

FE Week

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- > Payment demands described as “worrying”

Exclusive PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

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NEWS

Temp staff errors jeopardised almost £8m of non-levy cash

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

Nine training providers nearly missed out on almost £8 million of non-levy funding because officials mismarked their bids in the recent tender.

FE Week understands that the money was almost held back because the ESFA had drafted in inexperienced assessors to mark the complex submissions.

A Freedom of Information request showed that of all the providers who applied in the tender, 153 missed out on funding because their bids failed to reach the minimum required score.

The appeals process found that nine of them actually reached the threshold and had their complaints upheld, establishing contracts to the value of £7,949,634.

FE Week has seen one letter which suggests that the people who originally marked the scores for the hundreds of technical bids were not full-time ESFA staff, and were actually new assessors, contracted solely for the task.

The letter stated that the complaint reviews had been conducted by full staff members with “the appropriate technical expertise in

the provision of apprenticeship training” but who had not previously evaluated the bid.

The Department for Education declined to comment by the time of going to press.

FE Week understands that two colleges, Basingstoke College of Technology and West Kent and Ashford College, had successful appeals.

Paul Hannan, the chief executive of the Hadlow Group, of which West Kent and Ashford College is part, said it was a “massive achievement” to win its appeal.

Focus Training, which has delivered apprenticeships in the south-west for 20 years, also had its appeal upheld after it had originally been told it had missed the minimum score.

Jamie Rail, the private provider’s managing director, told FE Week it had been “one hell of a month” following the initial outcome of the tender in December, but he was elated with the final decision.

While there are more disgruntled providers denied contracts in the tender which continue to fight appeals, the AELP has hinted that there may yet be some good news on the horizon.

“We are working very closely with ESFA to get a package of measures agreed that



we hope should help ease the position for our members through to April 19,” the association’s chief, Mark Dawe, wrote in a newsletter to members last month.

“Usual line of ‘imminent’ I’m afraid, but we are aware how important this is to many of you.”

Meanwhile, a handful of Conservative MPs have weighed in. Jeremy Lefroy, the MP for Stafford, raised the issue in parliament last month after Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group, which is in his constituency, was denied a non-levy contract.

Karen Dobson, the principal of the college, told FE Week this week that she is in dialogue with the ESFA to “resolve the situation”.

“As an established apprenticeship provider with a long-standing track record for

success, serving over 850 local, regional and national employers, we remain hopeful that a satisfactory outcome will be reached in due course,” she said.

Exeter College, which FE Week rates as the best college in the country, is working with Labour’s Ben Bradshaw, a former culture, media and sport secretary who described the situation as “inexplicable”.

A college spokesperson confirmed this week that it had not had a satisfactory outcome from its appeal.

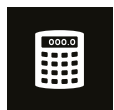
“We can confirm that at this stage we have not been allocated a non-levy contract under this process,” he said, adding that the college is still working with the ESFA and other partners to resolve this “technical funding issue”.

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Providers stung by top-level government brokerage fee

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

Providers training apprentices for the civil service will be subject to a controversial new brokerage charge from the top tier of government which will recoup millions of pounds.

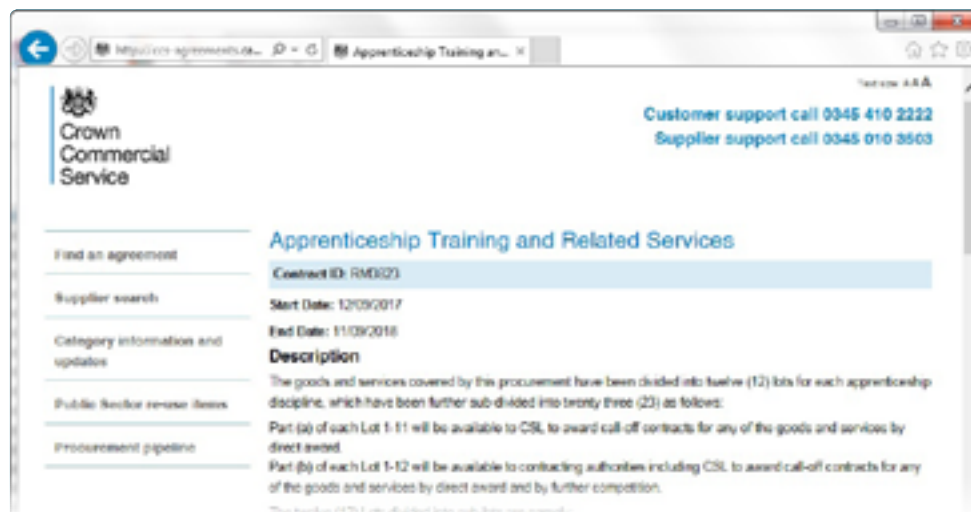
Candidates to train government apprentices were told to register with the Crown Commercial Service, and a group of 16 were chosen.

These were given access to at least £360 million, generated through the public sector's own apprenticeship levy payments.

They have now been told that CCS, which is a government agency representing the Cabinet Office, will retain a one-per-cent "management fee" on any apprenticeships that are delivered, allowing the government to retain around £3.6 million.

"The public sector seems to have been given permission to charge for permission to access frameworks," said AELP boss Mark Dawe, who pointed to the NHS as another public sector body guilty of trying to retain apprenticeships cash.

"We have raised this with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and they said it is allowed, but it can't be paid out of levy funds. Yet this is questionable, because for some providers, all their income comes from



apprenticeships and the levy.

"I'm worried that this is setting a bad example to other private companies that would like to do the same thing."

The government boasted last year that six out of the 16 providers appointed to the CCS "framework" are small- and medium-sized enterprises.

A spokesperson for one of the civil service-providers, which asked to remain anonymous, said the fees would harm smaller providers.

"It doesn't seem fair that the government is now clawing back some of its own levy money through what amounts to brokerage fees, in many cases on smaller providers that

will struggle to afford it," they said. "Yet it has made it clear it doesn't think others should do this."

Other bodies from across the public sector, including local councils and NHS trusts, have also been invited to use the CCS providers for their apprenticeship provision.

But FE Week found two examples last year in which the health service attempted to charge providers around one per cent of the value of their contracts, in their own competing brokerage schemes.

The NHS apprenticeship levy pot is estimated to be worth around £200 million per year nationally, which means one-per-cent brokerage charges could reach up to £2

million across the country.

Nottingham city council was exposed along similar lines last summer.

It was tendering for apprenticeship providers to join its directory – a list that it intended to share with other public-sector employers across England.

Any business transacted through the directory was subject to a one-per-cent management fee.

Mr Dawe is adamant that public sector bodies should be prevented from these charges: "We don't believe this should be allowed practice."

The government changed its rules in 2017 to state that "funds in an employer's digital account or government-employer co-investment must not be used for... specific services not related to the delivery and administration of the apprenticeship".

FE Week's understanding from subsequent conversations with the ESFA is that such charges are permitted if they aren't included in the negotiated levy price, though brokerage fees nevertheless remain a controversial topic.

"The charge by the CCS is considered to be a management fee and cannot be funded from the apprenticeship budget," said an ESFA spokesperson.

"Apprenticeship funding rules mean that levy funds must be spent on meeting the costs of training and assessments."

71% of UTCs awarded Ofsted's lower grades

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

More than two thirds of the university technical colleges visited by Ofsted in the last year received ratings that were less than 'good', according to FE Week analysis.

But the organisation which oversees UTCs has hit back, saying it believes the watchdog's inspection regime is not designed to measure their performance in the most accurate way possible.

Ofsted inspected 14 UTCs between February 2017 and February 2018, but just four of these, or 29 per cent, received a grade two, while none at all were rated 'outstanding'.

Meanwhile, 10 (71 per cent) were rated at grades three or four, both of which are considered unacceptable by Ofsted.

The Baker Dearing Trust told FE Week that UTCs are "new and innovative" colleges which are inspected "before many of them have a settled position in the local education landscape".

Its spokesperson claimed that the trust hopes that "over time", the "outstanding destinations" found at UTCs will "carry more weight" in Ofsted reports.

According to FE Week's analysis, a total

of 29 of the 14-to-19 technical institutions – including several which have since closed – have now been inspected, of which 17 (59 per cent) had the lowest two grades.

BDT's spokesperson said that the "objective" is to have every UTC rated 'good' or 'outstanding', and claimed the trust works "closely and constructively" with those that have yet to reach the benchmark.

The UTC movement launched in 2011 with the backing of former Conservative education secretary Lord Baker.

These specialist technical education providers are seen by many as unwelcome competition to more established general FE and sixth-form colleges, which consistently return a much higher proportion of higher Ofsted grades.

UTCs' Ofsted results remain well below those of independent training providers, sixth-form colleges, and general FE colleges – the last of which have themselves seen rapid recent improvement over the past year.

FE Week's last report on UTC inspections in March 2017, showed that the education watchdog had visited 20 of the providers. Only nine (45 per cent) were considered good enough for the upper two grades.

Our new analysis reveals a fall of four percentage points in the past year.

BDT pointed out that if only the 23 UTCs that are still open and have had inspections are taken into account, 52 per cent are at grades one or two.

This still however places UTC performance well below that of other FE providers.

FE Week revealed last month that as of February 7, just under three quarters of colleges are now rated 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The proportion of sixth-form colleges achieving the top two grades was at 81 per cent in September, and independent training providers were at 80 per cent.

The most recent inspection reports into UTCs, at the institutions in South Devon and Buckinghamshire, both produced grade threes.

It was the second 'requires improvement' rating in a row for Buckinghamshire, which had just 147 students on roll, despite a capacity of 600, in the last academic year.

Inspectors said that overall progress in English, maths and science has been "well below" the national average for the last three years, and the quality of teaching is "inconsistent".

The 14 UTCs visited by Ofsted since February 2017

Name	Date	Grades
The Leigh UTC	Feb-17	2
Energy Coast UTC	Feb-17	3
Heathrow Aviation Engineering UTC	Feb-17	3
Lincoln UTC	Feb-17	3
Bolton UTC	Feb-17	4
Watford UTC	Mar-17	2
WMG Academy for Young Engineers	Mar-17	2
University Technical College Norfolk	Mar-17	3
elutec	Mar-17	4
Sir Charles Kao Utc	Apr-17	3
UTC Cambridge	May-17	2
The Elstree UTC	May-17	3
Buckinghamshire UTC	Jan-18	3
South Devon UTC	Feb-18	3

It was the first time South Devon UTC has been subject to an inspection since it opened in September 2015. The college currently has just over 200 students, but senior leaders were criticised because they've "not secured consistently effective" teaching as it has grown in size.

Most UTCs have struggled since they were established in 2010, mainly because they've not been able to attract enough pupils to stay financially viable. Eight have so far closed.

An investigation in January by FE Week revealed that almost every UTC missed their recruitment targets last year, leaving them with combined debts of over £11 million.

The ESFA is trying to retrieve cash from 39 of 44 UTCs still open in 2016/17.

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NEWS

NOCN Group taking over One Awards

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

EXCLUSIVE

NOCN Group is taking over One Awards, which specialises in access to higher education, FE Week can reveal.

NOCN, based in Sheffield, confirmed the takeover would go through from August 1.

It said that One Awards, which is based in County Durham, is a natural fit, as the two organisations have “successfully worked together” for over 20 years.

This follows from last year’s acquisition of Cskills Awards, which made NOCN Group a “competitive provider” of construction qualifications.

The latest takeover will “widen NOCN’s offer to the FE market to include access to higher education, regulated qualifications, functional skills and apprentice end point assessments”, said Graham Hasting-Evans, the group’s managing director.

“I warmly welcome our new colleagues from One Awards into the NOCN Group family,” he added.

Existing learners and recognised centres will experience “no significant operational change as things carry on as usual”, he claimed.

NOCN currently runs 519 qualifications across all sectors, and employs 73 permanent staff. One Awards has 16 full-time employees and runs 102 access to higher education diplomas. Both employ additional assessors, examiners and markers.

“We have worked together for a long time and it got to the stage where we thought we would be better placed together,” said Mr Hasting-Evans. “One Awards already delivered qualifications for us in the north-east and our respective company charities had close links.

“This will make us one of the biggest awarding organisations that can offer the combination of vocational and technical qualifications, access to higher education diplomas, and apprenticeship end-point assessments.”

He said the Cskills Awards takeover had showed NOCN was “able to take on new organisations and to successfully integrate their products and services, retaining customers and building market share to the wider benefit of employers, learners, and FE providers”.

One Awards will continue to operate under the same brand, but as a subsidiary of the larger group, after August.

NOCN did not pay anything to acquire One Awards, as both organisations came to “a charitable arrangement rather than commercial” one.

“I am extremely positive about this move, which will be good for both of us,” added One Awards boss Fabienne Bailey.

Top-slice limited to 20% in best-practice guidance

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Management fees charged by prime providers should not be more than 20 per cent – and should generally be much less – after big-hitting FE representative bodies came to an agreement on best practice.

Three major FE organisations have put their name to new guidance on relationships between primes and their subcontractors.

They are the AELP, the adult community education and learning organisation Hoxex, and provider group Collab. The Association of Colleges is said to be in talks to sign on.

“The core fee charged by the prime provider for legitimate management overheads for quality and contractual compliance aspects should be between 0 to 20 per cent, depending on what is provided and the extent of what is provided,” the new guidance says.

“The expectation is that it is capped at no greater than 20 per cent and generally will be much less.”

Lead providers often claim the management fees are needed to cover administrative costs, but many in the sector, including the education committee chair Robert Halfon, believe that too much money is being diverted from frontline learning.

Some management fees have recently

reached up to 40 per cent, which was infamously how much was levied in some cases by Learndirect.

Julian Gravatt, the deputy chief executive of the AoC, explained why his organisation had not yet signed up.

“We have been discussing the idea of more work on subcontracting with AELP and Hoxex in the last week or so, but have not had time to consult with our members”, he said.

“The guidance has some useful parts to it which we are supportive of, but our view is that it’s always better to tackle the causes rather than try to regulate the symptoms.

“The current ESFA rules already prohibit poor behaviour and we are keen that those rules are enforced more robustly and urgently.”

Dr Sue Pember of Hoxex was more forthright: “It is vital that there is transparency over costs and the student experience is at the centre of the relationship.

“Our members are both primes and subcontractors, and this guidance starts to build a clear consensus of what is expected by each partner.”

“Market operations over a number of years have shown that for the range of services which can be offered by lead providers to subcontractors, and therefore need to be taken into account here, the cost of delivery is about 20 per cent or less,” added AELP boss Mark

Dawe.

“Good subcontracting is important to the sector, for example in how it supports smaller providers which have been badly hit recently and may need support from lead providers, so it’s important that it is done well.

Ian Pretty, chief executive of the Collab Group, stressed that relationships between primes and subcontractors should be “tangible, healthy and collaborative”.

The guidance suggests that if a potential subcontractor is considered a high risk, the prime should refrain from working with it at all rather than increasing the fee.

Another key recommendation is that “prime providers should continue to publish their fees and the rationale for them on their websites”, and “make available their rationale to their subcontractors”.

The government was accused in January of double standards on transparency, after it admitted it probably wouldn’t publish its long-delayed findings on subcontracting fees in time for parliamentary inquiry hearings.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has taken over responsibility for publishing all management fees in subcontracting. It “aims” to publish them by the end of March. =

Mr Halfon has told the DfE to collect and release the data “immediately”.

The DfE was unable to comment before FE Week went to press.

Thirteen providers added to RoATP after appeals

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

Thirteen organisations, including a Welsh college and the furniture retail giant DFS, have been unexpectedly added to the register of apprenticeship training providers.

The third and most recent window of opportunity to get on to RoATP closed at the end of October and it has not officially reopened since.

These newcomers have nevertheless appeared over the past week, bringing the number of bodies on the register to 2,588.

Their sudden appearance is understood to be a result of successful appeals after places were denied at first.

Among the additions to RoATP, which is for providers which want to run apprenticeships in England, was Coleg Gwent in Wales. Its business development director Stephen Owen said the college is looking to move its apprenticeship offer to England.

“We have been successful in our application to develop apprenticeship programmes in England,” he said.

“We are looking forward to working with businesses in England to develop their workforce through our apprenticeship offer.”

Of the new additions, 11 including Coleg Gwent are classed as “main” providers, while one is an “employer-provider”. They now all have direct access to ESFA funding and are in scope for Ofsted inspection.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing is another of the newcomers that falls into the main category.

DFS Trading Limited is the sole employer-provider – otherwise known as the retail company DFS Furniture.

A spokesperson said it had been working with training providers on apprenticeship schemes in service repair, retail and manufacturing for the last three years, and the “natural step forward” was to “bring all of this in house”.

“We look forward to expanding these programmes and launching new ones in other areas of the business,” she added.

The final organisation of the 13 is Generation (UK) Limited, which is classed as a “supporting” provider.

Providers in this category cannot access funding directly. They can only subcontract from one of the main providers up to the value of £500,000 per year, and cannot be directly inspected by Ofsted.

Meanwhile, two firms, London Skills and Development Network and NLT Training, have been removed, after they were rated ‘inadequate’ for apprenticeships in December.

Name	Provider Type
Mentor Training Centre Limited	Main provider
Coleg Gwent	Main provider
Trans-Plant Training Limited	Main provider
Generation (UK) Limited	Supporting provider
Sporting Futures Training CIC	Main provider
Lawtonash Training Services Ltd	Main provider
Semester: Learning and Development Limited	Main provider
Connective Care Education Ltd	Main provider
DFS Trading Limited	Employer provider
Cambridge Spark Limited	Main provider
The Chartered Institute of Marketing	Main provider
Via East Midlands Limited	Main provider
National Construction Academy Limited	Main provider

The agency began reviewing the approvals process after the third window closed, and has confirmed the review is ongoing.

A representative claimed officials are still considering the first year of RoATP’s operation, and that further information would be provided in “due course”.

The ESFA would not say when the register would reopen. Providers not yet on the register are still able to subcontract provision from a main provider, up to the value of £100,000 a year.

The Department for Education indicated that the 13 newcomers were added because previous decisions not to include them on the list had been successfully “reviewed”.

NEWS

Hull College Group could lose over 200 staff

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Hull College Group is preparing to shed up to 231 full-time jobs in an effort to balance its books.

In a statement that appeared online this week, chief executive Michelle Swithenbank warned that “some difficult decisions have to be made” to regain stability amid longstanding financial troubles.

The University and College Union has however warned there could be strike action in response.

The FE commissioner reported in February last year that HCG’s finances remained precarious after the Skills Funding Agency had issued a notice of concern in November 2016.

“We need to change the way we do things which is why the Hull College Group team has been looking at new ways of working,” said Ms Swithenbank.

“As a result, a restructure is being put forward which involves a number of proposed redundancies.

“This will potentially affect up to 231 full-time equivalent posts across our sites in Goole, Harrogate and Hull, including HCUK

Training.”

Anyone affected by redundancy will be offered “our full support and guidance” throughout the process, she claimed, including interview training and counselling.

“We are also working with major stakeholders to look at redeployment opportunities for our staff,” she added.

“To strengthen and protect our unique Hull city centre, Goole and Harrogate resource, we are also making changes to our curriculum so it best meets the needs of our local communities.

“From September this year, we will offer an improved range of courses in both further and higher education, including a number of new foundation degrees.”

Julie Kelley, a UCU spokesperson, warned that staff were understandably furious, and that strike action is under consideration.

“We are registering a dispute with the college over the redundancy proposals and any industrial action could be up to and including strike action,” she said.

“The staff here in Hull are very angry at a situation they now find themselves in through no fault of their own.”

The FE commissioner’s report warned that HCG’s “operating performance, as



measured by surplus/deficit after interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation costs has amounted to a cumulative deficit of around £10 million over the past four years”, while “a further deficit in excess of £1 million is forecast for the current year”.

The notice was issued because the SFA had rated the group ‘inadequate’ for financial health based on its 2016-to-2018 financial plan, and because it had requested exceptional financial support.

The then-senior leadership team had not addressed key issues, including the steady decline in financial performance and a loss of market share.

There was concern at all levels of the

organisation that it “lacks strategic vision and strong, resolute leadership and that this is frustrating and demotivating for staff”.

The group announced the departure of its chief executive Gary Warke in March last year.

Ms Swithenbank was unveiled as his replacement last July.

She had been interim chief executive for the previous five months, and a spokesperson said at the time that “as a result of the progress already made towards the group’s recovery, alongside the corporation’s confidence in Michelle, the decision has been taken to appoint Michelle to the role of chief executive”.



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NEWS

Bolton's college and university pioneer new FE/HE merger model

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

EXCLUSIVE

A college is joining a university using an “innovative” new merger model that’s acting as a pilot for future partnerships between FE and HE.

The alliance, between Bolton College and the University of Bolton, means the college, which has a grade two from Ofsted, will retain its own principal and governing board, giving it greater “protection” than it would through a traditional merger.

The model was proposed by the Department for Education, which described it as “exciting” and “the first of its kind”.

“This is an innovative new business model for further and higher education and we will be evaluating its success, particular how it benefits students and gives them the high quality education they deserve,” a spokesperson said.

“The university is not looking to come in and try to run the college,” said Bill Webster, Bolton College’s interim principal.

“It’s about making sure that the university has sufficient control to protect its ability to do what it’s been asked to do, at the same time as giving a fair degree of autonomy to the college.

“Should there be future HE/FE type mergers this is potentially the model it’s going to be.”

“It’s great to see a merger model that allows greater protection for FE provision



at colleges,” said Julian Gravatt, the deputy chief executive of the Association of Colleges, who is pleased the DfE is “working to make amendments where mergers may not have succeeded before”.

Most college mergers see one of the institutions dissolved and its assets transferred to the other partner.

But in this case, the college is changing its legal status from August 1 to become a company limited by guarantee with the university as its sole member, which will give the HE institute ultimate control.

The new company is being designated as an FE institution under the FE and HE Act 1992, so it will continue to operate in the same way as an FE college. Its principal will still be accountable to the college’s governing board.

Mergers typically result in a single governing board and consolidated leadership

team.

The approach is the result of the DfE’s “very strong wish” to develop a new merger model that would “ensure that the integrity and assets of FE are absolutely protected”.

“The university is signing an asset deed that completely protects the assets of the FE establishment,” said Mr Webster.

It will also underwrite the college’s finances, “giving a stronger balance sheet”.

George Holmes, the university’s vice-chancellor, described the arrangement as “the best of both worlds” for the college.

“This new model retains the integrity, identity and relative autonomy of the college while retaining the benefits of being part of a much larger organisation than the college was itself,” he said.

The Bolton merger was first proposed in the Greater Manchester area review, which ended in June 2016.

Bury College was planning to join in, but dropped out in April last year due to a change in plans from the original proposal.

It’s not the first FE and HE merger to go ahead; according to the AoC there have been 12 since 1993, most recently in 2012 involving Leek College and the University of Derby.

And a further two partnerships are in the offing, involving City College Southampton and the University of Southampton, and Lambeth College and London South Bank University.

However the latter may be under threat as the college was forced by the FE commissioner to seek out other potential partners.

Barnfield College will lose its apprenticeships provision

PAUL OFFORD
@PAULOFFORD

Barnfield College has been rated grade four by Ofsted for apprenticeships, which means it will lose the right to offer them under updated government rules.

An inspection report out this week rated it ‘requires improvement’ in all other headline fields, except for adult learning programmes and provision for people with high needs, where it was ‘good’.

The lowest possible mark for apprenticeships carries serious implications.

Providers given a grade four are taken off of the government’s register of apprenticeship training providers and won’t be able to offer the training. The rules on this were only clarified by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in January.

“The provision for apprenticeships is ‘inadequate’ and has declined in quality for the last three years,” said the report.

A total of 260 apprentices have been on framework programmes in eight subject areas, of which just over half study at intermediate level. Just over a third are aged 16 to 18.

“Assessors do not carry out assessment of apprentices prior learning to determine their starting points accurately, and ensure that they make good progress. Too many apprentices are unclear about the progress that they are making or are capable of,”

inspectors warned.

“Leaders do not plan and manage provision to meet fully the principles and requirements of apprenticeships.”

Apprentices’ attendance at off-the-job learning sessions is “erratic and low”, and they do not all spend the mandated 20 per cent of their time learning away from work.

“Managers and staff have not ensured that employers engage in all aspects of the training or help monitor apprentices’ progress and enable them to excel,” the report added.

While “a few” employers have a good understanding of apprenticeship programmes and support their apprentices “sufficiently”, inspectors warned that “too few” are involved fully in reviews of apprentices’ progress and setting “meaningful targets”.

This undermines apprentices’ motivation and holds learners back with progression.

Poor progress was found, for example, in efforts to improve English, maths and ICT skills.

“Apprentices have too few timetabled opportunities to improve these skills,” inspectors said.

There may yet be a lifeline for the college, however. In early February, St Helens College was also rated ‘inadequate’ for its apprenticeship provision, but it actually received special dispensation to remain on the register.

In the same week that new rules were published outlining when and how providers

Barnfield College

General further education college

Inspection dates

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Provision for learners with special educational needs	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with special educational needs	Good

would be removed from the register, the DfE admitted that it was treated differently due to its merger with Knowsley Community College that completed in December.

Merged colleges are considered ungraded by Ofsted, and are eligible to apply to the register under exceptional circumstances.

The ESFA had previously said it would “exercise its right to terminate contracts where a provider is not meeting the standards expected” – and that any provider with a grade four would be “removed from the register in due course”.

And under the new rules published on January 30, an ‘inadequate’ provider should be given five days’ notice of their removal from the register. They must not take on any new apprentices, but any existing apprentices would be able to stay on only at the employers’ discretion.

“A provider with a grade four Ofsted rating is ineligible to apply to the register and it is right that a provider is removed if

they are later assessed as inadequate,” a DfE spokesperson said.

Barnfield College taught around 3,700 learners last contract year. The latest Ofsted report did recognise some areas of encouragement.

“Leaders’ actions to improve teaching have resulted in demonstrable progress for some groups of learners as indicated by the increased achievement rates of study programme learners during the previous year,” it said.

“The majority of learners develop good practical vocational skills, particularly in workshop sessions.”

A college spokesperson stuck to the positives.

“The report highlights many areas of good practice and key strengths including effective safeguarding of students, demonstrable progress of learners indicated by increased achievement rates and good development of learners’ practical vocational skills,” she said.

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EDITORIAL

This civil service levy brokerage fee undermines the whole system



The Crown Commercial Service, an agency within the Cabinet Office, has set up its own mini-register of apprenticeship training providers, featuring just 16 providers that will have access to "more than £360 million" in levy funding.

Through its procurement process the CCS also claims to have negotiated "discounts" already, by agreeing with the 16 providers a set of apprenticeship prices that are on average 22 per cent below the relevant upper limits.

Yet despite estimated savings of "around £8 million per annum", the CCS will also charge the apprenticeship providers a brokerage fee for access to every public sector employee they train.

Levy funding has to be spent on activities related to training and assessment, so brokerage and employer inducements have been explicitly banned by the ESFA.

Nevertheless, this cashback for every recruited apprentice, which over time will run into the millions of pounds, has been excused by the ESFA on the grounds that providers haven't factored the cost into the apprenticeship price, meaning the money will come from elsewhere.

In truth, this is a technicality, a simple way for the public sector to claw some of its own levy back from training providers, which to my mind is clearly brokerage and arguably an employer inducement.

The ESFA should stop defending its colleagues from using such loopholes, and properly ban this sort of thing before the rest of the sector catches on.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2018 TWEETS:

Anne Milton MP @AnneMilton

Someone told me that an apprenticeship is about learning to do good job well. The apprentices I have met this week have demonstrated exactly that - well done to them all! #NAW2018

Robert Halfon MP @halfon4harlowMP

Sadly only two of the room full of apprentices I asked had learnt about apprenticeships as an option while they were at school. We must champion apprenticeships to make sure that more young people know about them. #LadderOfOpportunity #NAW2018

Assoc of Colleges @AoC_info

Great to see Dawn Ward, principal of @BSDCofficial on @BBCBreakfast with @stephbreakfast yesterday talking about the fantastic work of colleges delivering apprenticeships with employers. #apprenticeshipspotlight #NAW2018



Milton's not for turning on the 20% rule

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

The 20-per-cent off-the-job training rule is the biggest barrier to apprenticeship recruitment according to an FE Week survey – but Anne Milton will not budge on it.

The contentious policy was attacked by more than a quarter of respondents to our annual survey, where we asked readers which single policy change would make the apprenticeship reforms more successful.

Despite this, the skills minister has insisted once more that it is a "protected characteristic" and won't be changing – even at the lowest levels.

"Twenty per cent is really important, because an apprenticeship is about earning while you're learning, so if you don't have time off from the job you're not learning anything," she told FE Week at a special National Apprenticeship Week event on Monday.

Our survey, now in its third year, asked readers for their views on the changes to the apprenticeships system brought in last year – including the requirement that all apprentices must now spend 20 per cent of their working time in off-the-job training.

One of the questions asked: "If you could change, remove or introduce just one policy

to make the apprenticeship reforms more successful, what would it be and why?"

Of the 286 people who answered, 76 said the 20-per-cent rule needed changing or scrapping altogether – making it the most commonly cited bugbear among respondents.

Dianne Travis, director of workplace skills and guidance at Babcock Training Ltd, said the requirement for the training to be "completed within the time an apprentice is paid to work" should be changed.

"Employers in many sectors can't afford an apprentice who is 'non-productive' for one day every week in order to meet this requirement," she said.

And Louise Timperley, apprenticeship engagement manager at The Co-op, said the "blanket percentage" for off-the-job training at all levels should be reviewed.

"It doesn't make sense to invest the same in a level two as a level six, try a phased approach," she said.

But when FE Week put this concern to Ms Milton, she suggested that someone following a level two apprenticeship could use some of their off-the-job training time to upskill to a higher level.

"It's disappointing if we see learning as just confined by the end-point assessment," she said.

"For someone employing a person at level two, they must surely see the benefit of

increasing the skills of that young person even if they're not essential to the level two qualification."

Monday's event to mark National Apprenticeship Week was hosted by WhiteHat, an apprenticeship agency co-founded by Euan Blair, the son of Tony Blair, and Sophie Adelman.

Unlike many of our survey respondents, both saw the 20-per-cent rule as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Campaigning against it "degrades the quality of an apprenticeship", Ms Adelman said.

"Obviously there needs to be a level of flexibility around what it can contain but we think that people spending their time doing additional learning is not a bad thing."

The rule has been a major bone of contention among employers since it was introduced last May, particularly smaller firms that claim they cannot afford to let apprentices spend a fifth of their time away from work.

It has had a knock-on effect for providers struggling to convince companies to take on apprentices – prompting demands for greater flexibility on the rule from the Association of Employment and Learning Providers at its autumn conference last November.

For more on FE Week's survey, see the National Apprenticeship Week supplement included with this week's issue.

COMMENTS

HMRC VAT crackdown spreads to subcontracting

I have spoken to our accountant and he was unaware of this. Delivering government contracts is now becoming a joke. There are going to be many more now going to the wall and going into voluntary liquidation, which will put pressure on the government's redundancy scheme as the employers will not be able to pay this, then there are the claims for Universal Credit etc, other creditors not getting paid. The snowball effect will be ongoing. It's a good way to kick an industry and ending the industry, this could end up putting the country back into a recession.

David Watson

Ludicrous! Frankly, the subcontractor should under no circumstances be fined or penalised if a college has failed in their role of applying the 20 per cent VAT. It is not down to the provider to inform the prime that they should be charging VAT and neither should the subcontractor be fined as a result. If there is additional VAT to be paid one of the following should apply:
– The college stumps up the money and takes the 20 per cent off of their bottom line
– HMRC should swallow the loss as it has been shown time after time that they have in fact been negligent themselves.

John Fields

How much of this subcontracting was forced on the sector by the government (LSC) imposing minimum contract values? Essentially it transferred management responsibilities from government to the prime contractors. The government must shoulder some of the blame for this. Stockport College earns its third Ofsted 'inadequate' in five years

Mike Farmer

Assistant Principal and Regional Lead for Orchard Hill College

Location: Hillingdon and the surrounding boroughs

Salary: £57,477 to £61,560 per annum

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Improving opportunities and outcomes for our pupils and students remains at the heart of all that we do. For children and young people, especially those with special educational needs or who experience other barriers to learning, our world can present many challenges. All young people deserve to leave education confident that they have developed the skills they need to achieve their ambitions, with meaningful education, work and life experiences to draw on. This is the confidence that we aim to deliver.

As Assistant Principal and Regional Lead you will be responsible for managing the operations of the college centres within the Hillingdon Regional Hub. You will liaise with Local Authorities within your region to build relationships and facilitate enrolments.

You will have a key role in managing the personnel within the centres including multi-disciplinary teams to ensure a high performance culture and excellent student outcomes. You will be responsible for effective budget control.

This is a strategic role working with the Senior Leadership teams and you will take a cross college lead on a particular area of expertise such as Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

You will hold QTS or QTLS, have significant experience of good/ outstanding teaching of students who have learning disabilities, and successful experience of leadership and management of staff and resources in a similar setting.

If you are interested in joining a dynamic and fast paced culture with a supportive management team and great career opportunities, please contact David Thomas, Deputy Head of College on 07795630496 to arrange a visit to a centre.

This college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Please visit

www.orchardhill.ac.uk/jobs/job-vacancies/ for further information. Please send your completed application form to jobs@orchardhill.ac.uk.

Please note that CV applications will not be considered.

Closing date:

9.00am Tuesday 20th March 2018

Interview and assessment Date:

Friday 23rd March 2018 (TBC)



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**WORCESTERSHIRE
COLLEGE**

Curriculum Resource and Quality Director – Engineering & Construction

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Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College is passionate about developing employability prospects by delivering a wide range of vocational, professional and technical qualifications. WE are delighted to confirm that following a recent funding allocation, we are investing heavily in our Engineering provisions at the College. We are looking for someone to join our team to push forward on our expansion plans and further grow this area of the College.

Located across four different campuses, Worcester, Redditch, Bromsgrove and Malvern, HoW College is a thriving organisation with a vast and diverse community of learners. Our learners and staff benefit from a range of modern facilities and some of the best employee development and training opportunities in the area.

Working in partnership with Worcestershire LEP, Heart of Worcestershire College are entering the first stage of a major capital project in Engineering. Through £1.2million of investment HoW College Engineering Students are already starting to benefit from new advanced engineering and manufacturing equipment, newly created Electrical Installation workshops and a Centre of Computer Engineering.

Over the next 3 years a further £8 million will be invested into the curriculum area, commencing in early 2018 with the development of a new purpose built centre for Automotive Engineering and Plumbing and Heating Engineering. This project will give us an exciting opportunity to invest in new technologies, create world class facilities and outstanding learning opportunities within the area of Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.

We are offering an exciting opportunity to join our Engineering and Construction team within Heart of Worcestershire College.

To be considered for this role you must have:

- Experience of successful area and curriculum development with evidence of implementing innovative modes of delivery.
- A proven track record of people management and the ability to

challenge poor performance

- Experience of successful project management from inception through to completion, with the ability to work with people at all levels
- Experience of the development of learners' technical skills attainment, employability, work experience and progress

In return we offer a friendly, modern working environment, a diverse employee reward scheme, childcare voucher scheme, pension scheme, continued professional development and a generous holiday allowance, along with many other benefits.

Our vision is

'To provide Worcestershire with high quality further and higher education and training.'

To do this we believe in raising students' aspirations, self-confidence and significantly improving their employability prospects. We want our dynamic workforce to share our passion and enthusiasm. We believe in providing employers access to on the job training to develop their workforce. We are also committed to working with key stakeholders to enhance the economic prospects in the area.

As one of the largest employers in the area we pro-actively support and invest in our workforce to attack a wide range of specialist skills. We pride ourselves on our progressive and flexible approach and in our investment in our workforce, and as we enter the next phase of our growth strategy, there's no better time to join us and to help us deliver our clear vision for the future of further and higher education.

Closing date for this post is: Monday 19 March 2018

Interview date: Monday 26 March 2018

To apply please visit www.howcollege.ac.uk

This College is committed to equality of opportunity and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff to share this commitment. All successful applicants will be required to complete and pay for a Disclosure & Barring Service check. The costs of this check will be deducted from the applicant's first salary payment from the College.

We reserve the right to close this vacancy early if sufficient applications are received.

HoW College is a Smoke Free environment from the effects of direct/indirect contact with smoking, and all smoking related products.



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We are seeking a manager to lead our Faculty of Academic & Creative Studies which comprises A level and Creative Arts provision across both campuses. In 2017/18 we have c900 students on 35 A levels, c100 students on level 3 vocational science courses and c550 creative arts students on provision which ranges from level 2 to top-up degree programmes. A levels have recently been re-introduced to the Stafford campus and there is significant potential to grow and develop this provision.

Reporting to the Director of Curriculum & Performance, this is an opportunity for an ambitious and dynamic manager with a first class understanding of A level and BTEC curriculum delivery 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: 19 March 2018

Interview Date: 29 March 2018



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Whilst focusing on a specific area of cross-college responsibility - English and Maths, 16-19 Study Programmes, Value Added, Work-Based Learning, Progression/Destination or Employability (including Social Action and Work Experience) - you will enjoy real impact on the progression of every student, as well as our bottom line. Equally importantly, you will act as designated inspection lead in your specialist area and will secure significant funding, whilst driving our Quality Improvement Plan and coaching your colleagues to reach their full potential.

With expert understanding of at least one of the specialist areas above, you will combine a relevant degree or vocational certification with a formal teaching qualification. Needless to say, you will be highly experienced in managing curriculum areas and leading teams to achieve income and student outcome targets, and you will be passionate about innovative teaching and learning.

A structured yet creative problem solver, you will bring a demonstrable record of raising performance, participation and retention, and you will be ready to introduce some exciting new courses and pathways. Finally, leadership, management and assessor qualifications would be very useful, as would familiarity with developing business plans, but it's your sharp strategic mindset and hands-on approach that will matter most.

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> About Us > Vacancies.

Closing date: 19th March 2018.



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PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Salary commensurate with AoC benchmarked salaries

Closing date: Monday 19 March 2018 at 12noon

Interviews: Over two days on Wednesday 25 April and Thursday 26 April 2018

We are looking for an innovative and strategic Principal & Chief Executive; a leader who will build on the existing strengths of Craven College and lead us on the journey to being an outstanding provider of further and higher education.

This job offers an exciting opportunity for a current or aspiring Principal; a people person, someone with a track record of successful strategic institutional change. You will support the Board to develop and deliver bold and ambitious plans for the College, whilst retaining a focus on excellent FE and HE provision for our students and our local communities. Developing the sustainability of the College is a key priority and you will need to build a strong profile and create and maintain excellent networks and stakeholder relationships, particularly with employers.

You will evidence a commitment to continuous improvement, together with the leadership skills to inspire and motivate staff to share the strategic vision for the College. An understanding of the sector is important, because with the Board and senior team you will need to anticipate and respond creatively to challenges and changes from the external environment. The ability to deliver a value for money service for a College with a turnover of £15m, together with a sound understanding of governance is essential.

For further information about the role and the College, and to apply, please visit:

www.craven-college.ac.uk/principal

✉ jmatthews@craven-college.ac.uk | ☎ 07725 676 951



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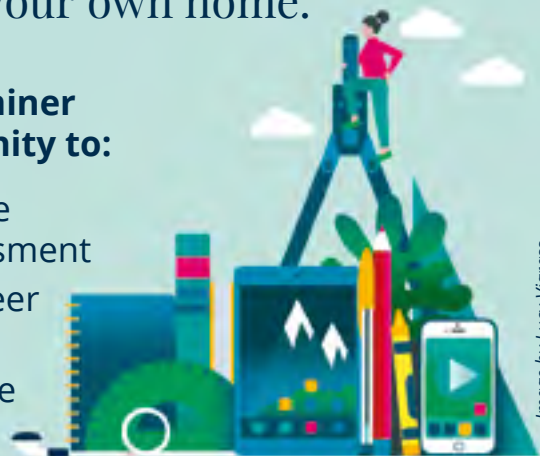


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Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair, Education Select Committee, House of Commons



Sir Gerry Berragan
CEO, Institute for Apprenticeships



Rt Hon Anne Milton MP
Apprenticeships & Skills Minister, HM Gov

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Image: BBC broadcaster & journalist Kirsty Wark chairing AAC Conference in 2017.

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EXPERTS



DR CAROLE EASTON

Chief executive, Young Women's Trust

More part-time apprenticeships would help marginalised groups

Apprenticeships as they stand are low-paid and inflexible, and that prices out people with care needs and children. This must change, warns Dr Carole Easton

As the government struggles to reach its target of three million apprenticeship starts, and while employers figure out how to make the most of the new levy, the needs of many potential apprentices are left out of the equation. If ever there were a time to make sure that apprenticeships are attractive and inclusive of all groups, it is now. Providers and employers must work together to deliver high-quality, flexible, part-time apprenticeships if we are to achieve workplace gender equality.

“
There are currently 41 men starting a construction apprenticeship for every woman

Apprenticeships are still not working for young women. There are currently 41 men starting a construction apprenticeship for every woman. For each woman apprentice entering engineering in England there are 20 men. And when almost a third of apprentices do not complete their training, it's clear that there's room for improvement. Too many don't even consider apprenticeships in the first place, put off by inflexible hours, low pay and a society that places a higher value on university education.

Developing better apprenticeships would help people from underrepresented groups get into work and training, benefiting families, businesses and the economy.

Despite the rhetoric, there is demand for part-time and flexible apprenticeships. Providers often do not think there is employer demand and employers do not think providers offer them. Meanwhile, potential apprentices have found that resources such as the government's 'Find an apprenticeship' service do not allow them to search for part-time apprenticeships, and many believe they are simply not available. But those employers and potential apprentices who are in the know recognise the benefits.

YouGov research for Young Women's Trust

shows that 54 per cent of employers would be willing to offer part-time apprenticeships, including 65 per cent of those in the public sector.

This would be of huge benefit to those who need to work and train flexibly, such as parents with young children, single parents, carers, care leavers and those with disabilities. A new report written in partnership between us, Trust for London, Timewise and the Learning and Work Institute features potential apprentices discussing how frustrating it is trying to find apprenticeships that can fit around caring responsibilities and health needs.

Without part-time and flexible opportunities, these groups can be shut out of apprenticeships. Instead, many find themselves in low-skilled work with little opportunity to progress, or out of work altogether.

To make apprenticeships more accessible, the government must substantially raise the apprentice minimum wage. Low-pay limits participation – a particular concern for part-time apprenticeships. Young Women's Trust found that two in five apprentices spend more money completing their apprenticeship than they earn, for example on travel to work, uniform and childcare. An hour's childcare can be upwards of £4.45 – or £6 in London – considerably more even than the incoming apprentice minimum wage of £3.70.

Many are put off doing an apprenticeship altogether because it isn't financially viable. We polled more than 4,000 young people, and discovered that their priority is not abolishing tuition fees but raising wages for young people and apprentices. Paying apprentices better would mean more people could afford to do them.

Making apprenticeships more accessible benefits businesses, too: it widens the talent pool, helping underrepresented groups in, and improves productivity.

The new apprenticeship levy offers an opportunity to finally get apprenticeships right. Creating a system that makes apprenticeships attractive and accessible to a wider range of people will bring huge benefits to society as a whole. It may even increase the overall number of people doing apprenticeships, helping the government reach its three-million target.

I hope that all the players involved in delivering apprenticeships will work together to make these changes and ensure that apprenticeships succeed in skilling people up, serving as a great alternative to a university education and contributing to improvements in social mobility for those otherwise likely to be left behind.



SAM PARRETT

Principal and CEO, London South East Colleges

What the FE sector should be saying about Progress 8

Colleges and providers are in agreement: school league tables are a terrible way to measure FE learners' progress. Sam Parrett proposes a solution

I recently wrote an article arguing that colleges should not be judged by the government's new-style Progress 8 league tables.

The response I received from colleagues, local authorities and wider stakeholders was overwhelmingly supportive and has made me wonder exactly what the sector should be pushing the DfE for, to ensure that FE can continue to offer life-changing educational options for young people.

League tables are only a very small part of a much bigger story, but they have huge influence on parents and young people making choices about post-11 and post-16 education.

The result of the new academically-focused Progress 8 tables is a damaged reputation for many very good institutions, which are in reality seeing their students achieve much success outside of this narrow framework.

In the case of 14-to-16 provision in FE, students arrive in year 10 or 11, often having being failed by school for the previous three or four years. Turning this around, particularly in key academic subjects like maths and English, is evidently a tall order for colleges in just one or two years.

Yet what these students are achieving in this short time cannot be fairly reflected by exam results. They are building confidence, learning employability skills, understanding the world of work, and gaining sector-specific technical skills and vocational qualifications – the list goes on.

An FE college which has given these young people a realistic chance of achieving in life should not have to bear the weight of another school's failure. Many schools will happily let students move on at 14 if they know that these students are unlikely to achieve their five A-Cs by the end of year 11. They will on the other hand be very reticent to lose students who are expected to make the grade – even if these students would be better off in a more practical environment.

Schools must take responsibility for the students they have taught for the majority of their secondary education. FE colleges shouldn't have to carry the bad data for schools; it needs to be shared, with the

student's individual needs put first.

I have no doubt that schools would be more willing to work in partnership if they knew they would bear some of the responsibility if students fail to progress. We have had students who moved to do their GCSEs with us, then went back to school to do A-levels. It is vital that all routes, in both directions, are accessible and supported.

The Baker clause is a very positive move but it needs to be embraced and enforced. Schools can't be allowed to let one provider in once a year to talk about alternative educational options. The DfE needs to support transition at a non-standard age, ensuring that local authorities communicate and promote all the available options in the area.

“
We must accept that traditional school isn't for everyone

Funding across schools and colleges should be standardised for all ages and no college should be financially penalised for taking on pupils that schools are not interested in. There also needs to be recognition that offering high-quality vocational training, with industry-standard facilities and experts, can be more costly than a classroom-based setting.

We need an agreement on outcomes as to what really does reflect "success". It is not a level playing-field and we need recognition that progression and progress into fulfilling work is the best marker of all. This means removing FE colleges from the school league tables and creating a new set of measures that reflect career-focused achievement and not only the ability to pass an exam.

An integrated framework is needed, which requires true partnership. Young people need to be put first and made fully aware of the many exciting options open to them. We must accept that traditional school isn't for everyone – and when that's the case, make sure that children know about and can access the many different routes to success.

EXPERTS

Dear Dr Sue



Dr Sue Pember, director of policy and external relations at Hoxe, answers your questions on college governance, backed by her experience as principal of Canterbury College and in senior civil service posts in education and skills.

Q1: SUPPORTING THE CHAIR

My principal seems to think he should not be involved in the running of the governing body and it is all down to me and the clerk. Is that appropriate?

Answer:

This view does seem to be taking hold, but it doesn't help the management of the college. Successful governance should be a matter for the principal as well as the chair, as it has an impact on the effectiveness of the college as a whole.

The roles of the principal and the chair both embrace leadership and management responsibilities but have their boundaries.

The chair should lead the governing body and manage its business, while providing an element of strategic leadership for the whole college. The principal should provide assistance to the chair in relation to board matters, while focusing primarily on the leadership and management of the college.

For board meetings to run smoothly, you need good chairing and clerking, and first-class advice and underpinning information from the principal. This doesn't mean a cosy relationship, but one of professionalism and challenge.

Q2: AN AWKWARD SITUATION

I'm a governor in an awkward situation where I am a confidante to both the chair and principal. The two don't get on and it is affecting the way the board runs. How can I get them back on track?

Answer:

This should not be just your problem, and you should not have to shoulder the responsibility alone. It is really important for you to talk to the clerk and vice-chair, and agree the next steps.

The first step would be for you and the vice-chair to talk to the chair or principal to uncover their issues and explain that you think it is affecting the way the board is working.

Explain it is vital that they present a solid, united public front. If in these conversations the chair highlights issues of performance, then they should be investigated properly. However, if it is just a breakdown of their working relationship, and the principal's performance is sound, you may need to suggest the chair stands down.

Either way it needs to be tackled before it upsets the effective running of the college.

Q3: PREVENT, SAFEGUARDING AND GOVERNORS

How do we know we are doing enough on Prevent and safeguarding? We have all gone through training, we have relevant policies, and we monitor how they are being implemented. Can we be doing more?

Answer:

I can understand why you ask this question because these responsibilities are wide-ranging.

It is important that you are clear on your duties and how robust your monitoring is. These are areas where you should use data about reported incidents and monitor how they were tackled.

Your policies need to account for where your students are studying and what is needed at any off-campus sites. Several colleges now they have risk assessments in which the action is proportionate to the risk.

For example, if some of your provision is delivered in an open-access situation, have you assessed the risk for that context, and is mitigation action appropriate? It doesn't mean you necessarily have to, say, fit gates and barriers, but it may mean that ID cards come into play and staff are all trained for emergencies.



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CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*



Puppy love: Jeffrey captures hearts on campus

Puppy spreads the love in Leeds

A 12-week-old cockapoo is the newest recruit at Leeds City College. The puppy, named Jeffrey, will frequent the college's schools of health sciences, childhood and education and public services as a therapy animal for stressed-out students.

As well as serving the needs of the college community, Jeffrey will attend puppy training sessions on a weekly basis to become an accredited therapy dog, and the college plans to take him to nearby schools and care settings to help others once he has qualified.

"Studies suggest that pets play an effective role in supporting the young and elderly and we'll be conducting research into the impact Jeffrey has on our most vulnerable students and their achievement levels, especially those with autism and additional needs," explained Sheila Lucciarini, head of childcare and public services at the college. "It's not uncommon to watch someone transition from emotionless to joyful when a pet enters the room."

Leeds City College will be documenting Jeffrey's progress and activity on a blog, which will be published soon.



There's no business like show business: The college's performing arts team

Dance like everyone's watching

A college is instilling a love of the arts in pupils at a nearby secondary school by running free drama and dance workshops. Sunderland College is working in partnership with Thornhill Academy to run the weekly dance and drama sessions, which give pupils regular access to arts education and inspire them to pursue creative subjects post-16.

The initiative is part of the college's recruitment strategy, and will run until the end of the academic year, culminating in a joint performance of *Blood Brothers* by pupils

and college students at Sunderland College's arts academy theatre, as well as an end-of-year dance show.

"The interest from schools wanting to work in partnership with us to ensure the arts is represented in the curriculum offer has been overwhelming," said Sheree Rymer, curriculum manager for creative arts at Sunderland College. "This new partnership shows the resilience of the arts in Sunderland and how there are young people who want to study the creative arts alongside more academic subjects."

Making waves on the radio



Making their debut

Stoke-on-Trent College learners have made the first-ever broadcast on a new national radio station. The team of creative media students brought their show to National College Radio on its launch day, which included a Q&A with their lecturer about his career, a movie review segment and a fast-request challenge featuring 21 song requests in 19 minutes.

The students prerecorded their show in the comfort of the college's studio, planning, recording and editing it, before sending it to NCR's programme controller.

The station broadcasts content made online by 15- to 18-year-olds at colleges and sixth-forms across the UK, and the Stoke-on-Trent team has now been offered a regular monthly slot.

"We're extremely proud of all the students, who have really risen to the challenge, meeting all deadlines and submitting good, well-planned and professional-standard content," said Lee Beddow, the programme leader for creative media at the college. "It's a real coup for our students to be selected as the first broadcast."

Kicking it with college students



Role models: Butland and students

An England goalkeeper has visited football fans at Newcastle-under-Lyme College's Knutton Lane campus. Stoke City's main man Jack Butland was given a tour of the college's sporting facilities and even took part in a training session with learners at the college's Andy Griffin Football Academy.

To round off his trip, Mr Butland took part in a Q&A session with 120 football fans from the college. Questions included "who is the best striker you've ever played against?", "what has been the best Stoke City performance this season?" and "how do you prepare for big games?"

"It was fantastic for so many of our students to have the opportunity to meet a top-class



Signing Stoke City FC merchandise

sportsman who competes at the highest level," said Karen Dobson, principal and CEO of Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group. "Jack is a fantastic role model and someone who will no doubt provide inspiration to many of our elite sporting students who aspire to follow in his footsteps."

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King***Growth industry: The future of farming**FEATURED
CAMPUS
ROUND-UP

Hartpury College is dragging the agriculture industry into the future by launching a new hub to educate farmers in the latest technological advances, reports Samantha King

The £2 million Agri Tech Centre will be based at the college's 1,000-acre commercial farm, and will provide a place to demonstrate to industry professionals how tech can revolutionise the farming process as well as increase the productivity of livestock.

"We've got an industry where the average age of people managing farms is probably about 58, and quite often they're a bit put off technology. They're not sure how it'll work, and so they leave it alone," explained Russell Marchant, principal and CEO of Hartpury College.

"We're not utilising the technology that we need to improve productivity, and that's what this centre is about."

Students who are trained in the tech will help give demonstrations to visitors to the centre on everything from the benefits of electronic ear-tagging and handling systems, to putting sensors on cows' tails which send a notification to a farmer's phone if the animal is about to give birth.

"The latest thing is using thermal imaging techniques on animals to see, if they're lame for example, what's causing the lameness. Is



Using thermal imaging to monitor cows' udders and joints



it muscular? Is it an infection? We can limit the use of antibiotics and use drugs more effectively," Mr Marchant added.

Half of the funding for the centre has been provided by GFirst local enterprise partnership after a successful bid from the

college's agriculture team, and the rest of the money has been put forward by the college and tech manufacturers, who want their farming innovations presented to farmers.

The new centre will also provide new job opportunities in the area, and the college wants to hire specialist staff to help the hub run smoothly after construction is completed in Autumn next year.

"This is hopefully just the start of Gloucestershire playing a leading role in Agri Tech innovation and knowledge transfer into



Daisy gets an ear inspection



Personal growth: Students monitor their crops

industry," continued Mr Marchant. "We'll start to try and set up tech demonstrations from this summer, so we won't be waiting until we've got the hub building finished."

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

**Malcolm Pate**

Farm manager, Moulton College

Start date February 2018

Previous job

Farm manager, Streetly Hall Farm Limited

Interesting fact

Malcolm plays the fiddle, and has toured Norway, the US and Canada as a member both of a folk band and the Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra.

**Catherine Cole**

Principal, the Sixth-Form College Farnborough

Start date September 2018

Previous job

Deputy principal, the Sixth-Form College Farnborough

Interesting fact

During her career, Catherine has worked in a number of schools and colleges in the UK and Australia.

**Jason Holt CBE**

Chair, Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

Start date March 2018

Interesting fact

Jason was awarded a CBE in the 2015 New Year's honours list for his services to apprenticeships and his efforts to plug the skills gap in the jewellery sector.

**Shirley Brookes-Mills**

Principal, Thomas Rotherham College

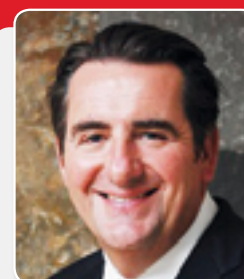
Start date June 2018

Previous job

Assistant group director, Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group

Interesting fact

Shirley will be the college's first-ever female principal in its 500-year history.

**Lee Kilgour**

Principal, Scarborough UTC

Start date April 2018

Previous job

Principal, the Greater Manchester UTC

Interesting fact

Lee worked for the RAF for 10 years as an aircraft engineer and instructor before moving into teaching.

Movers & Shakers

...

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



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FE Week

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: Mike Riches