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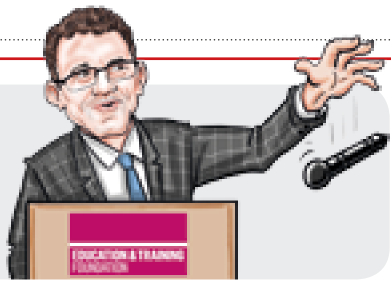
FE Week



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- Levy contractors include Liverpool Football Club and Mencap

Exclusive PAUL OFFORD @PAULOFFORD

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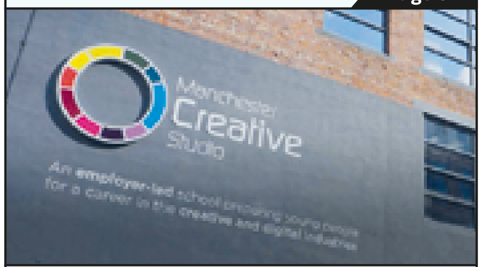

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NEWS

Fears over potential 'middle class grab' on apprenticeships are valid, says minister

Anne Milton

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Fears of a "middle-class grab" on apprenticeships are "valid", the skills minister has admitted, amid concerns that the rise of degree and management apprenticeships could hit social mobility.

Anne Milton told a House of Lords inquiry into the economics of further, higher and technical education that she was "watching and waiting" to see what happened – and would take action if necessary.

"Fears of a middle-class grab on apprenticeships are valid," she said at the hearing on Tuesday.

Ms Milton was responding to a question posed by Lord Lamont, who referred to concerns raised by the AELP that the focus on higher-cost, higher-level apprenticeships would squeeze out opportunities for young people at lower levels.

"I feel quite strongly that an apprenticeship can offer social mobility, so I sit and wait and watch," she said.

"And there are levers that I can – that we can as a government – pull at various times. We could distort the market."

Since the levy was introduced last April a number of sector figures, including AELP, have warned that the new system would encourage businesses to draw down funding for management courses for existing employees instead of offering lower level apprenticeships for younger people.

FE Week reported in October that management had soared in popularity to become the second most popular apprenticeship framework in 2016/17, with 46,640 starts over the year.

And experimental statistics published by the DfE in November revealed a massive 424 per cent jump in levy-funded apprenticeship at higher or degree level.

AELP boss Mark Dawe has argued that the seemingly inexorable rise in these sorts of apprenticeships puts the government's social mobility commitment at risk.

"Someone having access to level two and moving on to a level three, that to me is what social mobility is about," he said at an event last November.

Without changes to the current funding system "you can say bye-bye to level two".

But Ms Milton told Tuesday's hearing that the "majority" of apprenticeships were still "at level two and level three".

"I think they still make up 90 per cent of it," she said – although she acknowledged that "if you look at the starts, the one area where starts have gone up is at degree level."

The government is unlikely to take immediate action to address this rise, as Ms Milton admitted it would be "unwise" for the government to pull any of its levers yet.

This was because there has been "an awful lot of change in a short amount of time".

However, she told the hearing that she would like more money from the Treasury to "expand the programme".

"I would have to have that discussion with the chancellor as it is below my pay grade because we would probably have to have more money in the system."

She committed to looking at "outputs at the other end" of apprenticeships, in addition to starts, after the first anniversary of the introduction of the levy is over in April.

Anecdotal evidence from businesses suggests the new system "has massively improved retention", she told the hearing, "but we will know the figures when we get past the first year".

NEWS

20% subcontracting cap guidance already in trouble

BILLY CAMDEN
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EXCLUSIVE

A new best-practice threshold for a 20-per-cent limit on subcontracting management fees has already been undermined, after multiple colleges and their representative body refused to comply.

The guideline, agreed last week between the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Holex and Collab, a provider group, was conspicuously missing sign-off from the Association of Colleges, which said it needed to consult its members.

The AoC has now confirmed it will not commit to any recommended limit because it is developing other guidance "properly" with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the University Vocational Awards Council.

The guidance, which covers expectations for primes and subcontractors, states that the "core fee" charged by the prime provider for "legitimate management overheads" for quality and contractual compliance aspects should be "no greater" than 20 per cent and would "generally will be much less".

FE Week has spoken to three colleges which have historically charged more than 20 per cent. They all indicated their intention to continue doing so – should the subcontracting relationship warrant it.

"Very occasionally the college may need to charge up to 30 per cent, so that providers who are new to delivery can be effectively


David Hughes

supported in the development of the provision," said Dr Alison Birkinshaw, York College's principal and the AoC's president.

New College Swindon, which is an AELP and AoC member, states in its 2017/18 subcontracting fees policy that providers who enter new subcontracting relations with it could face up to top-slices of up to 38 per cent.

A spokesperson explained it would be "conforming to the 20-per-cent guidelines in the main", though there may be "exceptions depending on the nature of the partnership and the services we provide as the prime".

These exceptions might be "free learning materials, quality-assurance and improvement, staff recruitment, and some training input on top of returns to ESFA".

Barnet and Southgate College, a member of AELP, AoC and Collab – of which its principal David Byrne is the chair – charges up to 30 per cent in management fees.

A spokesperson said this is "proportional to the level of services provided" and didn't say whether the college would drop fees as a result of the new guidance.

AoC boss David Hughes told FE Week that his organisation is working with the ESFA and UVAC to "bring our members together to develop guidance on subcontracting".

"We want to do this properly, exploring the rules which already exist and ways to make sure they are being implemented," he said.

"We know that there is a lot of good practice in subcontracting to meet employer and specialist needs and we want to ensure that everyone can see that."

The ESFA did not comment before FE Week went to press.

"The only questions we think should be answered at this stage are: do these organisations think anything over 20 per cent is justified and what is the justification," said Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the AELP, in response to the AoC.

"Presumably it won't be taking money away from learners when they are campaigning for more money to get to learners in FE."

He added that his organisation would not "condone" any management fees above 20 per cent without an "acceptable rational", and if his members do not like this stance, then it is "for them to decide whether they want to remain part of our membership".

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

Some management fees have reached up to 40 per cent, infamously in the case of Learndirect, the now-disgraced largest provider in the country.

Mr Halfon even said subcontracting had become a "money-maker" during an education select committee this week.

DfE backs HMRC's crackdown on VAT

BILLY CAMDEN
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EXCLUSIVE

The Department for Education is backing HMRC's decision to collect VAT on subcontracting management fees.

The tax office has launched a major investigation into subcontracting to find out why primes have not been applying a mandatory 20-per-cent charge to their top-slices.

The crackdown, which involves a team of around 20 special investigators, has rocked a sector which may now face tens of millions in additional costs.

Many confused providers, who until recently had no idea about the rule, have engaged tax experts to calculate potential liabilities, though colleges are clinging to the belief that they may yet be exempt, and the Association of Colleges is backing them up.

The DfE, however, is one body with its mind made up.

"The rules are clear – VAT must be paid on management fees," a spokesperson said.

HMRC rules state that while vocational training is exempt from the tax, management services in subcontracting relationships are not.

Julian Gravatt, the deputy chief executive at the Association of Colleges, believes the department's statement "oversimplifies a complex situation" and wants its members to tread with caution.

He recognised that management fees charged by colleges are "taxable in principle".

But he also pointed out that paragraph 4.4 of VAT notice 701/30 muddies the water. It indicates that supplies of education and vocational training by "eligible bodies" including colleges can be "exempt" from VAT.

He stressed that eligibility for payment "depends on some fine distinctions", and each case needs to be "judged on its circumstances".

"Education and training are underfunded," he added. "No-one will benefit if HMRC officials overstretch themselves in interpreting complex legislation."

FE Week has sought clarification from HMRC, which was unequivocal in its response.

"The provision of education and services that are closely linked and essential to that education are exempt, if provided by an eligible body such as a college," it said, adding that management services are not regarded as "closely related services" and are therefore subject to VAT.

FE Week understands that HMRC plans to investigate up to six years of unpaid VAT and will attempt to claim all of it back.

This could rise to 12 years if evidence is found that prime providers knew about the charge and failed to apply it anyway.

Substantial fines are also likely, according to one VAT expert.

Evidence seen by FE Week suggests the VAT rule is unknown to most providers, and has not been applied for years, meaning that hardly any of it has been paid.

West Nottinghamshire College, which subcontracted nearly £17 million in provision last year, has been liaising with its financial advisors and is "confident" its subcontracting arrangements "meet the requirements for VAT accounting".

Eastleigh College, which subcontracted over £17 million worth of training in 2016/17, said it has always taken "external specialist advice" and its view on VAT and HMRC compliancy "has not changed".

Neither would confirm if they have ever charged VAT on management fees.

Around a £1 billion of funding is subcontracted every year across the ESFA post-16 funding streams, which FE Week estimates would generate around £40 million per year in VAT for HMRC.

NEWS

Brutal early Ofsted criticism brings ministerial stop on apprenticeships

PAUL OFFORD
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FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

The first of a new wave of Ofsted's early-monitoring visit reports on newcomers to the apprenticeship market has been brutally critical of training it labelled "not fit for purpose".

The situation at Key6 Group is so severe that the skills minister Anne Milton has stepped in to prevent it from taking on any new apprentices "following Ofsted's findings".

The inspectorate's stark criticism of Key6 Group is all the more striking because it has high-profile apprenticeship levy contracts with Liverpool Football Club and charity giant Mencap.

Ofsted's report said the provider had begun "swiftly recruiting apprentices in a relatively short space of time" after it joined the government's register of apprenticeship training providers last March.

Inspectors heard apprentices complain they were "not learning anything new on their apprenticeship".

Instead, they "shoehorn existing work in a portfolio to get a free qualification", and most people receive "a poor standard of training".

"The large majority of apprentices are not even aware that they are an apprentice, and identify themselves as studying a level five management course," inspectors concluded.

"All apprenticeship training must be fit for purpose," said Ms Milton on Thursday night.

"We have stopped Key6 Group from taking on any new apprentices following Ofsted's findings. The provider must now show us how they plan to improve, and we will monitor their progress."

Company leaders were found to be "unjustifiably optimistic", and it was noted that marketing literature promotes the group as a "gold standard global education and training provider".

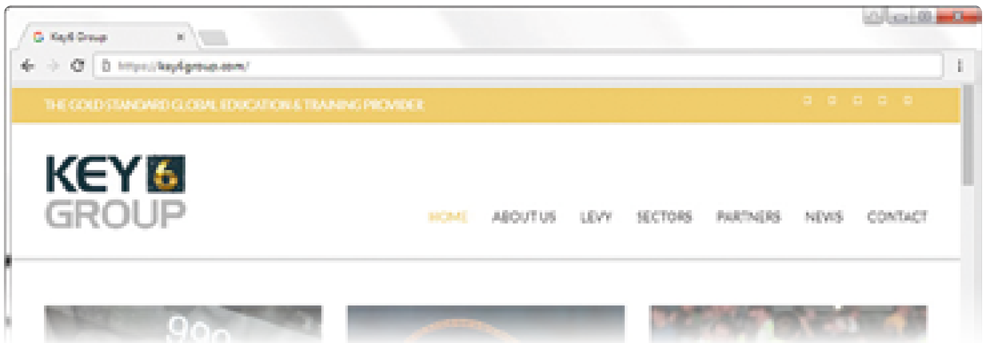
Craig Pankhurst, the provider's managing director, has complained to Ofsted about the report.

He said there had been "positive dialogue" with the ESFA and welcomed "their advice and guidance".

"We understood the Ofsted monitoring visit to be developmental and balanced. The lack of either forms part of the reason for Key6's complaint," Pankhurst said.

"We acknowledge we are a young organisation which inevitably will go through continuous improvement. We embrace constructive feedback and criticism to enable the quality of our delivery to be maximised."

Mencap told FE Week about its own unhappiness with the provider.



"Despite a thorough procurement process, we have been disappointed with the quality of training and other aspects of apprenticeship provision being delivered and have communicated this to Key6," said its representative Alton Hobbs.

The charity has "conducted a thorough review of the provision of training by Key6 and some of our managers undertaking the training participated as part of the Ofsted monitoring visit".

Mencap is now "in the process of assessing our contractual options".

Liverpool FC declined to comment.

Key6 launched in 2015 and provided training for 208 apprentices at the time of Ofsted's visit.

It does not appear on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's 2017/18 allocations list, which indicates that its apprenticeship funding all comes directly from levy-paying employers.

The levy was launched last April. It is only paid by employers with an annual payroll of £3 million or more, who use it to fund their apprenticeship training.

More than three quarters of Key6's apprentices were enrolled on management or leadership apprenticeships at levels three, four and five at the time of the visit.

There is mounting concern about the proliferation of largely untested apprenticeship providers, following roll-out of the levy and associated reforms.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman announced last November that Ofsted would conduct early monitoring visits at new RoATP providers to sniff out "scandalous" attempts to waste public money.

Sixty-six new companies – of which Key6 was one – are listed on RoAPT as a "new organisation without financial track record". When it applied in early 2017, it had not even filed their first accounts.

"While it is early days in terms of understanding the volume of new providers entering the apprenticeship market, I do want to reassure you, our existing and experienced providers, that Ofsted will be monitoring these newcomers closely," Ms Spielman told delegates to the last Association of Colleges conference, six months after the levy was established.

NEWS

Bradford College given second financial notice to improve

JUDE BURKE
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A cash-strapped college has been hit with a notice to improve for financial control – just months after it received one for financial health.

Bradford College, which also banked two million-pound government bailouts in December alone, had already been referred to the FE commissioner after the first notice, issued in November.

The latest notice warns that the Education and Skills Funding Agency will take further action in the case that its conditions aren't met.

These include developing a recovery plan focusing on "what has previously gone wrong and why, with regard to financial controls within the organisation and what actions have been taken, or are being taken, to address any identified shortcomings".

The college must "provide assurances from their internal auditors that there are adequate control processes to manage the achievement of its objectives", and that the "college has effective arrangements for governance risk management and internal controls".

It must also "continue to work with the ESFA and the FE commissioner and his advisers to undertake an independent assessment of the college's capability and capacity to make the required changes and improvements".

"Once the FE commissioner has undertaken this assessment, we reserve the right to vary the terms of the NTI to reflect recommendations made," the ESFA added.

If the college "fails to take the necessary actions (in whole or part)" on time, the agency "will take further action".

As FE Week previously reported, Bradford College received two exceptional financial support payments in December alone, each one for £1.5 million.

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

That triggered an intervention by the FE commissioner, who revealed that the college's dire financial position had come as a surprise to its governors.

He urged the board to commission "an independent piece of work to enable governors and the executive to understand what went wrong in 2016/17 and why it was not reported until after the year end".

Government preparing new ESOL strategy

JUDE BURKE
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The government will develop a new strategy to teach English to speakers of other languages (ESOL), which is aimed at improving integration.

"To boost English language skills – which are fundamental to being able to take advantage of the opportunities of living in modern Britain such as getting a job, mixing with people and playing a full part in community life – we will propose developing a new strategy for English language in England," said the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in a new green paper it calls the 'Integrated communities strategy'.

Sue Pember, director of policy at Holex, which has been calling for a national ESOL strategy since 2016, said she was "very pleased" the government had "finally listened".

"We are delighted that they have recognised and want to build on our work to develop a new community-based English language programme, and support for local authorities to improve the provision of English language tuition for those who need it most," she said.

But while the paper is backed with £50 million over two years, none of this appears to have been earmarked for the ESOL strategy.

"To create clearer pathways for learners, improve outcomes and secure better value for the taxpayer by making best use of existing funding, we propose developing a new strategy for English language in England," the document said.

Gordon Marsden, the shadow skills minister, warned that "there is no adequate replacement of money so far to allow the integration strategy to have the teeth required" after "substantial" funding cuts for ESOL in recent years.

The paper follows the Casey Review, commissioned by former prime minister David Cameron and published in December 2016, which concluded that good English skills are "fundamental" to improving immigrants' opportunities, but warned funding for ESOL courses had been heavily cut.

Its author Dame Louise Casey urged the government to carry out a national review of the provisions it makes for non-native English speakers, ensuring that "sufficient funding" is available.

Poor English language skills were found to result in lower wages and less community integration.

Despite this, she noted that funding for ESOL courses has been slashed by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2015.

The report also identified "a significant gap in funding for pre-entry and entry-level English language courses".

Year	Department for Education funding	Department for Communities and Local Government funding	Total
2009/10	£203m		£203m
2010/11	£169m		£169m
2011/12	£117m		£117m
2012/13	£128m	£0.12m	£128.12m
2013/14	£120m	£2.14m	£122.14m
2014/15	£104m	£3.66m	£107.66m
2015/16	£90m	£2.53m	£92.53m

Source: Parliamentary written question 59503, answered by Robert Halfon MP on January 19 2017

Latest wave of college strike dates announced

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Members of the University and College Union will walk out for a second time later this month, in an ongoing dispute over pay.

Staff at a number of colleges in London and the Midlands will go out on strike on either March 27 or 28 for two or three days of strike, just one month after previous action over what the UCU described as a "disappointing" pay offer of one per cent.

"UCU members at these colleges made it quite clear that they were prepared to take strike action in defence of their pay and conditions," said the union's general secretary Sally Hunt.

"They will be walking out again later this month unless the colleges properly address their concerns. Strike action is a last resort, but staff feel they have been left with no alternative."

David Hughes, the boss of the Association of Colleges, which represents colleges on pay, said he was disappointed by the renewed action.

"This will only impact their students, not the government whose chronic underfunding of FE has led to a situation where colleges are unable to offer their staff a pay rise which keeps pace with inflation," he said.

Mr Hughes pledged to "continue to pressure government to recognise the value of the workforce".

College	Strike dates
Capital City College Group*	27/28/29 March
Croydon College	27/28/29 March
Lambeth College	27/28/29 March
Sandwell College	27/28/29 March
New City College^	27/29 March 18 April
Havering College	27/28 March
United College Group ~	28/29 March

"I would not wish this suggestion of escalating strike action to undermine the constructive dialogue between the AoC, colleges and UCU," he added.

Seven colleges or groups are set to take action later this month: Capital City College Group, Croydon College, Lambeth College, Sandwell College, New City College, Havering College and United College Group.

Staff at those colleges voted "overwhelmingly" for strike action, the union said, with 91 per cent of those who voted backing a second walk-out, based on an average turnout of 63 per cent.

UCU said in a statement that staff were taking action over pay, but at some colleges the disputes also included concerns over working conditions such as workload.

The latest strike action will see fewer colleges affected than the first wave, which took place on February 28 and March 1.

The UCU estimated that more than 1,500 staff walked out at 11 colleges or groups.

Gerry McDonald, the group principal of New City College, said it was "clear the majority of FE staff recognise that striking is not going to result in an increased pay award".

Striking staff at his college would miss out on "valuable, scheduled staff training on one of the upcoming strike days".

"On the other day, no classes will be cancelled and all students are expected to attend," he said.

Negotiations between the AoC and college unions last September resulted in an offer of a one-per-cent pay rise or the sum of £250 "where this is more beneficial".

This was significantly below the claim for an across-the-board rise of six per cent submitted by the National Joint Forum, made up of the unions representing college staff, including UCU.

At the time Mr Hughes expressed "regret" that the AoC was unable to offer more.

"We wish we were in a position to make a better recommendation today, but current funding levels for colleges do not allow us to do so," he said.

NEWS

Levy revenue forecast downgraded by nearly a billion

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

The apprenticeship levy will generate £900 million less funding in its first four years than the government first claimed, according to economic forecasters.

A new "economic and fiscal outlook" report from the Office for Budget Responsibility estimates the tax will accumulate £10.7 billion by early 2021.

This represents a major downgrade – of £900 million, or eight per cent – in the original forecast that the levy would generate £11.6 billion, made when it was announced in 2015.

"We have revised down receipts from the apprenticeship levy by £0.1 billion a year relative to November," the report said.

"Having only been introduced in April last year, the profile of monthly receipts is still uncertain. However, with 10 months of revenues received by HMRC, it seems likely that full-year receipts will be lower than expected when the measure was first costed."

Expenditure on apprenticeships in the 2016-17 financial year was just over £1.6 billion, according to government accounts, split equally between 16- to 18-year-olds and adults.

So despite the downgrade, funding available for apprenticeship delivery is now around £1 billion higher than before the levy was introduced.

The apprenticeship levy is paid by employers with annual payrolls in excess of £3 million. It is charged at a rate of 0.5 per cent.

The OBR noted in 2015 that the levy is "economically equivalent to a payroll tax" and expected "the cost to be passed largely onto employees in lower wages".

The original costing expected the measure to generate £2.7 billion in 2017-18, rising steadily thereafter.

"Since the original costing we have made regular downward adjustments to our earnings forecast and, though this has been partly offset by higher expected employment growth, the overall effect is to lower the apprenticeship levy forecast," the OBR has now said.

"The levy came into force in April 2017 and HMRC statistics show that £1.8 billion of cash receipts have been received in the first nine months. Our latest forecast is that this will raise £2.6 billion in 2017-18 and a cumulative £10.7 billion in its first four years, an eight-per-cent drop from the original costing."

Financial year (original OBR forecast)	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Apprenticeship levy (Billion £)	2.7	2.8	3	3.1
First four-year total (Billion £)	11.6			

Financial year (latest OBR forecast)	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Apprenticeship levy (Billion £)	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.8
First four-year total (Billion £)	10.7			

Downgrade over four years	-8%
	-£900,000,000

Analysis by FE Week

Source: Office for Budget Responsibility: Economic and fiscal outlook. November 2015 and March 2018

The OBR's report was published on the same day that the skills and apprenticeships minister, Anne Milton, told a House of Lords committee that she wants more money from the Treasury to expand the levy.

"I would like simply to expand the programme," she said. "I would have to have that discussion with the chancellor as it is below my pay grade, because we would probably have to have more money in the system."

Robert Halfon, the chair of the education select committee and a former skills minister, also wants to see the programme widened and believes this should be done by making employers with annual payrolls of £2 million pay the levy.

"To fund more degree apprenticeships, we should increase and ring-fence funds from the apprenticeships levy," he said at a Joseph Rowntree Foundation event in December.

"And we could do this by broadening the levy's remit, so that employers with a salary roll of £2 million qualify."

The OBR is an advisory non-departmental public body set up by the government to provide independent economic forecasts of public finances.

£80m for SMEs to hire apprentices – but is it really new money?

PAUL OFFORD
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There will be an extra £80 million available to help small businesses recruit apprentices, the chancellor announced in his spring statement to Parliament.

However, it isn't strictly new funding, a Treasury official later admitted.

"We are committed as a government to delivering three million apprenticeship starts by 2020 with the support of business through the apprenticeship levy," said Philip Hammond.

The levy was launched last April for large employers, and there have been multiple concerns since about its impact on starts, and fears that the system has become too heavily orientated towards big businesses and their apprenticeships needs.

The levy is currently paid by employers with an annual payroll of £3 million or more, and is set at 0.5 per cent of this cost.

"We recognise the challenges the new system presents to some small business looking to employ an apprentice," Mr Hammond said.

"I can therefore announce today that the education secretary will release up to £80 million of funding to support small businesses in engaging apprentices."

A Treasury spokesperson was forced to clarify shortly after the announcement, though, that the money is "not new funding".

Philip Hammond

"There were no new funding announcements in the spring statement," he said. "It is from the existing DfE apprenticeship budget."

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has just received the first round of growth-request bids for non-levy apprenticeship funding, from those providers that were successful in the recent tender for contracts in this area.

The Treasury has confirmed that the chancellor's £80 million is in addition to £485 million in non-levy funding that has been already allocated.

It would not though say whether this ultimately amounts to extra funding on top of the total £650 million previously allocated for non-levy funding until April 2019.

FE Week believes the funding does come from the £650 million pot, and the amount is similar to that allocated to providers during the last round of growth requests that closed for submissions last Tuesday.

This hypothesis appeared to be confirmed in the House of Lords by Viscount Younger, the Conservatives' spokesperson on education.

"The government has awarded £490 million to providers across the country to deliver apprenticeship training for smaller businesses from January 2018 to April 2019," he told his fellow peers.

"And today we have announced that in April we will be making available an additional £80 million for starts with SMEs and that, my lords, will support an extra up to 40,000 apprenticeships."

This would then leave just £80 million to allocate in the second and third growth rounds, the results of which are to be revealed in July and November respectively.

"While any growth funding is very welcome, until the government removes the 10-per-cent employer contribution for apprentices under 24, and commits to an annual non-levy budget of £1 billion, apprenticeship starts are not even going to reach the level they were before the levy was introduced," claimed Mark Dawe, the boss of the AELP.

This all follows the controversial recent tender for non-apprenticeship levy contracts. A total of 714 training providers won contracts in the £650-million process – nearly a third of which did not have an apprenticeships allocation the previous year.

Apprenticeships minister Anne Milton recently apologised after the aborted first attempt and delays to the second, before the results were finally released by the ESFA in December.

Mr Hammond also mentioned the launch of a new national retraining partnership.

"Last week the education secretary and I chaired the first meeting of the national retraining partnership between the government, the Trade Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry," he said.

"I can reassure the house there was a clear and shared commitment to training to prepare the British people for a better future ahead. As our economy changes we must ensure people have the skills they need to seize the opportunities ahead."

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NEWS

IfA 'concerns' revealed over quality-assurance conflicts of interest

JUDE BURKE
@JUDEBURKE77

EXCLUSIVE

The Institute for Apprenticeships has "concerns" about conflicts of interest in its new model for quality-assurance, FE Week can reveal.

This emerged from minutes for a meeting of the IfA quality-assurance committee, obtained via the Freedom of Information Act.

The body "confirmed it had concerns about conflicts of interest with EQA providers in general" during the session last December.

It also agreed to develop "a register of interest for EQA providers" which "should list any declared interests that EQA providers have and how these are to be mitigated".

The minutes did not specify what the concerns were and a spokesperson for the IfA refused to explain this week.

"The process of recognising bodies to deliver EQA has reinforced the importance of investigating potential conflicts of interest," he admitted.

"Some conflicts can be managed, but others, for example being an end-point assessment organisation, will prevent that body from delivering EQA."

John McNamara, the Federation of Awarding Bodies' interim boss, said potential conflicts arise where employer groups or professional bodies providing EQA have an associate company or subsidiaries that "are doing other things in the apprenticeship market" such as end-point assessment.

There is a "perception" that in this situation the EQA provider might give preferential treatment to the assessment organisation within its own group, Mr McNamara explained.

"It's up to the EQA provider to demonstrate it's got no favouritism," he said.

Employer groups developing new apprenticeship standards can choose one of four options for externally quality-assuring the final exams.

These are an employer-led approach, a professional body, Ofqual or the IfA itself.

This has led to a proliferation of different organisations being named in apprenticeship assessment plans to provide EQA.

But to date just four have been approved by the IfA – People 1st, Tech Partnership, RMISC and Skills for Care.

One provider was rejected at the December meeting – but the IfA refused to say which. A further 32 organisations, named as EQA providers for 50 standards, are still awaiting approval.

These include one organisation that's also on the register of apprenticeship assessment organisations – but also a number that are part of the same group as an EPA organisation.

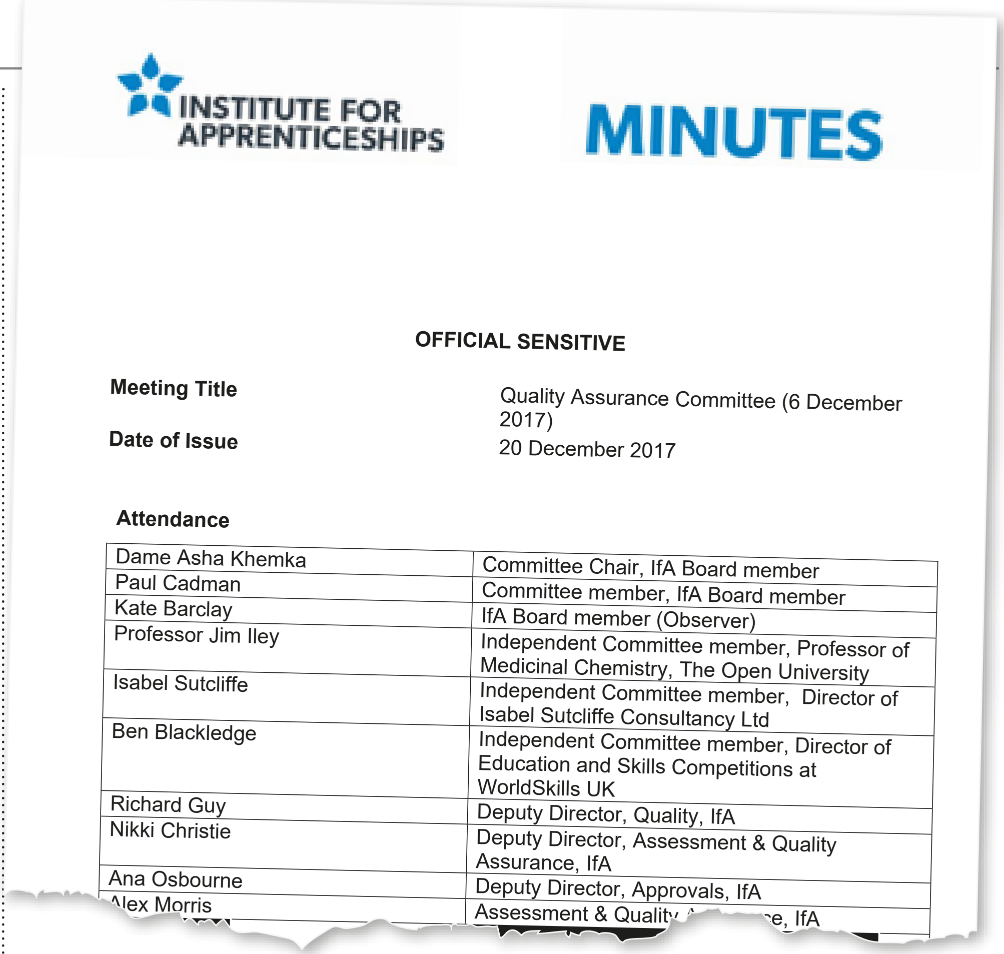
FE Week asked the IfA to explain what would happen in cases where it had not yet approved an EQA provider named on an assessment plan, particularly where there were apprentices that had gone through end-point assessment.

No answer was forthcoming.

However, we understand that at least one provider in this position had been told to carry out its duties as originally planned until told otherwise.

An IfA spokesperson said that "94 per cent of apprentices with EPA due in the next 12 months" are on standards with an approved EQA provider.

"We are working to approve the providers which cover the remaining six per cent."


INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

MINUTES

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Meeting Title	Quality Assurance Committee (6 December 2017)
Date of Issue	20 December 2017

Attendance

Dame Asha Khemka	Committee Chair, IfA Board member
Paul Cadman	Committee member, IfA Board member
Kate Barclay	IfA Board member (Observer)
Professor Jim Iley	Independent Committee member, Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, The Open University
Isabel Sutcliffe	Independent Committee member, Director of Isabel Sutcliffe Consultancy Ltd
Ben Blackledge	Independent Committee member, Director of Education and Skills Competitions at WorldSkills UK
Richard Guy	Deputy Director, Quality, IfA
Nikki Christie	Deputy Director, Assessment & Quality Assurance, IfA
Ana Osbourne	Deputy Director, Approvals, IfA
Alex Morris	Assessment & Quality ...e, IfA

What is the role of external quality-assurance?

External quality-assurance has a vital role to play in ensuring that apprenticeship assessments are reliable and deliver the outcomes needed.

It's designed to "ensure that end-point assessment is being delivered effectively and consistently by different end-point assessment organisations, and that assessment plans are fit for purpose".

It "ensures that EPA organisations all work to a high standard and that an apprentice who has been assessed by one EPA organisation would get the same result regardless of the EPA organisation".

Employer groups developing apprenticeship standards can as previously explained choose between an employer-led approach, a professional body, the IfA itself or the exams regulator Ofqual.

All four options are overseen by the IfA, to ensure "quality, consistency and credibility".

The former IfA chief executive Peter Lauener said last August that the institute puts "employers' needs and choices at the heart of our work", and it is "important that they have a choice in how external quality-assurance is undertaken".

In the case of the employer-led approach, the provider "must be a legal entity" and arrangements would include "governance set up by the employers".

A professional body is defined as a "not-for-profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest".

The IfA was originally intended as the EQA provider of last resort, but it has proved to be the most popular – with 90 approved standards choosing it. Open Awards Ltd runs the EQA on the IfA's behalf.

Meet the committee members

The Institute for Apprenticeships' quality-assurance committee has responsibility for reviewing "whether or not standards or assessment plans remain fit for purpose".

It is also tasked with checking whether EPAs are being "operated effectively". It has five members, two of whom are on the IfA board, and three of whom are independent.

Dame Asha Khemka

IfA board member
Principal and chief executive, West Nottinghamshire College

Paul Cadman

IfA Board member
HR director for Walter Smith Fine Foods

Jim Iley

Independent member
Professor of medicinal chemistry, the Open University

Isabel Sutcliffe

Independent member
Educational consultant

Ben Blackledge

Independent member
Director of education and skills competitions, WorldSkills UK

NEWS

Manchester Creative Studio to close amid exam malpractice furore

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

Accusations of exam malpractice helped sealed the fate of a doomed studio school, according to "shocking" new board minutes.

Documents from the Manchester Creative Studio, shown to FE Week, also reveal that former trustees retained access to the school's bank account months after they left, and that staff were not given contracts until this academic year.

It was announced in January that MCS would shut at the end of this academic year.

It will become the 18th studio school to close since the start of the scheme, which is designed as an alternative to mainstream education for 14- to 19-year-olds, and viewed by many in FE as unwelcome competition.

At the time, the closure was blamed on low student numbers, "significant financial challenges", and a damning grade four Ofsted report early last year.

But two investigations by exam board OCR also influenced the Department for Education's decision after it upheld two accusations of exam malpractice in a single subject. A separate investigation into malpractice in computing was also carried out.

Former shadow education secretary Lucy Powell, who is also the school's local MP, described the case as "shocking" and raising "real concerns about weak oversight and accountability of our schools system".

"Pupils, parents, teachers and the local community have been let down by terrible malpractice and unacceptable behaviour," she added.

Mr Shevill told FE Week that the malpractice related to "concerns about the similarity of coursework", and that an internal review had been undertaken to "stop such issues occurring again in the future".

OCR's investigation into computing resulted in no accusations being upheld, but as a result of the inquiry, exam results for the subject that should have been released to 27 students taking the qualifications last August were not received until October.

MCS has received at least £5 million in funding since 2014, while being run by the Collective Spirit Multi-Academy Trust.

It had received a financial notice to improve in June 2016 after misjudging pupil numbers, and announced it would be rebrokered to a new sponsor in January last year.

The school's board was disbanded last May to be replaced with a new one.

Minutes reveal that former trustees who had run the school into heavy debt had access to its bank account four months after they left.

The new trustees admitted this is "not usual practice", but Mr Shevill claimed the situation was "resolved" in September and insisted that no trustee had actually accessed the account.

The chair is also unsure why the former trustees hadn't got staff to sign contracts since the school opened in 2014, but confirmed this issue had also been rectified.

There were also major issues with the school's IT system.

"In terms of server problems these need further investigation by to be able to clarify and resolve any issues," minutes from June state. "Currently the system in place is not exam compliant, affects delivery of the curriculum and has safeguarding implications."

They added that estimated costs to achieve safe filtering was £37,000.

A critical health and safety report into the school, which is currently teaching around 40 students, has also been shared with FE Week.

Carried out in November 2017, the school was given red ratings because there was no formal accident reporting procedure, no formal health and safety inspections, nor any policy on violence to staff.

The school's most recent accounts, published last month, also revealed that £5,500 was owed to teachers' pensions.

Mr Shevill told FE Week this issue was a "complex one", adding: "There were a number of inaccuracies in the HR files and the 2016/17 pension return was not submitted on time."

Work is "ongoing" to correct everything.

"This multi-academy trust [Collective Spirit] has brought our education system into disrepute, highlighting the fragility of the studio schools model and the need for more robust due diligence when new organisations seek to establish new schools," said Ms Powell.

EDITORIAL

Ofsted is needed now more than ever

Key6 Group was found to be "not fit for purpose" – and the majority of their 200+ recruits weren't even aware that they were on an apprenticeship.

The inspectorate has really shown what makes it so vital, by visiting so quickly and choosing to make public its first report into a new apprenticeship provider.

And action from the apprenticeships minister Anne Milton has also been swift and equally public – telling FE Week that Key6 cannot take any new recruits until issues such as safeguarding are addressed.

The fact is, as FE Week has repeatedly reported, the ESFA made it far too easy for dozens of companies with no financial history, let alone experience delivering apprenticeships, to join the register of apprenticeship training providers.

And with over 200 starts mostly on management apprenticeships, it's likely Key6 is already drawing in hundreds of thousands of pounds each month in funding.

The ESFA now needs to properly join the quality and financial assurance party, by doing three things:

Firstly, raising the bar on new entrants to RoATP, something I'm cautiously confident its current review of the register will conclude.

Secondly, limit exposure to risk by gradually providing access to funding for new and untested providers, rather than giving them unlimited access from day one.

And finally, diverting some of the ongoing millions being spent on the apprenticeship system to expand the ESFA's audit team, because adding bells and whistles to this online software should not be an immediate priority.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

SPRING STATEMENT TWEETS:

Joe Dromey @Joe_Dromey

Chancellor announces £80m from funding to small businesses in engaging an apprentice. Good news. Apprenticeship starts have fallen 41% and the non-levy tender has been a fiasco #SpringStatement

AELP @AELPUK

N.B. It's not new or extra money. It's part of the existing £650m non-levy pot that has been held back for contract growth.

Andrew J Powell @AndrewJPowell

It would be useful if the government opened up the AEB & 19+ application window to companies that actually deliver outcomes as opposed to those who continually fail their students.

ACEVO @ACEVO

Philip Hammond says he recognises challenges of accessing apprenticeship levy for small businesses and will release up to 80 million of funding to help small businesses engage with apprenticeships #SpringStatement

AELP dramatically ditches ETF support, effective immediately

BILLY CAMDEN
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers has washed its hands of the Education and Training Foundation, claiming it is "no longer an organisation run by the sector, for the sector".

"We don't feel the programme being proposed and funded by the DfE supports our membership," said AELP boss Mark Dawe, who insisted the ETF "can't have its ownership cake and eat it".

The decision will send shockwaves through further education. The ETF, which is mostly funded by the DfE, was designed as a "sector-owned" support body, helping train the people who work in technical and vocational education.

As far as the AELP is concerned, however, it no longer operates as an independent body, rather than as an extension of the DfE, focusing on the incoming T-levels.

"There is nothing really around apprenticeships and work-based learning, when we are probably going through the most significant change in the sector – particularly with the move from assessing to training and end-point assessment," Mr Dawe told FE Week.

"There is a desperate need for workforce support development so the most fundamental thing that is needed at a critical time has been removed."

The move was ratified at an ETF board meeting on March 15, and that the AELP removed its representation with immediate effect.

The AELP had two trustees on the ETF's board – Chris Jeffery, a non-executive director of Skills Group UK, and John Hyde, the executive chair of Hospitality Industry Training.

David Russell, chief executive of the ETF, said his organisation was "disappointed" by the AELP's decision and would be "seeking discussions" with both the association's chair and chief executive to "understand more fully their decision and the reasons for it".

Other part-owners of the foundation include Holex, the adult community education body, and the Association of Colleges.

Established in October 2013 by former skills minister John Hayes, the ETF recently had its mission reviewed by the DfE, resulting in a "narrower remit".

Mr Dawe claimed his representatives were not allowed to "have any impact" on the ETF's focus, "so we do not feel like we should continue as an owner".

The organisation's total income in 2016/17 was £32.2 million, which included £29.1 million in grants from the DfE.

It is understood the government is now pushing the ETF to focus on the introduction of T-levels – which will mostly be taken at colleges rather than private providers – and other mainstream FE provision.

"The work is now being determined by the DfE and not by the ETF at all – they've lost their identity and is not representing the whole sector," Mr Dawe said.

"When the ETF was set up under John Hayes, it was about giving it all to the sector and allow it to determine what it needs for its workforce. It was by the sector, for the sector, but it doesn't feel like that is the case anymore."

Another factor in the AELP's decision was the fact that the ETF's "highly successful" Future Apprenticeships programme is being discontinued.

The scheme was launched to help FE teachers and leaders to make the transition from apprenticeship frameworks to delivery of the new standards.

The cancellation comes "at a time when the levy has got off to a less-than-auspicious start, there are hundreds of new providers in the apprenticeship market, and most of the workforce in the sector is having to change and develop".

The AELP now wants the DfE to give it some responsibility for providing training and continuing professional development (CPD) to its own members.

Mr Dawe added that he is happy for AELP to work with the ETF on programmes relevant to his members.

Mr Russell said support will continue to be available to work-based learning professionals and providers in the sector, "irrespective of whether AELP makes appointments to our board".

COMMENTS

Over two thirds of UTCs rated less than 'good' in the last year

So BDT's position seems to be we can improve the percentage of good UTCs if we ignore the closed ones – which by definition were failing.

Additionally complaining about early inspections only seems to work one way: some of the 'good' UTCs were inspected before any results were in place and are now trading heavily on this, despite having very poor results – whether measured as progress or attainment.

Destinations are a red herring – no-one gets to a good destination without some solid qualifications.

Roger M

Milton not budging on 20% off-the-job training rule

There's an obvious flaw in the argument that a level two apprentice could undertake learning at a higher or broader level than that required by the standard. Funding rules are clear that only learning and assessment within the standard can be paid for from the levy funds. If employers want more, they're expected to pay for it themselves.

And what's that reference to level two qualifications? The government has deliberately stripped out qualifications, claiming they're not needed

The whole thing is a mess.

Tracy Murphy

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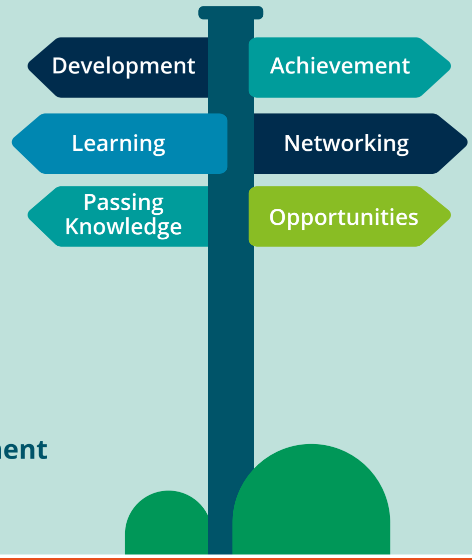

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EXPERTS

JULIE HYDE

Director, CACHE

What government needs to do to promote T-levels

All the polling suggests that not enough people know about the new T-levels, and those who do value them less than A-levels. This must change, writes Julie Hyde

CACHE recently commissioned a poll of parents and of young people aged 11 to 16, to get a sense of how ready the country is for T-levels and where the pitfalls might lie in the implementation. The results were revealing.

Firstly, there is a startling lack of awareness of the reforms underway – 53 per cent of parents and 56 per cent of young people polled had not even heard of T-levels.

While this could be expected, given that T-levels are still in the early stages of development, it is worrying that the very people who will need to navigate the new post-16 education landscape have no awareness of what's coming.

Perhaps more alarming is that 63 per cent of parents with children and 68 per cent of children aged 11 to 16 could not name an existing technical qualification. There is a lot of work to do to make technical education a widely recognised alternative to A-levels.

> Simply introducing new qualifications is not enough to deliver a real change in how technical education is viewed

Parity of esteem remains a long way off: it's encouraging that three quarters of parents believe technical qualifications are "just as valuable" as A-levels and 82 per cent think technical qualifications can "lead into good future careers". In spite of this, twice as many parents would advise their children to pick A-Levels (53 per cent) rather than technical qualifications (26 per cent).

The prime minister was right when she noted recently that people still view technical education as "something for other people's children".

The government has the right idea: creating robust technical qualifications respected by employers that give learners strong prospects. But simply introducing new qualifications is not enough to deliver a real change in how technical education is viewed. The government should acknowledge this challenge and set out in its consultation response how it plans to actively change perceptions and promote the benefits of technical education.

We need to find ways to educate parents and children about their post-16 choices so they can make informed decisions, and we need to start now.

The Baker Clause was designed to address this by ensuring that young people hear about all their options in school, but it has no teeth. The skills minister did recently call on FE providers to report schools which fail to cooperate, but this risks feeding the adversarial dynamic that created the problem in the first place.

We need a more direct approach. During the implementation period for T-levels, the government should actively work with the FE sector to harness our expertise and develop an impactful marketing and information campaign about the reforms, targeting parents and young people. We know what attracts people to our sector and what they want from a qualification, and we can help.

It is also crucial that people from the sector have a visible presence in the policymaking landscape. We need politicians and other high-profile people with experience of technical education front and centre, who can serve as role models and make a strong case for the benefits. The recent decision not to appoint anyone from FE to the Office for Students' board was particularly telling. If the government does not lead by example, then how will parity of esteem ever become a reality?

Ultimately, the best thing to ensure that technical education becomes the norm would be a period of stability. By my calculation, the sector has seen more than 20 different major reforms since 1980 – which explains why the public are struggling to keep up and can't name a technical qualification.

That's not to say that the academic sector has not faced its fair share of changes – it has – but while the content and assessment of qualifications may have changed, the core principles and components of the academic route have remained broadly similar and easy to follow.

Giving these reforms adequate time to take root is vitally important, as creating parity of esteem requires a significant generational shift in attitudes that clearly can't be achieved overnight.

PAUL FELDMAN

Chief executive, Jisc

Why are apprenticeship drop-out rates so high?

Jisc's Paul Feldman argues that to boost completion rates, we need to understand why apprentices are dropping out

The government's desire to have three million people start apprenticeships by 2020, and its moves to widen access through last year's careers strategy, are both steps in the right direction. These measures will feed into the government's industrial strategy and its drive for social justice.

But the Skills Commission's recent report into 'Apprenticeships and social mobility' has highlighted a few problems. More than 30 per cent of people who start apprenticeships in Britain do not complete them and, more worryingly, that situation is getting worse every year. The question is: why is this the case?

The commission noted that there is some evidence that young people from more affluent backgrounds, who have the social capital and credentials to navigate the skills system, are most likely to start higher-yield apprenticeships.

But the commission also recognises that more evidence is needed. One of the largest gaps in our knowledge is the lack of comprehensive data on the social backgrounds of people who are enrolling and then dropping out.

The commission recommends that data collection on social background and progression for apprenticeships should mirror that which already exists for – and benefits – HE and FE institutions, taking for example the Education and Skills Funding Agency's outcome-based success measures data.

Learning analytics is another form of data that could be useful. Jisc's work to develop access to learning analytics for higher and further education has shown that such data analysis can help improve retention rates.

For example, should a learner stop engaging with their virtual learning environment, a red flag is raised. Timely and appropriate interventions can then be made to support at-risk students to stay engaged with studying, which improves their experiences, their retention rates and their chances of a successful outcome.

In higher education, data has also been used predictively to identify any students who might be at risk of dropping out or not meeting their full academic potential.

We are looking at what we can do to adapt our system for apprenticeships. Indeed, it is our aim to enable data to be gathered from all stages of the apprenticeship journey, including attendance at training, progress, topic coverage, as well as data from systems such as student records, the VLE and e-portfolios.

We are already working with the Department for Education to use apprenticeships data, which has helped to confirm our belief that college providers need better information on which to base decision-making – especially if they are to help meet the government's goals in the skills arena.

Indeed, improving employability and social mobility are two policies in which FE is expected to take a leading role.

At the moment, the government's three million target, despite its ambition, doesn't provide enough incentive to address the high non-continuation figures because it only measures starts.

> The government's three million target doesn't provide incentive to address the high non-continuation figures, as it only measures starts

In recent years, the HE sector has been encouraged to adopt a "student lifecycle" approach to access. In practice, this means that institutions must ensure that students from non-traditional backgrounds are successful following enrolment.

In HE, underrepresented groups are more likely to drop out of their studies than the general student population. If the data for apprenticeships shows the same trend, then we must consider adopting an "apprentice lifecycle" approach to improve progression.

But the first step is to get the data, which is why we support the commission's call for the government to improve data collection for apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships benefit a range of individuals including those who find accessing the labour market difficult, from care-leavers to the long-term unemployed. If we can understand the needs of these learners we can help them to fulfil their ambitions and potential, creating millions of talented workers ready to plug the skills gap.

EXPERTS

David Gauke's recent speech on prison reform had a lot to like, writes Peter Cox, who suggests some next steps

PETER COX

Managing director, Novus, prison education and training provider

The value of rehabilitation rests on our investment in education

The justice secretary recently outlined his views on the role of prisons within society. Sitting in the audience, I was struck by his honest overview of a prison system with challenges, but also the capacity to address them. As he said, we send people to prison "as a punishment not for punishment", and it was heartening to hear that rehabilitation is one of the main aims.

But to make this happen we need to rely on investment made by both the system and the prisoner, providing hope and aspiration, so the right choices can be made and supported through education, skills and employment to reduce reoffending.

Mr Gauke referred to a "key-worker model", which would see prison officers build relationships with small groups of offenders. To me this is a fantastic starting point, and the crux of getting prisoners into the classroom to support their education. Prison officers are the pillars of the prison system; they have maximum exposure to the prisoners and they know their needs, fears and aspirations.

A key worker model for prison officers is a worthy objective, but prison education providers should also collaborate with prison officers to close the loop and get offenders into the classroom. As an education provider we first come into contact with an offender during their induction process, along with other agencies. This can be a stressful time for them, and it's only an initial point of contact. Prison officers have day-to-day contact with offenders and a greater opportunity to build rapport, and potentially influence their decision to engage with education.

If the education provision can be matched with examples of success, we can improve these relationships further. We currently run a peer-mentoring programme, where offenders use their existing skills or develop skills to support their fellow inmates to engage with education. They also introduce them to others on their wing who are positively engaging in education, and reference former inmates who have successfully benefited from education. A key-worker model would function similarly, and collaboration with education providers will create a cycle of support to underpin rehabilitation efforts.

Crucially, Mr Gauke suggested that his education and employment strategy would be released soon. For everyone working in prison education, it cannot come soon enough. Our hope is that it will address ways we can balance the need for core skills such as English and maths with practical support and access to technical education and apprenticeships. For education to affect rehabilitation, there must be a flexible strategy integrated into each establishment's regime, but which sets clear outcomes for progress and successful rehabilitation.

It's a difficult balancing act and it is vital that the education and skills learned in the prison classroom are valuable to employers in a prisoner's home community, and not just to those around the prison.

The focus on education and employment is important, but addressing only one factor will fail to reduce reoffending. I agree with Mr Gauke that release on temporary licence needs to be looked at further and could be a means of linking rehabilitation and learning with practical support around housing, community and, fundamentally, a job. Crucially any changes in ROTL must include access considerations to training opportunities, and this in turn raises questions about how systems such as adult education budgets are used, targeted and commissioned.

> **A key-worker model would see prison officers build relationships with small groups of offenders**

Finally the idea of a cross-government effort to reduce reoffending is, in my opinion, long overdue and very welcome. It makes absolute sense to link rehabilitation and reoffending with the services that ex-offenders often need but cannot always access. However, a cross-government group must recognise that most of these services are provided locally, but that local government, mental health trusts and colleges have major challenges, vastly reduced budgets and limited capacity. They must, however, all be part of the conversation.

Mr Gauke has a compelling overview and vision for prisons. We welcome the opportunity for change, and the emphasis on rehabilitation being so clearly linked with education is especially welcome.

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*


(L-R) Andrea Mackrell from Look Good Feel Better, cancer sufferer Christina Paterson and college students

The best bit of beauty therapy

Giving a makeup demo

Hair and beauty students in the north-east have had a crash course in giving chemotherapy patients a makeover.

The Middlesbrough College learners explored how to style wigs, redraw eyebrows and work with uneven skin tones, as well as learning about the danger makeup brushes can pose to the patients who have a lowered immune system as a result of treatment.

The session was delivered by Look Good Feel Better, an international cancer-support charity, which runs free skincare and makeup classes and workshops for women undergoing cancer treatment.

"The experience has been invaluable for learners across our department, from our trainee hairdressers picking up tips for styling wigs, to those on makeup courses understanding how to make the most of re-growing eyelashes," said Heather Ferguson, hair and media makeup course leader at the college.

"Cancer affects people in so many different ways and it was really inspiring to see how something as simple as makeup can help them feel like themselves again," added Rebecca Dick, a level two hair and media makeup student.

Delivering the talk
Ahmad Nawaz

Terror survivor speaks out

A 16-year-old survivor of a terrorist attack has shared his experiences with Walsall College's supported learning students to raise awareness of radicalisation and extremism.

Ahmad Nawaz was shot in the arm by Taliban terrorists while at school in Peshawar in Pakistan in 2014, losing his younger brother and numerous school friends in the attack.

He spoke at the college's Wisemore campus during Prevent Week, where West Midlands Police also ran an interactive session on the Prevent duty, and raised awareness of the dangers of getting involved in far-right extremism.

"We make it our mission to ensure that staff and students can study and work in a safe and welcoming environment, and that involves ensuring that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities," said Carol Egan, director of student journey at the college.

"Prevent Week is a good opportunity to raise awareness of radicalisation and extremism, and for our students to develop the knowledge to empower themselves to keep themselves and others safe."

Picturing the women of Nottingham

Girl power: Students see their project in situ

Learners celebrated International Women's Day with a photographic exhibition of some of Nottingham's female residents that went on show at the city's Victoria Centre.

The team of photography students from Nottingham College took 100 photos of business owners, college staff, friends, family, and even two Olympic gymnast sisters, Becky and Ellie Downie, for their 'Women in Nottingham' project, to mark the centenary of the right for women to vote.

The pictures were shown on a large screen at the city's Intu Victoria Centre for 10 seconds each throughout International Women's Day, which took place on March 8.

"We decided to concentrate on the women of Nottingham as it is where we are based and to celebrate the diversity, skills and attributes of women who live in a community at any one time," said photography lecturer Matt Bunn.

"Women's rights and the fight for equality is in the news a great deal at present, and this project is a positive way to promote the impact that women have on all of our lives."

The art of heritage preservation


Rebecca Warburton with her painting

Aspiring student artists are using their work to encourage more visitors to the historic village of Elsecar in Yorkshire.

The group of Barnsley College art and design learners worked closely with the Elsecar Heritage Centre to produce artwork depicting the history of the village, focusing on its architecture, industry and residents.

The artwork has already been showcased at the 'Elsecar: A village begins to reveal its secrets' exhibition at the Elsecar Heritage Centre, and will soon be on display to the public.

The project was part of a three-year partnership between Barnsley Museums and Historic England called the Heritage Action Zone, to attract more people to visit the area and celebrate its history.

"I really like history and enjoyed learning about the mining industry and how it changed the lives of the people of Elsecar," explained one of the artists, Rebecca Warburton. "I decided this was what I wanted my artwork to represent."

"Working with the College is helping the HAZ team to explore different and creative ways in which they can inspire new audiences and celebrate Elsecar's amazing story," added Roy Miller, a Barnsley councillor.

CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*

FEATURED CAMPUS ROUND-UP

They've got that Saturday feeling

Sixteen colleges across the UK are regularly opening their doors on Saturdays in an initiative that's making the arts more accessible to teenagers, reports Samantha King.

Satur-clay: Making pots at Northbrook College

The show must blow on: Trying their hand at glass blowing

Working with the Saturday Club Trust charity, colleges have been running regular clubs lasting up to 30 weeks in fashion, business, engineering, writing and speaking for local school pupils, and using their own students, tutors and external practitioners to lead sessions.

The idea behind the programme is to encourage 13- to 16-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue creative subjects after their schooling and get them work in the creative industries. Of course, the colleges get to boost their recruitment figures in the process.

Working with a letter press

"In terms of recruitment, having that kind of regular offer that you can repeatedly go out to the schools with builds those relationships," explained Dr Sophie Scott-Brown, director of education and research at the Saturday Club Trust.

Participating colleges include York College, Reading College, Cornwall College Cambourne, Highbury College, and East Coast College. Truro and Penwith College recently ran a workshop on how to make paintbrushes and paints for its own Saturday club attendees.

"Staff work Saturdays because they believe in what we are doing," added Joanna Conlon, curriculum team leader for creative arts at Blackburn College, which runs a Saturday club for three hours a week. "I believe that the kids who attend are potentially the next Dysons, Hirsts and Emins. We need them."

The cost of setting up and running a club is estimated to cost £10,000 upwards.

"It's a match-funded model. What the college has to provide is a regular venue and tutor, and cover the health and safety logistics and the resource budget," Dr Scott-Brown explained. "The trust is mostly responsible for is coordinating the national side of the network and helping organising special classes and visits to places through using our network of contacts."

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**

Movers & Shakers

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

Sandra Wakefield

Quality manager, PHX Training

Start date January 2018

Previous job
Quality and training manager, Learndirect

Interesting fact
Sandra went to stage school.

Liz Austin

Vice-chair, the Essex Employment and Skills Board

Start date March 2018

Previous job
HR director, London Stansted Airport (ongoing)

Interesting fact
Liz began her career in occupational psychology, and spent time working in mental health.

Fabienne Bailey

Managing director, One Awards

Start date February 2018

Previous job
Learning and skills manager, Stockton Borough Council

Interesting fact
Fabienne was born in Germany and lived there for nine years as her father was in the armed forces. Through his work and her own interest in travel, she has visited 28 different countries.

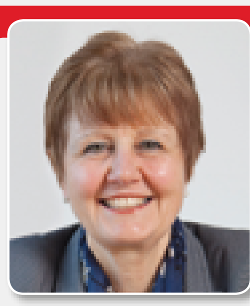
Samantha Rutter

CEO, Open Study College

Start date March 2018

Previous job
Chief operating officer, Open Study College

Interesting fact
Samantha will be on the judging panel at the Education Awards 2018.



Dr Anne Murdoch OBE

General secretary, Principals' Professional Council

Start date February 2018

Previous job
Principal and CEO, Newbury College

Interesting fact
Anne rode pillion to Italy on her husband's motorbike four years ago, touring through France, Germany and Austria, to northern Italy and the Dolomites, and they have another trip planned this year.

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, training provider or awarding organisation please let us know by emailing news@feweek.co.uk

FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Solutions:
Next edition

Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:
EASY

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

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: Robert Wegg