

FE Week

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SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORT IN CRISIS

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Exclusive PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA_AK

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‘Excessive’ executive pay row engulfs FE

BILLY CAMDEN
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Colleges must justify staff who are paid over £150,000 a year, according to the University and College Union, which says oversight is “desperately needed”.
Seventy-one college leaders earned salaries of that size or more in 2015/16, according to FE Week analysis of DfE accounting records.
This rises to 132 (over two thirds of all colleges) when pension contributions were included.
The government is beginning to crack down on high pay for academy chief executives and university vice-chancellors.
The new Education and Skills Funding Agency boss Eileen Miller joined the universities minister Jo Johnson this week to order both types of institution, which often pay salaries of more than £150,000 a year, to justify the excessive remunerations.
They were echoing the words of the former education minister Andrew Adonis, who called in August for university heads’ pay to be capped at that amount.
Colleges have however so far not received the same scrutiny, and the Department for Education this week refused to tell FE Week whether it would request similar rationalisation from FE providers.
Sally Hunt, UCU’s general secretary, said the bumper salaries enjoyed by many principals show that “too many college leaders are out of touch” and demanded more accountability on high pay.
“While staff pay is being eroded and

Highest college chief executive/principal pay 2015/16	
College	Salary including pension
Birmingham Metropolitan College	£302,000
Vision West Nottinghamshire College	£279,000
NCG	£278,000
North Hertfordshire College	£268,000
Stafford College	£260,000
Weston College	£255,000
Gateshead College	£244,000
The Manchester College	£242,000

Source: College accounts academic year 2015 to 2016

colleges are struggling to recruit because of low pay, these pay awards show it’s one rule for staff and another for those at the top,” she told FE Week.
“The recent scandals over pay and perks in universities show the desperate need for proper accountability of senior pay in all education institutions which receive public funding, including FE colleges.”
Ms Miller wrote to 29 academy trusts which have just one school, asking them to defend high salaries for their chief executives.
She said this is needed because of the “considerable scrutiny” over taxpayer-funded executive salaries that has emerged “in recent months”.
In August, Mr Johnson asked the same of vice-chancellors, after it emerged that dozens of university heads were earning £300,000, and some were on more than £400,000.
“While it is essential that we have the best

people to lead our colleges if we are to raise standards, it is also important the system commands public confidence and delivers value for money,” said a DfE spokesperson.
“That is why colleges must disclose senior staff pay annually in their audited accounts. Disclosure requirements are kept under review by the ESFA.”
It is not only chief executives and principals who are being paid such exceptionally high salaries.
FE Week looked at the accounts of the colleges (see table) with the highest salary and pension packages in 2015/16, and found that more than one person was on £150,000

or more at four: NCG, Loughborough, Gateshead and Stafford.
The board of the Hart Learning Group said a “significant element” of its chief executive’s pay was based on “performance, including some long-term measures”. The group comprises North Hertfordshire College, Hart Learning and Development, and the Hart Schools Trust.
The Manchester College said the chief executive of its parent company, the LTE group, was the person receiving a pay packet of £242,000.
A spokesperson said the group is one of the UK’s largest skills social enterprises, and operates five separate organisations in over 120 locations with a combined turnover of more than £180 million in 2016.
Nevil Croston, the chair of governors at West Nottinghamshire College, said the remuneration package for principal Dame Asha Khemka is commensurate with her “skills and expertise, her profile and reputation within the sector, the significant influence she has on government policy, and the success she has brought to the organisation over the past 11 years”.
FE Week did not list colleges where chief executives’ pay topped £200,000 if there were overlaps in principals or one-off severance payments.

No sign of government’s pay transparency pledge

The Department for Education has not acted on a promise once made by a former skills minister to increase pay transparency for senior management positions in colleges.
Nick Boles hinted that growing numbers of college staff were receiving excessive salaries in a review of post-16 education released in March last year.
Even though colleges have to publish what they pay senior staff every year in their audited accounts, they are not required to detail exactly how much they pay or who receives it.
Mr Boles said the DfE would explore accountability measures to publish the salaries of the three highest-paid members of college staff, to ensure value for money.
But the government appears not to have made any headway in this area in the last 20 months.
A DfE spokesperson said that senior staff pay disclosure requirements “are kept under review by the ESFA” when FE Week asked about progress on accountability.
FE Week found four colleges – NCG, Loughborough, Gateshead, and Stafford – had paid more than £150,000 in 2015/16 to more than one employee, after we combed college accounts.
NCG paid its chief executive £278,000, its group director for finance, estates and IT up to £210,000, and the principal of Newcastle College up to £160,000. These amounts included pension contributions and bonus payments.
A spokesperson pointed out that CEO Joe Docherty’s remuneration also included a car allowance. He is responsible for the whole group, which has six FE colleges and two private training providers, with a combined turnover of circa £170 million.
Stafford College meanwhile paid its previous interim principal Ian Clinton £260,000, and one other unnamed interim vice-principal above £200,000 in 2015/16.
Loughborough paid £254,000 for its principal in 2015/16, but said this was because of an overlap in leadership between Esme Winch and Heather MacDonald. Another of its employees was paid up to £160,000, but the college would not be drawn on who or what role this was for.
Gateshead paid its principal Judith Doyle £244,000 and one member of its executive team up to £160,000, although a spokesperson would not reveal their identity when asked.



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NEWS

Atkins caught in battle to rescue campus in the shadow of Grenfell

JUDE BURKE
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The FE Commissioner is now caught up in the battle to save a London college campus for residents dealing with the fallout of the Grenfell Tower fire.

Richard Atkins visited Kensington and Chelsea College this week to review its proposed merger with Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, which had been set for January 2018.

It is understood he was sent to the college by the skills minister Anne Milton, after she met members of Grenfell Action, who are campaigning to stop KCC's Wornington Road campus from being redeveloped for housing.

Verena Beane, a retired KCC employee and a leading campaigner, said the group was determined to stop the merger because they think the resulting super-college would be less likely to retain the campus, which is predominantly used by the sort of less privileged residents affected by the fire at nearby Grenfell Tower.



Richard Atkins

She said the group “put to the minister very strongly how the community felt that the loss of their local community college would be a step too far”, during the meeting arranged following requests by the group’s founder, Grenfell survivor Ed Daffarn, to Nick Hurd, the minister for Grenfell victims.

The Wornington Road campus, one of the college’s two main sites, was recently sold under a lease-back deal for £25.3 million to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, which then put forward plans that would at best result in greatly reduced teaching space at the site.

This provoked a furious local reaction, and residents clashed with college and council leaders during a heated public meeting in September.

They claimed it was an example of “social cleansing” in which services for poorer people could make way for costly housing.

Kim Taylor-Smith, who took over as deputy leader of the council in July and is lead member for Grenfell recovery, said afterwards that he had listened to the complaints the following week, and that campus redevelopment plans had been paused. KCC was rated



‘requires improvement’ in its most recent Ofsted report, published in March, while EHWLC only came out of FE commissioner intervention in September, having improved from a grade four to a grade two in May.

“A merger at this early stage of recovery is just crazy,” Ms Beane said.

She acknowledged that the “high profile” of the area following the tragic events of June 14, which led to 71 deaths, had helped the group get the minister’s ear.

“We were fighting it before Grenfell, and we were getting small wins, but the whole thing has become a centre of focus in north Kensington,” she said.

“The one thing we’re asking for is that these things be done as a form of reparation.”

The Department for Education would not be drawn on whether it was giving special treatment to the college, nor would it say whether Anne Milton had asked the FE commissioner to intervene.

But a spokesperson did confirm that Mr Atkins was carrying out a review into the



PA/WIRE

Grenfell tower

decision by KCC to merge with EHWLC. “The commissioner will take into account the educational and financial case for the merger, and consider any wider issues surrounding the Wornington Road site,” he said. “We welcome the FE commissioner’s decision to review the merger and we look forward to receiving his feedback,” said the two colleges in a joint statement. “We have responded to the concerns raised through the public consultation as part of the proposed merger and we are confident that the merger will secure the future of Kensington and Chelsea College, its staff and students as well as serving the needs of local residents and employers through its Chelsea and north Kensington sites.”

No sign of apprenticeships upturn

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There is no sign of the major upturn in levied apprenticeships that the government has been praying for, according to the latest statistics.

There were 13,910 commitments made through the apprenticeship service in October, down from 27,130 the previous month, the Department for Education has said.

A fall-back is normal after the September surge – but at 49 per cent it is a much bigger drop by proportion than in any of the past three years, which have seen an average die-back of around 39 per cent.

This suggests the government will have to wait even longer for an upturn in apprenticeships, which have been in freefall since the introduction of the levy in May.

Figures for the final quarter of 2016/17, from May to July, were down 59 per cent relative to the same time the previous year, according to the November statistical first release.

But Justine Greening told an education select committee hearing in October that the government had been “expecting” this fall in numbers, on the basis that employers would “take some time to look at how they wanted to invest” their levy money.

Others in the sector have attributed this fall-off to different causes, however.

These include new rules which mean apprentices must do a minimum of 20 per cent off-the-job training – a rule that the AELP insists is a barrier for many employers who can’t afford a “non-productive” apprentice for the equivalent of one day a week.

Companies not subject to the levy also now have to pay 10 per cent of the cost of apprenticeship training for the first time, another circumstance widely held to have contributed to the collapse in starts.

There has been no indication of an upsurge in the number of employers signed up to use the apprenticeship service.

Just 600 employers registered an account in October, the same as the previous month – already at its lowest since February.

Percentage drop in apprenticeships for October compared to September

Age	2014 starts	2015 starts	2016 starts	2017 commitments	% point difference between 2017 and 2016
Under 19	-61%	-60%	-56%	-67%	-10%
19-24	-35%	-39%	-37%	-50%	-13%
25+	-3%	-5%	-6%	-27%	-21%
Total	-39%	-40%	-37%	-49%	-11%



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INVESTIGATES

Action demanded as nationwide transport

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
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EXCLUSIVE

With more and more councils introducing travel charges that deter learners from further education, the government has ignored the AoC’s appeal for a review of transport arrangements for post-16 learners with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). FE Week investigates how widespread these charges really are, and considers their impact.

Two thirds of county councils are charging post-16 SEND learners for transport to and from their lessons, FE Week has discovered.

The Association of Colleges first requested a review of their transport arrangements last February, after FE Week reported on new charges instituted by certain councils in the north-east of England.

No review has been forthcoming, however, as the government insists statutory responsibility for transport for 16- to 19-year-olds rests with local authorities, as it does for those with SEND up to the age of 25 who started a course before they turned 19.

It does expect councils to make “reasonable decisions” about how much, if anything, they charge.

This begs the question: is anyone listening? FE Week set out to establish a national

picture, and we found that SEND learners are charged for transport by 19 of the 27 county councils in England.

The amount they charge varies widely depending on the region, but some students are left with bills of almost £1,500 a year.

A spokesperson for Natspec, the membership association for organisations which offer SEND provision said that “transport is an issue for some students, resulting in a few not taking up their college place because they are not funded to attend”.

An increasing number of local authorities are trying to save money by offering day places to SEND students rather than residential places, she said, meaning some learners now face expensive journeys of more than 90 minutes each way – which causes them “stress and anxiety”.

“We know that budgets are tight and that local authorities aren’t necessarily breaking the law, as the rules are different for post-16 transport compared with school-aged children,” admitted Natspec’s chief executive, Clare Howard.

“But it is disappointing that budgets are not viewed longer-term as it can be a false economy.”

Eight of the 19 councils we identified have introduced charges since 2014. Two of them, Dorset and Suffolk, began charging this year, while Surrey and Somerset introduced transport charges in September 2016, and Hertfordshire and East Sussex in September 2015.

Only three had charges before 2010: Warwickshire (2004), Staffordshire (2007) and Lincolnshire (2008).

“Students with SEND can often have to travel quite long distances in order to join the most appropriate study programme,” said Liz Maudsley, a senior policy manager at the Association of Colleges.

“It is a concern if any local authority charged unreasonable costs and thus prevented a student following the most appropriate course of study.”

In terms of impact on participation in FE and skills, the most recent government data shows that the total number of students with learning difficulties and other disabilities fell from 628,970 in 2013/14 to 606,600 in 2015/16.

The National Autistic Society’s policy and parliamentary officer, Catriona Moore, described our findings as “worrying”, as many young people on the autistic spectrum may

only be able to attend appropriate providers if specific transport arrangements can be arranged and paid for.

“As part of local planning, councils need to look carefully at the needs of their local population of learners with special educational needs and disabilities and establish a clear plan, including funded transport wherever necessary for young people who are unable to make their own way to school or college because of autism or another disability,” she said.

The Department for Education reiterated that “the legal responsibility for transport to education and training for 16- to 19-year-olds rests with local authorities”.

A spokesperson said colleges were able to subsidise learners’ travel costs, if they dip into 16-to-19 bursary funding available “to support disadvantaged young people who need most help with education and training costs”.



Hertfordshire charges some learners over £1,400 a year

The most expensive travel assistance can be found in Hertfordshire, where the county council demands a contribution of up to £1,411 a year depending on miles travelled and days attending.

A spokesperson said the figure was approximately 20 per cent of the average cost for travel across the county, and would be charged to learners travelling between five and seven miles and attending five days a week.

Also among the top five approached by FE Week for comment, Essex county council ranked second, charging SEND learners £900 a year, albeit with a 50-per-cent discount available to those on low incomes.

A spokesperson said the charge was introduced “in the light of unprecedented financial challenges” and reflects the average cost of providing contracted or public transport to post-16 students.

“The reality is transport for students with SEND actually costs significantly more than the amount charged, so the council considers its approach to be reasonable,” he said.

Warwickshire county council has been charging post-16 SEND learners for transport since 2004 and this year the cost reached

£765, with a 50-per-cent discount available for families on low incomes. “The price quoted is in line with our mainstream post-16 charges,” said a representative. “There are no plans to consult on changing these prices.”

Surrey county council has been charging students £3.68 a day (£699 a year) for transport since 2016, but did not offer a comment when contacted by FE Week.

In Somerset the cost has risen from £335 when it was introduced in 2016 to £675 this year. According to the council’s SEND travel assistance policy, the cost will rise again next year until it is the same cost as an annual “Love the Bus” ticket.

Two councils introduced charges for the first time this year: Dorset, where learners face costs of £640 (50 per cent off for low incomes), and Suffolk, where the charge is £630 but will increase by £30 each year.

A spokesperson for the Dorset local authority said: “The decision was taken to ensure that transport provision for all pupils is fair and equitable.”

Suffolk county council said on average the council still subsidises each SEND learner by £5,293 a year.

Charges in cities across the country can also be high

Transport charges levied on SEND learners in some English cities can also amount to well over a thousand pounds a year, where they are not covered by county councils.

FE Week contacted a sample of metropolitan district councils in Greater Manchester and Merseyside, and discovered that there can be a huge disparity in charges in areas close to each other.

For example, Liverpool city council does not charge for post-16 SEND transport, but nearby Knowsley council first introduced charges in 2014. Students are required to pay £3 a journey (£6 a day) which, over 38 academic weeks can add up to as much as £1,140 for learners who study five days a week.

Also in Merseyside, St Helen’s council consulted on whether to introduce charges this year; the outcome is still pending.

In Greater Manchester, Trafford council provides travel assistance for adult learners with needs for free, but charges learners aged 16 to 19 £200 per term (£600 a year) with a 50-per-cent discount available for

those on low incomes. The council rejected proposals to raise the costs to £750 in April this year.

Both Stockport and Rochdale councils introduced a charge of £510 this year, and Bury and Salford are consulting on whether to introduce one next year, but in Oldham and Wigan post-16 SEND transport is still provided for free.

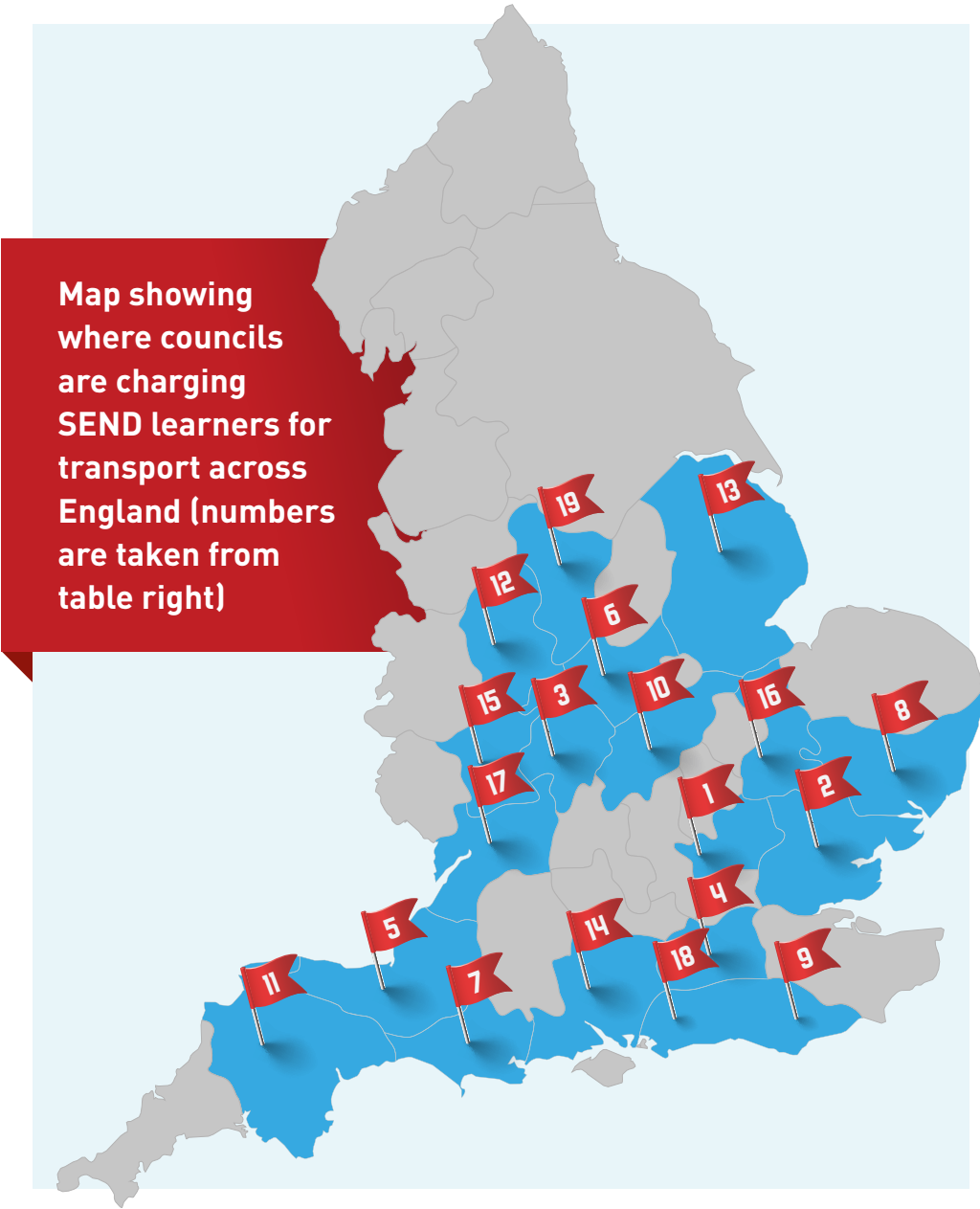
Salford city council’s executive support member for education and learning, councillor John Walsh, said the council had lost 47 per cent of its central government funding since 2010 and needed to make another £11.8 million of cuts this year.

“We are having to look at all services to make those savings,” he said.

We also contacted eight London borough councils, none of which charge for post-16 SEND transport.

“We believe everyone should have a right to access further education and do our best support families where necessary,” said a representative for Barking and Dagenham council.

Transport charges for SEND learners exposed



Councils	Cost per year	Date introduced
1. Hertfordshire	£1,411 (max)	Sep-15
2. Essex	£900	Sep-14
3. Warwickshire	£765	Sep-04
4. Surrey	£699	Sep-16
5. Somerset	£675	Sep-16
6. Leicestershire	£660	Sep-13
7. Dorset	£640	Sep-17
8. Suffolk	£630	Sep-17
9. East Sussex	£608	Sep-15
10. Northamptonshire	£600	Sep-11
11. Devon	£580	Council declined to say
12. Staffordshire	£575	Sep-07
13. Lincolnshire	£570	Sep-08
14. Hampshire	£570	Sep-12
15. Worcestershire	£547	Council declined to say
16. Cambridgeshire	£510	Council declined to say
17. Gloucestershire *	£456	Council declined to say
18. West Sussex	£427	Sep-11
19. Derbyshire	£374	Sep-14
20. Buckinghamshire	£0	N/A
21. Cumbria	£0	N/A
22. Kent	£0	N/A
23. Lancashire	£0	N/A
24. Norfolk	£0	N/A
25. North Yorkshire	£0	N/A
26. Nottinghamshire	£0	N/A
27. Oxfordshire	£0	N/A

* Fees from last year

Local government ombudsman warnings

The local government ombudsman has warned that councils are not doing enough to ensure special needs learners get the help they need.

New Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) were introduced in 2014 as a way of providing more holistic and efficient SEND support for learners up to the age of 25. They covers, for example, transport, as well as health and social care.

However, the ombudsman reported in October that the first 100 investigations have shown that, far from making the system easier for learners and their families to negotiate, some are facing a “disproportionate burden” to get the help they are entitled to.

The ombudsman warned some students are missing out on places in colleges and schools, and are “ultimately failing to reach their potential” due to the long delays involved in the process, which is not supposed to take longer than 20 weeks.

Complaints about the system have doubled in the last two years, from 109 in 2015/16 to



217 2016/17, with the number expected to rise further. Investigators have upheld nearly 80 per cent of complaints received compared with the ombudsman’s average of 53 per cent.

NUS says findings ‘particularly’ worrying

The National Union of Students is campaigning for free or subsidised travel for FE learners to tackle the “huge problem” of poor transport for students.

The NUS’ vice-president for further education, Emily Chapman, said our findings demonstrate the scale of problems she hopes to address through the union’s “My FE Journey” campaign.

“It is particularly worrying to see councils introducing transport costs for student with special educational needs and disabilities, local authorities should be providing vital services like this,” she said.

“Our campaign will lobby for subsidised or free travel for post-16 learners and apprentices ensuring everybody can access and succeed in education and

transport to and from their place of learning is no longer a barrier.”

The NUS campaign follows a Conservative Party commitment to cutting travel costs for apprentices in their election manifesto, but there has been no evidence the policy is near to being implemented half a year on.

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Long-awaited careers strategy comes

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

Support for the most disadvantaged learners is a top priority in the new careers strategy.

There are plans to launch a new £5 million investment fund “to support the most disadvantaged pupils” through the government’s Careers and Enterprise Company.

“This will help disadvantaged pupils to get the additional support they need to prepare for work, including opportunities for mentoring and guidance,” the document explained.

£4 million will be invested so every college and school will have a “named careers leader” in place by the start of the new academic year, who can give advice on the best training routes and up-to-date information on the jobs market, and help young people make decisions about their future.

A further £5 million will go towards developing 20 careers hubs, which will all be led by the Careers and Enterprise Company, in the areas of the country most in need.

The idea is these will link schools and colleges with local universities and employers to help broaden pupils’ horizons.

“Without access to the best possible careers support, some people will miss out on the opportunities,” Ms Milton told the Careers Development Institute’s annual conference, where she launched the strategy on December 4.

“They will continue to be held back if they don’t have the right advice at the right time to make informed decisions about their future, or may not have access to the broader experiences and role models to help them develop as people.

“It matters to me that we give people from all backgrounds the best possible preparation to move into a job, or training that enables them – whatever their background or wherever they



live – to have a fulfilling life.”

The strategy also confirms that the Baker clause, which forces schools to open their doors to FE providers to let them advertise their services to pupils, will take effect from January.

The amendment to the Technical and Further Education Act, which came into law in May, was proposed by the former education secretary Lord Baker, who acknowledged the move was likely to be universally hated by schools.

Schools and colleges will be “expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents” by September 2018.

Ofsted will have to “comment in college inspection reports on the careers guidance provided to young people” from January.

A revamped “one-stop shop” website, to be launched by the National Careers Service next year, will bring together careers information to support people at the start of their careers or who want to retrain or upskill.

The Careers and Enterprise Company will be

given an expanded role to support schools and colleges to meet the eight clear benchmarks for good careers advice, as set out by the Gatsby charitable foundation.

Ms Milton previously introduced the

four “pillars” of the strategy at the Careers Education and Guidance Summit in early November.

The event marked the end of a two-year wait for the strategy.

It was promised as far back as in December 2015, by the former education and childcare minister Sam Gyimah, who said the Department for Education would “publish a comprehensive careers strategy in the coming weeks”.

Nothing materialised, however.

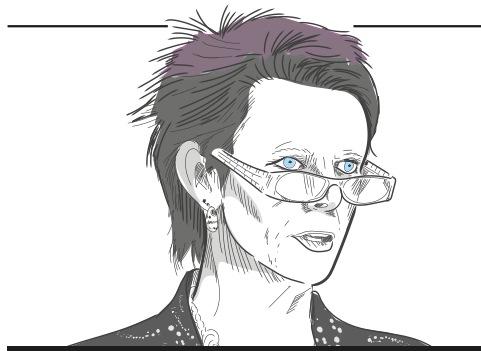
Robert Halfon, Ms Milton’s predecessor as skills minister, also promised that a strategy was on its way at a meeting in parliament in January, when he claimed it would appear the following week.

The four pillars of the strategy are ensuring a “high-quality careers programme” in every college and school; making sure employers “are an integral part of our approach”; making sure everyone can benefit from “tailored support”; and making the most of the “rich sources of information about jobs and careers that exist”.

The government’s timetable for delivery of the careers strategy:

Timing	Action
By January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Schools must give providers of technical education and apprenticeships the opportunity to talk to all students- Ofsted must comment in college inspection reports on the careers guidance provided to young people- Colleges should use the Gatsby benchmarks to improve careers provision, as set out in new statutory guidance
By September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The CEC will launch a new investment fund of £5 million to support the most disadvantaged pupils- Colleges are expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents- A named careers leader should lead the careers programme in every college
During 2018 and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Careers leaders’ training funded for 500 schools and colleges
By end 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All schools and colleges will have access to an enterprise adviser- A new, improved National Careers Service website will include all of the information to help citizens make informed choices

A Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664319/Careers_strategy.pdf



“We’re at a new beginning. We will see where we are in years’ time, but I think we will have made considerable progress”

FE WEEK ASKS... Anne Milton | PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS @PIPPA_AK

The long-awaited careers strategy was revealed in a conference hall in Solihull last week. FE Week was there for the first exclusive interview with the skills minister who brought it – at last – to fruition.

That there will be those in the sector who still think that more money is needed to make the careers strategy work, and Anne Milton has committed to reviewing it next year, based on its outcomes.

Just moments after walking off stage on November 4 to encouraging if not ecstatic applause, she acknowledged that when it comes to government policy, there is “always something else”.

“Everybody would like more money. I know everybody would like more money,” she told FE Week, adding: “But a strategy should be reviewed, shouldn’t it? I think we should always look at how it’s going. Somebody asked me what success looks like. Well, we need to see some progress in a year’s time.”

The most important points in the strategy, which was launched at the Career Development Institute’s annual conference, include £5 million for developing 20 careers hubs in disadvantaged areas and £4 million for a career guidance leader in every school and college in the country.

Ms Milton also used her speech to apologise for such a late launch, but talked passionately about social mobility and creating a country where everyone is free to “fulfil their dreams”.

Last year, FE Week reported that the Careers and Enterprise Company, set up in 2015 to connect young people to the world of work, was creating a postcode lottery for FE coverage: 15 LEPs were not covered and London was completely absent.

The careers strategy outlined plans to allow all colleges to access an enterprise advisor by 2020. So are the issues with CEC coverage in FE now being addressed?

The CEC is “brilliant” at “harnessing the skills of employers”, she insisted.

“The drive comes from both directions really. Us pushing schools to make sure careers advice

is good, that people who provide technical education and know about apprenticeships come into schools, and also employers from the other side,” she said.

“I think the two together will hopefully squeeze young people into a place where they will get all the information they need. But I think we haven’t made the best use of labour-market information and I think colleges have quite an important role to play in the use of that information.

“You can go to college or do A-levels in a certain subject, or go to university or do a degree at a college, but actually what you need is labour-market information. There are very few people who can afford the luxury to study for the sheer enjoyment of it,” she said.

Responding to questions from delegates at the end of her speech, Ms Milton also claimed that “joined-up government thinking” is integral, and that it wouldn’t be just another “political cliché that people mention from time to time”.

“We’re at a new beginning. We will see where we are in years’ time, but I think we will have made considerable progress,” she said.

mits to helping most disadvantaged

Dismay at lack of consideration for independent sector



While colleges are at the heart of the new careers strategy – racking up 82 references – there was no mention of support for independent training providers and their learners.

“It seems a shame that the government doesn’t think young people in learning at independent providers deserve any form of careers advice,” said Mark Dawe, the boss of AELP.

“Hopefully they will confirm this is an

oversight and rectify the position.”

Gordon Marsden, the shadow skills minister, questioned the expanded role the strategy gives to the Careers and Enterprise Company.

The company will be “backbone for coordinating all Gatsby benchmarks” – eight proposed markers of excellent careers advice – across schools and colleges, up from the two on which it had previously focused.

But Mr Marsden said this expansion was a “real worry” as “half the country has no coverage” three years after the CEC was launched.

He also hit out at the “woefully inadequate” funding promised for central elements of the strategy, with just £4 million for set aside careers leaders at every school and colleges.

“What period of time is that for and how many are not going to be covered?” he asked.

“Having waited two years for a strategy, it is extremely disappointing that once again this government has failed to adequately deliver the extra funding and resources necessary for a successful careers strategy.”

Kirstie Donnelly, the managing director of City & Guilds, wants extra resources to implement the strategy.

She described many of the measures it

outlines as “positive”, but “there is still much more to do and greater investment is needed to really get this right”.

“We also need to ensure that we rigorously measure the outputs of this work to ensure that it is working effectively,” she said.

Robert Halfon outlined his own vision for a National Skills Service on the same day as his successor as skills minister unveiled the strategy.

But while he wants the CEC and the National Careers Service to be consolidated into a single service, he claimed he wasn’t making an “attack” on the strategy, which he welcomed.

He outlined a number of tests which he believes it needs to pass – including whether it “significantly” helped people from disadvantaged backgrounds, or made “promoting skills, technical education and apprenticeships a priority”, and if it avoided “duplication of existing resources”.

The strategy’s commitment to supporting adults, particularly the long-term unemployed and those with additional needs, as well as young people was welcomed by Fiona Aldridge, the assistant director of research and development at the Learning and Work Institute.

“In our ever-changing labour market, it is imperative that adults are able to access timely and high-quality support to make informed choices about developing their skills,” she said.

“While we believe that it is important that all adults have access to these opportunities, it is particularly critical for those in low paid and insecure work, as well as those out of work.”

Her sentiments were echoed by Sue Pember, the director of policy at Hoxley, who said she “would have liked to have seen much more dynamic action for those who will not achieve five GCSEs at school and as a result often end up in low-skilled and low-paid employment”.

Catherine Sezen, a senior policy manager at the Association of Colleges, stressed that teachers needed “to be using the right language to promote different pathways”.

“The strategy needs to be flexible to recognise the good work that is already taking place in a number of schools and colleges across the country,” she said.

And Dr Neil Bentley, the chief executive of WorldSkills UK said that a “crucial part” of ensuring the success of the strategy was “ensuring that more young people are inspired about the benefits of apprenticeships and technical careers”.

DR DEIRDRE HUGHES OBE

Associate fellow, Warwick University's Institute for Employment Research

Former chair of the National Careers Council

This is less a strategy, more a high-risk careers experiment

The UK’s careers so-called “strategy” is to ditch trained, independent professionals in favour of volunteers, warns Dr Deirdre Hughes

The long-awaited careers strategy is finally in the public domain. There will be a huge sigh of relief from the DfE – and a sharp intake of breath for those at the coalface trying to deliver careers support to young people in their local communities.

There is certainly some good news for those working with adults: “All adults should be able to access free face-to-face advice, with more bespoke support for those

who most need it.”

What’s more, career learning pilots and a national retaining scheme will be funded in support of lifelong learning. But careers support for young people continues to form part of a high-risk experiment in England.

In 2017, two of the eight National Careers Service contractors achieved an ‘outstanding’ grade from Ofsted; the rest were rated ‘good’. These included the Inspiration Agenda, which supports teachers and young people’s encounters with employers and experiences of workplaces. The Education and Skills Funding Agency has now informed National

Careers Service providers that funding for this work will end in September 2018. Trained and professional careers advisers face uncertain futures.

There will instead be 20 new careers hubs, led by CEC. But how will these differ from partnerships that are already established in communities? And CEC is to be involved in primary school activities, competing with other well-established providers. But there is no mention of careers advice for young people in training.

Research published alongside the careers strategy shows that of the 2,000 young people asked who helped them make decisions

“**Young people want greater access to face-to-face careers guidance**”

about what to do after year 11/13, only two per cent pointed to a CEC enterprise adviser. Forty per cent spoke to an adviser at school or college. Although most young people are willing to access information online, they prefer face-to-face help.

A parallel DfE report indicates that staff feel that there are enough tools and resources available, but that more

personnel are required. Both reports are a reality check – many young people want greater access to face-to-face careers guidance, no different to adults.

The DfE proposal is to train 500 careers coordinators, now called “careers leaders”. Will they be existing or new teachers? There are over 3,000 schools and 280 colleges.

This is a unique experiment not evident in other OECD countries; we over-rely on volunteers and employers, and have a major void in the system when it comes to government investment in careers professionals’ work. Ironically, as more young people face more complex education and labour market choices, their access to independent and impartial careers professionals is left to chance in England, in contrast to other parts of the UK and further afield.

Some good news is that the Education and Training Foundation will provide professional development for those working with special educational needs and disabilities. But what of those young people not in schools and colleges? Does the CEC role now extend to cover those in apprenticeships/traineeships?

Delivery and implementation in communities is what really matters. Local partnerships will do their best to make things work. Over the next 12 months, it will be essential to monitor closely what’s happening at both a national and local level. Fortunately, the minister has promised a review, so watch this space.

”

EDITORIAL

Special needs learners deserve better



It has become all too clear this term that SEND learners who want to study further education are being badly let down.

The local government ombudsman warned in October that growing numbers are missing out on places at colleges, because of delays with local councils producing their education and health care plans.

Now Natspec, the membership association for SEND providers, has warned that more and more learners with special educational needs or disabilities are not now taking up FE places as the cost of travelling to and from lessons is too high.

Every single county council paid for their travel in full a little over a decade ago, but our investigation has shown two thirds are currently charging wildly variable fees.

The financial burden is worse for SEND learners, due the long distances they and their families often face to reach suitable colleges.

The government was wrong to ignore the Association of Colleges' call last year for a review on travel costs, and it simply isn't good enough that they're still passing the buck to local authorities.

I know that councils have statutory responsibility, but the DfE admitted it has an overview and requires LAs to make "reasonable decisions". It should take this role more seriously.

Paul Offord, Deputy editor

paul.offord@feweek.co.uk

 CAREERS STRATEGY TWEETS:

Kirstie Donnelly MBE @MDCityandguilds

Welcome the publication of the Government's long-awaited careers strategy. Not only will this help young people understand exactly what options are available, it will support schools and colleges deliver meaningful and practical careers advice

Mary Curnock Cook @MaryCurnockCook

The long-awaited @educationgovuk Careers Strategy: more tactics than strategy. A strategy might first set out what young people need to know about the world of work; and then how to achieve it

Ruth Spellman @RuthSpellmanWEA

Today the Government published its careers strategy. I welcome an all age strategy and I am pleased to see adults considered in this document however, the careers IAG should be properly funded and integrated onto the education offer

Joe Dromey @Joe_Dromey

Details of Govt's long-awaited careers strategy announced. Great to see the excellent Gatsby work is a key part of it, but the money announced looks very modest indeed



Eighteenth studio school on brink of closure

BILLY CAMDEN

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

@BILLYCAMDEN

@FCDWHITTAKER

The future of a studio school in Manchester hangs in the balance, after being plagued with financial and performance problems since it opened three years ago.

The Manchester Creative Studio could become the eighteenth studio school to close, leaving just 34 still open across the nation, after the regional schools commissioner opened a consultation on its future.

Studio schools are another alternative to mainstream education for 14- to 19-year-olds, taking on up to 300 pupils and providing a work-based curriculum in which pupils earn vocational and academic qualifications, as well as work experience. Like the similarly troubled university technical colleges, studio schools are viewed by many in FE as unwelcome competition.

Vicky Beer, the RSC, has written to everyone involved with the Manchester Creative Studio to inform them of an upcoming consultation on whether it should be closed or passed to another sponsor, according to the *Manchester Evening News*.

In the letter she admits that making the Manchester studio school viable would be “challenging” for any academy chain that took it on, and the school itself now admits

the option of closure is being “strongly considered”.

It needs a new sponsor “that could reverse its falling pupil numbers to make it financially viable”.

“The difficulties in securing the necessary viability would be a challenging task for any trust in the school’s current circumstances,” the RSC wrote.

“We have therefore decided to consider the possibility of closure of the school, subject to conducting a ‘listening period’ to gather views on the proposed closure.”

The original plan was made to rebroker the school and its sister institution, the Collective Spirit free school in Oldham, in January, after Manchester Creative Studio was handed a financial notice to improve and Collective Spirit was placed in special measures.

But Collective Spirit closed in the summer and the Manchester Creative Studio, which is also in special measures, deliberately avoided taking on new pupils in September, in preparation for a potential closure at the end of the academic year.

Both free schools were founded by Raja Miah, the former charity head who won an MBE for his social integration work in 2004.

The school has received support from another academy chain, the Laurus Trust, for the past six months, and claims to have made some progress in strengthening its position.

However, Martin Shevill, who took over as chair of the school’s board in July, said it had become “increasingly clear” that the school “does not have the capacity and resources to continue this trajectory over a sustained period of time”.

“The school has significant financial challenges and the reality is that, without considerable support from outside bodies, it is unable to deliver on its educational aspirations,” he said.

“The option that is being strongly considered is that the school will close at the end of this academic year.”

The rate of closure has apparently caused unease at the Department for Education, and FE Week reported earlier this year that the former academies minister Lord Nash met officials from the programme to discuss a review of the model’s concept.

Records show that Lord Nash met the Studio Schools Trust in March, with the purpose of the meeting listed as being “to review the concept of studio schools”.

The main issue for the 14-to-19 institutions is their battle to recruit enough pupils, just like UTCs; since the UTC movement began in 2010, a total of eight of the technical institutions have now closed.

The government is however holding faith in their success, as five more opened this September, bringing the UTC total to 49 across the country.

COMMENTS

Consultation launched on closure of 18th studio school

The idea of applying academic theory to practical, vocational skills is in itself sound. In the ITP sector we do it all the time, and did so long before the introduction of Studio Schools, and UTC's if I'm going to get another dig in! Instead of investing in alternative schools that clearly struggle to do things differently, here's an idea, invest the money in our sector. We're pretty good at this stuff!!

Just Saying!

Noel Johnson

Special interview: Minister speaks to FE Week about careers strategy

Read the headline and assumed it was about her path to No. 10! But I read on... More of the same then. For all the promise of it not just being another tired old cliché – she did manage to squeeze in the party line of social mobility and people being free to fulfil their dreams.

When you try to protect everything, you protect nothing.

Lurch

Is FE ready for the big apprenticeship frameworks switch-off?

Apprentices do not need a portable qualification validated by an awarding body – what they need is competences to enable them to do their job better!

This exercise has weakened the apprenticeship brand at a time when social mobility is a dirty phrase of the past.

MD



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As an equal opportunities employer, the College welcomes applicants from all sections of the community. Application packs can be obtained by visiting our website www.derwentside.ac.uk. Alternatively, email HR@derwentside.ac.uk or telephone (01207) 585963 to request a pack.

For an informal discussion regarding the role, please contact Karen Redhead, Principal and Chief Executive (01207) 585940.

Closing date for applications: Friday 5th January 2018



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Closing date for applications: 15 December 2017

Contact Details: recruitment@macclesfield.ac.uk



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EXPERTS



RUTH
SPELLMAN

General secretary, the Workers' Educational Association

Adult learners are vital to our skills strategy

The government is taking positive steps on skills development, but adult learners must be attended to, says Ruth Spellman

In recent weeks, our government has set out its vision for a country that's "fit for the future". The chancellor's budget, the industrial strategy and now the Skills Summit have all shone a spotlight on the need to upskill and retrain home-grown talent to close the productivity gap.

Last week, Justine Greening used her speech at the summit to develop this agenda further and the WEA welcomes many of the ambitions she set out.

For instance, she was right to say that alongside investment in manufacturing and technology, we must invest in our country's biggest asset, our people. She was right because it is an investment that underpins not only our economic strategy but that reaps dividends across every part of society.

She was also right to address the needs of both young people and adults in regards to education. Yes, we must prepare our workforce for jobs that don't yet exist, through high-tech training and investment in STEM, but we must also offer support for services and education providers that help adults take their first steps back into employment.

The WEA welcomes a National Retraining Scheme, with career learning pilots and initiatives on digital and construction skills, but there is currently no clear vision for a future in which access to learning for all ages is recognised as a driver of productivity and creativity.

This government's "future" also needs to include support for millions of adults who would benefit from accessible learning to help them with their basic skills, enabling them to get back to work, or retrain across all sectors of the economy.

We face today, as the education secretary rightly explained in her speech, a problem of lost potential. What we must remember is that potential is not only found in young people. We need to invest in our adult learners, just as we do with our under 19s, to connect them up to new opportunities.

Our own recently launched impact report showed the positive impact of offering people the chance to return to learning. 57 per cent were better equipped to find work, and 82 per cent reported improvements in mental health and wellbeing. Our report showed that people who undertake adult education courses do not rely so much on the benefits system, find

employment more easily and become active citizens.

Many of the opportunities are going to come from business, which is why we are pleased to see links forged between education providers and employers.

As well as helping learners develop new skills and confidence, it is important for people to get a sense of the needs and the culture of employers.

“**Skills development and training alone will not necessarily help people back into employment**”

Business must absolutely be present in schools and colleges, inspiring students and setting out clear pathways to employment, but they should also be involved in working with adult learners, for example through mentoring programmes and through volunteering. If firms were more closely involved in lifelong learning they could ensure that the skills and talents of adult learners were evolving to keep pace with a changing workplace.

That's also why we should see greater emphasis on careers guidance for adults as well as young people. Skills development and training alone will not necessarily help people back into employment, and we should not assume that adults don't also need support in navigating the world of work.

We know through many years of work that people respond best to flexible, accessible learning opportunities close to home. This means offering education courses that often don't look like education at all, but that offer people a local and welcoming environment in which they can start to develop the skills that they require to find their own pathways in life.

This government's vision to invest in our people is positive, but we must ensure that really means all people and give adults the chance to contribute to our economy and society and to be great role models for their children.



JULIE
HYDE

Associate director, CACHE

As we beef up the IfA, don't knock down AOs

The government should be wary of diminishing the role of awarding organisations in its T-level proposals, argues Julie Hyde, as many already work closely with employers

With Christmas fast approaching, the government has been making announcements left, right and centre – revealing more about plans for post-16 education and skills. It has been an exciting time for organisations across the FE sector, which have been eagerly awaiting these announcements.

It began with the autumn budget, swiftly followed by the industrial strategy white paper, Justine Greening's speech to the Skills Summit, the T-Level consultation, and now the careers strategy. Each of these built on the next, fleshing out the plans further.

With so many announcements in rapid succession you would be forgiven for failing to keep up, and in many ways this onslaught of information has raised more questions than it has answered.

One aspect that remains constant is that the government's focus is still clearly on putting employers at the heart of the technical education system, and ensuring that the UK has the skilled workers it needs to create an economy fit for the future. This is an important and welcome ambition, and the Skills Summit and skills partner statement of action that followed it was a clear sign of the importance that the government is placing on this.

The T-level consultation also suggests that the Institute for Apprenticeships' role is more significant than perhaps expected. It will not only administer T-levels, license awarding organisations (AOs) to deliver and sell them to providers, but the eventual qualification may also be generically branded and will not name the AO.

While we understand the impulse here, and recognise the need to ensure that all qualifications are rigorous and of a high standard, we feel that the government may be diminishing the role of AOs, many of which already work closely with employers to develop courses that will help students succeed in the workplace.

AOs generally know better than most what employers are looking for, and what makes a skilled professional with the occupational competencies to succeed in the workplace.

Particular qualifications and AOs are also often synonymous with certain sectors, and

employers actively seek people with these qualifications. This expertise is important in any technical education system that delivers the skilled workers employers need.

The 15 routes are extremely broad, and there will be a number of different pathways and therefore T-levels within them. Licensing one AO for a procured pathway or bundle of pathways will also potentially lead to a significant loss of sector expertise. The government may already recognise the issue; the consultation already states that AOs can bid as part of a consortium for T-level contracts, but again it remains to be seen how this could work in practice.

Licensing one AO will essentially create a monopoly in a sector area, and without ongoing competition between organisations, standards could fall, ending up with little incentive to innovate. As the recent report by Frontier Economics suggested, having a single AO could ultimately risk system failure.

“**AOs generally know better than most what employers are looking for**”

We look forward to working with the government over the coming months to answer these questions and create a system that achieves its ambition of parity of esteem between academic and vocational education routes.

It is crucial that we get this system right and that it is workable. It is important that the government engages with a range of organisations from across the sector throughout the consultation process. This will ensure that T-levels not only deliver the skilled workforce we need, but that learners can navigate the new system successfully, that awarding organisations can deliver rigorous, effective qualifications, and that providers can deliver them. Ultimately, we must all work together to make a success of them.

The T-levels consultation is open until February 8, at: <http://9nl.es/TLevels>.

EXPERTS

This Conservative government certainly talks the talk when it comes to social mobility. But, as Emily Chapman explains, it doesn't walk the walk when it comes to FE students.

Social mobility has become a bit of a buzzword for the current Conservative government. Justine Greening claims that education is at the heart of social mobility, Anne Milton sees the careers strategy as central to ensuring social mobility for all, and last year Theresa May set out her vision for a truly meritocratic Britain, where social mobility meant that “everyone has a fair chance to go as far as their talent and their hard work will allow”.

This vision took a bit of a beating last week when the Social Mobility Commission released its damning ‘State of the nation’ report, highlighting the stark regional differences that exist in Britain today. It sustained an even bigger blow when all four members of the committee quit last week, with Alan Milburn claiming that he has “little hope of the current government making the progress I believe is necessary to bring about a fairer Britain”.

This is something I've been reflecting on myself since I started as vice-president for further education at the NUS six months ago. The findings in the report were incredibly disappointing and concerning, but I would be lying if I said they'd come as a surprise. In my role, I meet students all across the country. The huge gulf that exists between those that have and those that don't is particularly stark when considering FE. Yet I've seen



EMILY CHAPMAN

VP of further education,
National Union of Students

‘Social mobility’ means nothing without financial support for FE

little evidence that this government is truly committed to supporting FE students to become socially mobile.

FE students disproportionately come from deprived backgrounds; they need the most support to access education, but you wouldn't know it from the current discourse around education funding. As is often the case, higher education dominates and the issue of maintenance support in FE is glossed over.

The much-anticipated tertiary education funding review is expected to cover age 18 and above, and let's be honest, we'll be lucky if it addresses the significant drop in advanced learner loans or the serious lack of maintenance support adults get to access FE. Last week, Anne Milton was asked a written question about the frankly inadequate maintenance support that 16-to-18s in FE receive. Her response suggests that the Department for Education is happy with the

postcode lottery that discretionary bursaries create.

This issue is a particular feature of the commission's report, which found that the effect of one's postcode on one's prospects is particularly acute for young people, and that disadvantaged youths in urban areas tend to benefit from better outcomes than young people in other areas. A huge range of factors contribute to this, including a lack of access to higher education institutions. One recommendation it made is for local authorities to offer travel bursaries to enable poorer young people to study degree courses.

Transport is an issue that consistently comes up as a problem for learners, and so I agree that they should receive financial support. But I don't believe this should be limited to people who want to access higher education. Transport provision and costs vary considerably across different regions

in England, but one constant is that plenty of people suffer from poor, unreliable services with little to no financial support. Last month I launched the #myFEjourney campaign, which lobbies for subsidised or free travel for post-16 learners and apprentices, so that everybody can access and succeed in education, not just those at university.

“**The government claims to be committed to creating parity of esteem between further and higher education**

Further education does so much to support social mobility, but this is often in spite of government policy, not because of it. The government claims to be committed to creating parity of esteem between further and higher education and to ensuring social mobility for all. To achieve this, though, there needs to be an honest discussion about financial support across the entirety of tertiary education – not just higher. Without this, the government's great “meritocracy” is nothing more than a buzzword.

Advertorial

Search for providers to support India's skills development

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NOCCN Group has launched a nationwide search for UK organisations that can provide technical and implementation support for skill development in India.

The government-backed “mapping exercise”, overseen by the leading UK awarding and apprenticeship assessment organisation, will identify organisations with the “capacity, ability and willingness to provide technical and implementation support” across the subcontinent.

The selected organisations will operate across the aerospace and aviation, automotive, infrastructure (building,

construction and real estate) and renewable energy sectors.

The search was launched at the start of December and will run until the end of January.

“We are delighted to be part of this fantastic, ambitious international drive to meet India's skills needs,” said Graham Hasting-Evans, the managing director of NOCN.

“Just as with our work in the UK, where we accelerate learning opportunities, this cooperative project will boost local, regional and national economies.”

NOCN is looking for organisations with expertise in training delivery; assessments; training of trainers; training of assessors; curriculum development; training pedagogy;

centres of excellence; transnational standards; quality-assurance and all other areas of sector-specific skills development.

A company spokesperson explained the brief.

“NOCN is delivering a research project on behalf of the UK government, to map UK institutions

and organisations working in skills development and which are delivering, or have the capacity to deliver, technical and implementation support for skills development in India, either on their own or in collaboration with Indian institutions,” he said.

“NOCN is conducting the research in a joint venture with PublicCo, L&WI and NOCN India Skills Foundation.”

The project, which also has an international development organisation backing, will support the Indian government's major Skill India initiative.

NOCN will aim to make contact with leading skills organisations and providers across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to assess their expertise and how they can work in India, and also analyse local markets to identify stakeholders and potential partners on the subcontinent.

NOCN is conducting the research during December and January when it will contact potential partner organisations.

At the end of January, there will be events in Indian cities to showcase and promote India-UK partnership potential, followed by the final report to be presented to the UK and India Governments.

“We believe NOCN's wealth of expertise, strong network and partnerships make us very well-placed to contribute to a wholly



worthwhile programme that will bring huge opportunities to UK training providers and other agencies in the learning and development field,” added Mr Hasting-Evans.

“The Indian skills development market is forecast to grow almost 10 times from the current estimate of \$2.5 billion to over \$20 billion by 2018.”

Anyone interested should contact Stephen Ram Kissun, head of international business development at NOCN Group, at stephen.ram-kissun@nocn.org.uk.

For further information, visit http://www.nocn.org.uk/india/india-uk_skills_project



CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*



Refugee play travels to Westminster

Performing arts students from Leyton Sixth Form College have been invited to perform their self-written play about refugees at Parliament.

They were the only college chosen to perform in the under-18s category at The Sunday Times National Student Drama Festival in Hull, for their play *No Human is Illegal*, and went on to stage it at a venue in Newport, where it was spotted by the local MP, Paul Flynn.

Now the 40-minute play, which explores UK foreign policy and the Syrian refugee crisis, will be performed in front of an audience at

parliament in February after an invitation from Mr Flynn. The majority of the cast members come from BAME backgrounds, and are nearly all first-, second- or third-generation immigrants. “The students that I teach come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, many of them are migrants themselves, yet they were oblivious the harsh reality of the current global crisis that I presented to them,” explained Katy Arnell, a performing arts tutor. “I found this fascinating and this directly fed into the devising process.”

Catering students turn the (kitchen) tables

Members of Barnsley College’s senior management team have taken part in a Masterchef-style cooking challenge at their on-site student restaurant, the Open Kitchen. Under the watchful eyes of the college’s catering students, staff had to prepare, cook and serve four different dishes to diners, including beer-battered plaice, trio of sausages, burgers and chick peas, and spinach and butternut squash bhuna. The winner of the event, as voted for by chefs and students, was the vice-principal for corporate services, Tony Johnson, who

impressed the judges with his energy and cooking ability. “It was exciting and a lot of fun to make the dishes. The event was fantastic and I now have a better understanding of the pressure our catering students feel on a regular basis,” said Phil Briscoe, vice-principal for quality and student experience at the college. “I will take home a lot of skills that I can use in the future.” The college’s Open Kitchen restaurant currently has a 4.5 rating on TripAdvisor, and is ranked the 96th best place to eat in Barnsley out of 360 eateries on the website.



Professor Cox explains everything



The TV presenter, author and lecturer Brian Cox has given students a talk on astronomy, cosmology, astrobiology and the origins of life during a visit to Stafford College. The acclaimed physicist delivered the wide-ranging 50-minute talk to more than 130 learners on physics, chemistry, biology and maths courses across Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group. After the talk, Mr Cox took part in a Q&A session with staff and students, with questions including ‘What would you say to Einstein if you could meet him today?’ and ‘What is the fabric of the universe?’

“The quality of the questions that the students asked were fantastic, you can definitely tell that they had a real enthusiasm for the subject,” Mr Cox said. He was also presented with - and autographed — three portraits of himself, painted by students Sophie Whittington, Lydia Cheung and Lewis Walker, which were commissioned by the NSCG ahead of his visit. “We were delighted to welcome Professor Brian Cox. He met many students who have been inspired by his work and hope to follow in his footsteps,” said Karen Dobson, the principal and chief executive of NSCG.



A career less ordinary

Seed merchants, citrus fruit suppliers and Europe’s largest equine hospital were among the businesses exhibiting at Writtle University College’s careers fair. Over 60 organisations were in attendance at the fair in Essex, including Colchester Zoo, the Kings Troop Royal Horse Artillery and representatives from the Sanger Institute’s genomic research centre, who showed students a few of the options available to them post-study. Alongside exhibitors, there were workshops on how to use social media to find

work, how to cope with assessment centres and even a crash course in running your own business for students on courses ranging from global ecosystem management to garden design. “The nature of our specialist courses means that there are some very interesting career options for our students, such as nutritionist, equine behaviour consultant or government research scientist,” said Mark Yates, Writtle’s careers coordinator. “It’s a great chance for students to think through how their studies will improve their future career and studies.”

Social care students get stuck in with residents



Over 30 students at Sunderland College have been paired with elderly people in a T-level pilot project that flips on its head the traditional model of students shadowing carers, reports Samantha King.

The college’s new intergenerational advocate scheme, designed in partnership with Sunderland City Council, has level three health and social care students working closely with residents of care homes and extra-care housing schemes to provide companionship and increase social engagement in older people, especially those with cognitive impairments such as dementia.

Students are running group activities such as biscuit decorating, and organising parties and musicals, as well as one-on-one projects with residents, including making memory boxes.

The project is being funded by the Department for Education ahead of the new T-levels, as part of a pilot looking at which work placement models work best.

Sunderland College is one of six colleges in England to be supported by the government to pilot the proposed reforms, which include longer work placements to replace the current one-to-two-week programmes.

“There are a few colleges involved in the pilot, but I only know of ours that is an intergenerational project,” explained project



Belle Vue House resident Peggy Rutter with Chelsie Purcell

lead Carla Raine, a health and social care lecturer at the college. “This initiative gives our students a meaningful opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of members of our older community.”

The first 15 students taking part have already started their placements at two extra-care housing schemes, Bramble Hollow and Willow Brook, and at Belle Vue House, a care home in Hedon. They are expected to last until February when the next wave of students will take over.

“One student is paired with a resident who

moved over from South Africa and doesn’t have family over here, but is really interested in shipyard building and industrial history,” said Ms Raine. “She researched ship-building in Sunderland and now they’ve gone on trips to museums and are going to create a model boat together.”

Social workers from the council’s adult social care team provided students with training before they embarked on their placements in November, covering everything from safeguarding and confidentiality to what to expect working in a care setting.



Carla Raine, Chelsie Purcell, Councillor Graeme Miller and Peggy Rutter



The intergenerational advocates get training from council social workers

“It’s not traditional placement work where students shadow a carer in practice. This one is very much about students taking ownership and working with the resident,” Ms Raine added.

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



Adrian Cottrell

Deputy principal, Waltham Forest College

Start date January 2018

Previous job

Interim vice principal for finance and resources, Amersham & Wycombe College

Interesting fact

Adrian wants to take up shepherding with his own flock of sheep. He hasn’t told his family yet.



James Bagley

Principal, Gateway College

Start date November 2017

Previous job

Vice-principal for curriculum and quality, Gateway College

Interesting fact

James loves spicy food and grows a range of chillies to dry, cook with, and make into sauces.



Joe Crossley

CEO, Qube Learning

Start date December 2017

Previous job

Business development director, Qube Learning

Interesting fact

Joe is a car enthusiast and his favourite car is the classic Porsche.



Dominique Unsworth

SME ambassador for Apprenticeships, Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

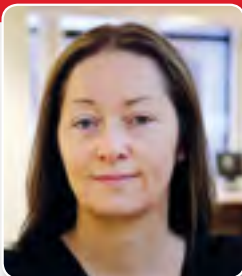
Start date October 2017

Previous job

Managing director, Resource Productions (ongoing)

Interesting fact

Dominique used to work at Slough Museum and co-wrote a book on the modern history of Slough, called The Changing Face of Slough.



Angela Walsh

Group apprenticeship coordinator, NEC Group

Start date September 2017

Previous job

Tutor and assessor, Solihull College and University Centre

Interesting fact

Angela’s perfect Friday night involves Italian food and a large glass of red wine.

Movers & Shakers

...

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

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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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



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