

**HOW MUCH MORE CASH FOR A T-LEVEL?**



Page 16

**WHO YOU GONNA CALL? ATKINS GETS TWO MORE YEARS**



Page 6

**INCENSED: OFSTED USE PERCEPTION IN RESEARCH, NOT FACTS**



Page 5 & 18

# FEWEEK

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EDITION 263

## AEB DEVOLUTION SPECIAL TREATMENT

**EXCLUSIVE: Khan demands DfE finds London solution to funding postcode lottery**

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See pages 10 & 11



See pages 8 & 9

## 'SHOCKING' QUALITY OF LOAN-FUNDED COURSES

**INVESTIGATION: Nearly all loans-only funded providers rated grade 3 or 4**

- Some learners duped into taking loans but no Ofsted early monitoring visits planned
- DfE admits some learner loan providers withholding data - thus avoiding inspection
- Halfon says urgent action needed a week ahead of Chief HMI annual report for 2018

Exclusive

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See pages 12 & 13

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EDITION 263

**ESFA reveals launch date and redesign plan for 'strengthened' apprenticeships register**

Page 4

Milton DOES want collaboration between colleges and private providers

Page 16

Let's spend more cash on SEND learners and less on bureaucracy

Page 18

DfE agencies could do more to aid colleges in crisis

Page 19

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# Only schools with 'excellent' vocational provision should be rated outstanding, says Edge

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The Edge Foundation has hit out at schools for focusing too much on academic subjects and said that Ofsted should save its coveted 'outstanding' rating for only those which excel in teaching technical education.

The charity wants the watchdog to limit the top inspection grade to schools "that are able to demonstrate excellence in creative and technical teaching as well as for traditional academic subjects".

It follows calls from Lucy Noble, the artistic and commercial director of the Royal Albert Hall, for the creative arts to be compulsory at GCSE. It also comes after entries to GCSEs in performing or expressive arts subjects nosedived by 40 per cent.

The recommendation from Edge was made in the charity's Skills Shortages bulletin, which features data from the Department for Education's employer skills survey and Open University Business Barometer.

DfE data shows that the number of

skills shortage vacancies has more than doubled since 2011 to 266,000.

Edge is particularly worried about the decline of creative and technical subjects in the wake of the introduction of the EBacc, a school performance measure which favours academic subjects over the arts and vocational courses. Entries to design and technology GCSE, for example, have fallen by 57 per cent since 2010.

Commenting in the report, Professor Roger Kneebone from Education at Imperial College, London, said: "It is a concern of mine and my scientific colleagues that whereas in the past you could make the assumption that students would leave school able to do certain practical things – cutting things out, making things – that is no longer the case.

"We have students who have very high exam grades, but lack tactile general knowledge so they struggle even to perform chemistry experiments. An obvious example is of a surgeon needing some dexterity and skill in sewing or stitching. It can be traced back to the sweeping out of creative subjects from the curriculum;

it is important and an increasingly urgent issue."

The report also recommends that the government restore creative subjects "back into the heart of the curriculum", and says higher and FE providers must be "properly resourced to deliver creative courses".

It also calls for the apprenticeship levy to be "tailored to industry needs".

An Ofsted spokesperson said: "Outstanding schools are those in which the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding, where all other judgments are likely to be outstanding and where pupils thrive thanks to the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

"We have often said that pupils deserve to benefit from a broad and rich curriculum, and that schools should not teach to the test. Our education inspection framework, which will go out to consultation in January, will focus on the substance of education when it takes effect in September 2019.

"We will propose new criteria for 'outstanding' as part of that consultation."

## Troubleshooter replaces Garry Phillips at City College Plymouth

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A college whose previous boss quit following the publication of a damning FE commissioner report into his leadership of his former college has appointed an experienced troubleshooter as its interim principal.

Penny Wycherley, formerly principal of Waltham Forest College until she retired in March, will take over the top job at City College Plymouth until a permanent replacement is found.

Her appointment follows the departure of Garry Phillips, who stood down earlier this month amidst anger from the University and College Union over his position.

"It's an exciting time for the college with so many opportunities for it to serve and develop," said Ms Wycherley.

She is an experienced troubleshooter. Since 2006, she has helped to turn around South Kent College and Great Yarmouth College, and the latter moved from an Ofsted grade four to a grade-two college.

She originally retired in 2014, but continued to specialise as an interim principal at Waltham Forest College. She moved the college's Ofsted grade up from a three to a two over the last two years.

Mr Phillips, who jumped ship from



Penny Wycherley

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College before its financial failings could be exposed, resigned from City College Plymouth on November 13.

The FE commissioner's report into EHWLC, which Mr Phillips led until he took up his current role in July, published on November 2, revealed a catalogue of leadership failings.

According to the report, which was based on visits to the college in August, its financial situation was so bad it would be "unable to meet its commitments from early October without support".

City College Plymouth is in early intervention for financial health by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and received a visit from two members of the FE commissioner's team earlier this month.

The college is understood to be consulting on a proposed restructure, with up to 75 jobs at risk.

# College-run academy trusts in trouble

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Exclusive

An academy trust run by a college has been warned it will be stripped of its only school if standards don't improve – the latest in a string of college-run trusts falling into trouble.

The Burton and South Derbyshire Education Trust – set up by Burton and South Derbyshire College – was warned the Kingfisher Academy could be rebrokered unless standards improved.

In a minded to terminate notice, published last week and sent in October, the government highlighted the school's 'inadequate' Ofsted rating, after its first inspection in September 2017.

Although a monitoring visit in June found leaders were taking effective action to make improvements, the government has asked for further information to ensure progress is being made. The trust has since said they have

provided this information, and claimed closing the school had now been taken off the table.

Among the other college-run academy trusts to face problems is the Salford Academy Trust, founded by Salford City College, the University of Salford and Salford City Council. In June it confirmed that it would give up all four of its schools and close.

Salford City College retained 75 per cent control over the trust, which, according to accounts published in February, had been identified as "high risk" by the Department for Education after a review of one school identified "serious weaknesses".

And in March the multi-academy trust Marine Academy Plymouth, sponsored by the University of Plymouth, Cornwall College and the Plymouth local authority, was warned its namesake school could be transferred to another trust after being put into special measures in November last year.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education

Union, said colleges are "very good" at providing post-16 education, but warned that "does not qualify them to run schools or manage academy trusts".

He said: "The government was wrong to assume that a college provider could simply take over schools and run them successfully."

According to DfE statistics, 21 colleges are listed as the main sponsors of academy trusts, with a total of 57 academies between them. They range from having one to 13 schools.

FE Week analysis found just one of these academies is rated as 'outstanding': Heath Lane Academy run by The Midland Academies Trust, which is sponsored by North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College.

However, the trust's three other schools are rated 'requires improvement'. Three more of its academies, including two studio schools, have

closed.

In total, 13 college-run academies are rated as 'good', nine as 'requires improvement' and five as 'inadequate'. The rest have not yet been inspected by Ofsted.

Julian Gravatt (pictured), deputy chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said it was important to note that colleges "mainly" sponsor trusts with schools that were previously failing, or which run ventures such as university technical colleges or alternative provision academies.

He said there have been "many successes" in college-run trusts, but added: "Colleges don't have deep pockets like some sponsors do, and the different legal structure of academies has been an unhelpful obstacle."

The obstacles he referred to include the fact that colleges have a different financial year end, and that colleges can't recover VAT although schools can.

Mr Gravatt also said



that the DfE and Education and Skills Funding Agency have more than 1,000 officials who work on issues associated with academies but only a few hundred who work on colleges. "The former don't always understand the latter," he added.

Kevin Gilmartin, post-16 and colleges specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said colleges can bring "great benefits" to trusts because of their "close links to employers and their expertise in vocational and technical education".

He added the biggest challenges to education are inadequate government funding and teacher shortages.

The DfE offered this comment when FE Week asked why it thinks some college-run trusts have underperformed: "One of the benefits of the academy system is that sponsors are from a variety of backgrounds and can tailor their expertise to suit pupils' needs.

"This freedom in the hands of school leaders is driving up standards across the country, with more than half a million children now studying in sponsored academies rated 'good' or 'outstanding' that often replaced underperforming schools. This includes academies that are sponsored by further education colleges."



## News

# Revamped apprenticeships register will go live next month

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The government has finally announced the launch date for its new and “strengthened” Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, after reviewing it for more than a year.

It will go live on December 12 and will include a number of tougher rules for getting on and staying on it.

Gaining a place on the official apprenticeship register allows unlimited access to levy funding and co-funding for levied employers, but FE Week has reported extensively on problems with the application process, and discovered it is not full of the “top-quality” providers first claimed by the government.

FE Week has taken a look at the troubled history of RoATP and what changes providers can expect from the revamped version.

## Awkward start to ‘top-quality’ register

On March 14, 2017, the Education and Skills Funding Agency launched the apprenticeship provider register for the first time, ahead of levy delivery from May 1.

At the time, the agency told the sector that the register would “make sure that anyone taking an apprenticeship is doing so with a top-quality” and that the 1,708 providers on it have been “through a rigorous assessment process to make sure they meet apprenticeship quality expectations”.

But just three days later FE Week’s front page story revealed sector shock at



FE Week’s front page revealing sector shock at the first RoATP in March 2017

the register.

The selection process was branded an “omnishambles” after providers with no delivery experience whatsoever found their way on to it while numerous huge, established colleges missed out.

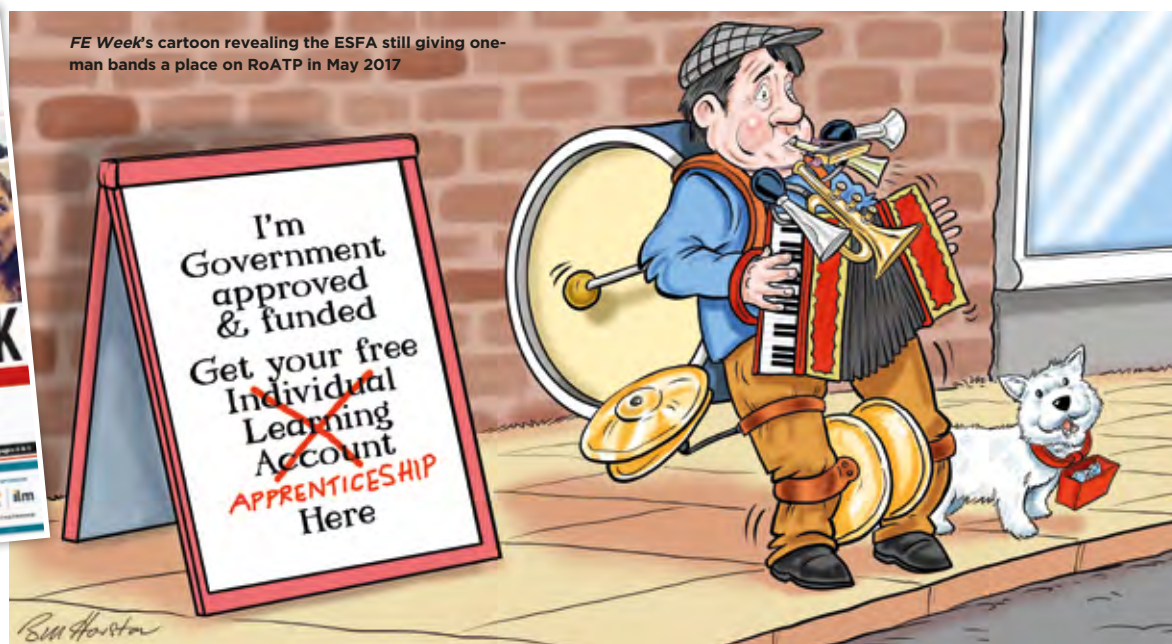
## More troubles with second application window

In May 2017 the ESFA published an updated register following a second application window, in which 507 providers were added.

But FE Week soon discovered that the agency was still letting on “companies” that had yet to even trade.

Labour’s shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden demanded an investigation into the way providers are selected after a new company, run from home and with one employee, made it on to the list.

FE Week’s cartoon revealing the ESFA still giving one-man bands a place on RoATP in May 2017



## ESFA reveals plans for early review

In September 2017 the agency said that after they have concluded the third application window they would review the whole register.

There have been no public application windows since then. There was however a special window for teacher training organisations in March 2018, to ensure there were enough accredited providers in place to deliver the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship from September this year.

There were originally meant to be four public application windows to get on RoATP a year, but this was scrapped when the review started.

At the time of the closure the register had over 2,500 providers on the register.

## A year under review

In 2018 Ofsted, concerned about so

many new providers, secured £5.5 million from the Department for Education to undertake monitoring visits to all “new” apprenticeship providers in the next 24 months.

So far, the education watchdog has published 90 new provider monitoring visits, and one in four has been awarded ‘insufficient progress’, resulting in the ESFA banning new starts until Ofsted undertakes a full inspection within the following 24 months.

Meanwhile, frustration has grown among providers who want to get on RoATP but have been prevented from doing so because of the ESFA’s review.

Last month, FE Week reported the permitted trade of buying your way onto the register, despite it being closed for applications, for as little as £50,000.

The broker that was selling the provider claimed that the ESFA’s delay

in reopening RoATP had “created this sort of market where smaller providers who aren’t doing much delivery can be sold off”.



FE Week reports on how providers can buy their way onto the register

## ROAPT REDESIGN WITH ‘TOUGHER’ RULES

This week the ESFA revealed that the register will finally reopen for applications from December 12, 2018.

The announcement confirmed many of the rule changes that the agency’s director of apprenticeships, Keith Smith, told the AELP conference last month.

### The key changes are:

- Once the register is open it will stay open indefinitely
- Two applications per year will be permitted, using the Bravo portal

- All providers already on RoAPT will need to reapply in 2019, starting with those with the “highest profile risk”
- The ESFA is considering the introduction of funding “limits” to restrict size and expansion of providers. The agency will consult on this “in the coming months”
- Providers and employers must now prove they have actively traded for 12 months (not three), are financially stable (evidenced by their financial information),

skilled and are able to deliver quality apprenticeship training, before they apply, rather than when they begin delivery

- Providers with an ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ grade from Ofsted – from no more than three years before applying – will be exempt from certain questions on the leadership and management of their delivery.

This also applies

to universities funded by the Office for Students

- From August 2019, the £100,000 threshold for subcontractors (including employers) will be scrapped. All subcontractors will need to get onto RoAPT as supporting providers, for example, if they want to deliver apprenticeships
- Supporting providers will be limited to accessing £100,000 of apprenticeships funding in year one, before rising to £500,000 per year
- Main and employer providers cannot act only as subcontractors



Keith Smith



# Beauty training provider slammed by Ofsted for 'misleading' careers advice

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Ofsted has slammed an 'inadequate' private provider for its "misleading" careers advice, in a damning report published this week.

Chic Beauty Academy, which offers advanced learner loans funded provision and level two adult education courses, was rated grade four overall and in four headline fields – although the provider has disputed many of the education watchdog's findings and said it will be challenging the verdict.

Its report comes just a week after Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman criticised colleges for giving learners "false hope" by recruiting them on to courses with low chances of employment.

It found that learners at Chic Beauty Academy "receive insufficiently comprehensive and sometimes

misleading advice and guidance about how the choices they make about courses will help them to achieve their career goals".

The provider, which offers courses in beauty therapy massage, nail technology and make-up to around 400 learners in the last year, according to the Ofsted report, has an AEB allocation of £455,501 and £996,140 for advanced learner loans in 2018/19, according to ESFA figures.

"Learners do not have access to impartial careers advice before they enrol on courses through the academy's call centre," its Ofsted report said.

Inspectors found that leaders had failed to "collect sufficient information about learners' next steps into further training or employment in the beauty therapy industry" to ensure the "programmes that they offer meet learners' career aspirations".

Nor had they "consulted sufficiently" with employers to ensure that the

courses provided learners with the "skills and qualifications to gain employment where they live" or to "meet local needs".

The provider was also criticised for having "advised inappropriately" a few learners who were "entitled to receive free or subsidised training" to take out loans instead.

Among their recommendations, inspectors urged the provider to "improve the quality of pre-course information, advice and guidance so that learners can make well-informed choices about the appropriateness of the programmes they are considering before they take out an advanced learner loan or enrol with the academy".

However, Safeen Ali, Chic Beauty Academy's director, said there were a number of "incorrect, untrue points" in the report and that she was challenging it.

She said the provider has Matrix accreditation, meaning it has met



recognised standards in information, advice and guidance – which it would not have got "if our IAG was poor".

She said learners were given advice at enrolment stage, and again at induction, which included information "about their course, and where they wish to go with their course and their career".

She also denied that Chic Beauty had ill-advised learners to take out loans.

Learners aged 19 to 23 who were eligible for free training, through the first level three entitlement, but had taken out loans instead were on courses that were "not on the eligibility list for the AEB", and Chic Beauty had agreed with the ESFA that those affected learners were "going to waive their right for free training".

Ms Ali said she had yet to be told by the funding agency whether it was going to terminate Chic Beauty's contract.

Ms Spielman's comments last week

followed the publication of Ofsted's thematic review into level two study programmes at colleges.

It found some subjects, namely arts and media, "stand out" as areas where there is a "mismatch between the numbers of students taking courses and their future employment in the industry" and as such learners are sold an "impossible dream", according to the chief inspector.

Although her comments prompted some pushback from members of the audience, the AoC boss David Hughes said she was "quite right".

"I think the response from Ofsted is proportionate and quite right," he said.

"We need to face up to the fact that sometimes we're not challenging learners enough to make sure they are understanding the courses they go in, because it does happen in some places, not everywhere."

## Spielman using perception not facts on arts and media job prospects, says principal

BILLY CAMDEN

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Exclusive

Ofsted's view that colleges are giving students "false hope" by putting them on courses where there are slim job prospects has been criticised by a leading principal for being based on "anecdotal" rather than robust evidence.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman questioned whether some colleges are chasing income over students' best interests at the Association of Colleges conference last week.

She was referring to the inspectorate's thematic report on level two qualifications which found some subjects, namely arts and media, "stand out" as areas where there is a "mismatch between the numbers of students taking courses and their future employment in the industry".

Writing for FE Week, the principal of Grimsby Institute, who spoke out during a question-and-answer session with Ms Spielman at the AoC conference, explains why she was "incensed" by the view that arts and

media students are being sold an "impossible dream".

"The [level two] report identifies that art and media courses were generally perceived to give the least chance of gaining employment within those industries," writes Debra Gray (page 18).

"The interesting term here is 'perceived'. The research is based on the perceptions of a small number of providers.

"There appears to be little triangulation with verifiable labour-market intelligence from reliable sources to see if perception matches reality.

"What appears to be credible research is simply an account of provider perceptions presented as fact. The methodological dangers of relying on anecdotal evidence rather than empirical evidence are legion."

The section in Ofsted's level two report that Ms Spielman based her view on shows a graph with just 11 responses which said arts and media courses have the "least chance of progressing to employment in a relevant industry".

Ms Gray writes: "The problem doesn't just lie with assumptions that anecdotal evidence is generalizable,

it also begs the question whether the right question is being asked in the first place. The chief inspector states in the report 'I am therefore concerned about the number of courses on offer that college leaders know do not lead to good local employment'.

"The report assumes we have a common understanding of the term 'good local employment'. Fifty per cent of Grimsby's catchment area is the North Sea, but we have road and rail links to Hull, Lincoln and Sheffield, all of which are thriving creative cities. Is this 'local' enough? It is also vital to point out that a significantly higher proportion of jobs in the creative industries are freelance and commission-based than is typical. Is this considered 'good' employment?"

Responding to the criticism, Ofsted said: "Our report recognised that the numbers of students going from arts and media courses into jobs in that industry was low. On the other hand, we found colleges advertising these courses as having extremely good career prospects, and as a result these are some of the most popular courses available.

"That is doing a disservice to students who take those courses."

## News

# FE commissioner: check with me before appointing a principal

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Exclusive

The FE commissioner has urged college governors to check with him before appointing a principal as part of a crackdown on “serial offenders” ahead of the incoming college insolvency regime.

Richard Atkins was speaking exclusively to *FE Week* in the same week he was reappointed to the role for another two years.

“I would encourage every single chair or clerk on their behalf, before they interview their final shortlist, to do due diligence with others in the sector – the Association of Colleges, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, my office,” he said.

“You need to be extremely careful because the appointment is so critical to the future success of the college. And the sector is small enough for people to be aware.”

While he said “I don’t believe in witch hunts”, Mr Atkins warned that “we do as a sector need to guard against a very small number of people either getting let go or jumping ship and then turning up somewhere else and then adopting the same behaviours that caused the trouble before”.

Mr Atkins’ remarks follow the resignation earlier this month of Garry Phillips from City College Plymouth, less than two weeks after the publication of an FE commissioner report into his previous college, Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, that was deeply critical of his leadership.

Mr Phillips faced anger from members of the University and College Union at Plymouth, who returned a vote of no confidence in his leadership and in the governing body’s decision to hire him.

His resignation was one of a spate of departures by senior leaders in the sector, many of whom – but not all – had been working at colleges that Mr Atkins and his team are involved with.

Following a “pretty good year” in 2017/18, this year got off to a less positive start for the FE commissioner with a number of high-profile interventions – including West Nottinghamshire College and EHWLC.

One of the “big causes” in many of these cases was the incoming insolvency regime, which Mr Atkins described as a “game changer” that had “brought several of these cases to a head more quickly than would have happened in the past”.

The regime, which will allow colleges to go bust for the first time, will come into effect at the end of January. Exceptional financial support will be withdrawn from the end of March, at the same time as the deadline for spending cash from the restructuring facility.

**“We do as a sector need to guard against a very small number of people jumping ship”**

While there is likely to be “some money to support colleges that have become insolvent to get back on their feet in some way”, it is likely to be a “much smaller amount of money” than is available at the moment, Mr Atkins said.

“Colleges now face the most rigorous challenge if they suddenly or unexpectedly run out of money,” he said.

In those cases “there is a very focused conversation with the governors and leaders of those institutions about how we return the college to sound financial health” and “that is a really serious conversation because potentially on the April 1 or 2 those colleges will become insolvent”.

But, he added, “I don’t necessarily see the insolvency regime leading to closures”.

“What I do see as an outcome is governors and senior staff being held to account in a more transparent and more robust way than ever before,” Mr Atkins said.

His “earnest hope” as colleges adjust to the changes is that “people ask for help sooner, they improve further their financial planning, particularly their management of cash, which is critical, and that governors and leaders stay right on top of that”.

“Cash really is king in incorporated



Richard Atkins

colleges, and you really can’t afford to run out at short notice,” he said.

That’s what happened to West Nottinghamshire College, which hit the headlines in September after it emerged it asked for a bailout just 48 hours before it would have run out of cash.

Mr Atkins stressed the importance of colleges having at least two financially qualified governors on their board to both challenge and support the principal and finance director.

On a “number of occasions” he and his team had intervened at colleges without any, which he said he found “genuinely staggering in 2018”.

Mr Atkins wouldn’t be drawn on whether any colleges were at immediate risk of going bust.

“I think there are a small number

of colleges, a very small number, who still find it difficult to take advice or ask for help,” he said in response to the question.

**“Colleges now face the most rigorous challenge if they suddenly run out of money”**

He acknowledges that there will be “a small number” of failures, but he hoped to “keep that to the absolute minimum.”

“I do think there will be a small number of colleges who battled through area review to remain standalone, who will do anything rather than have a discussion about what might be in the long-term best interests of that institutions, and therefore one or two of those might fail,” he said.

He urged leaders to “realistically assess” and come forward to ask for help if necessary as “there’s no shame in that”.

Mr Atkins said there were a few college leaders “who are in denial, who underestimate how close to the edge they are”.

“I would genuinely like to visit or help those colleges come to terms with a sustainable future for their learners,” he said.





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## News

# Star learners and employers celebrated at



National Apprenticeship Awards 2018 winners with co-hosts George Clarke and Lois McClure (centre)

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The country's best individuals and employers who champion apprenticeships have been honoured at the 15th National Apprenticeship Awards – including a new accolade for 'Rising Stars'.

Old Billingsgate in London held the glitzy ceremony on Wednesday night which was co-hosted by apprentice Lois McClure and TV presenter, George Clarke.

The awards were bigger than ever before, with prizes up for grabs in nine different categories. Entries came from over 1,100 apprentices and employers across England.

To be crowned winners at the national final, apprentices had to battle through tough competition in regional heats and demonstrate how they have benefited from their apprenticeship, before showing their contribution to their employers' business objectives.

Winning the new rising star award, which showcased trainees who have

made "impressive progress in their careers to date and have the potential to go even further", was intermediate retail and enterprise apprentice Joe Buck.

He is employed by Mitchells and Butlers and currently works in Toby Carvery as its duty manager.

Joe was crowned the winner after his work was recognised as "exceptional by a panel of judges" and through a public vote where over 7,000 people voted for their "rising star".

Lauren Carroll, the vocational learning attraction manager at Mitchells and Butlers, said: "As one of the first apprentices recruited by Mitchells and Butlers, Joe truly is a shining example of what his employer was aiming to achieve through recruiting apprentices.

"Joe has gone above and beyond his expected role at Toby Carvery, becoming an expert in both the kitchen and front of house, providing the business with a strong pipeline for management roles both sides of the pass."

Other individual awards went to:

Muhammad Uddin from Yorkshire Housing – intermediate apprentice of the year, Daniel Millington from HydraForce Hydraulics Ltd – advanced apprentice of the year, Jordan Coulton from Weightmans LLP – higher or degree apprentice of the year, and Natalie White from the National Nuclear Laboratory – apprenticeship champion of the year.

**"More than 7,000 members of the public voted for their 'rising star'"**

A special recognition award was also presented for the first time.

It was won by The Armed Forces – The Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and The British Army – for their "commitment to apprenticeships". All three services are have been

recognised as 'outstanding' by Ofsted and, combined, are the "largest apprenticeship employer in England".

A recruitment excellence award was also introduced this year which recognised employers who have "attracted a diverse and high-quality apprenticeship workforce through new and innovative approaches to recruitment".

It was picked up by BAE Systems plc, who also took home the macro employer of the year award.

Other employers to win were: Troup Bywaters + Anders – SME employer of the year, and KMF Precision Sheet Metal Limited – large employer of the year.

Skills minister Anne Milton, who attended the event, said: "A huge well done to all the winners, finalists and rising stars.

"The winners tonight will have stepped out of their comfort zone to learn new skills and many will have changed the direction of their life. Congratulations to them all and they should be very proud of all they have achieved."

Also present was Keith Smith, the Education and Skills Funding Agency's director of apprenticeships. He added: "I want to congratulate everyone that was a part of this year's awards. All the winners' stories demonstrate that apprenticeships change lives, lead to rewarding jobs and transform businesses for the better."

Host George Clarke said it was "great" to see that the winning employers and apprentices are from "such a rich variety of sectors, showcasing beautifully the broad range of skills that apprenticeships deliver".

"I am delighted to have been part of this celebration of excellence in apprenticeships," he concluded.

Education secretary Damian Hinds, who delivered a brief speech on the night, said: "The National Apprenticeship Awards is a fantastic event to celebrate the achievements of apprentices, employers and training providers, and I want to wish all the winners and nominees congratulations on their incredible efforts."



# at National Apprenticeship Awards 2018

The Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star



**Joseph Buck**  
Mitchells & Butlers

**Highly commended**

Jenny Jones, HM Revenue and Customs  
Aleksandra Burzec, Home Group

The British Army Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year



**Muhammad Uddin**  
Yorkshire Housing

**Highly commended**

Amelia Wayne, Futures Housing Group  
Bethany Geddes, The Automobile

The Rolls Royce Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year



**Daniel Millington**  
HydraForce Hydraulics Ltd

**Highly commended**

Muhammad Khan, BT  
Lucas Benson, BAE Systems Ltd

The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year



**Jordan Coulton**  
Weightmans LLP

**Highly commended**

Joe Powell, HM Revenue & Customs  
Michelle Blackwell, Bevan Brittan LLP

Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year



**Natalie White**  
National Nuclear Laboratory

**Highly commended**

David Thompson, NETA Training Group  
Susan Gough, Lloyds Banking Group

The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence

**BAE Systems plc**

The BAE Systems Award for SME Employer of the Year

**Troup Bywaters + Anders**

The Royal Navy Award for Large Employer of the Year

**KMF Precision Sheet Metal Limited**

The Centrica Award for Macro Employer of the Year

**BAE Systems plc**



**Anne Milton**

“It is fantastic to be here at this awards ceremony this evening, so good is it that I’ve almost lost my voice. If anybody ever doubted the value of apprenticeships have a look here tonight”



**Damian Hinds**

“The National Apprenticeship Awards is a fantastic event to celebrate the achievements of apprentices, employers and training providers, and I want to wish all the winners and nominees congratulations on their incredible efforts.”



## Investigates

# London Mayor seeks special treatment

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS  
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From front

Exclusive

Fears are growing over the creation of a postcode lottery for adult learners, leading one devolved area to seek special treatment from the Department for Education, *FE Week* can reveal.

From August 2019, more than £600 million of the £1.5 billion adult education budget will be devolved to the seven mayoral combined authorities. However, these authorities will only be able to fund students who live within their boundaries.

Guidance on AEB devolution, published last month, confirms there will be “no direct reciprocal agreements between the Education and Skills Funding Agency and any mayoral combined authority or Greater London Authority arrangements to fund residents who travel to learn across boundaries from devolved areas to non devolved areas, or vice versa”.

This change could have a big impact on the number of learners accepted by colleges inside the seven devolved areas – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City, Sheffield City, Tees Valley, West Midlands and the West of

England – and London, as well as the institutions nearby.

With the prospect of colleges and providers being forced to check postcodes at enrolment, and out of area learners being turned away, *FE Week* has taken a closer look at the reality of devolved funding.

## Special treatment for London

The Greater London Authority is in the process of trying to negotiate a special agreement for the capital which would allow for greater flexibility.

A spokesperson said the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is asking for Londoners to “receive the same treatment as learners from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland”, rather than England.

## “Many colleges outside the capital are used to enrolling Londoners”

“This includes an acceptance that learners from London could be funded if specialist skills training is not available other than outside of the capital and they want to travel to, or live in, other areas of England to study or learn,” he said.



Sadiq Khan

Many colleges outside the capital are used to enrolling Londoners, including Guildford College, Harlow College and North Kent College, while colleges based inside of London but close to the border, such as London South East Colleges, may now face difficulties recruiting learners from outside the capital.

A spokesperson for the DfE said the Greater London Authority had been

given “access to information which identifies learner attendance and need”.

“This is a significant step that will give local areas the opportunity to better meet local economic needs,” she said, adding that the authority is able to enter into a funding agreement “with any provider, no matter where that provider is based, to fund learners who live there”.

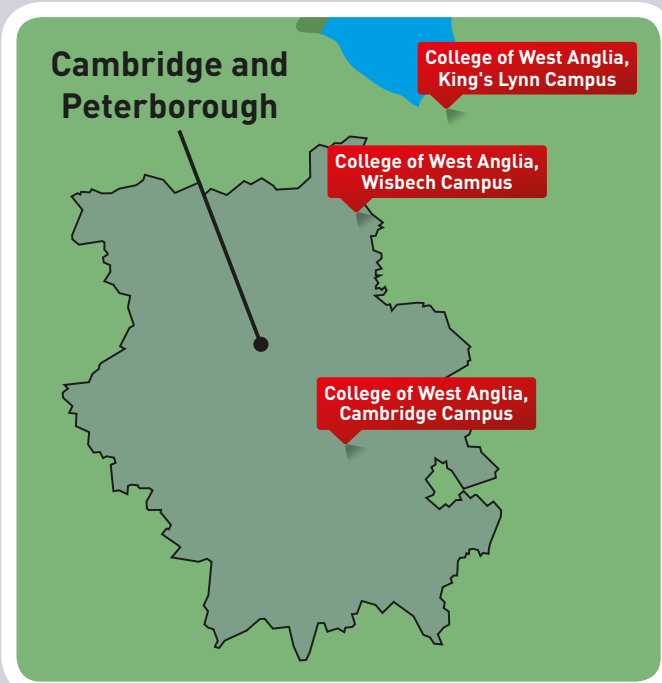
## Concerns from sector leaders

Sector leaders have been unanimous in their warnings about the new policy, which they say could have negative consequences for learners and institutions alike.

Mick Fletcher, FE expert at the Policy Consortium, warned the changes “could cause all sorts of problems”.

“One of the difficulties in running colleges is ensuring class sizes. Even if

## TROUBLE AHEAD FOR COLLEGES WITH MULTIPLE CAMPUSES



*FE Week* has taken a closer look at some of the complications that may arise from the new focus on postcodes.

As the emphasis is placed on whether colleges are inside a combined authority, this may overlook colleges with multiple campuses which can lie outside of boundaries.

The College of West Anglia, for example, was formed in 1998 out of a merger between the Norfolk College of Arts and Technology and the Cambridgeshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture, and a further merger in 2006 added Isle College in Wisbech.

The college is now based over these three campuses but, although Cambridge and Wisbech are contained within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority, the third campus, in King's Lynn in Norfolk, is not.

The College of West Anglia did not respond to requests for comment about what this will mean for the way the college operates, and whether learners in Norfolk will still be able to attend the local King's Lynn campus.

The arbitrary nature of the boundaries also means that some learners living on the same street could be prevented from going to the same colleges.



For example, the edge of the Greater London Authority boundary splits Crayford Road from Dartford Road, where it becomes Kent.

This means that learners who live on the Crayford Road side, in London, will not be funded by the GLA if they enrol at North Kent College's campus in Dartford, just 1.3 miles away. And their neighbours who live on the Dartford Road side, in Kent, will not be funded to go to the London South East Colleges' campus in Bexley, just 2.38 miles away.



# Colleges amid AEB 'postcode lottery' concerns

## COLLEGES FEAR POSTCODE 'RESTRICTIONS'

Harlow College estimates the changes could affect up to 200 of its learners every year who come from both London and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region.

The college is particularly concerned about its newly established partnership with Stansted Airport, who work extensively on recruiting learners from London on to their campus. A spokesperson said the GLA has made contact to try to find a way forward.

He said: "Employers and potential employees increasingly do not work within the geographical boundaries defined by politics.

"It is really important that contracting arrangements do not impede opportunities for people to gain access to better employment and training. There appears to be no proposed flexibility in rules related to postcodes."

Ian Pryce, chief executive of Bedford College, said he was concerned the devolved budgets are "likely to restrict rather than increase opportunities" and "increase the complexity for colleges".

"I really don't like the idea of us having to say to someone from St Neots 'these are all

the courses we do but you can only do these ones because of your postcode'. I hope it won't come to that, and also hope we don't see devolved authorities using funds to favour their own adult provision departments or creaming off money for admin."

However, he added that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority has been "excellent at involving us and wants us to carry on as normal for now".

Sean Scully, director of student experience at Oaklands College, which takes learners from London and Cambridge, said the college was "aware and fully engaged" and expecting "very low numbers" of learners would be affected.

"Our initial thoughts are that by staying engaged with the areas we know students are coming from we will greatly reduce any possible impact," he said.

A spokesperson for the Guildford College Group said it was "aware of the issue" and was still in discussions with the Greater London Authority "to find a resolution for the very few students that this will affect".

it's just one or two students, that could be the difference of a class being viable or unviable," he said.

"All these negotiations will have to be done by people who haven't done it before. We're going to reinvent a whole load of bureaucracy."

He added: "I think it's going to be damaging. It's going to be damaging for some individuals and for some institutions, and it's going to be an extra cost."

Stephen Evans, chief executive of the Learning and Work Institute, called on the combined authorities and the ESFA to "take a proactive approach" to make sure learners can continue to find the best courses for them, and to make sure colleges are not subjected to "unnecessary bureaucracy" or uneven funding.

"The measure of the success of

devolution will be whether devolved areas can deliver higher quality provision and better outcomes for individuals and employers, without adding extra burdens and bureaucracy," he said.

Sue Pember, director of policy at Hoxley, warned that even in cases where colleges do agree contracts with an authority, these contracts will be "numbers driven" and so are likely to "limit a student's ability to choose".

"The feature of learner choice has been an important aspect of the English system of FE," she said.

"It has driven up quality, allowed the best colleges to grow, and it will be a sad day when it is lost."

Concerns have also been raised that the policy ignores the fact of people often travelling across geographic boundaries for work as well as for

study.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said it would be "sensible" to have more "flexibility"

## "It will be damaging for some individuals and some institutions"

within the devolved funding to use for learners who travel from outside of the relevant area.

"There is growing recognition that in most combined authorities there is significant travel for work outside

the combined authority zone," he said. "This presents a significant issue when looking at workforce rather than residency."

### Figures from AoC

Estimates from the Association of Colleges suggest a huge variation in the amount of money that different devolved areas receive.

The Greater London Authority is expected to receive an AEB allocation of £311 million next year, whereas smaller areas can expect a fraction of that amount, with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in line for £12 million and the West of England expecting £17 million.

The AoC's estimates, based on data from 2016/17, suggest that 62 colleges are contained within the boundaries of the combined authorities and GLA,

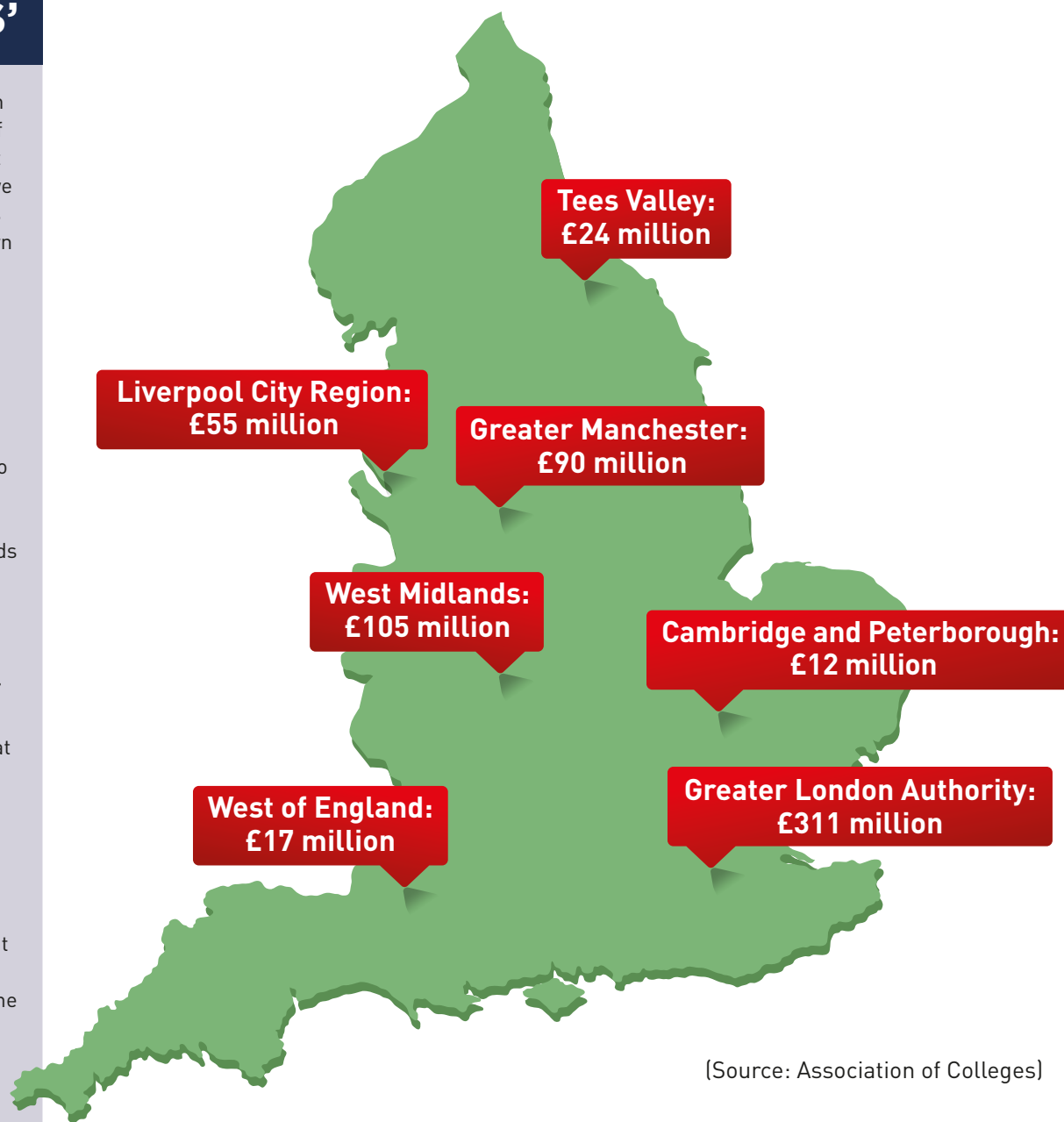
which will share £342 million from the devolved budget but just £42 million in separate funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

There are 168 colleges not based within a combined authority, which will share £401 million from the ESFA but will be entitled to split just £81 million from the devolved budget.

Speaking at the AoC conference last week, its deputy chief executive Julian Gravatt said: "I think effectively what we will see is the devolved authorities will want to deal with fewer colleges and providers, and will effectively localise."

Asked about concerns over a postcode lottery, he told FE Week: "It would be much better if the DfE and the combined authorities could agree a cost transfer arrangement to avoid new bureaucratic obstacles."

## Devolved budget estimates



(Source: Association of Colleges)



## News

# Revealed: vast majority of loans-o

JUDE BURKE  
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From front

Exclusive

A massive 80 per cent of providers that only deliver provision funded by advanced learner loans have been rated less than good by Ofsted, *FE Week* analysis has revealed.

But despite this “shocking” statistic – which covers provision worth millions and affects thousands of learners – the education watchdog was tight-lipped on whether it was upping its monitoring of loans-only providers.

Furthermore, the Department for Education has revealed that not all loans providers are submitting vital performance data – meaning some could be dodging inspection.



Robert Halfon

Our findings have prompted Robert Halfon, chair of the influential commons select committee, to demand urgent action.

“It is shocking that so many students who are taking the risk of a loan are experiencing substandard training,” he told *FE Week*.

Our investigation “must spur the relevant agencies and Ofsted to take urgent remedial action to ensure that students get the quality training they deserve,” he said.

**“It is shocking that so many students who are taking the risk of a loan are experiencing substandard training”**

*FE Week*’s analysis is based on a list given to us by Ofsted of the providers whose only source of government funding was advanced learner loans that had had inspection reports published by the end of October, to which we added those that had been published in November.

That gave a total of 20 loans-only providers to have been inspected by Ofsted.

Of those, eight have resulted in an ‘inadequate’ grade and a further eight

were graded ‘requires improvement’, while just four were rated ‘good’. None have received an ‘outstanding’ rating.

The reports published to date reveal a catalogue of alarming findings – including learners at one provider being duped into taking out a loan.

“Too many” learners at Academy Training Group, which began delivering loans-funded training in 2014/15, “are not aware that they have taken out an advanced learning loan to pay for their course and that they are required to pay this back”, inspectors said in a damning grade four report published earlier this month.

Between them the 20 providers had allocations worth more than £12 million in the year of their most recent Ofsted report, and more than 3,100 learners at the time of inspection.

The 16 grade three and four providers were responsible for over 90 per cent of that total: 2,969 learners and £11.2 million allocations.

Given these figures, we asked the education watchdog if it had any plans to introduce early monitoring visits for loans-only providers, similar to those it carries out at new apprenticeship providers.

It didn’t respond directly to our question, and instead said it was “concerned about any skills provider judged to be ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’”.

“We normally inspect new providers within three years – this time frame begins when loans-only funded skills providers actually start to use their loans and educate their learners,” the spokesperson said.

As a group, loans-only providers

Published full inspections of loans-only providers - as determined by

The Tess Group

Brooks &amp; Kirk Limited

The Beauty Academy Ltd

TDLC

Health and Fitness Education

Elmhouse Training

JFC Training College Ltd

Train Together

Eden College of Human Resource Development and Management St

Tower College Of Further And Higher Education London Limited

Beacon Education Partnership Limited

The Terri Brooke School Of Nails and Beauty

GSS Solution Limited

Elms Associates Limited

Active Lifestyles

Lifelong Opportunities

Training 4 U Services Limited

Academy Training Group

Impact College

Focus Training Limited

Total

have slipped under the radar as inspection reports typically make little reference to whether the funding source comes from a loan or the adult education budget.

According to Ofsted 2017 annual report, loans-only providers were only “included in the scope for Ofsted inspections from September 2016 as independent learning providers, at the start of 2016/17”, even though some providers had been delivering since late 2013.

“Limited” evidence from its inspections of loans-only providers over 2016/17 had “highlighted some potential concerns about the quality and effectiveness of distance learning provision in some providers”, the report said.

**“We are taking action if providers do not record their loans data on the individualised learner record”**

Education and Skills Funding Agency figures reveal there are 49 providers whose only form of adult skills funding is loans allocations, worth a combined total of almost £18

million, in 2018/19.

*FE Week* analysis has found that 16 of those have had allocations since 2014/15 – but only 10 have been inspected.

Performance data for some of those six is missing from the published achievement rate tables, meaning they may not even be on Ofsted’s radar.

The DfE has admitted that not all providers submit this data to the ESFA – even though they are required to do so – because they can still get their funding from Student Loans Company without it.

Additionally, it said a number of those without published data may be below the threshold for inclusion, although the DfE could not explain what the threshold was, at the time of going to press.

“We have been working closely with providers to make sure they record their loans delivery and are taking action if providers do not record their loans data on the individualised learner record,” a spokesperson said.

Shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden told *FE Week* he was “concerned” about our findings – particularly in light of the three high-profile collapses of loans-only providers in 2017.

John Frank Training, Educo Limited and Focus Training and Development Limited all went bust within months of each other, leaving learners in the lurch with huge debts and no training – prompting *FE Week*’s #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign.

## FE LOANS POLICY EXPLAINED

Advanced learner loans, originally known as 24+ loans, were introduced in 2013/14 for learners studying courses at levels three or four and aged 24 and older.

Eligibility was expanded in 2016/17 to include 19- to 23-year-olds and courses at levels five and six.

The ESFA had previously recognised that it had problems overseeing loans-funded provision, particularly where much of it was subcontracted.

In August 2016 it banned new subcontracting contracts for advanced learner loans, with a complete ban coming into force the following year.

It also introduced caps on the amount

of loans cash that could be allocated to a provider, and tightened up the rules for providers that want to start delivering loans-funded provision.

Since 2017/18, providers must have been rated either ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted to request a new loans facility – although this criteria was loosened slightly for certain providers the following year.

“The ESFA will always take into account any underperformance in ongoing monitoring and contract-management arrangements,” a spokesperson said.

“Any provider that receives an inadequate Ofsted rating will have its advanced learner loans agreement removed.”



# Only providers are less than 'good'

Ofsted	Inspection date	Ofsted grade	Number of learners at time of inspection (Ofsted data)	2018/19 allocation (ESFA data)	Funding paid in three years from 14/15 to 16/17 (SLC data via Fol)
	01/02/2017	2	11	£250,499	£22,240
	15/02/2017	3	440	£0	£446,020
	27/02/2017	4	262	£0	£1,748,390
	21/03/2017	2	45	£68,873	£145,600
	23/05/2017	4	227	£0	£344,170
	31/10/2017	3	15	£120,163	£92,460
	05/12/2017	3	29	£758,628	£1,473,480
	23/01/2018	2	7	£157,343	£174,050
Studies Limited	30/01/2018	2	124	£471,103	£644,080
	19/02/2018	3	297	£1,501,288	£1,394,340
	27/02/2018	3	217	£1,618,190	£1,646,580
	15/05/2018	4	135	£0	£864,570
	19/06/2018	3	158	£0	£609,560
	10/07/2018	4	27	£72,243	£152,510
	10/09/2018	4	102	£376,544	£145,370
	18/09/2018	3	45	£204,290	£65,160
	19/09/2018	4	7	£100,500	£59,950
	02/10/2018	4	545	£1,630,585	£1,781,710
	09/10/2018	4	24	£455,481	£787,270
	09/10/2018	3	439	£880,961	£977,460
			3,156	£8,666,691	£13,574,970

Inspections			
Grade 1	0	0%	20%
Grade 2	4	20%	
Grade 3	8	40%	80%
Grade 4	8	40%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>		

Learners			
Grade 1	0	0%	6%
Grade 2	187	6%	
Grade 3	1,640	52%	94%
Grade 4	1,329	42%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,156</b>		

Funding 14/15 - 16/17			
Grade 1	0	0%	7%
Grade 2	£985,970	7%	
Grade 3	£6,705,060	49%	93%
Grade 4	£5,883,940	43%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,574,970</b>		

Source: Analysis by FE Week

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## News

# AOs investigate apprenticeship provider to church groups following Ofsted's misuse of funding concerns

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
**BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

Exclusive

Multiple awarding organisations are investigating an apprenticeship provider to church community groups after Ofsted raised potential misuse of funding concerns in a damning 'inadequate' report this week.

Inspectors found that Touchstone Educational Solutions Ltd, which has Education and Skills Funding Agency contracts totalling more than £2 million, worked with employers who did not recognise the names of their apprentices.

They also found that the provider does not withdraw learners in a "timely manner" which leads to funding claims continuing after they have left their courses.

The Ofsted report said that Touchstone recruits the vast majority of its 450 learners and apprentices from church community groups at its sites in Woolwich, Greenwich and Leeds.

As well as apprenticeships in care management, Touchstone offers adult learning programmes paid for via

advance learner loans in health and social care, access to higher education (nursing), business administration and childcare, and functional skills courses in maths and English.

It lists seven awarding organisations on its website, all of which told *FE Week* they were not aware of the funding concerns prior to the Ofsted report. However, a number of them have said they are now looking into the provider.

"Highfield is currently looking into the concerning information arising from the Ofsted report published on November 26, 2018," said a spokesperson for Highfield Qualifications.

"We are unable to comment further whilst our investigations continue."

Awards for Training and Higher Education said that as an Ofqual regulated awarding organisation, it was "informed by Ofqual as to Ofsted's findings on November 15, 2018 but at this time the report was not available".

A spokesperson confirmed that the awarding organisation "accessed the report immediately" after it was available on the Ofsted website and has "already set checking processes in place".

"ATHE undertakes Ofqual audited quality assurance procedures for all its recognised centres – including initial



health checks and ongoing monitoring and development and external verification visits," she added.

"ATHE procedures will continue to be applied accordingly."

Touchstone's other awarding organisations: NCFE, OCR, City & Guilds, Innovate Awarding, and Gateway Qualifications said they were not investigating the provider.

Ofsted said the delivery of all of Touchstone's provision was insufficient, and leaders, governors and managers "do not have an accurate view of the quality of the programmes and do not have effective plans in place to make improvements".

The biggest concern was around the provider's management of data.

"File management is very weak and records about learners are very poor, with missing or inaccurate information," inspectors found.

"Leaders are too slow to withdraw those learners who have asked to be taken off their programme. Consequently, claims for funding continue to be made for apprentices who are no longer in learning"

They added: "Too many employers do not know how much progress their apprentices make. Some employers did not recognise the names of the apprentices who, according to the

apprenticeship files, are supposed to be with them."

The inspectorate also found that plagiarism is an issue at the provider. "Assessed and formally accredited work cannot be reliably attributed to individual learners, a few of whom have received qualification certificates."

On top of this, arrangements for safeguarding adult learners and apprentices are "ineffective".

"Learners and apprentices do not have a sufficient understanding of the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation," inspectors said.

As it has been rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted, Touchstone will now be removed from the register of apprenticeship training providers and banned from delivering its own apprenticeships. The ESFA is also likely to terminate all of its other skills contracts with the provider.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "We will always take action to protect learners if a training provider is not fit for purpose. We are currently assessing Ofsted's findings and will be contacting Touchstone Education Solutions to set out the action we will be taking in due course."

Touchstone did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

# UCU strike closes one college and affects five others

**JUDE BURKE**  
**JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

A walkout by more than 700 University and College Union members caused disruption across six colleges this week – and even forced one to close for the two days.

Bradford College shut eight of its 12 buildings and called off all its planned lessons on Wednesday and Thursday, while at least three other colleges cancelled some classes.

Further disruption could be on the horizon, as ballots opened at another 26 colleges in an ongoing dispute over this year's pay deal.

"Despite the weather, members have been out on the picket lines explaining to their students why they have been on strike," said Matt Waddup, the UCU's head of policy and campaigns.

He acknowledged that the action had "meant serious disruption" but insisted the union's members "have been left with no alternative".

Staff are demanding a five per cent pay rise, and are angry over

Association of Colleges' offer in July for a "substantial pay package" over two years, dependent on government funding.

UCU members at New College Swindon, Bath College, Petroc, Lambeth College and Croydon College, as well as Bradford College, took part in this week's action.

A spokesperson said the union had balloted around 700 members across the six colleges, and expected all of them to have walked out – although the actual numbers will be higher as new members had joined since the ballot.

Bradford College said it had "made the very difficult decision to close the college to students in order to minimise disruption and to enable students to make alternative arrangements for their learning" on November 28 and 29.

New College Swindon posted on its website that it had to "cancel a very small number of classes" on both strikes, and texted all affected learners.

The UCU said feedback it had received from both Bath College and Petroc indicated that "significant

numbers" of classes had been cancelled at both colleges, and that "scores" of learners at the latter had joined staff on the picket line at lunchtime.

Wera Hobhouse, MP for Bath, gave her support to striking staff at her local college ahead of the walkout.

"Further education needs proper funding, and the staff who work in this vital area should be properly paid. I fully support UCU members taking industrial action in Bath," she said.

However, a notice on Bath College's website, published November 22, said it expected the "majority of teaching and learning activity to proceed as usual".

"Whilst we are disappointed that some staff are striking, we understand the reasons why," the notice said.

A spokesperson for Petroc told *FE Week* there had been "minimal disruption" and "where there has been we have put alternatives in place".

Neither Lambeth College nor Croydon College responded to *FE Week* ahead of publication.

Ballots on possible action at a further 26 colleges opened on Wednesday and are set to close on December 19.



The picket line at Bradford College

Mr Waddup said the results from those colleges "will be back before Christmas and we hope that will focus college leaders' minds".

"If they refuse to act then we will be looking at further waves of strikes with more colleges in the new year," he said.

This week's action follows a "landmark" deal agreed between the UCU and Capital City College Group last week, which will see staff receive up to a five per cent pay rise.

But, as previously reported by *FE*

Week, the deal will cost the group more than £3 million, and will turn a projected breakeven budget for the year into a £2.3 million deficit.

The AoC held its first ever week of action last month to "make a lot more noise" about the funding issues affecting the sector – including pay.

The Love Our Colleges week was prompted by the Department for Education's decision to fund a 3.5 per cent pay rise for school teachers while ignoring college lecturers.



# BTEC AWARDS 19

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Rachna Udasi, BTEC Student of the Year 2018,  
St David's College



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## News

# DfE launches T-level funding consultation

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
**BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

The Department for Education is seeking views on how funding should be distributed to providers for the delivery of T-levels from 2020, including plans for four new funding bands.

A consultation, launched on Tuesday, includes the indicative per student funding rates based on hours of study over the two-year programmes, which range from £4,170 to £5,835 per year (see table).

It also reveals that each industry placement within a T-level will be

covered with an additional £550 per student – £50 more than was recommended in the Sainsbury Review.

The proposed funding bands are based on the current £4,000 per year base rate for 16- to 19-year-olds. They are then applied on a pro rata basis to calculate the T-level funding rates.

The consultation points out that the initial rates are based on “the information currently available about T-levels, and may be subject to some change” as the pathways are developed.

It adds that the DfE is planning on placing the first T-level courses to be taught from 2020 – in education and childcare, construction and digital – in

funding band 7 at a rate of £4,845 per year.

Funding for 18-year-olds will stay at the same rate as for 16- and 17-year-olds because “the hours required for the Technical Qualifications will be fixed, and 18-year-olds will need the same amount of funded time to achieve threshold competence as other students”, the consultation says.

It also confirms that additional funding will be provided to support T-level students who have not yet met the minimum English and maths requirement.

“We propose providing a one-off payment (during the first year of T-level

programmes) of £750 per subject per student to cover these maths and/or English needs over the two years,” it says.

“Students who need both maths and English would attract this payment for each subject (i.e. £1,500) in total but as T-levels are level 3 programmes, we expect the numbers needing both subjects to be low.”

The £550 per substantial industry placement, which will be a minimum of 45 days each, is “based on the amount we made available for the previous work experience trials, and more recently for the industry placement pilot we ran in the 2017/18 academic year,” the consultation document says.

The DfE proposes paying half of the industry placement funding in the first year and half in the second – so £275 a year.

FE Week has previously reported that the biggest barrier to making the placements work will be in persuading thousands of businesses around England to offer them, a task which is likely to require financial incentives.

However, the consultation says nothing about employer incentives to help with the placements.

Skills minister Anne Milton said:



“Our A-level qualifications are recognised as some of the best in the world, it is now time to deliver the same for technical education. T-levels are central to that.

“Now is the opportunity for the further education providers who will be on the ground delivering these courses to have their say. I want them to help us shape this system. Their view is critical so that we make sure T-levels give young people the technical skills they need and our economy the workforce it needs.”

Overall, the new technical qualifications will be backed by £500 million of investment every year when they are rolled out.

The first three T-levels will be taught in over 50 FE providers from September 2020. The 22 others will be fully rolled out by September 2023.

The funding consultation closes on February 19, 2019.

## Indicative T-level funding bands based on programme size over 2 years

	Band 6 - small T-levels	Band 7 - medium T-levels	Band 8 - large T-levels	Band 9 - very large T-levels
<b>Average planned hours</b>	1250 hours	1450 hours	1600 hours	1750 hours
<b>Minimum planned hours required for the band</b>	1150 hours	1350 hours	1500 hours	1650 hours
<b>Funding rate</b>	£8,340 (paid at £4,170/yr)	£9,670 (paid at £4,835/yr)	£10,670 (paid at £5,335/yr)	£11,670 (paid at £5,835/yr)

# Milton DOES want collaboration between colleges and private providers, DfE confirms

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
**BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

## Exclusive

The government has confirmed that the skills minister wants collaboration, not competition, between colleges and private providers.

Eyebrows were raised last Friday when the Department for Education published Anne Milton’s speech from the Association of Colleges conference, because it claimed it was “exactly as delivered” but contradicted what she actually told delegates.

“There is the apprenticeship levy money out there in the market – you

need to show what you can do on training and be real competition for the independent training provider market,” it said.

At conference, the minister changed the speech and offered a different message which was warmly welcomed by the likes of the AELP.

“I want to see more and more apprenticeship training being offered by colleges and where possible, possibly in collaboration with independent training providers,” she said.

This new view from Ms Milton makes a change to former skills minister Nick Boles’ message to the AoC conference three years ago in which he told the audience to stop letting private

providers “nick your lunch”.

It even prompted AELP boss Mark Dawe to write in his weekly members’ newsletter about it.

“The other great change in language was we didn’t hear any of the previous nonsense about ‘eating your lunch’ – instead there was a clear message about collaboration with ITPs – I nearly fell off my very comfy ICC seat!” he said.

But when it became evident that the minister was originally supposed to encourage “competition”, Mr Dawe told FE Week: “Officials advise, ministers decide and it’s about time some officials moved on and recognise that there has been a change in line under this minister as has been clearly shown in her previous speeches and appearances before select committees.”

When asked by FE Week for clarification on what it is the minister actually wants, collaboration or competition, the DfE confirmed the speech on gov.uk was incorrectly labelled as checked against delivery and that the minister did mean that she wants to see more collaboration.



Anne Milton

A spokesperson added that the minister wants to make people aware that there will be £2.5 billion by 2020 in the apprenticeships budget, and that colleges should see this as an opportunity and sometimes this could be in collaboration with private providers.

FE Week has listened back to the delivered speech and found that the minister followed it nearly word for

word and missed out only a couple of sentences, including the line about encouraging competition.

The DfE said that it might take some time for the department to update Ms Milton’s speech on gov.uk, so for clarity, FE Week spared 20 minutes to do it for you. Visit <https://feweek.co.uk/2018/11/23/confusion-surrounds-miltons-view-on-college-and-ity-collaboration/> to read it.

**But T Levels apart - there is the apprenticeship levy money out there in the market - you need to show what you can do on training and be real competition for the Independent Training Provider market.**

**Both apprenticeship training and T Levels will only succeed if delivered by high quality, resilient institutions. The one common feature of every successful institution is high quality leadership and... Of course**





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NCG works with over 45,000 learners and 7,800 businesses. We have a turnover of c£180m and employ 2,500 staff in 61 locations across the UK. The education, skills and training sector is changing and NCG is ready to meet the needs of our customers and the expectations of our stakeholders. Our agreed strategy and improvement action plan will ensure, following our recent Ofsted, that we rapidly deliver improvements in quality across NCG. Our goal is not just to be 'good', but to ensure that each part of NCG is at, or on a clear journey towards 'outstanding'.

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For more information and to apply visit [www.leadingNCG.com](http://www.leadingNCG.com) and contact our advising consultants at GatenbySanderson: Paul Aristides on 020 7426 3987 or Emma French on 07977 225 513.  
Closing date: 17 December 2018.



## Head of Marketing

**Organisation:** London South Bank University and Lambeth College  
**Salary Range:** £54,562 - £62,519 (inclusive of London Weighting)  
**Start:** January 2019

In January 2019, Lambeth College will join the London South Bank University family of institutions which heralds the beginning of an exciting new era for the College and its learners. The University is now looking to appoint an experienced marketing leader to support the College with its exciting agenda for growth and development.

Working as the FE marketing lead within our marketing organisation, you will lead on the design and implementation of an exciting and robust marketing strategy that will enable the College to increase student recruitment, build market share and enhance brand reputation throughout the communities it serves. Central to this will be the identification of target markets and segments to underpin sustainable growth, the influencing of curriculum provision based on learner and employer needs, and the execution of highly effective and continually optimised recruitment campaigns.

The successful candidate will be a driven and experienced marketer with a high level of commercial acumen and a track record of delivering growth, preferably within the FE sector. An individual who combines a strategic mind-set with highly developed operational marketing skills that can flex across a range of both digital and non-digital channels. They will possess an excellent understanding of how to engage a range of stakeholders through digital and social media channels and will be target driven, able to translate ideas and activities into measurable outcomes.

For more details and to apply, please visit [www.lsbu.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/jobs)

**Closing Date: 06/12/2018**

**Interviews: 14/12/2018**



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quality student experience, creating partnerships between employers, academic and professional service teams.

The ideal candidate will be a passionate, ambitious and effective manager, having gained experience in industry, to bring specialist knowledge for an employer based role.

Ideally you will be qualified to degree level and hold a level 3 to level 5 qualification in one of the construction disciplines. You will also hold a teaching and/or assessing qualification in further education. You will have experience of leading and managing a construction provision.

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**If you are ready for a challenge please view our website for further information and a detailed list of the benefits on offer with this position: <http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs>**

**Closing date: 10 December 2018 (midnight)**

**Interview date: 14 November 2018**



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We already have established relationships with a huge range of employers including Airbus, NPL, Bank of England, IBM, Hilton Hotels, Rocco Forte Hotels, EE, Huawei, Vodafone, the NHS and Age UK to name but a few. You will bring outstanding consultative sales and account management skills in order meet apprentice recruitment targets and grow the apprentice pipeline.

**Deadline for application:** Monday 10 December 2018

**Interviews will be held:** Week commencing 17 December 2018

The post is based at the Stag Hill Campus in Guildford and will require regular national travel. The University of Surrey has generous annual leave allowances, opportunities to join a pension scheme, childcare assistance and various schemes to support your relocation or commute.

For more information on the roles, please contact Neeta Barot, Head of Degree Apprenticeships at [n.barot@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:n.barot@surrey.ac.uk).

To apply see: <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/working-at-surrey>

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## Director of Finance Salary £60 - £65k per annum

Are you up to the challenge of this exciting and challenging opportunity? Weymouth College is looking to appoint an experienced Director of Finance, a Qualified Accountant, to join our Senior Leadership Team.

As a highly ambitious college, which continues to build on its Ofsted Good inspection rating and outstanding results, we are now seeking a qualified and experienced accountant who will develop and implement a financial strategy that will return us to good financial health and maintain this position.

Reporting to the Principal and Chief Executive you must have recent financial management experience gained in the further education sector with experience of developing financial strategies, and all aspects of budget management and business planning. You must be able to report complex financial data and information in formats which inspire the

confidence of senior leaders and support decision making at all levels.

For an informal discussion with the current post holder, Liz Hurst, please contact her by email in the first instance at [liz\\_hurst@weymouth.ac.uk](mailto:liz_hurst@weymouth.ac.uk)

Weymouth College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy. The successful applicant will be required to apply for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and to provide proof of eligibility to work in the UK.

For an application pack please contact Louise Gilligan HR Adviser at [louise.gilligan@weymouth.ac.uk](mailto:louise.gilligan@weymouth.ac.uk) or phone 01305 208873. Completed applications should be sent to Louise Gilligan

**Closing date for applications: 9.00 am Monday 10 December 2018**  
**Interviews will be held on 11 January 2019**



## EDITORIAL



## It's now obvious that urgent action is needed to quality assure all loans-only providers

In 2013 the government moved several hundred million pounds of level three funding out of the adult skills budget, replacing some but not all of it with advanced learning loans.

At the same time, the then Skills Funding Agency decided it was a good idea to give companies, many with no history of receiving public funding, access to the Student Loans Company funding.

The result was both predictable and exposed by *FE Week*: misuse of funds by several firms

that went bust owing millions. An outright ban on subcontracting and heavy capping of growth requests followed.

Now, after waiting years for Ofsted to conduct 20 full inspections, we find that the overall quality at these loans-only providers is shocking.

A massive 94 percent of learners, close to 3,000 at the time of inspection, took out these government loans for courses at providers rated grade three or four. Of which, half the inspections were rated grade four.

Our investigation also found that Ofsted has been slow to inspect and appears publically disengaged, with little to say about *FE Week* findings and in no rush to visit the remaining loans-only providers.

This is shocking, not only given the typical quality of the provision they are observing, but because their own inspectors have even found examples of learners that claimed to not even be aware they had taken out a loan!

At the very least, Ofsted's new early

monitoring visits to apprenticeship providers should be extended to include those only funded by loans.

The chair of the education select committee, Robert Halfon, is right to call for urgent action. But not just from Ofsted.

After we ask the DfE why some loan-only providers were not featuring in achievement data reports, they admitted that the ESFA was allowing some to not even submit data. These figures are then hidden from Ofsted and

official statistics, despite the companies being in receipt of Student Loans Company funding.

According to the DfE these providers are below a 'threshold', but when *FE Week* asked what this threshold was, at the time of going to press no answer was forthcoming.

As always we will keep seeking an answer from the DfE, as may Ofsted.

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

## Readers' reply



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### Third 'requires improvement' rating in a row for mega college in debt

Colin Gallacher

Q. How can a college with funding of £61m and 16,000 students (customers) not be regarded as and run like a 'business'?

A. When it's publicly funded.

### ESFA scraps £100k threshold, forcing all subcontractors onto the apprenticeships register

Iain MacKinnon  
@IainAMacKinnon

Whether that's good policy or not surely depends on whether the tests for joining the Register are set fairly, and don't inappropriately put off good employers (and good niche providers) who bring expertise others don't.

Tony Allen  
@tonyaas1

Sounds like the right thing to do to me

Jenny  
@JHinkley24

So they should be and they should be inspected as some are absolutely awful but they get away with it at the moment

### FE Commissioner quizzed over 'serial offenders'

Steve Bennett  
@properjob57

Surely this is as much as a failure of governance - they are the hirers. They are also complicit in the grotesquely inflated salaries some CEOs are paid - accountability there too. FE has a duty, like other state funded education to close pay inequality - up and down.

Brian B  
@justbbanks

FE has serial offenders because the consequences of their greed and incompetence falls on the shoulders of students, staff and the taxpayers, while failed principals just go on to fail and profit somewhere else.

### AoC boss accepts Ofsted's concern over courses with poor job prospects

Daniel Phillips  
@dan\_pgce

More interesting would be looking at the study programme as a whole once students exit 16-18 education. What skills have been amassed in those 2-3 academic years? How do they link employability, university and future prospects

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

### FE Commissioner quizzed over 'serial offenders'



Should have had a thermal scanner in the conference room - bet a fair few in the audience were squirming...

Time will tell whether this is just lip service or the beginnings of proper accountability. It's not just bad apple leaders at providers that need sorting out, there are quite a few policy shortcomings that incentivise behaviour.

Geoff

## Experts

## DEBRA GRAY

Principal,  
Grimsby Institute

## Ofsted's blinkered views on arts and media courses lack insight

**The obsession with STEM is causing misperceptions about the value – economic and social – of participation in the creative industries, believes Debra Gray**

I like Amanda Spielman. I think she has been a force for good at Ofsted. I spent a day with the chief inspector of education, children's services and skills last year when she came to visit us in Grimsby, and she was remarkably forgiving and gracious when I nearly crashed us both into a truck at a roundabout in Immingham.

However, her comments about students on arts and media courses being sold an "impossible dream" made at the Association of Colleges' conference last week incensed me. The substance of Ofsted's argument lies within its Level 2 Study Programmes report published on 21 November. This identified that art and media courses were generally perceived to give the least chance of gaining employment within those industries.

The interesting term here is "perceived". The research is based on the perceptions of a small number of providers. There appears to be little triangulation with verifiable labour-market intelligence from reliable sources to see if perception matches reality. What appears to be credible research is simply an account of provider perceptions presented as fact. The methodological dangers of relying on anecdotal evidence rather than empirical evidence are legion.

So, what is the reality?

The creative sector is worth £92 billion annually to the UK economy, two million people are directly employed in the creative industries and over three million work as creative professionals in non-creative industries. Employment in the creative sector is growing at four times the rate of other sectors.

The Creative Industries Council states that between 2010 and 2016 the creative industries sub sectors – which include advertising, film and TV, architecture, publishing, music, design, games,

museums and galleries, fashion, crafts, and the creative use of technology – grew their economic contribution by 44.8 per cent, outpacing the purely digital sector, which increased its GVA (gross value added) by 23.3 per cent during this period.

A career in the arts is an impossible dream? I don't think so.

**"The creative sector is worth £92 billion to the UK economy"**

The problem doesn't just lie with assumptions that anecdotal evidence is generalisable, there is an issue over the right question being asked in the first place. The chief inspector states in the report: "I am therefore concerned about the number of courses on offer that college leaders know do not lead to good local employment."

The report assumes we have a

common understanding of the term "good local employment". Fifty per cent of Grimsby's catchment area is the North Sea, but we have road and rail links to Hull, Lincoln and Sheffield, all of which are thriving creative cities. Is this "local" enough? It is also vital to point out that a significantly higher proportion of jobs in the creative industries are freelance and commission-based than is typical in other sectors. Is this considered "good" employment?

Arts and media are both completely local and completely global, and everything in between, from the microbusinesses in ceramics and jewellery operating in a spare room to multi-billion transnational media empires influencing governments. Creative jobs are some of the most future-proof over the next 20 years – they cannot be taken by automation and AI is not a replacement for the human imagination – so we must prepare more creative professionals for the repercussions of the fourth industrial

revolution, not fewer.

Arts education in the UK has been decimated in the push to advance the STEM agenda, as if they are two different things. Without imagination and creativity, scientists and engineers cannot show us the future – we must value creative skills, not further banish them owing to flawed perceptions.

So thank you to the creative professionals who designed my clothes, my furniture, the news I read this morning, the film I saw this afternoon, the documentary I watched with my reluctant children, the artists who put the pictures on my walls, the musicians who help me through dark times, the authors who take me to magical worlds, the comedians who make me laugh, the actors who transport me to places I wouldn't go alone and the digital and creative industries team at Grimsby Institute who go above and beyond to make sure no learner's dream is impossible.

Without you, the world is a very bleak place. I am proud to stand by your side.

## GRAHAM RAZEY

Principal and chief executive,  
East Kent College Group

## Let's spend more cash on SEND learners and less on bureaucracy

**Some of the funding that used to be spent on support for learning disabilities now goes on administration. Students would benefit if the money went direct to providers, says Graham Razez**

Throughout the 25 years I've worked in further education, there have been a number of clichéd expressions thrown about. From Cinderella service to cash-strapped, the sector has a lot of aphorisms. However, my personal favourite right now is the phrase "what goes around, comes around". At present, in the world of SEND funding, it has never rung more true.

There was a time I'm sure many of you can remember, when the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) would provide colleges across the length and breadth of the land with an annual funding allocation. This could be used to address the disabilities and learning difficulties faced by students, which were often – but not always – articulated through a

Learning Disability Assessment (LDA). Under this system, providers were trusted to use the funding to most efficiently and effectively deliver the support required for their students.

While there were imperfections in the system, it gave providers the autonomy required to ensure the needs of students were met, along with a minimal administrative burden. This meant the maximum possible funding could be spent on frontline deployment, ensuring students reaped the most achievable benefit. In fact, the audit regime ensured no more than 20 per cent of any funding was spent away from direct support, and that every penny was accounted for in actual spending in any given year.

Wind forward to today's more hostile environment, and we are faced with a multitude of challenges within the system. Local authorities have been added into the mix and a significant proportion of funding is now being used to manage these additional layers

of bureaucracy. The number of posts within both local authorities and providers has increased exponentially.

Worryingly, however, these posts have not, as one might hope, been created to improve the quality of the offer, but to compete over who can provide the most eloquent arguments

**"Jobs have been created to compete over who can provide the most eloquent arguments"**

for why a student should or should not be eligible for element two and three funding.

The resulting impact is a reduction in funding being provided to support the young people, many of whom are

some of the most vulnerable in our society. In fact, evidence provided by the Department for Education itself suggests the volume of tribunals is increasing significantly as more and more parents and young people are told that they are not eligible for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or that they are unable to access their placement of choice.

While a strong argument can certainly be made that the amount of funding in the high needs system is simply insufficient, I do feel that the first place to start would be to remove unnecessary bureaucracy.

The first step to achieving this would be to change the relationship between local authorities and providers, based on the mutual understanding that the young person should be placed at the heart of the process. We must work hard to agree that providers are not, as some local authorities would claim, "trying to game the system to achieve margin in this work" and conversely, that local

authorities are not trying to "drive down costs to use the money in other parts of the education system". Neither is helpful, and stereotypes and assumptions of this nature are certainly not making for harmonious relationships.

So rather than waste precious resources constantly arguing about individual students, why couldn't we have a country-wide return to the block grant funding system? Block grant funding enables providers to plan the service for the whole, rather than the individual constituent parts. It gives the provider the flexibility to deliver a whole service, rather than having to tag costs at an individual level and claim in year. The agreement is also in advance of the year, enabling the provider to plan the service rather than being forced to react.

Whether that comes through local authorities or not, I am convinced we can save significantly on administration costs and maybe, just maybe, we can be trusted to do the right thing collectively for our young people.



# KAREN REDHEAD

Principal and CEO, Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College



## DfE agencies could do more to aid colleges in crisis

**As she leads her new institution to financial recovery, principal Karen Redhead reflects on what can help and hinder this difficult process**

I took over at Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College in September, in the wake of a financial notice to improve from the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and an intervention from the FE commissioner, fully aware of the scale and extent of the issues faced by the college.

This is my initial insight into what it's been like leading a college towards financial recovery, what is working and what could be done better.

The first stocktake visit from the commissioner's team in October was thorough and purposeful. It genuinely gave me access to what felt like high-quality consultancy, coaching and mentoring that is vital in such a challenging scenario. It acknowledged that we'd done an overwhelming amount of work but that there was still much to do.

The process has been as burdensome as it has been supportive, and there's a real danger of overwhelming a college that is by definition already weak. Deteriorating financial health is often the first sign to the outside world that all is not well. But that's usually the tip of the iceberg.

The financial controls at West London College were certainly weak, but in addition, the college had no strategic plan, no costed curriculum plan, no workforce plan, a financial plan that was not fit for purpose, no estates strategy – despite having multiple and complex projects on the go – and the risk register hadn't been updated since 2016.

Compounding this can be the difficulty in attracting senior leaders and board members. At one point we had vacancies in the post of chair, vice chair, clerk, deputy principal for curriculum and quality, director of finance and resources, and director of management information systems. I'm really pleased to have appointed some

strong candidates to the executive team, but they don't take up their posts until the new year.

We have to report to three separate agencies: the ESFA, because we're under a financial notice to improve; the FE commissioner's team, following their diagnostic assessment in July; and the transaction unit, because we're

**“The power imbalance leads to a temptation to acquiesce”**

in receipt of an exceptional financial support loan.

And perversely, what happens is that the hoops the college has to jump through, mainly in relation to the financial support loan, become the biggest barrier to improvement.

There's simply not enough time to do the crucial development work with the

finance department and senior team because they're too busy providing data about the college's weekly cash flow, in order to calculate the bare minimum loan payment we need each month.

We're lacking some of the underpinning processes that would be taken for granted in a well running college, and due to the onerous reporting requirements, the team doesn't have time to set them up.

Data requests include items such as course-level costing. But if the college is still developing its curriculum plan and workforce plan, that information is not available. It can feel quite challenging when the various agencies are making demands for information for which the processes are not yet in place.

The power imbalance in this kind of situation leads to a temptation to acquiesce to administrative requests, in the interest of maintaining harmonious relationships, that under other circumstances I would question.

The three agencies are trying hard to minimise duplication of demands

on the college. However more could be done to achieve this. Rather than the separate processes requiring different recovery plans, it would make more sense to combine these into one plan from the outset. It would also have helped to have access to a model recovery plan template that could be modified according to the circumstances.

More clarity about the new insolvency regime would also help. Asking a college in crisis mode to create its own specification for an independent business review, for example, is just one more unnecessary burden.

And finally, if we're to avoid these situations in the first place, leaders must be encouraged to ask for help early – and this requires a radical rethink. If the only option is to trigger a formal process with high personal consequences, then of course leaders will be reticent. We know very few people set out deliberately to do a bad job, so we need to think about how to create a no-blame, no-shame process.

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## AEB funding - supporting you through the devolution evolution

From the start of the 2019-20 funding year, the adult education budget (AEB) will be devolved regionally with significant implications on providers.

As you start to prepare for this change and develop key relationships, we are here to support you. We understand the skills gaps in your region and our comprehensive product offer will give strength and depth to your delivery. What's more, we have dedicated account managers based in your region who have both the local and national expertise you need.

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# Bulletin



**Chris Webb**

Chief executive,  
Bradford College

**Start date** Spring 2019

**Previous job**

Principal, Barnsley College

**Interesting fact**

Chris's degree in sport science enhanced his skills in being creative, collaborative and competitive - everything he needs to be a CEO in the FE sector.



**Elaine McMahon**

Interim principal,  
Cornwall College

**Start date** November 2018

**Previous job**

Interim principal, Kensington and Chelsea College

**Interesting fact**

Part of Elaine's education took place in Australia and she has lived in France, Australia and the US as well as in all parts of this country.

# Movers & Shakers

...

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



**Penny Wycherley**

Interim principal,  
City College Plymouth

**Start date** November 2018

**Previous job**

Principal, Waltham Forest College

**Interesting fact**

Penny didn't learn to speak until she was three - after which, her mother said, she never learned to stop talking!



**Fiona Aldridge**

Director of policy and research,  
Learning and Work Institute (LWI)

**Start date** November 2018

**Previous job**

Deputy director, research and development, LWI

**Interesting fact**

Fiona started working at the Learning and Working Institute (then called NIACE) exactly 21 years ago - as PA to the same role she's just been promoted to.

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](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)

**FEWEEK**

Got a **story**?

Get in touch.

Contact: [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)  
or call 020 81234 778



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

# FE WEEK ANNUAL APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2019

## THE FLAGSHIP NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE FOR EMPLOYERS AND PROVIDERS

### 2019 HIGHLIGHTS WILL INCLUDE:



Unmissable plenary sessions with keynotes from leading figures



Connect with over 60 leading suppliers within our exhibition



Select from over 70 in-depth and practical workshops covering a range of topics



Celebrate at our glitzy gala dinner and FE Week & AELP apprenticeship awards evening

ICC, BIRMINGHAM | 27-28 MARCH 2019  
REGISTER TODAY AT FEWEEKAAC.COM

HURRY - DON'T MISS OUR SUPER EARLY BIRD OFFER ON TICKETS. BOOK BY THE END OF NOVEMBER AND **SAVE AT LEAST 25%** ON TICKETS!

For sponsorship & exhibition enquiries visit [feweekaac.com](http://feweekaac.com) or email [aac@feweek.co.uk](mailto:aac@feweek.co.uk). Early bird exhibition rates available.

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FEWEEK aelp  
**AAC  
2019  
AWARDS**



★ Nominations close 17:00 on FRIDAY 21 December

**NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN**

**AAC  
APPRENTICESHIP  
AWARDS 2019**

A celebration of excellence in apprenticeship delivery

FE Week & AELP are delighted to announce the return of the AAC Apprenticeship Awards. Following the success of the inaugural awards earlier this year we have expanded the number of awards for 2019. These awards are designed to celebrate the contribution made by apprenticeship employers and providers in delivering world class apprenticeships.

For more information visit [feweekaac.com/aac-awards](http://feweekaac.com/aac-awards)

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

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](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk).



Last Edition's winner: Chris Rowland

**Solutions**

Turn the paper around to check if your answers match - but no cheating!

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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