

# FE Week

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**NO UPTURN IN LEVY STARTS**

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**31%**

**ONE IN 5 UTCs GIVEN GRADE 4**

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## APPRENTICES CAN'T FINISH

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- > **Apprentice unable to complete loses out on promised pay rise**
- > **IfA tight-lipped but DfE admits 'more to do' to address concerns**

Exclusive

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**Sixth-form colleges given access to DfE bailout funds ahead of looming insolvency deadline**



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### Principal accused of ice-cream 'bribe' faces calls to resign

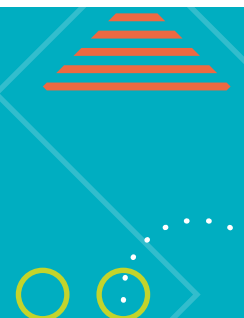
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# FE Week

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## NEWS

# Hull College staff want their principal sacked after ice-cream 'bribery' stunt

BILLY CAMDEN  
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Staff at the cash-strapped Hull College Group are demanding the immediate resignation of their chief executive after she offered discounted ice-creams to deter them participating in a protest over job losses.

Members of the University and College Union unanimously backed a vote of no-confidence in their boss Michelle Swithenbank on April 19.

They voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action the day before, over a bitter dispute over the potential loss of up to 231 full-time jobs.

UCU said Ms Swithenbank's position is now untenable, after her failure to defend jobs at the college and a "bizarre" 24 hours which saw the management team attempt to "bully and then bribe" staff not to attend a protest on April 18.

The college had first sent an email to all staff saying that anyone who joined the protest risked doing so illegally.

The UCU said this was "clearly was not the case" and questioned if the college was "deliberately misinforming staff or did not understand employment law".

The union complained HCG then tried a



Stock image

different approach, inviting staff to purchase discounted ice-creams at a venue at the opposite end of the college to the protest.

The college hired the ice cream van from 11am to 1pm – coinciding with the protest.

"Staff have made it quite clear that they have no confidence in Michelle Swithenbank's leadership and want her to resign immediately," said UCU regional official, Julie Kelley. "To go from bullying to bribery in less

than 24 hours highlights the chaotic shambles at the heart of Hull College leadership.

"Staff need someone running the college who will talk it up and publicly defend its staff and students. The college should scrap damaging plans to cut jobs and courses, and work with us to develop a more positive approach which meets the needs of local people."

UCU expects to announce strike dates in the next few days.

At the time of going to press a spokesperson for HCG said it had yet to receive correspondence from the union suggesting a vote of no-confidence in Ms Swithenbank, but "should any such vote be received, the group will gladly provide their response".

He added that the college's employment solicitors "identified participating in an unofficial protest during staffing hours (11am) could result in a breach of contract".

"A communication was sent to staff to give clear advice on their own responsibility and to make an informed decision to participate," the spokesperson said.

"We felt it was our responsibility as an employer to highlight the possible actions of joining a protest organised by an organisation which is not affiliated with the current negotiations."

HCG has been under severe financial pressure for the past couple of years.

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

Richard Atkins 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".

In March Ms Swithenbank warned that "some difficult decisions have to be made" to regain stability amid longstanding financial troubles, and announced it looked to cut up to 231 full-time jobs.

## South Wiltshire UTC rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted

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Another University Technical College has been rated 'inadequate', taking the total number with Ofsted's worst rating to six.

Following an inspection in mid-February, the South Wiltshire UTC was told its leadership and management, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for pupils and 16-to-19 study programmes were 'inadequate'.

Inspectors said expectations of what pupils can achieve are "not high enough", and work does not challenge pupils of different abilities to realise their potential.

The curriculum at the UTC is not meeting students' needs because it "lacks the flexibility required", and staffing issues have exacerbated this problem.

Staff absence, insufficient leadership of teaching and staff shortages means the quality of teaching is "too variable".

"Too often, teachers do not use progress information or provide adequate guidance to pupils to help them improve their work."

Pupils are not well prepared for their next steps and do not receive strong careers

advice, the report warned.

Ofsted also criticised the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, who don't do as well as their peers at the UTC. Additional funding is not helping to raise their achievement.

Absence is also too high for different groups of pupils, they said.

South Wiltshire UTC only opened in Salisbury in 2015. It currently has 215 pupils on roll, against a capacity of 600.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who need support at the UTC is "much higher than average", Ofsted said.

The report brings the total number of UTCs inspected so far to 30, one fifth of which are 'inadequate'.

UTCs are specialist technical education providers for 14- to 19-year-olds and 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.

Joe Mulligan, the UTC's principal, said the outcome of the inspection was "disappointing for our students, parents and staff" and that work had already begun to "systematically, robustly and rapidly address every issue identified by Ofsted".

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## NEWS

# WEA's future threatened by AEB devolution

BILLY CAMDEN  
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A huge training provider that has been educating disadvantaged adults for over 100 years could “disappear” if it loses £7 million as a result of devolution, the House of Lords has heard.

The Workers' Educational Association expects to lose a third of its income when the adult education budget is devolved starting next year – which will have catastrophic repercussions for an organisation founded in 1903.

Lord Bird, the founder of The Big Issue, warned that the WEA faces a huge reduction in student numbers as a result and could effectively “disappear”, during a debate in the upper house on lifelong learning.

“Because of localism, which we know is decentralising and bringing the process

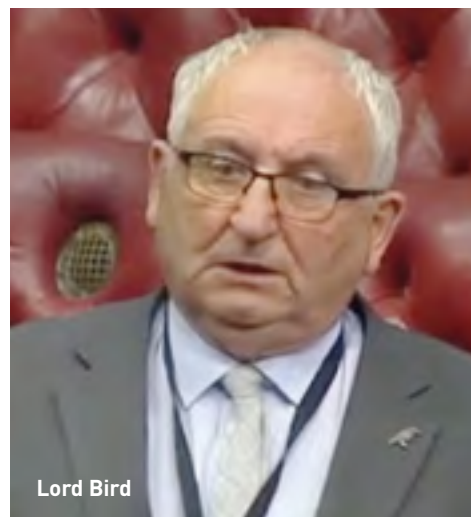
down to as local as possible around decision making, the WEA will be stripped of about £7 million – about a third of its income,” said the peer, who is a patron.

“It will disappear if localism is followed through. They don't own any buildings or have a shed load of money stacked up somewhere and can't save for a rainy day because everything is done very simply.”

Seven combined authorities have so far signed devolution deals alongside London to take control of AEB spending in their regions from 2019/20.

WEA, which is rated ‘good’ by Ofsted and has a £19.1 million AEB contract, has a presence in 2,000 locations across England and teaches around 50,000 disadvantaged learners every year.

A spokesperson confirmed to FE Week today that the £7 million figure quoted by Lord Bird is WEA's estimate for how much it will lose as a result of devolution.



Lord Bird

She admitted that while the WEA is not expecting to have to close, it is bracing itself for a substantial reduction in learner numbers “at the time when we are needed most”.

Ruth Spellman, the organisation's chief executive, explained that the WEA will be affected by devolution of the AEB in three “major” ways.

First, it stands to lose “around a third” of the value of its national contract in 2019/20.

Second, it faces extra costs of contracting, managing, administering, and reporting to all of the mayoral combined authorities, plus managing both its current contract with DfE and contracts which will need to be developed in non-devolution areas.

The third major impact will be to add “risk and uncertainty” to the WEA's income so that it will be forced to hold additional reserves.

“The net effect of these pressures will be to make cuts to student numbers inevitable at precisely the time when we need to increase our capacity,” said Ms Spellman.

Lord Bird, who spent several spells in prison during his teens and twenties, told the Lords that he himself has been a recipient of lifelong learning, which the WEA was vital to.

“When I was banged up on many occasions there were many people from the WEA who gave us all the classes we wanted around art, brickwork and crafts and sorts of things,” he explained.

He added that if the country wants to stop “shrinking numbers” of adult education, then the government needs to find a way of helping organisations like this.

Viscount Younger of Leckie, who represented the government at last night's debate, claimed that devolution presents an “opportunity” for providers to develop their provision to meet local needs.

It is “important” that organisations like the WEA “begin to make contact with mayoral combined authorities and the greater London authority to start a working relationship and demonstrate the ways they can contribute to meeting skills needs locally”.

“We are already well into talks in each of the MCA and GLA areas – and indeed already deliver provision in all of them,” said Ms Spellman in response. “However, our ability to meet the needs of MCAs – and partners in other non-devolved areas – depends on our sustainability as a national organisation with local delivery.”

## Secret RoATP application window revealed

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

EXCLUSIVE

Thirty-six teacher training organisations have joined the register of apprenticeship training providers during a secret application window, FE Week can reveal.

Employers and providers have been denied the opportunity to win a place on to RoATP ever since the third and most recent application window shut at the end of October, with results published in January.

The application process has since been put under review and will not officially reopen until September.

However, the Education and Skills Funding Agency allowed for an “extenuating circumstance” and opened the register solely for initial teacher training organisations between February 28 and March 9.

This follows a “disastrous” previous round which saw most applicants get rejected.

A spokesperson for the ESFA claimed that the special window was run to ensure there are enough accredited ITT providers in place to deliver the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship from September 2018.

It is likely to form part of the government's attempt to tackle the growing teacher recruitment crisis in schools.

A recent Department for Education forecast said the number of secondary school pupils is set to increase by 540,000 over the next seven years.

But the number of applicants for teacher-training courses as of January was 29 per cent lower than it was the same time last year.

Emma Hollis, executive director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers, insisted that while it is good that more ITTs have joined the register, this second window was forced on the government because of a calamitous first attempt.

The postgraduate teacher apprenticeship was only approved for delivery in October, at which point the ESFA started encouraging ITTs, particularly school-centred initial teacher training providers (SCITTs), to get on the register so they can deliver the standard from its launch date this September.

This round has been “disastrous”, Ms Hollis explained, as the majority failed in their bids.

It is understood that around 60 applied but only 20 got a place.

In the build-up to this special round, the government offered webinars and training to ITTs on how to write their bids because the first time had been “such a train wreck”.

But this second attempt didn't go as smoothly as hoped either.

Ms Hollis is aware of one unnamed Ofsted-rated ‘outstanding’ SCITT which failed in its first attempt due to inadequate answers to two questions in its bid.

This provider worked with the Institute for Apprenticeships to improve and passed in the second round.

However, the SCITT still failed as a result of its answer to a safeguarding question which it

had passed in the first round and hadn't made any changes to.

“You can't make it up,” Ms Hollis said. “I can't see how apprenticeships are going to be successful as long as we are facing these kinds of unnecessary barriers.”

Thirty-six ITTs have now been added to RoATP following this exclusive window – bringing the number of organisations on the list to 2,623.

Those who were successful in this round told FE Week of their delight in getting on the register.

“We hope that the apprenticeship route will complement our successful Schools Direct and SCITT programmes and enable us to support more entrants into teaching,” said Heath Monk, the executive director of the Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham.

The Kemnal Academies Trust said it was particularly excited to be able to offer the graduate teacher apprenticeship as another route into teaching, “which means that our schools will have more opportunities to successfully recruit outstanding early career teachers”.

Other employers and providers wanting to join the register will have to wait until September to apply, as confirmed by Rory Kennedy, the Department for Education's director of apprenticeships, at FE Week's Annual Apprenticeship Conference in March.

He said the review of RoATP is not expected to be completed until the summer, despite it starting in November.

### ITT providers added to RoATP

Goldsmiths' College
Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Somerset County Council
Suffolk County Council
Thomas Telford School
University of York
University of Sussex
Sirius Academy West
Crispin School Academy
Runwell Community Primary School
Dove House School
Colchester County High School for Girls
Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy
Merseyside, Cheshire & Greater Manchester Teacher Training Consortium
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Oakthorpe Primary School
Bright Futures Educational Trust
The White Horse Federation
The Kemnal Academies Trust
North East Learning Trust
Henry Maynard Primary School
GLF Schools
South Farnham Educational Trust
Harris Federation
The Bourton Meadow Education Trust
Bedfordshire Schools Trust Limited
The Cam Academy Trust
The Gorse Academies Trust
Landau Forte Charitable Trust
East Midlands Education Trust
Teach Poole
Xavier Catholic Education Trust
Inspiring Futures Through Learning
The Sigma Trust
King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham
West Exe School

## NEWS

# Sixth-form colleges given access to bailout fund

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Sixth-form colleges can now apply for government bailout cash, according to updated guidance from the Department for Education.

The college financial intervention and exceptional financial support guidance, first published in 2015, has today been updated to “include sixth-form colleges, which are now eligible for exceptional financial support”.

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said it was “helpful” that arrangements for SFCs were now aligned with FE colleges.

“But the introduction of the insolvency regime means that arrangements for colleges in financial difficulty are likely to change again in the near future,” he warned.

“The vast majority of SFCs will not require exceptional financial support, but there is no question that ongoing funding pressures are having a negative effect on the financial health of the sector.”

He added that he was “pleased” the DfE was reviewing funding for the FE sector “in response to our joint funding campaign”.

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



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

The government has indicated that these bailouts will be phased out with the new FE insolvency regime later this year, proposals for which were recently out for consultation.

It’s not clear exactly how much money has been spent on bailing out struggling colleges.

Former skills minister Robert Halfon told parliament in January last year that the government expected to have spent £140 million in exceptional financial support by the end of March.

That figure is likely to have risen much higher since then.

FE Week has reported on cash-strapped

colleges receiving multimillion-pound bailouts, including £11 million dished out to 12 colleges in December alone.

According to the DfE at least part of this cash came from the adult education budget, which was underspent by £63 million in 2016/17.

One SFC that could benefit is Cadbury Sixth Form College. An FE commissioner report published in March reported a “series of financial items” that “could result in the college being at immediate risk”.

A cash-flow forecast for the college “indicated that external support for cash flow would be needed in March 2018”, according to the report.

## MPs will investigate long-term FE funding

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

The Commons education committee will investigate long-term education investment – especially whether colleges and schools are getting the money they need.

The influential group of MPs has launched an inquiry into whether a longer-term plan is needed for investment across education, including FE, and what resources are really needed.

MPs will look ahead to the government spending review process, which will determine the overall level of public funding for schools and colleges.

The inquiry will also look at the effectiveness of “targeted funding” such as the pupil premium, and how a new national funding formula will be implemented.

“Young people are in compulsory education for around 13 years, yet government only plans investment in education every three or four years,” said committee chair Robert Halfon.

“We need to move to a situation where education funding is not driven primarily by Treasury processes but rather by a long-term strategic assessment of our national priorities for education and skills.”

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## NEWS

## New ways to win at the 15th National Apprenticeship Awards show

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@PAULOFFORD

The 15th National Apprenticeship Awards have opened for entries – and several new categories have been announced, including the ‘Recruitment excellence award’.

“It will recognise employers who have attracted a diverse and high-quality apprenticeship workforce through new and innovative approaches to recruitment,” said an Education and Skills Funding Agency spokesperson.

Also new for 2018, is a special recognition award for an individual who has “made a special contribution to the promotion and delivery of apprenticeships” – to be selected by the National Apprenticeship Service.

There will be a ‘Rising star’ award for the first time, to showcase apprentices who have “made impressive progress in their career to date and who show the potential, through their apprenticeship, to take a career path to the very top of their chosen profession”.

The established employer of the year categories recognise companies with up to 249 employees; ‘large’ ones with 250 to 4,999 employees; the largest with 5,000-plus people working for them.

‘Apprentice of the year’ awards categories include intermediate, advanced, and higher or degree-level learners.

Apprentice employers and apprentices from all sectors and industries are invited to enter the awards by the May 25 deadline.

Entrants could be chosen as a regional winner at nine awards ceremonies across the country.

A national judging panel will then choose overall national apprenticeship award winners from the regional champions. The national ceremony will take place on November 28.

Charlotte Hughes, a GSK employee and winner of the ‘Higher or degree apprentice of the year’ award in 2017, recommended others to enter this year.

“I am extremely proud to have been a winner. It’s provided a huge boost to my confidence and has helped raise my profile,” said Charlotte.

“To help with entries, this year the process has been simplified further and guidance documents for employers and apprentices are available to download,” an ESFA spokesperson said.

Visit <https://appawards.co.uk/> to find out more. Entry is free.

## CITB shedding 800 jobs as it pulls out of direct training

PAUL OFFORD  
@PAULOFFORD

The college that top The Construction Industry Training Board will shed around 800 jobs over the next three years, in a radical overhaul of how it operates that will see it pull out of direct training.

In its 2018-21 business plan, the CITB estimates that its current number of 1,370 employees will fall to around 560.

It announced last November that it would be selling off its National Construction College.

A spokesperson confirmed that this will account for around 200 of the jobs, though the board hopes most employees affected will keep their jobs with whoever buys the college.

The rest of the losses will come from outsourcing back-office functions including HR, legal, finance and customer operations.

Instead of operating as a direct provider, the CITB now plans to become an enabler of training, through the launch a new construction training directory of approved providers.

It has also made it easier for employers to reclaim money they pay into it through

its own levy, in the form of grants that will be paid for training to providers on the directory.

An online database, called the construction training register, will allow employers to search records of employees to “check skills and manage their training needs”.

However, the CITB does not expect its training directory and register to “operate at their full potential, nor hold all courses and records, until early 2019”.

This week’s Vision 2020 report says that investment will include £613 million on “training and development to deliver skills outcomes”.

CITB Apprenticeships, which manages apprenticeships at the national construction colleges and a network of other providers, was rated ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted as recently as October last year. But the aim is now to sell off all seven college sites by 2020.

Questions had previously been raised about the future of CITB’s levy, which it has traditionally charged construction employers to support training in the industry.

The CBI warned in 2015 that these employers shouldn’t be hit with a “double whammy” due to the launch of the government’s separate apprenticeship levy.

But the business plan has now confirmed

that the levy will continue, and estimates it will generate £598 million for the CITB by 2021.

Net income from other income over the same period will be £91 million.

The ongoing importance of “persuading others to resolve issues for the benefit of industry will see us increase campaign and influencing activity” is also recognised.

The CITB plans to run two campaigns as part of bolstered marketing efforts.

These will involve a “behavioural careers campaign” to improve the industry’s image and increase new entrants into construction, and a “training campaign” to encourage individuals and employers to invest in lifelong learning.

The board will also move its head office from Bircham Newton in Norfolk, to Peterborough.

The plan had to take on board the findings of a government report, published late last year, which demanded “wide-ranging reform”.

“This business plan sets out our ambitions for the next three years,” said chief executive Sarah Beale.

“It shows how CITB’s work across England, Scotland and Wales will modernise and repurpose. By 2020 we will be the ‘levy in, skills out’ body construction employers asked for, doing less better, while being fully transparent and accountable.

“I am confident that this business plan will make a radical difference to the CITB, enabling us to meet the skills needs of construction.”

## ESFA takes 10 days (and counting) to fix its payment reports

BILLY CAMDEN  
@BILLYCAMDEN

The government has missed its own deadline to finally fix its malfunctioning apprenticeship payments reporting system.

A flurry of complaints about the system appeared on the Education and Skills Funding Agency’s FE Connect site on April 10.

FE Week ran a story on the issue six days later, at which point the ESFA promised a fix by April 18.

“We are currently in the final testing stage of an updated report that will fix the issue of duplicate rows and also fix many of the known outstanding issues we have been working behind the scenes to improve,” said a spokesperson on April 17.

“We are committed to releasing this new version of the report tomorrow. We apologise for the inconvenience caused.”

However, at the time of going to press on April 19, the correct reports had still not been

restored after a week and a half of work, even though it was being treated as an “urgent investigation”.

An ESFA official posted this message on the hub to let providers know the bad news: “We are continuing to work on the remaining technical issues and intend to release an updated version of the R08 report shortly.

“We recognise the impact that this delay is having on providers and want to apologise for this.

“Based on provider feedback we are prioritising a simpler version of the report that will enable providers to reconcile payments against their remittance statements more easily.

“We are in the process of testing this simpler version with a sample of providers and will provide an update when we have more information.”

It’s safe to say that the providers which rely on the broken system are not satisfied with the delay.

“The people behind the apprenticeship payments system have decided to add a second row of data now in the period and

payments report for the erroneous ones made last month,” said the first complaint.

“The first row appears to take the full period seven amount back and the second row what looks like the correct year to date payment however I have yet to go through in fine detail. Just a warning for anyone else interested.

“I have actually found one apprentice with 27 programme aim rows!!! What the hell is going on????????????”

On April 17 another read: “The sector and providers are badly in need of some serious reassurance that ‘we are sorry for any inconvenience caused’ is a phrase that will no longer need to be used – please help!”

This isn’t the first time the service has gone down. There were other issues with the payment system last December.

Providers again left irate messages on FE Connect. One of many was from Chris Bradley, who showed FE Week an apologetic message he received from the ESFA’s business operations service centre.

It recognised that the apprenticeship funding system had been incorrectly expecting cash contributions from levy-funded employers, in a case relating to Nottinghamshire-based provider SREducation, where Mr Bradley was data and contracts manager.

He has been back on the forum in recent days, to express further frustrations.

“It is time whoever is accountable stood up and answered what is going wrong,” he said. “If there is a problem with resource it is no excuse. If you or I were failing either directly or as a result of the team we would be held accountable for sure.”

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## INVESTIGATES

# Apprentices can't graduate: End-

JUDE BURKE  
@JUDEBURKE77

FROM FRONT EXCLUSIVE

**The Institute for Apprenticeships has rejected concerns about a lack of end-point assessments stopping apprentices from graduating – accusing the AELP of an “inflammatory” intervention.**

**FE Week was first to raise the issue back in 2016, but are the apprentices really affected? We spoke to scores of providers and employers, and our investigation paints the most comprehensive picture yet of what's really going on.**

It's the nightmare scenario that sector leaders warned could happen – but desperately hoped wouldn't.

Nine would-be dental practice managers began their apprenticeship with Barnet and Southgate College in November 2015.

They finished their training and should have completed last May.

But almost a year later nobody is available to test them because the assessment plan is unworkable.

We also found the shocking example of a blameless apprentice on a level two large goods vehicle driving standard, who missed out on a pay rise because there is no EPA ready for him [see boxout].

There are deep feelings of betrayal among many learners who can't complete, especially those stuck on minimum wage until they finish.

Despite our findings, the IfA has accused the Association of Employment and Learning Providers of being “inflammatory” to raise

such issues.

Speaking on April 6, at an event to mark a year since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, the IfA's boss Sir Gerry Berragan insisted neither apprentices nor employers are concerned.

Our findings paint a very different picture. We've found numerous apprentices who have been unable to complete – either because there was no-one in place to deliver the EPA, or because organisations on the EPA register weren't ready to deliver.

Yet when we put our findings to the IfA it declined to comment, arguing that the situation is the Department for Education's responsibility alone.

It also refused our request to interview Sir Gerry.

“We recognise that there is more to do, which is why we continue to work closely with the Institute of Apprenticeships and end-point assessment organisations to address concerns,” said a Department for Education spokesperson.

The DfE claimed 99.1 per cent of all apprentices are on standards with at least one end-point assessment organisation, rising to 99.7 per cent for those due to finish within the next 12 months.

But, as our investigation has revealed, simply having an EPA organisation in place isn't enough: they have to be ready to deliver.

Our findings prompted the director of policy at Hoxex, Sue Pember, to demand apprentices be treated “with the respect they deserve”.

“It is wrong to treat young people in this way. We need to protect their interest,” she insisted.

AELP's boss Mark Dawe meanwhile



Sir Gerry Berragan

accused the government of “swerving the question on the true picture of EPA”.

Apprentices waiting for 12 months for EPA appear not to “register as a problem”.

“Let's have some honesty and openness which means a collaborative approach and working together to solve the problems,” he said.

AELP submitted the findings of its research [see box out] into the readiness or otherwise of standards and assessment plans to the government back in January.

Mr Dawe has since become embroiled in a bitter public row with the IfA, and told the education select committee this week he has been hearing “horror stories” from his members.

EPA has been a hot topic since FE Week first raised grave concerns in June 2016.

The proportion of standards approved for delivery without at least one assessment organisation in place has dropped in that time, from 59 per cent in October 2016 to 30 per cent – or 77 out of 253 – now.

Twenty-one of those 77 have been approved for over a year. Six were fully signed off more than three years ago.

Many of these standards have apprentices on programme – including more than 300 on the level three fire emergency and security systems technician standard, which was approved for delivery in August 2016.

The ESFA requires assessment organisations to have the “necessary infrastructure, policy and assurance procedures” in place within nine months of being accepted onto the register, but that doesn't mean they have to be ready to deliver.

In the case of the Barnet and Southgate College apprentices, there are two EPA organisations on the register for the dental practice manager standard.

The college told us the assessment plan had been redeveloped and was currently awaiting sign off by Ofqual. This was preventing the EPA from being delivered.

FE Week has asked a number of the organisations listed as providing EPA for these standards how ready they are to deliver the assessments.

A spokesperson for City and Guilds, which is on the register for 41 standards, said it had already delivered 400 EPAs and had “prioritised completion of all EPAs that already have customers”.

Pearson, on the register for 30 standards, is “working to meet demand for EPA based on need”.

NOCN and Highfield, listed as offering EPA for 43 and 22 standards respectively, both said they have assessments booked, while Innovate claimed it is in a position to deliver assessments for 18 standards once apprentices were ready.

Standards approved over a year ago with no EPA (as at 06/04/18)	Level	Approved for delivery date	Days since approved for delivery	Years since approved for delivery
Control / technical support engineer (degree)	6	12/11/2014	1,241	3.4
Electrical / electronic technical support engineer (degree)	6	12/11/2014	1,241	3.4
Manufacturing engineer (degree)	6	12/11/2014	1,241	3.4
Product design and development engineer (degree)	6	12/11/2014	1,241	3.4
Dental laboratory assistant	3	26/03/2015	1,107	3.0
Dental technician	5	26/03/2015	1,107	3.0
Solicitor	7	03/09/2015	946	2.6
Land-based service engineering technician	3	23/12/2015	835	2.3
Live event rigger	3	23/12/2015	835	2.3
Boatbuilder	3	25/02/2016	771	2.1
Building services engineering installer	2	24/03/2016	743	2.0
Transport planning technician	3	11/05/2016	695	1.9
Papermaker	3	01/06/2016	674	1.8
Survival equipment fitter	3	07/06/2016	668	1.8
Airside operator	2	29/07/2016	616	1.7
Fire emergency and security systems technician	3	19/08/2016	595	1.6
Road transport engineering manager	4	07/09/2016	576	1.6
Aviation maintenance mechanic (military)	2	15/09/2016	568	1.6
Sports turf operative	2	19/09/2016	564	1.5
Spectacle maker	3	21/12/2016	471	1.3
Power engineer (degree)	7	16/02/2017	414	1.1



# point assessment crisis exposed

## The EPA organisations that aren't ready to deliver

Providers repeatedly told us they had apprentices ready to take their end-point assessment, but the organisations listed as offering it aren't ready.

Nine apprentices at Barnet and Southgate College began a pilot of the level four dental practice manager standard in November 2015.

They were all ready for their assessment as planned in May 2017 – but the assessment wasn't ready “due to issues with the content, methods and its overall design”, a college spokesperson told us.

With input from the college, the employer group that developed the standard went back to the drawing board and has now resubmitted a revised assessment plan to Ofqual.

But according to Ofqual, the assessment plan has been with the trailblazer group since February 2017 – so it seems the apprentices are no closer to finishing their apprenticeships than they were last May.

Changes to the assessment plans have also been holding up apprentices on the level two large goods vehicle standard.

One provider who asked to remain anonymous said he had one apprentice on the standard who should have been coming up to assessment now but instead his progress has “ground to a halt”.

“He will have a wage rise when he completes his apprenticeship because he's on a slightly lower rate at the minute,” he said.

It's also affecting the provider's relationship with employers who “see it as our problem, our fault, because they don't understand everything that's going on”.

Richard Weston, speaking on behalf of the National Logistics Academy, has

18 apprentices who started last May and “clearly the employer is looking now to see what the options are for EPA”.

Although there are six organisations on the register, none are in a position to deliver it.

The one that's closest to being ready is “looking to start” in June or July “but they're requiring 90 days' notice to book an EPA” – meaning it could be September or October before the assessment can actually be taken.

However, Highfield Qualifications, one of the six EPA organisations, told FE Week that

it is now ready to deliver the assessments.

Sandra Cooper from the Care Learning Centre has around 85 apprentices approaching their end-point assessment on three standards in the coming months.

“We didn't shy away from the new standards, we wanted to get on and do it straightaway, so we started ours in May last year, so realistically most of our learners should be ready in May,” she said.

The level two adult care worker, level three lead adult care worker, and level three team leader/ supervisor standards all have multiple EPA organisations on the register.

But she said none of the ones she'd contacted had been able to guarantee they would be in a position to offer the assessment when her apprentices were ready.

One provider told us that their apprentices have been held up because EPA organisations

don't have enough qualified assessors – even though they claimed to be able to deliver the assessments.

A further two providers were forced to take the regressive step of moving apprentices from standards back to the equivalent frameworks, simply because the EPA was undeliverable.

Coventry College has done this for learners on the welding standard “to keep employers happy”.

### AELP sent evidence to the DfE in January

Further evidence exposing the lack of readiness of end-point assessment has come from the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

The providers' body sought views from ITPs and assessment organisations on the fitness-for-purpose of both standards and EPAs, which it compiled into a report sent to the Department for Education and the Institute for Apprenticeships in January.

The findings were intended as “part of a constructive engagement on the reforms to help facilitate improvements”, but “we have seen little progress made” it was sent in, a spokesperson admitted.

AELP used a red, amber and green ratings system to show where action is needed on a standard or assessment plan.

Of the 157 assessment plans reviewed, 78 were rated ‘green’ – meaning there were no problems.

But 57 were graded ‘amber’ and needed to be looked at, and an alarming 22 were rated ‘red’ – indicating they required urgent action to fix.

Problems included assessment plans that were too detailed and difficult to follow, and a lack of standardisation of assessments, with apprentices being assessed in different ways for the same standard.



### Apprentices can't complete without any EPA organisations

According to the DfE, just 0.3 per cent of apprentices due to complete in the next 12 months are on standards without at least one EPA organisation in place.

Among those are 21 apprentices at one provider, who asked to remain anonymous, on the land-based service engineer standard.

It was approved for delivery more than two years ago, but so far no assessment organisations have stepped up to the plate.

Furthermore, there is “no sight” of when the assessment might be available.

The provider's current cohort is unlikely to complete their apprenticeship within the allotted time – which will have a knock-on

effect on the next cohort of apprentices.

As things stand, the current apprentices only have limited knowledge of what will be in the final assessment, which means they can't properly prepare.

Other providers, including Richard Weston at the National Logistics Academy, told FE Week how valuable it was for apprentices to have practice papers ahead of the EPA.

“Until you can actually give them a flavour of how they're going to be tested it's very difficult to prepare them,” he said.

Another provider has learners halfway through their programme on the level two sports turf operative standard, with “no sign” of anyone signing up to offer the EPA.

### No EPA means fewer starts

It's impossible to quantify how many people haven't started an apprenticeship because of a lack of EPA – because, by definition, they're not counted in any statistics.

But Havering College told us it had delayed a cohort of 10 apprentices on the level three accident repair technician standard, as there's no assessment organisation on the register – and “it doesn't appear that anyone is applying”.

The college's fall-back position – if it gets to the point where employers will take their business elsewhere – is to start the apprentices on the equivalent framework.

But that would mean they would only get trained in one of three disciplines (paint,

panel, or mechanical, electrical and trim) when the standard covers all three.

The standard is “the employer's preference for smaller garages, because smaller garages tend to not have only one person who only does the repair or the spraying”.

They're not the only ones to be holding off starts.

Another provider has employers in their area interested in two standards which “will not sign up” without assessment organisations in place.

This has had an impact on the overall view of apprenticeships, and employers are asking why there were standards approved without an EPA organisation in place.

## EDITORIAL

## DfE to address end-point assessment concerns?



The issue of apprentices starting standards without an end-point assessment organisation in place was first raised by FE Week in June 2016.

At the time a former senior civil servant, Dr Susan Pember, described the lack of consideration towards learners as “diabolical”.

A few months later the interim chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships Peter Lauener described it as “not ideal” but “manageable”.

The Education and Skills Select Committee wasn't convinced, and last year recommended that standards should not be launched until at least one end-point assessment organisation was in place.

This recommendation was rejected by the government, but is it still manageable?

Skip forward to 2018, and the chief executive at the Institute for Apprenticeships, Sir Gerry Berragan, clearly thinks so.

He took to the stage to “bust myths” on the issue at FE Week's Annual Apprenticeships Conference in March and early this month told a conference that ongoing concerns are “inflammatory”.

Yet when we sent over our dossier of evidence to the IfA and DfE, which included apprentices indefinitely waiting to finish their course and in some cases missing out on a pay rise, the tone changed.

The IfA refused an interview and declined to comment, but the DfE admitted “there is more to do” and needed to “address concerns”.

Hopefully our investigation has served as a wake-up call, as the first step in fixing a problem is admitting there is one.

Step two should be to stop standards from being available for delivery until at least one assessment organisation is registered and both willing and able.

**Nick Linford, Editor**  
news@feweek.co.uk

**SELECT COMMITTEE APPRENTICESHIPS TWEETS:**

**Simon Reddy** @reddyplumbing

Dawe makes some good points on funding, which is obviously where his expertise is located - liked his comment that #apprentices only get half the funding for English and Maths, but they often need the most help!

**Education Committee** @CommonsEd

Andree Deane-Barron says @CentralYMCAUK is not able to talk to all pupils in schools about apprenticeships - they are still only able to talk to selected pupils. Schools are not universally applying the Baker Clause.

**CETTA** @cettacademy

Mark has done us all a favour - his message needed to be said. There must be many of you who share his deep concerns about how the IfA continue to damage the Apprenticeship brand and the whole sector to an extent that is, I believe, unprecedented in my 37 years in this sector.



## Starts still in freefall with January down 31%

**JUDE BURKE**  
@JUDEBURKE77

Apprenticeship starts were down 31 per cent in January on the same period in 2017, the latest provisional government statistics have revealed.

The news comes just days after the chancellor Philip Hammond admitted to Parliament that he had expected the apprenticeship levy would usher in a fall in starts - but not quite to this extent.

There were 25,400 starts in the first month of 2018 - down 11,300 from January 2017's provisional total of 36,700, according to the Education and Skills Funding Agency's monthly apprenticeship statistics update, published April 19.

The latest figures represent a bigger proportionate drop than in December, which saw a 23-per-cent year-on-year fall in starts.

“I recognise that starts are down—we always expected that,” he said during Treasury questions on April 17.

“There are fewer starts than we expected, but we are seeing a much higher level of apprenticeship. The Department for Education and the Treasury are looking carefully at how this is working.”

David Hughes, boss of the Association of

Colleges, wants the government to “engage with colleges and employers to work out how to stimulate growth where it has fallen”.

This might include more outreach and “developing provision to encourage reluctant employers to engage in the system”.

“Where standards are not ready yet, frameworks should be fully-funded and there should be more support for pre-apprenticeship training to help people get ready for their apprenticeship,” he said.

Mark Dawe, Mr Hughes' counterpart at the Association of the Employment and Learning Providers, warned that the government is “creating social immobility” through the apprenticeship system.

“The government said at the end of last year that its funding priorities lay with levy-payers, and this has been borne out by the fact that nearly half all starts can now be found in large employers and this proportion continues to grow,” he said.

“Given many levy-payers across the country are concentrating on higher level starts, it's no wonder that we've seen a massive collapse in level two starts and starts for 16- to 18-year-olds.”

Apprenticeship figures from August 2017 onwards remain provisional, and the DfE stresses that they are subject to change; starts for recent months have generally been revised

up since they were first published.

There have now been 206,100 starts recorded to date for 2017/18, which represents a 24-per-cent drop on the same period last year.

Of these, 44 per cent have been at level two, which is nine percentage points lower than 2016/17's final share of 53 per cent.

Meanwhile, 11 per cent of starts so far this year have been at level four or above, an increase of four points on last year's final share of seven per cent.

Last month the skills minister admitted that fears over a “middle-class grab” on apprenticeships are valid, given that the “one area where starts have gone up is at degree level”.

“I feel quite strongly that an apprenticeship can offer social mobility, so I sit and wait and watch,” Anne Milton told a House of Lords committee hearing on March 13.

In response to the latest statistics, a DfE spokesperson said its reforms were “about increasing the number of quality apprenticeships, so people of all ages and backgrounds can take advantage of the opportunities apprenticeships bring”.

“We have recently seen an increase in the number of people starting on higher level apprenticeships”, which had been “designed by employers themselves to meet their needs,” she continued.

### COMMENTS

#### Principal's £300k salary at £30m college causes furious reaction

I'm sorry, but a 64.7% achievement rate for apprenticeships is nothing to sing about and 86.4% on classroom is nothing special either. There are many other colleges doing better than this.

He's shown his true colours here. He's clearly very good at self-promotion, but his “improvements” are not worthy of this level of payment.

David Shaw

I agree with the previous comment from David - these achievement rate improvements are at best mediocre and I would expect this as a minimum just for someone to hang on to their job. There is nothing at all exceptional about these levels of improvement - indeed I would argue it is much easier to do this than to take a college from 'good' to 'outstanding'. The board will hopefully do some benchmarking before setting future remuneration as this is well out of kilter with college sector norms and it is irresponsible things like this that bring the sector into disrepute.

SEL

#### £73m adult education budget left unspent by 441 providers

I'm not surprised at the shortfall.

The criteria are too strict and paperwork too heavy to meet the needs of those it needs to help most. Timescales and period of completion is not suitable to the needs of the most vulnerable or those who need flexibility built in and ID requirements are too restrictive. Delivery of these initiatives can feel like we are meeting the needs of numerous other agendas, i.e. Brexit.

Sadie

# Deputy Principal, Finance and Resources

**Salary:** £80,350 - £85,850 (depending on experience)  
**Benefits:** Local Government Pension Scheme, generous leave allowance, relocation package, inclusive access to personal development programmes

Furness College is a vibrant, innovative and fast-paced college based in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria. Judged to be good with outstanding features by Ofsted in March 2015 and with outstanding financial health, the College is ambitious about its future. Following a merger with Barrow Sixth Form College in August 2016, we are the largest FE provider in Cumbria. The College is based on two campuses: the £42 million Channelside campus which opened in 2013 and the Rating Lane campus which provides the largest choice of A' levels in Cumbria. We have a first-class reputation for our work with local employers, including BAE, and we have an exceptionally strong STEM curriculum.

With its long history of ship building and the presence of a large number of international employers, Barrow-in-Furness is a vibrant place to work and live. Only 12 miles from the Lake District National Park and 30 miles from the motorway network, the quality of life is second to none, with a relatively low cost of living. There are good schools, superb leisure opportunities and ready-made holidays on the doorstep.

The Corporation is looking to appoint an ambitious and forward-thinking individual to this senior post. The Deputy Principal, Finance and Resources, is a crucial member of the Executive Leadership Team, contributing significantly to the future success and development of the College. She/he will provide strategic leadership and direction across the finance, estates, human resources, IT and other associated support areas, ensuring that the College meets the challenges faced by the FE sector. The post holder will provide long-term financial stability and effective resource management, enabling



the College to take advantage of future opportunities and work effectively with employers and other stakeholders.

The successful candidate will be a qualified accountant with a strong, successful track record of strategic financial leadership and financial planning/control at an executive level. She/he will be a talented leader and will demonstrate strong management skills, motivating and inspiring the wider college team whilst understanding the complexities of delivering education and skills training in an FE environment. Knowledge of the FE sector and funding methodologies would be beneficial; however, applications are welcome from high-calibre individuals from a diverse range of sectors.

If you would like to discuss the role in more detail with Andrew Wren, Principal and Chief Executive, please contact **Karen Johnson**, Clerk to the Corporation, on **01229 844805**, or email **karen.johnson@furness.ac.uk**.

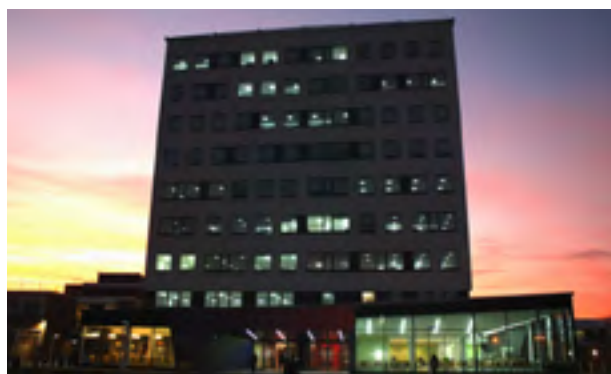
**Timeline:** advertised Friday 27 April  
**Closing date:** Monday 14 May 5pm  
**Shortlisting:** Tuesday 15 May  
**Interviews:** w/c 4 June



## The College of West Anglia

### Vice Principal Curriculum and Learning

Salary c. £83k + Relocation of up to £8k + LGPS or TPS



**We are one of the largest GFE colleges in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, with a difference!**

We incorporate a land-based campus within our offer and operate in several counties which makes us unique. This is no cliché, but we are 'on a journey' and are moving at pace from our current Ofsted Grade 3 to Outstanding.

We seek a curriculum senior leader to energise, shape and enhance our push for improvement. As Vice Principal you will harness our significant staff and physical resources and deliver excellence to our 7,500 students and many employers across a wide curriculum offer.

Significantly, we are judged as Outstanding in Apprenticeship delivery, and are also highly regarded for our development of learner's practical skills and HE, and we seek to bring all provision up to this level.

Reporting to the Principal & Chief Executive you will work with a committed cross-college team to deliver success.

You will have a detailed understanding of the FE landscape and take responsibility for our student outcomes and subsequent growth. You will share our passion to leave no stone unturned in pursuit of excellence.



Applications from candidates who have led change to improve Ofsted inspection outcome rating to Good or Outstanding are particularly welcome. In return, we offer a competitive salary and clear opportunity for further personal and professional advancement in this extraordinary College.

Candidates should register their interest with the Protocol team but are also welcome to contact David Pomfret, Principal & Chief Executive for an informal discussion.

Closing date: 9am Monday 14th May 2018

Final interview and assessment:  
Thursday 14th & Friday 15th June 2018

**Protocol** | Excellence in FE

To apply for this role or to download an application pack visit: [www.protocol.co.uk/cwa](http://www.protocol.co.uk/cwa)

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role contact Ian Sackree 07795 271559 or David Beynon 07970 042334

**UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL, GROW OUR BUSINESS**

# Assistant Principal, Business Growth

**Salary:** Circa £67k, plus performance related pay and generous benefits package, including 35 days' annual leave, pension scheme, onsite car park, gym and nursery

Coventry is positively buzzing: with a population 7% younger than the national average (and increasing faster than anywhere else in the West Midlands), at the heart of one of the fastest growing LEP areas in terms of economic output, coupled with the opportunities arising from the accolade of becoming City of Culture in 2021, Coventry is a vibrant place to be!

With global economic strengths in areas such as Automotive R&D (particularly Electric Vehicles and Connected & Autonomous Vehicles), Advanced Manufacturing, and Digital Creative (especially in gaming), coupled with a strong SME base, Coventry is a city of innovation that has constantly re-invented itself to survive and thrive.

At the heart of this landscape, the newly formed Coventry College has ambitious plans for growth. Created from the merger in 2017 of Henley College and City College, Coventry College is now the key professional and technical skills provider in the area and is making great strides in its first year, performing well across all areas of its delivery plan. Building upon existing relationships with over 700 employers, this is an exciting opportunity to shape skills delivery across Coventry and the wider region, harnessing the demand for more, higher and new skills in the workforce in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities now presenting themselves. Leading stakeholder relationships, working with employers to develop sector-specific strategies, you will be at the heart of shaping the College's future as the 'go-to' strategic growth partner.

You'll need to be passionate, have strong change leadership skills, with a drive and determination to succeed. An experienced skills strategist and business developer, you'll

be comfortable in shaping plans which deliver organisational growth and exceed customer expectations. Assessing and stimulating market demand across all income streams - including student-led programmes, employer skills, apprenticeships, commercial and international business - you will have a proven ability to create innovative, client-focused solutions, whilst also being adept at spotting opportunities and introducing new products to the College portfolio.

With experience of leading Apprenticeship programmes, including the creation of and transition to new Standards, you will be naturally results-driven and commercially aware, comfortable with transparent reporting of performance. As a leader you'll be motivating and empowering, driving this approach through the organisation and building high performing teams.

Leading our marketing and communications strategies, you'll be a strong, persuasive communicator with the ability to work effectively across structural and organisational boundaries in order to influence others in the achievement of strategic outcomes. Naturally collaborative, you'll build on and form new partnerships that add value to employers and communities across our city and beyond.

**If this describes you, we look forward to hearing from you.**

To apply, log on to [www.coventrycollege.ac.uk](http://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk) (look under the 'about us' section) or [www.fejobs.com](http://www.fejobs.com) (search for Coventry College, Henley Campus)

**Applications Close:** Monday, 23rd April 2018

## IT'S AN EXCITING TIME TO JOIN THE DN COLLEGES GROUP!

DN Colleges Group is a new college group in the Yorkshire and Humber area, following the successful merger of Doncaster College and North Lindsey College in November 2017, with an annual income of £50 million, 1,200 staff and 13,000 students. It is an exciting time to be joining the DN Colleges Group as it looks to appoint new senior leaders.

Building on the excellent reputations of each college and the provision of a wide range of courses from Further Education and Apprenticeships through to Higher Education, the Group will now be building on its growth to benefit both local areas and the wider region as a whole.

### GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND FUNDING | COMPETITIVE SALARY

In order to deliver our ambitious strategy, we are seeking to appoint a results-driven Group Director of Finance and Funding to oversee the finance and funding functions. You will be responsible for the design and implementation of the financial strategy and direction for the DN Colleges Group. Working with the Principals and Chief Operating Officer, the successful candidate will take a senior role in leading, promoting and ensuring financial stability which will enable the Group to maintain a strong financial health rating, whilst maximising new opportunities for further growth.

Reporting into the Chief Operating Officer you will be instrumental in ensuring that a new accounting system is effectively embedded into the organisation and you will bring synergy and an inspiring approach to leading your cross-college teams.

Our successful candidate will be a qualified accountant with significant strategic management experience in FE finance and funding, along with the ability to develop new initiatives and manage change. You will have a commercial mind set and the ability to lead and motivate a dynamic team within a progressive environment.

### GROUP DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING | COMPETITIVE SALARY

Reporting into the Deputy Principal, North Lindsey College, the Group Director of Teaching and Learning is key to our success. We need leaders who are inspired by what they do and who can inspire others around them.

In this very visible cross-college role, you will be vital in ensuring that our teaching and learning is second to none within our Further Education provision. Your innovation, inspirational leadership and supportive coaching style will enable us to provide our students with an exciting and effective learning experience.

Working with our teaching and learning staff, you will be instrumental in embedding consistent and effective policies and procedures across both colleges. You will be a lead practitioner who will challenge the current systems and processes and inspire our staff to provide innovative solutions to learning.

For an informal discussion about the post please contact Harpreet Jossan on 0207 034 2604 or email Harpreet\_jossan@aoc-create.co.uk or Lesley Lightfoot on 07748067344 or email Lesley\_lightfoot@aoc-create.co.uk

To arrange an informal discussion with the Chief Operating Officer or the Deputy Principal please contact the AoC team to arrange.

**Closing date for applications is:**

Monday 7 May 2018: Group Director of Teaching and Learning  
Sunday 20 May 2018: Group Director of Finance and Funding

**Final Selection will be held in the college on:**

Thursday 24 May 2018: Group Director of Teaching and Learning  
Week Commencing Monday 11 June 2018: Group Director of Finance and Funding



For further details about the posts please visit the microsite at: [www.aoc-create.co.uk/current-opportunity/dngroup/](http://www.aoc-create.co.uk/current-opportunity/dngroup/)



We currently have the following exciting opportunities available:

**Head of Department - Construction and Building Services - Corby**

Essential criteria

Degree or Level 4 or 5 qualification in relevant Construction or Building Services discipline, Level 3 Construction or Building Services Trade Qualification, English and Maths or similar at GCSE grade A-C or equivalent, Recognised teaching qualification (PGCE, Cert Ed or equivalent)

**Head of Department - Engineering - Corby**

Essential criteria

Degree level in the relevant discipline, English and Maths or similar at GCSE grade A-C or equivalent and a recognised teaching qualification (PGCE, Cert Ed or equivalent)

**Head of Department - Computing and Science - Kettering and Corby**

Essential criteria

Degree level in the relevant discipline, English and Maths or similar at GCSE grade A-C or equivalent and a recognised teaching qualification (PGCE, Cert Ed or equivalent)

The ideal candidates will lead the management of all aspects of the operation and development for the department working within the College's management framework to deliver high quality learning programmes with high levels of student success and an unbeatable student experience and to proactively contribute to achieving the College's Strategic Plan.

**The College offers a generous benefits package.**

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## EXPERTS



# PAUL BARBER

Director, the Catholic Education Service

## Time to close the loophole that harms Catholic SFCs

**A legal anomaly is stopping Catholic sixth-form colleges from reaping the benefits of academisation. Putting this right would be a simple matter, writes Paul Barber**

In the wider Catholic school sector there are a variety of legal safeguards that protect the distinct character and ethos of Catholic schools – for instance the emphasis put on religious education. These legal protections have been in place, and have largely stayed the same, since the Butler Act in 1944.

When academy legislation was brought in and developed by successive governments, Catholic schools were allowed to keep the same safeguards that protected their Catholic character when they converted from a voluntary-aided school to an academy.

However, because academisation legislation for sixth-form colleges was developed separately from schools, the same safeguards given to schools were omitted for Catholic SFCs – as FE Week reported last week.

This was done not out of any malice towards the church, but because of our relative size in the FE sector.

Because the Catholic Church is the largest provider of secondary education and the second largest provider of primary education in the country, accounting for one in 10 of all schools, any academy legislation for schools would naturally have to take into account the uniqueness of our sector. With just 14 Catholic SFCs in England, our sector was simply not big enough to register.

The situation in which this legal anomaly has left the Church is frustrating for several reasons. It is holding back colleges that want to convert to academies for the VAT boon this would bring, which could be so easily rectified with one line of legislation. Moreover, the Church actually has sixth-form colleges which are academy sponsors for schools whilst being unable to convert themselves.

The Catholic Education Service has a strong working relationship with the Department for Education which is fully aware of the issue and how it is specifically affecting our sector. We remain hopeful that this legal anomaly will be resolved as and when the next piece of education legislation is brought to Parliament.

Because of the size of the Catholic school

sector in this country, people often overlook the Catholic further and higher education establishments which the Church runs. As the longest-serving provider of education in the country, the mission of the Church has always been to educate the whole person, allowing them to achieve their best, whatever their best may be. A key part of this is providing a wide variety of education establishments to help young people succeed throughout the entirety of their academic life.

Much of this has been through the provision of sixth-form education. The vast majority of Catholic sixth forms are attached to existing schools, but there are also 15 standalone Catholic sixth-form colleges – 14 in England and one in Wales.

To this extent, the only standalone SFCs to have a religious character in England are all maintained by the Catholic Church. Like all other Catholic nurseries, schools, colleges and universities, they have a very distinct character rooted in the Catholic faith.

In addition to its many voluntary aided schools and academies, the Catholic Church also maintains four universities, a variety of teaching schools and 11 special schools for children with severe learning difficulties. We even have some dioceses which have looked into the prospect of opening a pupil referral unit.

**“ We remain hopeful that this legal anomaly will be resolved**

The Catholic community is perhaps the most ethnically and socially diverse in the country, and our wide variety of education establishments are there to cater for them all, offering a high-quality education within a distinct Catholic ethos.

Catholic sixth-form colleges have a proven record of success with many being rated either ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted and achieving A-level results significantly above the national average. This success is down to these colleges’ distinct Catholic ethos – something they shouldn’t have to lose if they were to convert to academies.



# THOMAS BURTON

Head of assessment, NOCN

## Learning necessary lessons from end-point assessment

**End-point assessment is a vital part of any apprenticeship, and Thomas Burton explains how to get it right**

The government wants its trailblazer apprenticeship reforms to drive up productivity.

Seen as a vital source of ammunition in the nation’s economic arsenal, the reforms are designed to redress a skills deficit that has forced businesses not only to compete with each other for orders, but also for a small pool of potential workers with the necessary skills.

Apprenticeships give employers back control, by nurturing and developing their own talent pools. Managed properly, they can greatly expand any company’s skills base and create a committed, able and highly competitive workforce.

NOCN has been working in partnership with employers, FE colleges, training providers and skills experts in many trailblazer groups to develop a range of standards and assessments for new apprenticeships. The group has already been approved to deliver 43 standards – the most of any end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) to date. Working with employers and training providers, we have all started to learn some valuable lessons.

### Early involvement in EPA

Involvement from both the employer and training provider is required early in the process. End-point assessment (EPA) planning must involve the employer, and must be considered and planned for at the outset of delivery.

### Flexible approach

EPAOs need to have a flexible approach when engaging with training providers and employers. Agendas and employment demands can change in the workplace and the ability to respond to employers is a requirement of any successful EPA provision.

Training providers have a key role to ensure that apprentices have a full understanding of what EPA looks like. The pressure of an EPA experience is like learning to drive and taking a driving test.

### Clear structure

An EPAO needs to provide a clear structure to the training provider and employer. Vitality, this information must also reach the apprentice. An apprentice will need the support, preparation and guidance to ensure that during EPA they perform to the highest level. The training provider must allow the apprentice to own their EPA process; it’s their apprenticeship and apprentices must understand that it is down to themselves to

prepare, with the support of their provider.

### Robust gateway

A robust gateway prerequisite process is a regulatory requirement for all EPAs, ensuring that every apprentice has reached the level of competence accepted by the employer at a recognised industry level.

**“ The pressure and stress of an EPA experience is like learning to drive and taking a driving test**

The EPAO needs to consider the ability to respond to a reasonable adjustment request and the suitability of assessment across all apprentices, in all job roles. The EPAO and training providers must work with employers, especially those engaged with level two apprentices, to consider the impact of assessment.

### Resits, complaints and appeals

Training providers need to ensure a contractual agreement is in place for resits, complaints and appeals. Education technology and the portability of mobile learning devices portability both play an important role in how employers and apprentices view modern assessment. Every option for a successful delivery should be considered when working with an EPAO.

### Effective regulation

Feedback from the EPAO to both the training provider and the employer ensures that the future quality of apprenticeships is maintained within the standard. This in turn makes sure that a standardised approach is applied to all assessments, and rigorous internal quality-assurance is applied by the EPAO to mitigate poor or inaccurate assessments. To achieve this, we need to ensure consistent, effective and efficient regulation of EPAs.

The advent of the apprenticeship levy is an opportunity for the English apprenticeship system to become a true driver of skills, productivity and workforce development. To make it a success, employers, training providers and EPAOs need to work together to achieve the desired benefits.



## 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: EXCEPTIONS TO EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT

I keep hearing about failing colleges that merged in the area reviews and got large sums of money. Why is the government rewarding failure in this way?

Answer:

“

**The government has made the decision to prioritise those areas and get provision of good quality in place**

This is a difficult question to answer, as when you put it like that it seems hard to justify. I agree that it does seem unfair but the students must always come first. It is not the learners' fault that they have had to attend a poorly run establishment, and future learners must

not be subjected to the same experience.

So the government has made the decision to prioritise those areas and get provision of good quality in place, but doing that comes at a cost.

I am hoping that once these areas are settled, we will return to a fair and more equitable distribution of support funds.

## Q2: SHOULD OUR PRINCIPAL HAVE THREE JOBS?

I am a staff governor and recently I realised my principal seems to be doing three jobs. Is that normal?

Answer:

This is not normal, but not unusual. There is a trend at the moment to grow empires. For example, a principal might run a college as their main role, be chief executive of a trading company where the college is the largest shareholder, and chief executive of a multi-academy trust.

The college structure will probably have grown organically without the board recognising the complexity and extent of its growth. As a board, you might need to start thinking about whether there should be a group structure, and consider whether it is reasonable to ask one person do all three jobs.

Also, the board should look at accountability and what might happen if things go wrong. If one of the boards of these three entities is dissatisfied with the service and attention they are getting, who makes the changes?

There are also questions of remuneration and assessment of performance, and who pays whom?

There are many possible models but, the bottom line is that this needs to be transparent, well documented and be an effective use of public funds.

## Q3: CRACKING ALL THESE CODES OF PRACTICE

The minister's letter to governors talked about the Charity Commission code, but we already have the code of good governance for English colleges and the UK's main corporate code. Why do we need yet another code?

Answer:

“

**It is high time for a refresh in my opinion**

A college's legal status is that of an exempt charity and therefore there are elements of charity law and behaviours that are relevant to a college board.

This new code has a greater emphasis on openness and accountability than the previous version. However, the Charity Commission's code has been drawn up to cover both large and small charities and is very generic.

When the code of good governance for English colleges was developed, the work did consider best practice in the commercial world and charities, and was tailored to represent the best in college practice, which is why it received BIS and ministerial endorsement. However, as it is now three years old, it is high time for a refresh in my opinion.

NOT TO BE MISSED

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## AEB FUNDING RULES, RATES, PERFORMANCE AND PROFILING 2018/19

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**BIRMINGHAM**

DATE: 1 MAY 2018

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DATE: 9 MAY 2018

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DATE: 14 MAY 2018

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## CAMPUS ROUND-UP *with Samantha King*



Re-coop-erating: The chickens enjoy their new life

### Recharging rescued battery hens

**S**eventeen former battery hens have been given a new lease of life after being taken in by staff and students at Eccles Sixth-Form College.

The college's sport, health and social care, travel and tourism and uniformed public services departments all chipped in to cover the £4-per-hen fee charged by Lucky Hens Rescue, a Wigan-based charity which originally saved the hens from slaughter.

Now, the rescued chickens will live in a newly refurbished pen at the college, alongside seven Vorwerk chickens, a breed originating in Germany.



Fowl fashion

For now, the chickens are wearing jumpers knitted for them by health and social care students until their feathers grow back, following their ordeal.

"They have all settled in so well, it took them some time to venture outside but we have to remember they

have never seen anything like this before," said Chris Pye, the college's animal centre coordinator. "It was also so nice of all of the departments to come together to help these animals, and this worthy cause. I feel immensely proud of us all."



Reaching new heights: Principal Len Tildsley prepares to abseil

### Roped into a charity abseil

**L**earners in Leek held the life of their principal in their hands, as he abseiled down a local church for charity.

Buxton & Leek College's principal Len Tildsley, alongside the town's mayor Brian Johnson, descended the town of Leek's only medieval church, St Edward's, to raise money for the Mayor's Charity, which supports youth organisations based in the area.

A team of level three outdoor sports students set up the fundraiser as part of their course with the help of their tutor, Allan

Shaw. They fixed the abseil to the top of the fourteenth-century church tower, and fitted the pair with ropes and safety equipment to keep them secure amidst the windy weather.

"This is just one of the many activities that we get to do as part of this course that makes it so great" said student Tom Bailey. "We are really prepared for the world of work because we get to experience a wide range of activities. Being based in the Peak District is also a perfect setting as we get to experience it all on our doorstep."

### Warrington learners get on the ball



The student coaches

**S**ports students from Warrington and Vale Royal College have been teaching over 4,000 primary school children how to play rugby.

The team of 12 level three students teamed up with the Warrington Wolves Community Trust to deliver rugby league sessions to pupils across Cheshire over the course of a week.

Each student took on a different role during the sessions, from coordinating events to officiating during individual sessions.

The week of events were arranged as part of the college's work with Warrington Wolves, the local professional rugby league



Play ball: Learning the art of rugby

club, and its charitable foundations.

"Being able to take part in such an event gives our students the opportunity to get first-hand experience of coaching young children – something that many of them will go on to do as they embark on a career in the industry," said Ryan McNeely, sport lecturer at the college. "It also gives our learners fantastic experience of leading a large-scale event, with multiple activities running at the same time."

### The importance of maritime safety



The boating lake

**A** group of maritime teachers put their lifesaving skills to the test when a standard survival exercise was interrupted by an emergency.

The group, including one student, from Blackpool and the Fylde College's Fleetwood nautical campus rushed to the rescue of a family whose daughter and five-month-old baby, still in its pram, fell into a seafront boating lake, followed by their mum who was attempting to pull them out.

The drama unfolded while the group were undertaking sea-survival training with students nearby.

"When you work in this area you have the skills and training to provide assistance



Fear knot: The rescuers

in rescue situations.

"We're just pleased we were able to help and the family were all ok," said John Bradbury, a lecturer who has worked at the campus for 49 years. "Our student Phil was also able to use his expertise in paediatric care to help look after the baby."

Following the incident, the kids' father, who was at work at the time of the incident, returned to the scene to thank the team, and give a £50 donation to a charity chosen by them.

# KPMG takes its apprentices back to the old school

Professional services giant KPMG has been sending its apprentices back to school in a scheme to boost their professional development, reports Samantha King.

Apprentices at KPMG are encouraged to go back to their former schools and talk about their career journey so far through the firm's Back to Schools programme, developed after its first-ever cohort of apprentices in October 2015 asked how they could share their experiences of the world of work with their old teachers and schoolmates.

The scheme has had a revamp this year, and apprentices can use six allotted volunteering days to visit schools and deliver a presentation on their apprenticeship.

"We have a specific learning curriculum, aside from the professional qualification, to help them bridge that gap from college to corporate life," explained Kevin Matthews, KPMG's apprenticeships assistant manager. "The programme helps apprentices looking to build their confidence with presentation skills and networking ability."

Six of the company's apprentices have been appointed apprentice champions in locations across the country to help run the programme, field questions from their peers and assist with facilitating school visits.



"We encourage the apprentices to make that initial contact with schools," said Elizabeth Morris, assistant manager for student recruitment at KPMG. "We have copy that we provide them with and they're able to tweak that, just to say hello, I came to this school or college, and I'm really interested in coming back and talking about my experience – is there an opportunity for me to do so?"



Climbing the career ladder: KPMG apprentices

Before the Back to Schools programme was in place, the firm found that on outreach visits to schools, pupils were more interested in hearing the experiences of newer recruits than those in more established positions in the firm.

"Those apprentices are ultimately our best sales people. They're enjoying themselves, they're living the values of our firm and they can go out there and talk to those people in a

much more meaningful and authentic way," added Mr Matthews.

## 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](mailto:samantha.king@feweek.co.uk)



**Mike Lee**

Training development manager, BSRIA

Start date March 2018

### Previous job

Regional operations manager, Carillion Training Services

### Interesting fact

Mike is a member of fundraising group Lions Club International, and this year will help run the biggest fireworks event in Berkshire, with over 8,000 spectators.



**Peter Lauener**

Chair, Construction Industry Training Board

Start date May 2018

### Previous job

Interim chief executive, Student Loans Company (ongoing)

### Interesting fact

Peter makes his own marmalade.



**Neil Carberry**

Chief executive, the Recruitment & Employment Confederation

Start date June 2018

### Previous job

Managing director, Confederation of British Industry

### Interesting fact

Neil is a lifelong Heart of Midlothian fan, enjoys playing rugby and coaches his son's team.



**Ian Clinton OBE**

Principal, Northumberland College

Start date April 2018

### Previous job

Principal, North Shropshire College

### Interesting fact

Ian was once tipped out of a wooden canoe by an angry hippo in Botswana, and the next day was chased up a tree by a buffalo.



**Gerald Davies**

Acting principal, Moulton College

Start date April 2018

### Previous job

Deputy principal, Moulton College

### Interesting fact

Gerald holds a degree in agricultural engineering.

## Movers & Shakers

...

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

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### FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

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

Solutions:  
Next edition

### Last Week's solutions

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

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

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

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

### Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.  
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Last Edition's winner: Ellen Cotter