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Exclusive investigation **JUDE BURKE** @JUDEBURKE77

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NEWS

Colleges continue to bounce back up in Ofsted's estimation

PAUL OFFORD
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EXCLUSIVE

Just under three quarters of colleges are now rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, as the sector's rapid improvement continues into 2018.

Two reports published this week – for Chelmsford College and Craven College – recorded a crucial step up from grade three to grade two.

And Leicester College and Lakes College both achieved the same level of improvement in reports late last month.

Grades three and four are considered unacceptable by Ofsted, so the news that four more colleges have managed the climb will be a significant morale boost for their peers.

It also means that 74 per cent of colleges now hold the top two grades.

FE Week analysis up to the end of August – later confirmed in the 2016/17 Annual

Ofsted Report – showed that just 69 per cent of general FE colleges were rated 'good' or 'outstanding' at the time, a figure that had fallen for three years running.

We carried out further analysis in December, which showed the proportion rated 'good' to 'outstanding' had risen to 73 per cent, after a good showing from colleges in the early part of the current academic year.

This week's report on Craven College, which taught just over 6,000 learners last year, highlighted the "unrelenting" drive of its leadership.

"Leaders have made good progress in realising their vision to provide high-quality education and training for students and apprentices," it said.

"Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have focused unrelentingly on tackling weaknesses. They have put in place a wide range of largely successful strategies and actions for improvement."

The report on Chelmsford College, which

College	Report published	Grade before	Grade now
Chelmsford College	07-Feb-18	3	2
Craven College	07-Feb-18	3	2
Leicester College	19-Jan-18	3	2
Lakes College	18-Jan-18	3	2

FE college grades	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
As at 31 August 2017	13%	56%	29%	2%
As at 31 December 2017	13%	59%	26%	2%
As at 7 February 2018	13%	61%	25%	2%

FE college grades	Grade 1 and 2	Grade 3 and 4
As at 31 August 2017	69%	31%
As at 31 December 2017	73%	27%
As at 7 February 2018	74%	26%

taught around 3,200 learners last year, was full of praise for the "high expectations" of governors and senior leaders.

It said that they "communicate well an effective learning strategy to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners".

The 2016/17 annual Ofsted report also showed an eight-point fall compared with the previous year in sixth-form colleges with a grade one or two.

The proportion of SFCs receiving the top two grades had previously climbed every year since 2012.

It rose from 72 per cent five years ago to an impressive 89 per cent in 2016.

But figures to September last year showed that the proportion rated 'good' or 'outstanding' had dropped to 81 per cent.

Meanwhile, 80 per cent of independent training providers received the top two grades.

DfE: 10 colleges lost out in non-levy tender

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Ten colleges which once held contracts to deliver apprenticeships with small employers were not awarded funding in the recent non-levy tender.

The academies minister Lord Agnew has explained that 189 colleges had non-levy allocations with the ESFA last year, and 182 of them bid in the procurement.

But 10 were denied contracts, three of which are in London.

Six of the bids were rejected because they did not meet the minimum scoring threshold, and the others fell below the £200,000 minimum contract value.

Two colleges in the west Midlands were denied contracts, as well as two in the north-west, and one each in the south-east, south-west and east of England.

"Potential providers were required to indicate the sectors and regions in which they would be delivering apprenticeships in their tenders," said Lord Agnew.

"We are confident that non-levy paying employers can access high-quality apprenticeship training to support their growth and success, regardless of where in the country they operate in."

He added that the Department for Education

would continue to keep this under review and take action where necessary.

He was responding to a question tabled by Lord Watson of Invergowrie, who asked what assessment the government had made of the impact of colleges losing their allocation of non-levied apprenticeship funding on local employers and apprentices.

Lord Agnew reiterated that all providers who are on the register of apprenticeship training providers are still able to deliver to levy paying employers.

Conservative MPs have begun weighing in on the non-levy debate.

Jeremy Lefroy, the MP for Stafford, raised the issue in parliament for Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group, and Royston Smith, the Conservative MP for Southampton, is jumping to the defence of SETA, a registered charity who has delivered engineering apprenticeships in the area for 48 years.

Exeter College is meanwhile working with Labour's Ben Bradshaw, a former culture, media and sport secretary, and the 'good'-rated HYA Training is liaising with its own MP, Emma Hardy, a Labour politician who sits on the education select committee.

FE Week is aware of two colleges, Basingstoke College of Technology and West Kent and Ashford College, which were successful in appealing initial decisions not to award them a contract.



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Professional footballers found guilty of £5m subcontracting fraud

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Two former professional footballers and two other men have been found guilty of scamming colleges out of £5 million in apprenticeship funding, through a con which involved “ghost learners”.

Mark Aizlewood, who played for Wales 39 times in the 1980s and 1990s, and Paul Sugrue, who played for clubs including Manchester City, Middlesbrough and Cardiff City, were convicted at Southwark Crown Court last week, after a five month trial.

Two of their former colleagues at the now-defunct provider Luis Michael Training, Keith Williams, 45, from Anglesey, and Jack Harper, 30, from Southport, were also found guilty on fraud charges.

Throughout the trial, the court heard that LMT used its well-known footballing names to defraud the taxpayer between 2009 and 2011 by persuading nine colleges to use it as a subcontractor, using cash they got from the government to deliver apprenticeships.

Sparsholt College was hit hardest, signing contracts worth more than £4 million, although not all of this money was handed over before the scam was exposed.

The total value of all the contracts the colleges signed with LMT was £5,188,355, of which more than £3.5 million was actually paid.

The losses were all reimbursed by the Skills Funding Agency.

For the con to work, LMT had to prove it had learners enrolled and ready to train. It did this in part by creating “ghost learners” – using the personal information of real people to claim apprenticeship funding. These people were unaware their identities were used in this way.

Certain others actually enrolled, but these were vulnerable young people, most of whom were not in education, employment or training, and had dropped out of school before 16.

A total of 3,008 learners, all aged 16 to 19, were hoodwinked in this way. They were under the illusion that they were doing an apprenticeship in NVQ activity leadership, which would lead them to a career in football coaching.

LMT even employed other high-profile former players, such as the former Welsh international Neville Southall, the Republic of Ireland’s Alan McLoughlin and Manchester United player Russell Beardsmore, as tutors to deliver some of the training. These other players were not aware of the scam.

The provider also used almost 150 professional football clubs as part of the scam, roping in big teams like Manchester City, Leeds United and Nottingham Forest.

They would receive a “facility fee” for employing the apprentices, often amounting to

around £10,000.

“Many of them [the young people] were living the dream thinking they would be coaches for clubs like Manchester City and gain an NVQ – but it was a farce,” said a spokesperson for the Serious Fraud Office, which investigated the case.

The learners only received two to three guided learning hours per week even though they were meant to be given 20.

To give the impression that students had completed all academic aspects of the course, LMT used a number of young people on work experience from a school in Wales to complete tests learners had been supposed to complete, and filled in false learner comment reviews.

LMT forged due diligence paperwork and submitted false accounts to persuade colleges to join agreements.

Of the millions of pounds claimed, Sugrue, 56, from Cardiff, took home the majority (£516,568), while Aizlewood, 57, from Aberdare, cashed in £424,002.

The former stars were spending the money on day-to-day luxury items, such as Range Rovers, trips to Paris, and shopping sprees in Harrods.



Mark Aizlewood playing for Wales

(l-r) Paul Sugrue and Mark Aizlewood walking into Southwark Crown Court

In the meantime, the colleges struggled. Sparsholt in particular had to put off building programmes as a result of the financial loss.

And learners, who were meant to be paid £95 in weekly wages but rarely received more than £10, couldn’t afford Christmas presents for their children because of the scam.

“We condemn the deliberate deceit and criminal actions of these fraudsters who have either admitted their guilt or been convicted and we hope this acts as a deterrent to others,” said Tim Jackson, principal of Sparsholt College.

He added that the college had worked “tirelessly” to ensure as many as possible of the affected learners were able to complete their apprenticeships.

“As an ex-international footballer, Mark Aizlewood knew the industry and how the

system worked and his gravitas helped the company get in with colleges, football clubs and learners,” the SFO spokesperson said.

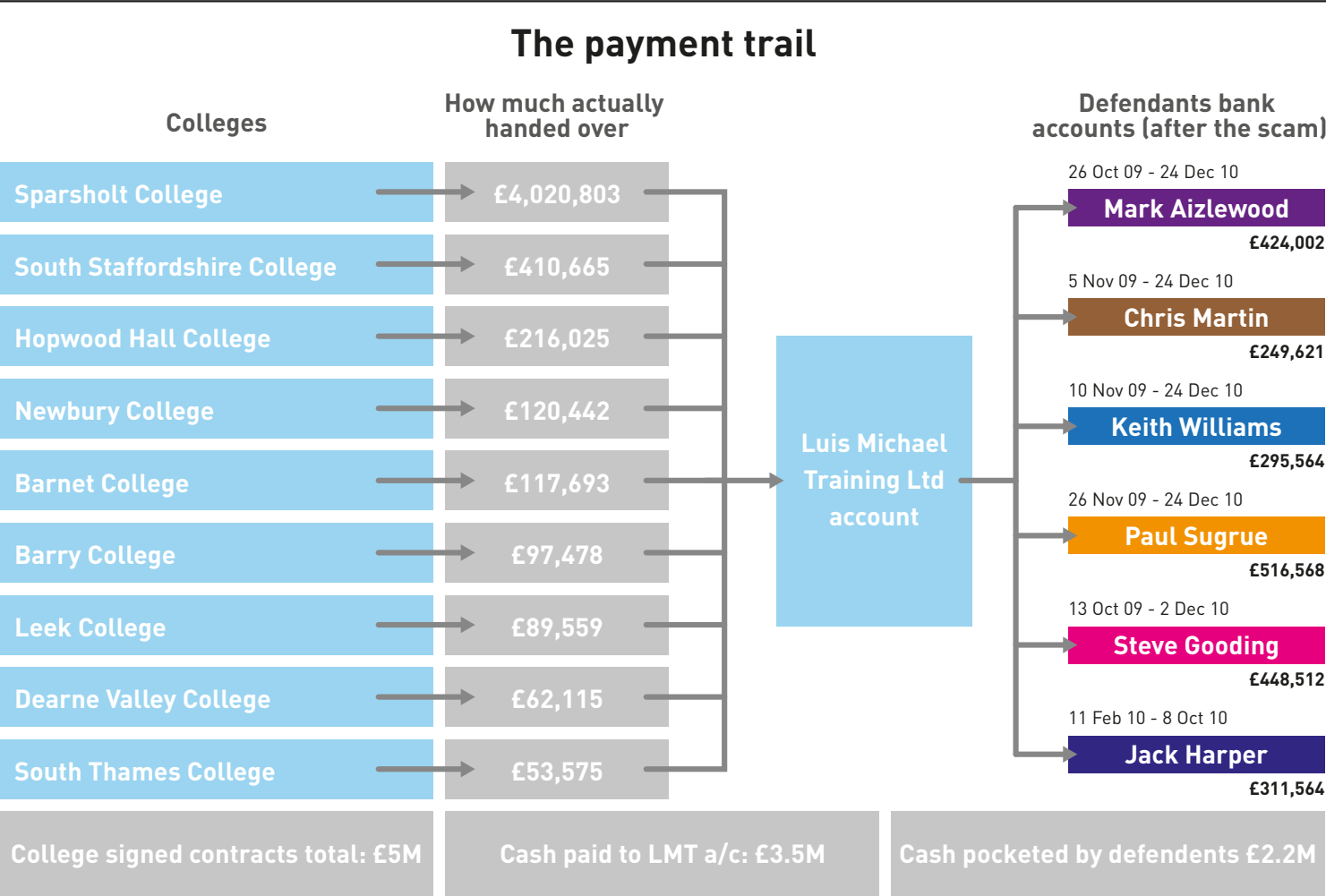
“As a result of the failure of Luis Michael Training, many of the learners were having trouble putting food on the table for their families.”

The Serious Fraud Office was made aware of the situation in 2011 and arrested the men in 2012. They were finally brought to court in September 2017.

Two more men involved in the con pleaded guilty before the trial began.

These were Christopher Martin, 53, from Newbury, who pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation, and Steven Gooding, 53, from Bridgwater, admitted one count of the same charge, both in relation to the case.

All of the defendants are to be sentenced on February 26.



Source: Serious Fraud Office



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College bailouts continue ahead of t

Revealed: 12 colleges received secret payments totalling over £11m

JUDE BURKE
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FROM FRONT

EXCLUSIVE

Twelve cash-strapped colleges received secret government bailouts totalling more than £11 million in December.

It perhaps demonstrates a significant increase in the amount of money being dished out to struggling colleges – and has prompted demands for greater transparency.

The figures were published by the Department for Education as part of a scheduled release detailing monthly expenditure.

“Accountability for the use of taxpayers’ money requires full and immediate transparency; there is no excuse for anything less,” said Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

“It is encouraging that the FE commissioner now has a wide-ranging brief to help colleges in difficulty turn around but the funding required seems to be getting greater.”

However, Julian Gravatt, the deputy chief executive of the Association of Colleges, argued that “publishing information about exceptional financial support (EFS) at the time of need might hit confidence in a financially weak college and would not be helpful to anyone”.

He admitted that once the college

insolvency regime – introduced as part of the Technical and Further Education Act – takes effect later this year it “would be worth looking again at what is published when and about whom”.

Confronted with evidence of the payments, the DfE immediately removed any reference from its monthly expenditure list, and said they would remain secret “to ensure the college’s financial position can be managed effectively during the period of support”.

“EFS funding, where appropriate, can be found in individual colleges’ annual accounts and the value of the EFS loan book is reported in the Education and Skills Funding Agency annual accounts,” a spokesperson said.

But the sums involved are unclear; the DfE’s accounts refer only to £60 million in “EFS loans” issued in the last two financial years. No figures are published for EFS grants, and Robert Halfon, when he was skills minister, told parliament in January last year that the government expected the total EFS spend to reach £140 million by the end of that March.

Described as “one of the most significant risks” to its budget, the ESFA’s accounts to March 2017 refer to the “declining financial health of the FE sector” which is “leading to greater demand for intervention and growing pressure for exceptional financial support”.

EFS – which can come in the form of a grant or a loan – is only available to colleges that are “encountering financial, or cashflow,

difficulties that put the continuation of provision at risk”, and which have “exhausted all other options”.

The government has indicated that these bailouts will be phased out with the new FE insolvency regime later this year, proposals for which are currently under consultation. EFS is not the only area of college finance attracting transparency concerns.

FE Week has previously reported on a number of struggling colleges receiving multimillion-pound bailouts from the £700 million restructuring facility, which is intended to help colleges pay for any post-area review changes they can’t afford themselves.

These include £25 million for Lambeth

College, and an as-yet unknown sum being negotiated by Cornwall College – neither of which have immediate merger plans.

During a Commons select committee hearing last month, Halfon asked the FE commissioner Richard Atkins about the lack of transparency surrounding the restructuring facility.

“I don’t have responsibility for allocating those funds,” Atkins said, adding: “I would argue, as I do whenever I intervene in colleges, that openness and transparency is really important in running any organisation. And indeed, one of the things I find in the colleges I intervene in – not always, but often – there’s a lack of openness and transparency.”

Date	Amount	College
08/12/2017	£1,000,000	Cornwall College
08/12/2017	£1,650,000	St Helens College
08/12/2017	£1,500,000	Bradford College
08/12/2017	£535,969	Stoke on Trent College
08/12/2017	£1,000,000	Lambeth College
08/12/2017	£300,000	Stratford upon Avon College
08/12/2017	£475,000	Stockport College
08/12/2017	£708,804	Redcar and Cleveland College
08/12/2017	£375,000	North Shropshire College
15/12/2017	£1,350,000	Hull College
28/12/2017	£700,000	Sussex Downs College
28/12/2017	£754,433	City of Wolverhampton College
28/12/2017	£1,500,000	Bradford College
Total	£11,849,206	

How Stoke-on-Trent College was propped up by more than £500,000

Stoke-on-Trent College is almost £16 million in the red and received more than £500,000 in exceptional financial support in December alone, while it awaits the outcome of a £21.9 million application to the government restructuring facility.

In the meantime, it is “reliant on the continued availability of bank loans (in respect of which covenants have been breached) and an overdraft, together with short-term cashflow support from the Education and Skills Funding Agency”, according to its 2016/17 financial statements.

These circumstances “constitute a material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt on the group’s and the college’s ability to continue as a going concern.”

The college went through four different principals during the year – one of whom cost the college £67,000 for just over three months’ work.

An additional £150,000 was spent on “compensation for loss of office paid to former key management personnel”.

A spokesperson for the college insisted that remuneration for the top job “represented

a salary consistent with the previous year” – which was between £170,001 and £180,000, according to the accounts – but with the “addition of a one-off expenditure that was in line with the organisation’s contractual responsibilities”.

He said the college had “implemented a number of cost-saving measures in the past year to stabilise its finances”, and these “unavoidable” payments were an “element of the fresh-start process through which the college is going”.

The college would not be drawn on what this fresh start involves, but a note from the

college’s July 2017 governing board minutes indicated that it was expected to cost £550,000 in 2017/18.

The grade three college, which had an operating deficit of £1.61 million in 2016/17 and debts including a £12.75 million loan from Lloyds Bank, had two separate requests for EFS approved during the year, the accounts revealed.

The first, in February, was for £990,000, and the second, in July, was for £2.55 million.

It’s not clear if the £535,959 it received in December was part of, or in addition to, this £3.5 million.

Unlike other colleges with similarly precarious finances, Stoke-on-Trent has no plans to merge.

An FE commissioner-led structure and prospects appraisal in February “recommended a ‘fresh-start’ approach as the college had been unable to find a willing strategic partner”.

Despite this, the college is in the process of submitting a bid to the restructuring facility – a fund designed to pay for post-area review changes that colleges are unable to afford.

But the £21.9 million it has requested is intended cover the college’s debt, along with “a small short-term loan request to provide additional headroom in the context of adverse variances against forecast operational cash flows”.

Stoke-on-Trent, which slipped from ‘good’ to ‘requires improvement’ in November 2016, received a notice of concern for financial health in October 2014, which led to intervention by the FE commissioner.

That process concluded a year later, although the notice remained in place – and was joined in February last year with a notice for financial control.



The launch of new insolvency regime

Exceptional support for Bradford College twice in a single month

A struggling college was bailed out twice in December, to the tune of £1.5 million each time, FE Week has learned.

Figures revealing the amount of exceptional financial support dished out to Bradford College – which is currently in FE commissioner intervention – were published accidentally by the Department for Education last week.

No reason is given for the bailouts, and the college didn't provide one when asked for a comment – nor has it published its 2016/17 financial statements.

The grade three-rated college was hit with a financial notice to improve in November, after requesting an unspecified amount of EFS.

The FE commissioner was then sent in to carry out an assessment of the college's "capability and capacity to make the required changes and improvements", and shortly after it was announced that its chief executive, Andy Welsh, would be stepping down at the end of the academic year.

But, according to its website, Chris Jones – a former adviser to the FE commissioner – was appointed interim chief executive in January to focus on "student experience, the college's strategic recovery plan and financial

sustainability".

Bradford's finance director, Chris Malish, is also new, having replaced former post-holder David Hambleton in August last year.

Minutes from a meeting of the college corporation in July reveal little sign of the trouble to come; the college had self-assessed its financial health as 'satisfactory'.

But the college's 2015/16 accounts revealed it had £43 million in bank loans taken out to fund a number of capital projects, and concerns were raised that it would be in breach of covenant on one of these by the end of 2017/18.

And accounts for the college-sponsored Bradford College Education Trust show it to have had an operating deficit of almost £1.3 million in 2016/17, although the college is in the process of withdrawing its sponsorship of the trust.

Bradford College, which had a turnover of £53.3 million in 2015/16, slipped from 'good' to 'requires improvement' in November last year. It emerged from the west Yorkshire area review, which completed in June 2016, with a plan to remain standalone.

But, according to last November's financial notice to improve, one possible outcome of the



FE commissioner's involvement is a structure and prospects appraisal, which could see the college paired with another.

A spokesperson for the college told FE Week it had been "working closely with the ESFA and the FE commissioner to formulate a robust financial recovery plan".

"As that work is ongoing, we will not be making any further comment at this time," they added.

EFS is only available to colleges that are "encountering financial, or cash-flow, difficulties that put the continuation of provision at risk", and which have "exhausted all other options", according to ESFA policy. Any request leads to an automatic 'inadequate' financial health rating and a

referral to the FE commissioner.

It's set to be phased out with the introduction of the new FE insolvency regime later this year, proposals for which are currently under consultation.

The accidental publication of the EFS figures – which were quickly retracted – comes amid growing concerns over transparency, as a number of colleges have received multimillion-pound bailouts from the restructuring facility.

"The department does not normally publish information relating to EFS to ensure the college's financial position can be managed effectively during the period of support," a DfE spokesperson said. "Where appropriate, EFS is declared in colleges' accounts."

Government consulting on fine details of insolvency proposals

Even as the huge sums of money flowing into failing colleges have been uncovered, the government is consulting on its proposals for a college insolvency regime.

Legislation introduced as part of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 created a new education administration, which is designed to allow colleges to go bust while also protecting the needs of the learners.

The consultation, which opened in December and closes on February 12, focuses on the technical details of the process by which a college can be declared insolvent.

Once the regime comes into effect – and it's expected "late 2018", as some of the details require secondary legislation – colleges will no longer have access to exceptional financial support.

Among the issues being discussed are how the DfE and the ESFA can strengthen intervention for colleges at risk of financial failure.

In addition to the existing ESFA process, the FE commissioner's remit was recently expanded to include diagnostic assessments at colleges showing early signs of problems.

But the consultation asks for views on how "monitoring and intervention can be further

improved" and how the ESFA and the FE commissioner can "work with and support colleges to help them self-identify financial difficulties at an early stage".

It also asks for views on how a proposed period of "independent business review" – to be run alongside any ESFA or FE commissioner intervention but before a college enters education administration – might work.

The review, which the document says is "standard practice in most insolvencies of a reasonable scale", might be triggered by a "breach of covenant or an unanticipated funding need".

Local and combined authorities and local enterprise partnerships are among the stakeholders who would be consulted during the review, which would take between six and 10 weeks.

Emergency funding may be given to the college "if it is required to protect learner provision during that period", though "ideally" the review would take place before such cash was needed.

Other questions in the document relate to the technical details of the insolvency itself, including whether there should be any "specific modifications" to normal procedures

"to apply them effectively to FE bodies".

A college would only enter education administration by order of the education secretary, if administration were the "best solution" to protect the learners' interest, if it were "insolvent (or likely to become so)" and if "no other form of intervention might help the college's long-term future".

"We expect such scenarios to be rare", the document admits.

In an interview with FE Week in November, the FE commissioner Richard Atkins said that while it was "definitely possible" that a college might go bust in the future, "I don't think that's the same as the college closing its doors to students".

He expects his team to be called in to carry out a structure-and-prospects appraisal, which could lead to another institution taking over.

"It would be extremely uncomfortable for any principal or chair of a governing body to be declared insolvent. I'm hoping we never get to that point," he said.



Insolvency regime for further education and sixth-form colleges

Government technical consultation

Launch date 18 December 2017
Respond by 12 February 2018

"I'm hoping this period of independent business review will bring everybody to the position of understanding what needs to happen to secure the future of that college for the benefit of the learners and the community."

T-levels consultation: Here's what

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

It's all over. Your chance to influence the future shape of T-levels is gone, after the public consultation closed for good on Thursday.

After more than a year's delay before it launched at long last in December, the consultation ran for just 10 weeks and was made up of 45 questions.

It sought opinions on the planned implementation of the new technical qualifications, which the government claims will set a new "gold standard" in training. They're expected to emerge from 2020, but the roll-out process has been repeatedly called into question in FE Week.

1 Which of the below options for funding maths and English within the T-level programme do you think would be the most appropriate?

Option 1: Provide it from each student's T-level programme hours

Option 2: Provide the study as additional funded hours on top of their T-level hours



Option 2. English and maths should attract additional funded hours as separate certificates on top of technical qualification hours, ensuring that T-level technical qualifications are always comparable between individuals and unaffected by whether or not English and maths are also studied. Ideally English and maths should in all cases continue to be studied through the duration of a T-level, beyond the minimum stipulation of the standard, to optimise options for progression, but funding rates will require review to make this prospect viable.



English and maths should be funded on top of T-levels (option 2). This should apply to transition year learners as well. There should be opportunities to take higher level English and maths where appropriate; greater flexibility in the condition of funding would support this, freeing up staff to teach at level three.



Learners who need to improve their English and maths skills should have the opportunity to do so, whilst receiving the same amount of technical training as their peers. Otherwise, the disadvantage of poor English and maths skills could be compounded by giving these learners less time to develop technical skills, which potentially reduces their opportunities to progress. Option 2 supports providers to resource English and maths delivery, with the flexibility to integrate English and maths in ways that engage and motivate learners.

Businesses and training providers had the chance to weigh in on numerous sticking points: including how viable it would be for every T-level to include a 45-day mandatory minimum work placement as planned – a requirement described last year as "impossible" by no less than the Association of Colleges.

Respondents also discussed how they thought maths and English provision should be funded, how the proposed "transition year" would work to prepare certain learners before they start their T-levels, and what providers expect their biggest challenges to be.

FE Week asked to see responses to what we see as the six key questions in the consultation. Answers from the AoC, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, the Learning and Work Institute, and the Federation of Small Businesses feature over the following two pages.

2 What do you think the biggest challenges will be for providers in delivering new T-levels and what additional support do you think providers will need?



The availability of work placements is the single most important factor that will determine whether T-levels can go ahead either locally, or for that matter at all. It cannot be assumed that if there are skill shortages in an area, then there will be companies in the area willing to provide work placements to help address the issue.

Without the availability of work placements, nothing else matters, so while all support will be welcome, the government must be prepared to put time and money into helping and enabling providers to identify suitable placements with employers and facilitate learners getting to them.



The funding issue is a big challenge; additional funding is for more hours, not an overall increase per hour. Will it be sufficient? There are also ongoing issues with staffing when it comes to training and recruitment. We need to consider the possible lack of facilities and resources.

Stakeholder awareness is also an issue – we must ensure that we engage well with schools, employers and parents.



The biggest challenge will be implementing work placements, particularly given the scale and range of the placements that will be required. Our call for evidence identified some of these, including: supply not meeting demand, learner readiness for work placements, engaging employers, and timetabling.

Furthermore, our call for evidence identified three approaches to providing support that the DfE could consider:

- The DfE publishes guidance for FE providers and employers to ensure consistency of practice in the delivery of work placements.
- National promotion of T-levels to engage a wide audience including schools, sixth-form colleges, young people, parents/carers, employers and the FE sector. While activities should aim to raise awareness of opportunities in technical education, this should be an integral part of a wider careers strategy.

3 What support should we consider as part of a transition offer to ensure that students can progress to level three study and particularly T-levels, relating to the proposed transition year?



The current transition offer implies that a lack of maths and English are the main barriers to accessing a technical education. In turn, this may mean that learners who have achieved a grade four in English or maths, but for other reasons are not ready to progress to a T-level (such as perhaps an interrupted education, caring responsibilities, or other factors), have no transition offer available for them to work towards T-level entry.

A specific transition offer could however be aimed at learners with special education needs, and/or could provide focused discrete learning to prepare learners for level three study, ensuring the hardest to reach can be engaged.



The transition offer should be funded in line with T-levels. Learners below level three make up 46 per cent of the general FE cohort and are not homogenous. The transition offer should also focus on employability skills including English and maths with a technical/vocational hook.



One of the main challenges identified through our call for evidence is learners' readiness for a work environment. As work placements are an integral part of a T-level, learners will need support to develop employability skills to ensure they can appropriately engage with this aspect of their qualification.

FE Week

SECTOR LEADER CALLS TIMESCALES "IMPOSSIBLE"

DfE RESEARCH WARNS OF EMPLOYER "FATIGUE"

INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY STILL JUST WORDS

ARE T-LEVEL PLANS IN TROUBLE?

> Greening begs big business for help with "substantive" work placements

> Promises an "army of skilled young people" via 15 technical routes

An FE Week front page from last July exposing grave doubts about T-level plans

the sector really thinks

4

Should we review qualifications at level two and below, based on the principles that these qualifications should support progression into employment or higher-level study, and have a value in their own right alongside T-levels?



Level two is an important entry point for those who have been let down at school and have not attained it at the end of compulsory education. More specifically, many occupations require entry at level two no matter the prior learning, so they should be considered as having a standalone value rather than merely as progression vehicles towards level three.

Many technical vocations have not been taught at all in the compulsory education period, making the availability of level two training even more important post-16. Precluding level two from inclusion in the suite of T-levels therefore risks losing a rung to social mobility.



The government should incentivise some level two qualifications that are well aligned to routes through extra hours and funding. There are already technical certificates available in this space, but more research needs to be done to check whether this is the way forward.

Regarding a level three review, this needs to be robust and include the voice of all key stakeholders. Applied general qualifications support social mobility and progression to higher education. There needs to be an impact assessment on any potential changes to the current qualifications on offer.



Yes we agree. This needs to be considered as part of technical education reform, of which T-levels are a part. Provision at level two and below are the foundation for further and higher-level learning and therefore act as a stepping stone for many learners.



Yes. Level two qualifications play an important role in opening up opportunities to individuals who may have additional needs or face challenging circumstances. Many small businesses offer opportunities at this level.

FSB research from 2016 found that 45 per cent of small firms with apprentices offered level two apprenticeships, demonstrating the demand from businesses for programmes and qualifications at this level.

However, the FSB agrees that qualifications at level two and below should be reviewed in order to ensure that they adequately prepare individuals to progress into employment or higher-level study, and to address concerns raised in the Sainsbury Review around the ability of low-level vocational qualifications to enhance career prospects.

5

Do you agree with the proposed approach integrating the work placement within the T-level programme?



The work placement is the most crucial part of the T-level concept and must provide a worthwhile experience for both the learner and their potential employers if T-levels are to gain traction.

The core competencies of apprenticeship and traineeship providers should therefore be a cornerstone in the building of a new strand of provision in which employer placements are key. AELP believes that key elements of T-level standards should be required to be demonstrated in all work placements for that T-level, rather than let the content of the work placement be designed at an individual provider/employer level, which will emerge from a sector-by-sector approach to design.



The approach to integrating work placements within T-levels comes with a major challenge of employer engagement, especially at an SME level. Rural and urban environments will have different challenges in terms of access and competition for placements. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined. Flexibility will be required, as it is in many high-performing vocational and education training systems to meet the needs of all students and employers. Paying students for work placements needs to be considered more carefully.



Yes we agree. Participating in relevant and high-quality work experience improves learners' employability skills, and will ensure that T-levels remain competitive and valued by employers alongside apprenticeships.

Employers and providers are supportive of work placements as part of the qualifications and any concerns are related to how these would be implemented.



No. FSB fully supports the inclusion of a substantial, high-quality work placement for all students undertaking a T-level. Time spent in a working environment helps to develop job-specific and employability skills that equip young people to successfully progress into employment or pursue further study.

However, our research shows that over a quarter (27 per cent) of FSB members believe that schools and colleges do not acknowledge business considerations and constraints, such as time and resourcing issues, when trying to engage firms in activities like work experience.

It is for this reason that we are encouraged to see government acknowledge the need for flexibility around the timing and pattern of the 45-60 day placement to suit the requirements of differing industries, but also the capacity of smaller firms to offer work placements in one long block.



Implementation of T level programmes

Government consultation

Launch date 30 November 2017
Respond by 08 February 2018

6

Do you have any comments about how we might approach the funding of T-levels? How could the funding formula be adapted to distribute funding for T-levels?



AELP supports funding systems that allow responsive growth in the early stages before settling to a more predictable approach once uptake has stabilised. Partnerships will be key in making T-levels work, particularly in the early stages between those best placed to deliver classroom-based learning and those best placed to manage and administer work placements.

It is vital that funding flows do not limit the ability of the infrastructure to partner or subcontract in ways that encourage high-quality delivery models from emerging. There are also many independent providers delivering innovative study programmes that could form the basis of delivery, and more should be encouraged using a flexible funding system that is provider-neutral and open to all.



The current funding mechanism and formula works well.

CBI's thoughts on T-levels

The Confederation of British Industry did not share its responses to the consultation.

Instead, it provided the following comment from Ed Richardson, its senior policy adviser for skills.

"T-levels have the potential to be revolutionary, opening up new routes to skilled work," he said.

"But they can't be rushed, or driven by Whitehall targets. Learning the lessons of the apprenticeship levy will help – this has to be a partnership.

"The government needs to work with business on curriculum design and work placements, involving a wider range of businesses in their plans.

"Key priorities for firms are delivering sufficient high-quality work placements, ensuring that there is flexible support for all learners to progress onto level three and ensuring a universal offer on provision in all parts of the country."

Pressure mounts on SLC over loans scandal

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

The Student Loans Company is feeling the strain of an FE loans scandal that has left hundreds of learners with huge debts and no qualifications, as their repayments reprieve draws to a close.

FE Week has been campaigning for the past year to have debts from advanced learning loans written off for the blameless former learners of several collapsed training providers.

They had been left unable to finish courses after three firms, John Frank Training, Edudo Ltd and Focus Training & Development Ltd, collapsed in late 2016 and early 2017.

The SLC granted them a 12-month deferment on repayments, but now led by Pater Lauener, who was boss of the Education and Skills Funding Agency when the scandals broke, it will not say whether the debts will be cancelled after the deferment period closes at the end of March.

The chair of the parliamentary education committee, Robert Halfon, who was skills minister when the providers folded and who now feels free to speak his mind, is trying to encourage more decisive action.

“If the providers have failed through no

fault of the students, and there isn’t adequate and accessible alternative provision, it is utterly essential that they should not be made to repay the loans,” he said.

Labour’s shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden heaped further pressure on both the SLC and ESFA through a parliamentary question he lodged this week.

He asked new education secretary Damian Hinds “if he will make it his policy to write off advanced learner loan debts for former learners affected by the collapse of John Frank Training Ltd, Edudo Ltd, and Focus Training & Development”.

Former JFT learner Asim Shaheen, 50, was among the ex-learners hit by the collapse. The chef still had an outstanding debt of £8,000 after the London company went bust.

The Skills Funding Agency offered to send him to South Cheshire College to complete his training.

But this just wasn’t a viable option because it is 25 miles from where he lives. He says he has been “left completely in the lurch”.

FE Week soon found many more learners affected by the collapse of Hampshire-based Edudo Ltd and Darlington’s Focus Training & Development Ltd.

Our #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign, which was launched last February in Parliament with Mr Shaheen a special guest, has led the charged to have the debts

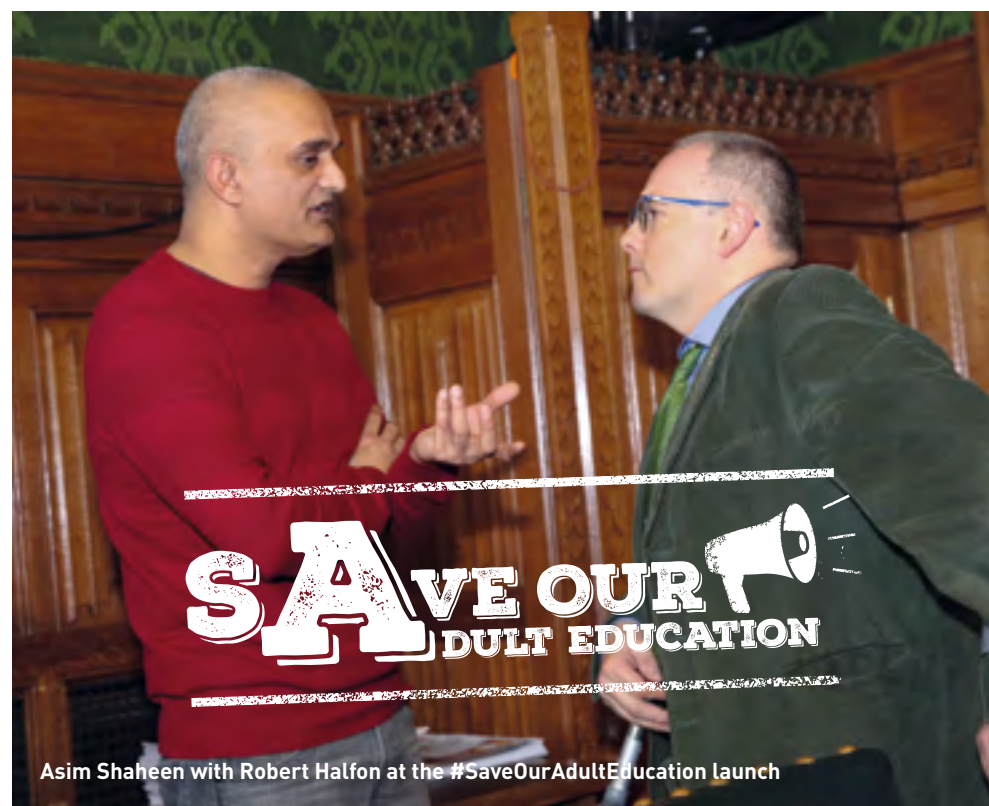
scrapped.

The ESFA has issued a statement to FE Week on the situation with the loans.

“We have ensured learners have not entered repayment in this tax year, where there was a need to allow them time to move

providers,” a spokesperson said. “The SLC will be contacting learners again shortly regarding next steps.

“Our priority continues to provide learners with alternatives, if their provider is no longer able to deliver training.”



Adult education budget climbdown cost £16m

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

The government has had to pump an extra £16 million into the adult education budget to appease a group of training providers who threatened legal action over last year’s controversial tender.

The original procurement had total pot of around £110 million to use this academic year.

The process culminated in widespread fury when the results were released in August, as many providers unexpectedly lost out on huge sums due to the sheer volume of applicants.

But things changed on September 29, after a coalition of furious providers threatened court action and caused a change in the rules.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency chief executive at the time, Peter Lauener (pictured) promptly found extra cash to bring most AEB contract values for 2017/18 up to 75 per cent of previous allocations.

New figures, obtained via a Freedom of Information request, shows this extra funding amounted to £16 million, which was shared between 96 successful providers.

A Department for Education spokesperson told FE Week at the time it was always “our priority” to act in the best interests of

learner.

That was why “we have confirmed additional funds to support providers in delivering quality adult education across the country”.

In the ESFA’s original policy, published in January 2017, providers which did not bid or were unsuccessful were to be offered a contract worth no more than £589,148.

But the ESFA wrote to those providers on September 5, telling them that they would now receive 75 per cent of the value of their previous contract to use in 2017/18.

Many believe this U-turn came as a result of the special treatment offered to Learndirect, which withdrew its tender bid earlier in the year.

The nation’s biggest FE provider had a contract worth £60 million last year, but received roughly £45 million to recruit and train adult learners until July 2018, even though it was slapped with an ‘inadequate’ rating from Ofsted in August – a situation which usually causes the DfE to terminate a provider’s funding.

Learndirect’s boss Andy Palmer even

admitted he was “surprised” by this large allocation after his provider’s tactical withdrawal during a recent Public Accounts Committee hearing.

At this point, other providers that had been successful in the tender had seen their AEBs slashed.

For example Somerset Skills & Learning, a provider rated ‘good’ by Ofsted a history of more than 100 years, was awarded a contract worth just three per cent of its previous budget. It later lobbied with MPs to overturn the decision.

Other providers rallied together and geared up for collective action against the government.

This coalition claimed it had suffered financial loss and damage as a result of the tender – and believed it had sufficient grounds to launch a judicial review against then education secretary Justine Greening, or even appeal to the EU Commission.

They alleged that the ESFA was negligent of – or even complicit in – corrupt practice under the Public Procurement Act 2015, which states that a procurement must not be interfered with once underway.

They argued that had they known the ESFA would change its rules and reduce allocations by just 25 per cent for those that did not participate, many would have ignored the bidding round to secure sufficient funding to survive.



NEWS

Ofsted promises monitoring visits for subcontractors

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Ofsted will deploy monitoring visits in a tougher new approach to subcontracting, its most senior director for FE and skills has revealed.

Starting from February 12, it will begin to undertake "a sample of risk-based monitoring visits to directly funded providers to look specifically at management and quality of subcontracted provision for specific subcontractors", according to a letter from Paul Joyce.

The move appears to be a reaction to the mounting demands for a crackdown led by Commons education committee chair Robert Halfon.

The former skills minister said last November that there should be a "wholesale review" into why Ofsted is not directly inspecting subcontractors.

"This letter is to inform you that Ofsted will be increasing its focus on the management and quality of subcontracted provision," Mr Joyce said in his letter.

These monitoring visit reports will be published, and will focus solely on provision

delivered by the subcontractors.

Reports into direct contractors will also contain "more detail about the quality and management of subcontracted provision and may refer to named subcontractors".

This is the third wave of new monitoring visits, which have traditionally concentrated on grade four providers, unveiled by Ofsted this academic year.

The chief inspector announced in November that Ofsted would conduct early monitoring visits at new providers entering the apprenticeship market.

Amanda Spielman was speaking six months after the launch of the register of apprenticeship training providers, which put hundreds of new providers, some with no experience whatsoever of running apprenticeships, in a position to receive millions.

"I have asked my inspectors over the coming months to conduct early monitoring visits to a sample of new providers," she said. "This will allow us to evaluate how well prepared these providers are."

The inspectorate launched a consultation in the same month seeking views on monitoring visits to FE providers judged 'requires improvement'.

Additionally, we will be increasing our focus on subcontracted provision by undertaking a sample of risk-based monitoring visits to directly funded providers to look specifically at the management and quality of subcontracted provision for specific subcontractors.

These monitoring visits will cover similar ground to inspections with respect to quality and management of subcontracted provision but will focus solely on provision delivered by the specific subcontractor(s).

Yours sincerely



Under old rules, providers given a grade three were given support and challenge visits, and their letters went unpublished until they were reinspected, generally within two years.

Ofsted sought opinion on whether it should get stricter by making its monitoring visits public.

Visits to direct contractors fall short of standalone inspections of individual subcontractors, though the Ofsted handbook was updated in September 2016 to add a line reserving "the right to inspect and grade any subcontractor and its provision as a separate entity".

However, a spokesperson told

FE Week that if monitoring visits find cause for a standalone inspection, Ofsted still "reserves the right" to conduct one.

Mr Joyce added in his letter that the extra efforts made to monitor subcontracting standards "may entail additional

inspection resource", especially on inspections where the directly funded provider uses multiple subcontractors.

This may add extra strain on Ofsted's limited resources.

Ms Spielman has repeatedly warned of the growing "challenge"

Ofsted is facing, as a result of numerous new expectations and the influx of new apprenticeship providers.



Paul Joyce

NOT TO BE MISSED

UPCOMING EVENTS

LONDON

DATE: 16 MARCH 2018

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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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NEWS

National finalists announced for the inaugural AAC Apprenticeship Awards

FE WEEK REPORTER
@FEWEEK

After an overwhelming response to our call for nominations, the shortlist for the inaugural AAC Apprenticeship Awards has been announced.

Earlier this month the judging panel met in central London to deliberate on the eventual winners; over 250 organisations submitted nominations this year, from colleges and training providers to the Home Office and BT.

FE Week and AELP are delighted to announce the shortlists for the AAC Apprenticeship Awards in association with CMI, and the national results will be held at next month's Annual Apprenticeship Conference to recognise the very best in apprenticeship provision.

Those shortlisted in each category will be recognised at a prestigious reception, at the start of National Apprenticeships Week. Robert Halfon, the education select committee chair and a former skills minister, will meanwhile host a reception at the House of Commons.

At the reception, regional winners will be crowned in the 'apprentice employer', 'apprenticeship provider' and 'promoting

apprenticeships campaign' categories. The winners of the national awards will be announced at a glittering ceremony and dinner at the Annual Apprenticeships Conference in Birmingham on March 22.

Shane Mann, publisher of FE Week and chair of the Judging panel, described the awards as "a great opportunity to celebrate the amazing work of employers and providers in the apprenticeship sector".

"We were delighted to receive so many nominations for the inaugural awards," he added. "It's a testament to the world-class apprenticeship opportunities provided by our sector that the standard of applications was so high, and the judges had a challenging job to determine the winners.

"We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to submit a nomination and our judges for their time and consideration. I can't wait to kick off the celebrations at our parliamentary reception at the start of National Apprenticeship Week".

Mark Dawe, chief executive of FE Week's awards partner AELP, who helped with the judging, said, "it was very difficult to choose winners in each category".

"It's fantastic to get so many applications in the first year. I was blown away by the range of amazing work being done by providers and employers," he continued. "We partnered

The categories in full

The national and regional award categories are:

- Promoting apprenticeships campaign of the Year (North, South, London & East, Midlands)
- Apprentice employer of the year (North, South, London & East, Midlands)
- Apprenticeship provider of the year (North, South, London & East, Midlands, Nations) (Regional winners will be announced on March 5)

The national award categories:

- Digital apprenticeship provider of the year
- Construction apprenticeship provider of the year

- Engineering and manufacturing apprenticeship provider of the year
- Business and administrative apprenticeship provider of the year
- Promoting apprenticeships campaign of the year
- Apprentice employer of the year
- Apprenticeship provider of the year
- Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships (employer or provider)
- Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships (individual)

with FE Week on these awards as a way demonstrate the amazing work done by providers in supporting their learners and employers – we certainly have many examples of outstanding work demonstrated across the sector."

Robert Halfon said the awards are "a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate the excellent work going on in apprenticeships".

"I want to offer my congratulations to all those nominated, and I look forward to welcoming those shortlisted to parliament during National Apprenticeship Week next month," he added.

The AAC Conference will run from March 21 to March 23 at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham. National award winners will be announced at the AAC Gala



Dinner on Thursday, March 22.

The conference programme is created in partnership with the DfE, and in a close working relationship with bodies including AELP, the Institute for Apprenticeships, the University Vocational Awards Council and Ofsted, making it the flagship national apprenticeship conference for employers and providers.

The shortlist

Apprentice Employer of the Year		Sponsored by City & Guilds ilm digitalme
BT Greene King	London and East	
Clarkson Evans Ltd Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Midlands	
Sheffield City Council Lookers plc	North	
Specsavers Optical Superstores Capgemini	South	

Apprenticeship Provider of the Year		Sponsored by ncfe.
Babcock Training Ltd Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)	London and East	
Nova Training Walsall College	Midlands	
Bridgend College Cardiff and Vale College	Nations (Scotland, Wales & NI)	
Gen2 Barnsley College	North	
The Cornwall College Group Abingdon & Witney College	South	

Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Apprenticeships (Employer or Provider)		Sponsored by CMI
MiddletonMurray Learning Curve Group		

Digital Apprenticeship provider of the Year		Sponsored by Jisc
Digital Skills Solutions		
Firebrand Training		

Engineering & Manufacturing Apprenticeship Provider of the Year		Sponsored by City & Guilds
Gen2		
Babcock Skills Development & Training Limited		

Promoting Apprenticeships campaign of the Year		Sponsored by SMARTAPPRENTICES
Just IT Training Home Office	London and East	
Nova Training Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group	Midlands	
Sheffield City Council BL Training Ltd	North	
EDF Energy Kent County Council	South	

Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Apprenticeships (Individual)		Sponsored by CMI
Jacqui Canton, Deputy Principal, Abingdon and Witney College Phil White, Head of Learning and Development, United Utilities		



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EDITORIAL

College sector shows signs of recovery



Our analysis of colleges' Ofsted grades suggests a significant improvement in the past five months.

By the end of August last year, the sector's grades had declined for three years in a row, with only 69 per cent of colleges at 'good' or 'outstanding'.

But with a flood of college inspections improving from a grade three to two since then, including four in the last three weeks, this has now risen to 74 per cent.

This leaves around 50 colleges with a 'requires improvement', many of which will now face an FE commissioner "diagnostic assessment".

And with the offer of support from the new National Leaders of FE and a £15 million strategic college improvement fund, there should be no excuses for complacency.

Sure, colleges are complex organisations often rattled by policy shifts and tight finances, but young people, adults and employers should still expect to receive high-quality education and training.

So let's focus on achieving continual improvement – after all, colleges would expect nothing less of their learners.

Nick Linford, Editor

news@feweek.co.uk

QUALS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS U-TURN TWEETS:

Paul Eeles @PaulEeles

Common sense prevails & the value of Qualifications to apprentices finally recognised. The apprenticeship reforms finally make sense for both employer and learner @awardingbodies fully supports this sensible development by @IFAteched

Robert Halfon MP @halfon4harlowMP

Not just good news, @FEWeek But GREAT news. Something I believed should happen and wanted to do...

Ali Orr @_AliOrr_

Mandatory qualifications policy to be extended to degree apprenticeships - will see some degrees removed from standards where not required by professional bodies or regulation #fasterbetter

Lorraine Osborne @lorraineo73

I am so pleased and relieved, I have been campaigning for this since they announced they wouldn't be qualifications. This will enable all apprentices to have social mobility as well as capability and make apprenticeship equally valuable.



A new dawn for qualifications in standards

JUDE BURKE

@JUDEBURKE77

The Institute for Apprenticeships has confirmed a major U-turn that should allow mandatory technical qualifications to be included in new apprenticeships, in a move widely welcomed by the sector.

The change was announced at a special IfA briefing event, days after it was exclusively revealed on the front page of the previous FE Week.

"I think we've recognised that where a qualification doesn't do damage to end-point assessment, and doesn't duplicate it, but is a good thing and adds value to it, then we don't have a problem with it," said Richard Guy, the IfA's deputy director for quality.

Employer groups can submit proposals for approval under the new rules – which will apply to both existing and new standards – from the April 11 application window, the IfA confirmed.

"Common sense prevails and the value of qualifications to apprentices is finally recognised," tweeted Paul Eeles, the chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies. "The apprenticeship reforms finally make sense for both employer and learner."

"I hope this represents the start of a fundamental shift in attitude at the IfA now that we have Sir Gerry Berragan at the helm, where new apprenticeship standards really are

employer-led," said Graham Hastings-Evans, managing director of awarding body NOCN.

Sir Gerry was appointed as the new chief executive of the IfA last November, and wasted no time in making it "faster and better".

John Hyde, executive chairman at HIT Training, said adding mandatory qualifications to the new hospitality apprenticeships would give "confidence to learners and their parents considering a career in this industry".

"City & Guilds or BTEC are much stronger brand images than a government apprenticeship certificate signed by current minister," he added.

Kirstie Donnelly, the City & Guilds managing director, acknowledged that "you would expect us to be pleased at this latest U-turn", but she warned that "it seems to go against any streamlining of the system that the government is trying to introduce".

And Rod Bristow, president of Pearson UK – which sells BTECs – said that including qualifications in apprenticeships was "an important way to recognise the achievements of the learner".

Strict rules limiting the use of qualifications in standards have frustrated the sector for years.

Previously, the criteria only permitted a mandatory qualification in an apprenticeship where it was a regulatory requirement, required by a professional body.

It otherwise applied if a qualification was such a "must-have in the labour market that

an apprentice would be disadvantaged in job applications without it".

The guidance now allows for an "off-the-job technical qualification that does not accredit full occupational competence and would either add breadth to the apprenticeship or provide structure for the off-the-job training".

The blanket ban on allowing employer groups to submit a standard for approval that includes a qualification still in development – introduced last summer – has also been lifted.

Another newly announced change related to the timing of funding-band recommendations, which aims to "shorten the time a standard spends waiting for approval for delivery".

The Institute's "faster and better" programme also aims to simplify aspects of the development process by "changing" some of the policy criteria for approving apprenticeship occupations and standards.

It also brings in improved trailblazer guidance and "intensive" trailblazer workshops.

The skills minister Anne Milton recently admitted that "some oil on the wheels" was needed.

"We have listened and responded to what trailblazer groups have been telling us since the Institute's launch last April: that the apprenticeships standards development process needs to be faster and better," said Sir Gerry.

"These improvements should address these concerns."

COMMENTS

Off-the-job qualifications can be included in apprenticeships, IfA confirms

This is a sensible decision, even if it's just to provide a structure for deliverers undertaking a new way of facilitating learning and giving credence to an as-yet-unknown model.

I think adding other quals such as tech certs to standards is driven by awarding bodies mostly due to their incomes being affected by the introduction of standards. Standards have technical and theory assessment so I don't see the point adding more!

Noel Johnson

Noel Johnson

Non-levy apprenticeship funding process was as fair as possible

I think that in many areas people were not aware of the regional percentage of cutback which in turn placed some under the threshold. I can show the minister two providers five miles apart in one region the other in another both doing the same qualifications and one won, but the other did not due to the percentage cut and both did the same turnover.

Poorly thought-out process on every level. The introduction of the RoATP and all employers accessing apprenticeship training through the apprenticeship service should have happened at the same time. In essence this current situation is for a period of 12 months and has severe implications for the small providers who have been providing 'good' and 'outstanding' provision for years.

Steve Lawrence

Jill Nelson



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



Salary: Negotiable

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) is the best college in Staffordshire and, increasingly, one of the most successful in the country. Comprising Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford Colleges the group has £40m+ turnover with 5,500+ full time students, 1,500 apprentices and 500 HE learners. Performance – both for learner responsive and apprenticeship delivery – is comfortably within the top 10% of GFE colleges nationally.

We are seeking a manager to lead our Faculty of Professional Studies which comprises provision across two campuses in Accounting, Business, Computing, Travel and Access plus Hospitality and Hair & Beauty at our Stafford campus.

Reporting to the Director of Curriculum & Performance, this is an opportunity for an ambitious and dynamic manager with a first class understanding of curriculum delivery in the professional/service

industries and the ability to lead a diverse staff team to achieve outstanding levels of performance.

This college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All college based positions are subject to enhanced DBS check and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications from all sectors of the community.

How to apply

To apply for this role please go to www.nulc.ac.uk/jobs and click on 'Apply' to complete an online application form.

Closing Date: 25 February 2018

Interview Date: 7 March 2018

Apprenticeship Account Manager



Salary: £30,838 - £35,947

The School of Apprentices at London South Bank University has created one of the most successful Higher and Degree Apprenticeship functions of any university. We are currently managing 90 employer accounts that are sending us over 300 apprentices.

They are now looking to recruit an Apprenticeship Account Manager to join the Apprenticeships Team to support the business development function of the Team.

The candidate must be able to establish and maintain strong client relationships providing a full account management service. The candidate will work alongside the Business Development Manager to maintain excellent working relationships with internal stakeholders and the wider LSBU Schools.

If you feel that you have the correct skills for this role then please visit <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/jobs>

Application closing date: 25-2-18

Interviews will take place 5-3-18

If you would like to discuss this role please contact Neeta Barot on neeta.barot@lsbu.ac.uk

Apprenticeship Sales Manager



Salary: £36,891 - £43,175

The School of Apprentices at London South Bank University has created one of the most successful Higher and Degree Apprenticeship functions of any university. We are currently managing 90 employer accounts that are sending us over 300 apprentices.

They are now looking to recruit an Apprenticeship Sales Manager to join the Apprenticeships Team to support the business development function of the Team. You'll be part of a successful Apprenticeship Team ensuring that the University meets its apprentice recruitment targets.

The candidate will be someone who's able to create new opportunities by developing an understanding of employer's apprenticeships needs, creating and implementing sales plans and cross selling to existing clients.

The role will include meeting clients working with senior level staff within all sectors (such as HR Directors) and undertaking consultative phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings, as well as attending university and industry events.

If you feel that you have the correct skills for this role then please visit <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/jobs>

Application closing date: 25-2-18

Interviews will take place 5-3-18

If you would like to discuss this role please contact Neeta Barot on neeta.barot@lsbu.ac.uk

Director of Business & Finance

based in Oswestry, Shropshire offering an annual salary of circa £52,000.



Derwen College is an Ofsted "Outstanding" and CQC "good" college. We support students with learning difficulties and disabilities to live the life they want and to be as independent as they can be - our aim is to recruit the best possible staff to deliver this first class experience to our students.

We currently have an exciting opportunity for a Director of Business & Finance to join our senior leadership team. This role will play a critical role in partnering the senior leadership team in strategic decision making and contributing to the College's overall success by effectively managing all financial activities and driving new business opportunities.

Person Specification:

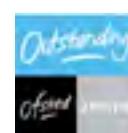
- Strong Commercial Business Acumen
- Qualified and experienced Accountant
- Substantial experience of key strategic financial reporting, business development and charitable financial regulations
- Have a dynamic and effective leadership style

We can offer the right candidate a well-resourced working environment, situated in a beautiful rural setting. We offer a fantastic array of employee benefits including on-site shopping, leisure facilities, final salary pension, substantial annual leave, and extensive continual professional development.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and adults at risk and expect all employees to share this commitment. We are a Disability Confident employer and offer a guaranteed interview scheme for suitable applicants.

Please apply with your CV and covering letter to: natalie.bellis@derwen.ac.uk

Closing Date: 28th February 2018



Hours: 37.5 Per week
Job Type: Full-time
Salary: £24,000 per annum
Close Date: 23 February 2018

ICS Learn is the world's most experienced distance learning organisation. We have been a pioneer in teaching skills and qualifications at a distance for over 128 years, giving students the opportunity to learn while earning and to fulfil their ambitions.

We have exciting new opportunities for HR and Accountancy Apprenticeship Assessors. These roles will be primarily home based in the London/SE Region. You will be well organised, with the ability to prioritise and meet agreed deadlines. At the same time, you should bring a flexible approach to working hours.

You will have A1 or equivalent and have experience in training and assessing Apprenticeships up to Level 5. You will have a passion about education, are highly motivated, enthusiastic and have a commitment to learner achievement and success.

Duties Include: -

- Carry out effective initial assessment with all potential learners including functional skills
- Induct the learner into the Apprenticeship
- Provide guidance and tuition on the course and e-portfolio
- Assess and sign off candidate e-portfolios
- Co-ordinate combining reviews and work based observations
- Ensure learners' outcomes are achieved on time
- Retain information regarding starts, leavers, and outcomes to enable accurate reporting of statistical and financial information
- Deal with learner or employer queries efficiently and professionally
- Meet external standards
- Willing to travel throughout the London/SE Region and Glasgow

Applicants should submit CV and cover letter to:
Margaret McLuckie - margaret.mcluckie@icslearn.co.uk



Swarthmore
friendly learning

Curriculum Manager

£36,017.28 per annum

We are looking to recruit a highly motivated, experienced, flexible and enthusiastic Curriculum Manager to manage the English, maths, ESOL, and Arts programmes at Swarthmore.

To be considered for this role you will need to hold a relevant teaching qualification (PTLLS, CTLLS, DTLLS, PGCE, Cert Ed) and a degree, preferably in a related subject area. You will have successful experience of running a department, planning programmes, managing a team, quality assurance, community outreach and teaching in a related area.

Swarthmore is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. The centre is actively committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all through education and therefore encourages applications from all regardless of age, disability, economic status, gender, race, religion and beliefs or sexual orientation. Successful candidates will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) Disclosure Check.

A full job description, person specification and application forms are available on our website at <http://www.swarthmore.org.uk/vacancies>

Please note we do not accept CVs

Closing date: 12 noon Monday 5th March 2018

Interviews w/c 12th March 2018

Applications to Wendy Bloom, Swarthmore Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square, Leeds, LS3 1AD
wendy.bloom@swarthmore.org.uk



CIS Manager



King Edward VI College
Stourbridge

King Edward VI College in Stourbridge, West Midlands is a vibrant sixth form college committed to continuously improving its strong educational and pastoral provision. The College has over 2000 students studying academic A levels. Placing our students at the centre of everything we do, our overriding priority is their welfare, development and continuing success.

Position: CIS Manager

Location: Stourbridge, West Midlands

Contract type: Permanent, full-time

Salary: £40,875 to £44,714 per annum

About the role:

King Edward VI College is seeking to appoint an experienced CIS (College Information System) Manager to oversee the College's data and IT provision. This is an exciting role that requires leadership and creativity to build on current successes. The post holder will serve on the college leadership team.

It is an interesting and varied role within a busy office, which is centrally located within the College. The post holder will support the College in its aim to provide the highest quality education and experience for students

and staff and to ensure we meet our statutory data requirements. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone wanting to lead both registry and IT teams, with a desire to innovate in a supportive and encouraging environment.

About You:

The successful candidate will be educated to degree level or have relevant professional qualification and will have significant student data management experience in the education sector and an understanding of the IT systems generally.

Additionally, you will also have experience working with further education proprietary data systems (e.g. Unit-e, ESFA systems, ProAchieve) and experience of establishing, monitoring and improving quality standards and service requirements. You will also have knowledge of examination systems.

Please visit our website <http://bit.ly/2hzuUlt> for more information on the post and details of how to apply.

Please note that the **closing date** of the vacancy is midday **Monday 19 February 2018**.



Finance & Payroll Manager

Department:

Shared Services/Finance

Report to:

Managing Director /Financial Director

Manager:

Managing Director

Salary:

Negotiable

Job Role

Main point of contact for Directors regarding all aspects of budgeting, ensuring that management accounts and related information are readily available for audit. Main Duties involve managing pay roll administration, financial processing and ESFA accounting and Financial Audits. Contributing to SAR, QIP and Ofsted preparation/Inspection.

Key Performance Indicators

- Timely payments of Payroll & Invoices
- Queries on payroll
- Monthly reports identifying areas at risk for SLT
- Managing CPD
- Time Management
- Prioritising Workload

Qualifications/Experience

Professional Finance Qualification at Degree level, minimum of 2 years in FE sector financial role and knowledge of Maytas and/or similar systems.

Quality and Compliance Manager

Department:

Quality

Report to:

Managing Director/Training Director

Manager:

Managing Director

Salary:

Negotiable

Job Role

To ensure PTS LTD meets the relevant quality standards of the necessary/required standards demanded by Professional Bodies, Funders, ESFA, Ofsted and Learners. To ensure contract compliance is managed and rigorous. Contributing to SAR,QIP and Ofsted preparation/Inspection.

Key Performance Indicators

- Gaining new standards/awards to be identified/ agreed by SLT
- Maintain/ Renewal of current standards/awards
- Production of audit reports with action plans
- Prioritising workloads
- Manage your own self- development /Continuous Professional Development which includes webinars.

Qualifications/Experience

Degree Level in relevant subject area, minimum of 2 years working in the FE sector in a similar role and knowledge/experience of Maytas/etrack or similar systems.

Please send CV's to

Andreaw@ptstrainingacademy.co.uk

or ring **07943215845** for further information.

<http://www.ptstrainingacademy.co.uk>



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+ Otley
College**

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for future industry leaders

Principal & Chief Executive

Attractive remuneration package • Based Ipswich or Norwich

As part of our attractive and unique remuneration package, the College can offer a range of financial support options for Principal accommodation.

Easton and Otley College is one of the UK's largest independent colleges specialising in land-based studies. Our priority is to offer all our students an inspiring and innovative learning environment. Focused on our two campuses in Norfolk and Suffolk we operate at the heart of the largest sector of one of the fastest growing regions in the UK. With over 4,000 students and a turnover of c£25m pa we want to extend our impact and influence across the region, and nationally, based as we are in one of the best places in the UK to live, work and learn.

We have been through a challenging period, but with a new Chair and a fully committed and engaged Board, we are demonstrating clear and decisive leadership in implementing a robust recovery plan with clear targets and timelines for growth.

As incoming Principal with a record of exceptional leadership qualities, you will help to drive recovery and growth, to realise our ambition to be a national exemplar in shaping the future of our sector, and to be a college of first choice for great professional careers.

You will bring an entrepreneurial approach to tackling internal and external challenges, together with an empathy and understanding of the College's mission and purpose. We are looking for exemplary candidates and are open to applications from the public and private sectors.

This is an exciting and career enhancing opportunity for an individual with an outstanding track record of leadership and management. You will bring the strategic skills to set out a bold vision for sustainability and future growth. Your commercial leadership skills will enable you to think creatively about new business opportunities and develop further the culture of robust and innovative thinking. Adept at managing external relationships, whilst providing strong and inspirational leadership internally, will require a candidate of integrity, intellect, impeccable judgement and charisma. Above all you must bring a commitment to the learning community of the east of England, driving standards of high quality education and life-long learning to the benefit of all; students are at the heart of all we do.

To find out more, please visit our dedicated microsite at **www.eastonandotley.leadingtheway.com** For an informal and confidential discussion, please contact our advising consultants at GatenbySanderson: **Paul Aristides** on **020 7426 3964** or **Jo Boardman** on **07834 030501**.

Closing date is 12 February 2018.

Final interviews will be held on w/c 5 March 2018.

GatenbySanderson



city college
plymouth



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE & PRINCIPAL - Competitive Salary

City College Plymouth is a significant player in the economy, skills and employment arenas of the South West of England. As the only general FE college in the thriving city of Plymouth, the college is well positioned to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Following the announcement of our current Chief Executive and Principal to retire at the end of the academic year, we are looking for an exceptional individual to lead us into the next phase of our development.

Our next Chief Executive and Principal will drive and deliver strong outcomes across all aspects of the organisation whilst using their expert ambassadorial and stakeholder relationship skills to position the college to excel locally and regionally.

We have appointed FE Associates to support us in this significant appointment.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact Samantha.Bunn@fea.co.uk for an initial conversation.

Further details can be obtained from our microsite: <https://plymouthleadership.fea.co.uk>

Closing date: Wednesday 21st February 2018 at noon.

Interview dates: Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th March 2018.

“Excellent venue,
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great networking
opportunities and
fabulous gala dinner!”

Fabienne Bailey, Stockton
Learning and Skills Service
previous AAC delegate

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Inspector, Ofsted



Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair, Education Select
Committee, House of
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Sir Gerry Berragan
CEO, Institute for
Apprenticeships



Sir Vince Cable MP
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Image: BBC broadcaster & journalist Kirsty Wark chairing AAC Conference in 2017.

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EXPERTS



ANTHONY
ELGEY

General manager, MP Futures

The IfA's qualifications fix is not a win for everyone

The sector cheered when the IfA said it would allow qualifications in standards once again, but not all is as it seems, according to Anthony Elgey, who has been involved in several trailblazers in the mineral products industry

It seems the sector's celebrations over this week's Institute for Apprenticeships announcement, that qualifications would be permitted in apprenticeship standards, were premature. The new rule allows only for the inclusion of qualifications that test knowledge, which means the IfA is still not listening to what employers are asking for.

Swathes of employers in all kinds of trailblazers are saying they would like vocational qualifications mandated in standards, especially those which test on-the-job competence. Many sectors have to demonstrate competence to the Health and Safety Executive. In the extractives sector this is achieved by gaining a vocational qualification derived from national occupational standards.

But the real puzzle is why first the DfE, and now the IfA, are both so stubbornly opposed to vocational qualifications.

One reason, given by the IfA at a recent briefing, was that it "really doesn't want them", given that they duplicate end-point assessments. But could it not also be argued that EPA duplicates an existing regulated vocational qualification assessment process – and that this should be seen as a great opportunity instead of a threat to EPA?

The fact of the matter is vocational qualifications have been approved by the government regulator as a robust, reliable way of assessing the skills, knowledge and competences that are required for particular roles.

The more likely explanation might be that the people at the IfA who are drafting the guidance do not fully understand vocational qualifications. Its own website guidance refers to NVQs in the context of unacceptable qualifications: "a qualification which accredits occupational competence, for example an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification). Summative assessment in these qualifications duplicates EPA and costs a relatively large amount of money to deliver, drawing resources away from training."

NVQs do not even exist anymore. Over the last 10 years they have evolved into QCFs (2008) and more recently, a simplified system of RQFs (2015). If the people writing the guidance are so completely out of touch with the current vocational qualifications

landscape, how can we trust that their decisions are based on evidence?

Another explanation is that the IfA is concerned that if it allows vocational qualifications to be mandated, it would make end-point assessment redundant, which would be highly embarrassing for everyone involved. However this would not be the case at all: vocational qualification assessment can actually complement EPA and the IfA should see this as an opportunity, not a threat.

“The real puzzle is why first the DfE, and now the IfA, are so opposed to vocational qualifications

Putting all this aside, I remain to be convinced that standards mandating vocational qualifications will be approved, even if those qualifications meet the IfA's new rules. Over recent years it has been all too common for standards to be rejected on multiple occasions, even though they complied with one of the three acceptable rules for inclusion.

To give just one example, employers wanted the weighbridge operations apprenticeship standard to include a qualification that was developed to demonstrate competence. The trailblazer group satisfied the requirement of professional registration and was even given wording for the letter from the Institute. The apprenticeship was rejected, however, as the letter did not satisfy the panel.

The group was advised to use the "hard sift" requirement, meaning that job adverts would need to prove that any apprentice or applicant must have this vocational qualification or they would not get the job. The IfA did not accept the explanation, however, that a vocational qualification can only be achieved in the role, so employers are unable to advertise for an entry-level role using an advert that insists they must have a qualification that can only be gained on the job.

This is not a win, nor is it a case that stubborn blockers have been removed. As far as we're concerned, the IfA has still not heard the voices of every employer.



DAME RUTH
SILVER

President, the Further Education Trust for Leadership

Whistleblowers in FE are vital for sector scrutiny

Whistleblowers aren't treated with much respect in the UK, even though they generally have good intentions. Dame Ruth Silver wants this to change

Even for a sector with adaptation in its DNA, these are challenging times. In addition to the day-to-day pressures of accountability, budget cuts and curriculum change, sector leaders have had to deal with the area reviews and the attendant challenges of merging, restructuring or sharing services. Many have had to rethink their offer, reducing some areas of curriculum to ensure the survival of others.

These changes have huge consequences for staff and students. Managers and teachers often find themselves with new responsibilities, sometimes working in different settings with new colleagues, while job losses are painful not only for those made redundant but for those left behind. When restructuring is handled badly, suspicion, insecurity and distress intensify, and allegations of unfairness can abound. Values-led organisations like colleges operate on trust and when it is eroded, it is bad for staff and students alike, and fertile soil for whistleblowing.

Whistleblowers are in the news, both in the public sector – for example in the case of Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust – and more widely, in the worlds of entertainment and politics. Steven Spielberg's new film *The Post* highlights one historic example, the leak of the Pentagon papers. But while the journalists who break these stories can become heroes, whistleblowers are more usually vilified, their motives questioned and their lives turned upside down.

The stigmatisation of whistleblowers will be explored in the 2018 FETL Lecture by Professor Mark Stein, an expert on whistleblowing whose research is profoundly relevant to the challenges of contemporary leadership. Prof Stein suggests that this stigma is not only because whistleblowers set up "in opposition" to the organisations they work for but because they represent "the lost good self" of an organisation. In other words, they offer an uncomfortable reminder of how an organisation has drifted from its core purposes or failed to live up to its values.

Whistleblowers can alert us to problems at an organisation of which we, as leaders, may be unaware. They highlight organisational risks that may have been overlooked. And they represent an important body of opinion

that leaders might in many cases prefer not to hear about.

This is why we in further education need to take whistleblowing seriously. The reluctance to call out misconduct demonstrates legitimate concerns about consequences and the imbalance of power and scrutiny in many workplaces. It is the job of leaders to address this imbalance. Values-led organisations need to develop policies that acknowledge the importance of whistleblowing and create an environment in which all staff feel safe, as well as transparent processes which protect employees who identify wrongdoing, rather than seeking to weed them out.

Prof Stein locates the treatment of whistleblowers within the "territory of the self" as opposed to the "territory of the other". What this means, from an organisational point of view, is that in turning our back on the whistleblower we are not defending ourselves from outside attack but excluding part of ourselves. The cost of not taking that risk seriously can be a loss of trust or a failure to engage with the truth of the problems an organisation faces. By taking it seriously, we send a clear message to staff that allegations of wrongdoing will be addressed as well as asserting our values as ethical organisations.

“Values-led organisations need to develop policies that acknowledge the importance of whistleblowing

This is a difficult subject; not everyone will be comfortable engaging with it. That is why it is so important that we, the sector's leaders, explore new understandings of whistleblowing and its role in the scrutiny and functioning of our institutions. This means moving beyond fear and loathing to develop a positive, ethical approach to an issue which says much about the values of our organisations.

'Whistleblowing – and the loss of the good self' is the title of the 2018 FETL Lecture, to be given by Professor Mark Stein on 14 March 2018.

EXPERTS

The government needs to establish a set of FE-centric measures to get a better idea of what it wants from the sector. Ali Hadawi has a few suggestions

Two new Ofsted reports out this week have raised the proportion of colleges now rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ to almost three quarters. There is no denying that this is great news for the colleges themselves, and it may even say something about the teaching and learning happening at them – but how much does it signal success for the FE sector as a whole? Is Ofsted really measuring what we think it’s measuring?

If we’re honest, the government currently has no viable means of measuring what it actually wants the FE sector to do.

There are a number of proxy measures, however. These centre on the quality of teaching and learning, outcomes for learners, success on courses, leadership and management, financial health and so on. However, they do not offer a robust measure of the real impact of FE.

They are used for two reasons: the absence of a truly clear mission for the sector, which would normally drive the assessment of impact, and the perceived difficulty in assessing impact.

The proof that these proxies lack relevance is evident from the discourse around the success or otherwise of the sector. For example, ministers never challenge us to deliver a set number of courses or qualifications, or on our inspection outcomes, or on the level of spend from our grants. Instead, ministers invariably quote CBI statistics on “skills shortages” and



Principal and CEO, Central Bedfordshire College

ALI
HADAWI

Ofsted is measuring all the wrong things

criticise FE for not improving, despite the fact that colleges have never actually been asked to close the skills gap or beat shortages.

While FE inspectors are certainly passionate about quality and improvement, this all begs the question: could Ofsted be measuring the wrong thing?

It is not in the current frameworks for any of the regulation agencies to assess the local or regional skills gap or shortage before they inspect a college. For example, it is not inconceivable that Ofsted could use the skills shortage in a certain region as part of its evidence base when judging the relevance of a specific college; after all, the data is publicly available and regularly updated.

The government needs a dependable metric to enable it to decide on the role of FE, levels of funding and how to use the sector to affect the economy, social cohesion, productivity and

other areas of its influence. Developing an alternative metric to quantify the effectiveness of the FE sector is a complex endeavour. It would require significant research into impact measures and how relevant, transferable across sectors, repeatable, consistent and meaningful they are to those who work within FE and for the stakeholders.

One possibility is to explore a non-financial and intangible value metric in which social value is aligned to the sector’s mission. Such a measure might challenge the need for the existence of regulatory bodies such as Ofsted in the way they operate now.

The metric would need to offer a dependable measure of how FE affects individuals, communities, businesses, the economy, crime levels, reoffending levels, mental health issues, citizenship, progression into employment,

progression into HE, social mobility, meeting government agendas on the economy and employment, skills shortages and gaps in the economy, economic activity, economic competitiveness and productivity, to name a few.

With a robust measure of social value and impact, the government would not need to issue a white paper every time a response to

“
The government currently has no viable means of measuring what it actually wants the FE sector to do

a localised issue is required. For example, a certain area needs to address skills shortages or focus on community cohesion, all that would be needed is a change in the weighting of the various components of such a measure. This would allow development of an FE mission which can be utilised nationally, regionally and locally.

This is not about rushing in yet more change for the sector – it’s about starting a genuine discussion about our purpose and values, and identifying the right metrics and outcomes to meaningfully reflect these.

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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*



The first crop of farming leaders

Sowing seeds for the future

A new leadership course designed by farmers has been launched at Myerscough College to ensure the future of the farming industry.

The Young Farmers Leadership Academy will run until October at the college's Food and Farming Innovation and Technology Centre, teaching aspiring farmers the leadership and management skills needed to run a successful farming business.

Consisting of six two-day workshops, the course has received the financial backing of the Prince's Countryside Fund, which exists to secure the future of the countryside, and support the farming industry.

A range of guests speakers have already

been confirmed to visit students undertaking the course, including Ciara Gorst, head of agriculture at the Co-operative and Oliver McIntyre, the national agriculture strategy director for Barclays Bank.

"The academy has been set up in response to a call from the farming industry for Myerscough to develop a leadership course for future farming leaders," said Craig Thompson, the college's head of agriculture and countryside. "The delegates left having really enjoyed the course and were brimming full of thoughts on their own leadership skills and how to use them in developing their career and businesses in which they work."

Barnfield College has no love for hate crimes



The anti-hate campaign

Barnfield College has become an official hate crime reporting centre in an effort to help police crack down on instances of hate crime.

Working closely with Bedfordshire Police, the college will allow students and staff who may have been victims of, or witnesses to, a hate crime to talk about their experiences with someone they are familiar with.

Members of the public will also be welcome to visit the centre, with a dedicated hotline also in place for victims who wish to report an offence anonymously.

The college is the first educational establishment in Bedfordshire to become a

hate crime reporting centre, and members of staff at both the college's campuses are trained to take statements and submit them to the police through an online portal.

A hate crime is defined as an offence against an individual solely because of their race, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, disability or any other perceived difference.

"We are delighted to be working with the police to provide a platform that will encourage victims and witnesses of hate crime to come forward and report incidents, with confidence," said Beth Taylor, the college's head of safeguarding.

Littleton restaurant wins big



Crème de la crème: restaurant staff celebrate their win

Walsall College's on-site restaurant has taken home three national accolades at the annual Business of the Year Awards.

The Littleton, a restaurant and cocktail bar, was presented with the award for 'best reviewed restaurant in Walsall', the award for 'best reviewed restaurant in the UK' in the fine dining category, and was crowned the 'third best business in the UK' at an event organised by thebestof, a marketing company.

The winners of each category were determined by customer reviews left for the businesses online, and reviews of The

Littleton described the food as 'exquisite', 'beautiful' and 'well presented'.

Headed up by AA rosette-winning chefs Steve Biggs and Paul Ingleby, the 40-seat restaurant is currently rated as the top restaurant in the Walsall area on TripAdvisor.

"We've received continuous five-star reviews since we opened in 2016," said Emma Huckle, restaurant supervisor. "We see an eclectic mix of customers, from business people enjoying lunch and after-work drinks, to families and friends celebrating birthdays and evening meals."



Coming soon to a street near you... the winning designs

May the fruits be with you

Darlington council's public health department has recruited college students to help reduce obesity levels in the borough.

Over 40 Darlington College learners on fine art, graphic design, photography and art and design courses have been commissioned to design posters to promote a healthier lifestyle to the area's residents.

Ten of the designs have now been chosen to feature in a new campaign, with one of the winning designs by 18-year-old student James Peacock, featuring *Star Wars*

characters as fruits.

"*Stars Wars* is current but stretches back several generations and is therefore something the community as a whole can relate to," he explained. "I do make sure I watch what I eat and exercise. I'm delighted to be chosen in the top 10."

"The students really understood the need for healthy living and their work can't fail to reach the wide and diverse audience that exists in Darlington," added Rachel Osbaldeston, public health portfolio lead at Darlington Council.

Plymouth college learners stage hotel takeover



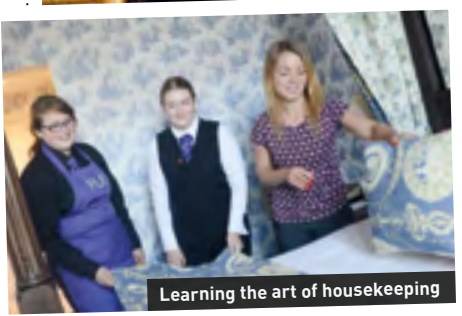
Seventy learners descended on a local hotel for a week in City College Plymouth’s largest-ever work placement initiative, reports Samantha King.

Students from across the college’s catering, marketing, hospitality, business and travel and tourism courses were let loose in Plymouth’s Duke of Cornwall Hotel to gain experience in a multitude of hotel disciplines.

Ahead of the placement, dubbed “City College @ The Duke”, learners were briefed about what would be expected of them – and the college even implemented a social media policy for the participants to avoid causing the hotel any reputational damage.

“The biggest thing we had to be aware of was remembering that this was an operating business. We had to be very, very careful around the reputational damage that potentially could have been caused by putting in a whole load of students into a hotel,” explained Mike Jones, the college’s employability and enterprise manager. “We spent a lot of time making sure the students were prepped.”

Students were placed across the hotel reception, events and marketing, and catering departments, with ESOL students taking up roles as housekeepers across the hotel’s 72 rooms.



“ESOL students are an area of learners that struggle to get work experience. It was good for them to get exposure to a working environment which also helped them develop their language skills as well as practical work skills,” Mr Jones added.

Following the placement, one student has been offered a part-time role in the hotel kitchen, and 17-year-old travel and tourism student Evie Mills has been kept on for an extended work placement following her work in the marketing and events team.

“People asked me if I was nervous but, honestly, I had total confidence in the calibre of students that the college can produce,” said Jonathan Morcom, the hotel’s director,

who is also a former City College Plymouth student.

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

Steve Wallis

Director of quality, NCG

Start date April 2018

Previous job

Assistant principal, Hartlepool College of FE

Interesting fact

Steve coaches a mini rugby team on a Sunday. He appeared briefly in the first division (now called the Rugby Premiership) as a player himself.

Carole Kitching

Principal and CEO, New College Swindon

Start date July 2018

Previous job

Principal, Lewisham Southwark College

Interesting fact

Carole is a fluent Greek speaker and ran a successful private school on the Greek island of Evia in the 80s and 90s.

David Gartland

Principal, Lowestoft Sixth-Form College

Start date January 2018

Previous job

Vice-principal, Lowestoft Sixth-Form College

Interesting fact

David is a fan of sports, playing ice hockey as a youngster and recently completing his first ever 10k run for charity. He also supports Newcastle United.

Gary Riches

Head of apprenticeships, Hartlepool College of FE

Start date December 2017

Previous job

Advanced practitioner, Hartlepool College of FE

Interesting fact

Gary once played semi-professional football for Billingham Synthonia and Bishop Auckland Football Club.

Mark Whitworth

Chair of governors, West Lancashire College

Start date January 2018

Previous job

Chief executive, Peel Ports (ongoing)

Interesting fact

Mark competed in taekwondo at the international level and is a fourth dan. Today, he teaches two of his three children when time permits, and both are black belts.

Movers & Shakers

...

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



"HONEST AND INSPIRATIONAL.
GREAT SPEAKERS AND
INTERESTING CONTENT.
EXCELLENT NETWORKING
OPPORTUNITY."

WLN DELEGATE 2017

WLN CONFERENCE 2018: 'RELEASING TALENT'
SPEAKERS | WORKSHOPS | NETWORKING

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8TH MARCH 2018.
WLNFE.ORG.UK/BOOK



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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: Stephen Ram Kissun