what I do and it is an honour to have received the award," he said, "definitely a highlight in my career."

The Food and Drink awards were set up to recognise the best of catering and hospitality in Chesterfield, including categories such as 'best pub of the year', 'the family friendly award', 'best customer service' and 'young chef of the year'.



Paving the way: The student volunteers

A rock solid memorial

Stonemasonry students have taken part in a stone-carving project honouring local men who served in World War 1.

The four level three students from Bath College carved commemorative paving stones honouring the last surviving combat soldier of WW1 in any country, John "Harry" Patch, as well as William George Chivers and Herbert Charles Windell, who all grew up together in Bath's Combe Down Village.

The stones will be placed around the area's new Mulberry Park housing development, where each street is named after the men and marked with the commemorative stones.

The ceremony to unveil the first paving stones was attended by relatives of Mr Chivers, as well as college students, representatives of Combe Down Heritage Society, the Royal British Legion, Bath and north-east Somerset council and local MP Wera Hobhouse.

"It's my way of paying respect to those who fought in World War I, especially coming up to Armistice Day," said Jonny Stoker, a student who helped carve the stones. "I'm looking forward to visiting the site and seeing all the stones laid together in situ. I think that will give me a massive sense of achievement."

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

Asian Apprenticeship Awards bring out the best of British

More than 500 people descended on Birmingham's Edgbaston Cricket Ground for an annual awards ceremony celebrating the best apprentices from the British Asian community and their employers, reports Samantha King.

Now in their second year, the Asian Apprenticeship Awards brought together apprentices, employers and representatives from across the FE sector to raise the profile of apprenticeships among those from a British Asian background.

Eight apprentices from sectors including medical, social care, construction and retail were presented with awards, with the overall 'apprentice of the year award' given to Naila Bibi, an apprentice at Aspire Housing.

The winning apprentices were judged on their ability to demonstrate how much they had learned from taking on an apprenticeship, as well as their overall enthusiasm and work ethic, with the apprentice of the year selected by judges on the night.

Founder Safaraz Ali explained in a recent piece for *FE Week* that the awards were started because "low apprenticeship take-up is more significant among British Asians than in other



Naila Bibi



Comedian Hardeep Singh Kohli performs for delegates



The trophies



Sue Husband

BAME communities".

It wasn't all about the apprentices however, and awards were on offer for 'small' and 'large employer of the year', 'learning provider of the year', 'school or academy of the year' and 'overall contribution to apprenticeships'.

Sue Husband, director of the National Apprenticeship Service and a former

head of education for McDonald's UK, was presented the prize for overall contribution for her role as a leader and influencer in the sector.

"To be recognised for the contribution I have made to apprenticeships in England is humbling. Making a difference to the lives of apprentices, of all ages and from all backgrounds, is something I love being part of," she said.

A team of apprentices from Midlands-based engineering company Salop Design and Engineering Ltd was commissioned to design and manufacture the glass trophies that were presented to winners.

Alongside the winners, guests of honour included broadcaster and journalist Suzi Mann, comedian Hardeep Singh Kohli and keynote speaker Charlie Mullins, who became Britain's first millionaire plumber after taking up an apprenticeship after leaving school aged 15.

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

**Delroy Beverley**

Chairman, Yorkshire, North East and Humberside regional board, CMI

Start date October 2017

Previous job

Executive director of Nottingham City Homes

Interesting fact

Delroy was the first BAME chairman of an international business school in Europe.

**Anne Tyrrell**

CEO, DN Colleges Group

Start date November 2017

Previous job

Principal and CEO at North Lindsey College

Interesting fact

Anne has written and had published two books on 20th-century fashion.

**Peter Doherty**

Chief operating officer, DN Colleges Group

Start date November 2017

Previous job

Executive director of finance and corporate services at North Lindsey College

Interesting fact

In his youth Peter played guitar in a band – badly.

**Stella Raphael-Reeves**

Deputy principal, East Coast College

Start date November 2017

Previous job

Director of curriculum at Birmingham Metropolitan College

Interesting fact

Stella is a yoga and dance instructor, with a keen interest in wellbeing.

**Mick Lochran**

Principal, North Lindsey College

Start date November 2017

Previous job

Deputy principal at North Lindsey College

Interesting fact

Mick is a Scunthorpe United season ticket holder, and played football for Scunthorpe boys.

Movers & Shakers

...

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

FE Week

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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug. Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk. Last Edition's winner: Nicola York