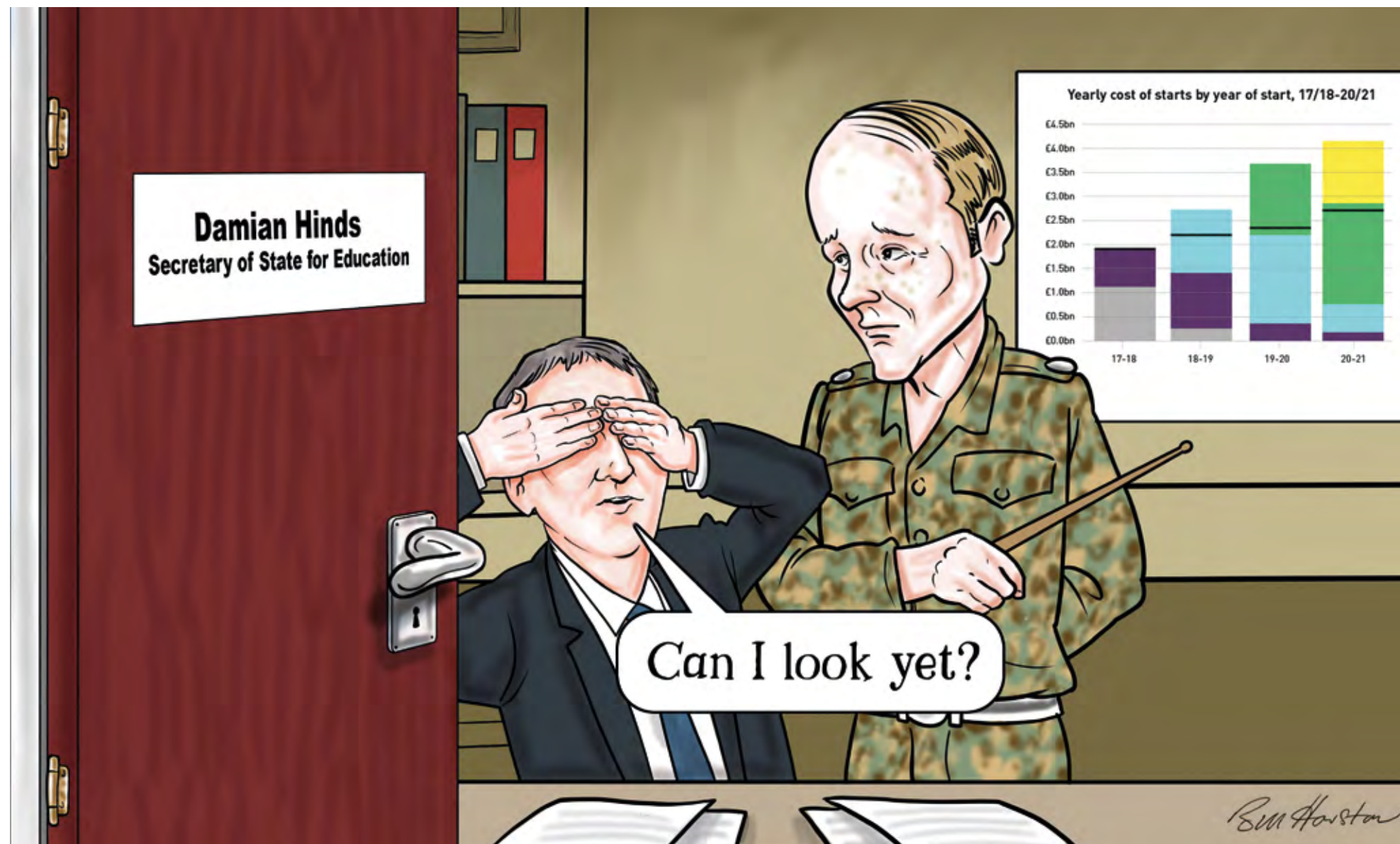




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IFA: LEVY MONEY COULD RUN OUT

- Secret presentation to employers forecasts £500m overspend by July 2019
- Damian Hinds: 'I didn't write the presentation so I can't really comment'
- Skills minister to consider whether to stop funding some apprenticeships

Exclusive

JUDE BURKE JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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Nick Linford
EDITOR
@NICKLINFORD
NICK@LSECT.COM



Shane Mann
MANAGING DIRECTOR
@SHANERMANN
SHANE@LSECT.COM

Please inform the FE Week editor of any errors or issues of concern regarding this publication.



Cath Murray
COMMISSIONING EDITOR
@CATHMURRAY_
CATH@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Billy Camden
CHIEF REPORTER
@BILLYCAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Jude Burke
SENIOR REPORTER
@JUDEBURKE77
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Pippa Allen-Kinross
SENIOR REPORTER
@PIPPA_AK
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Simon Kay
DESIGNER
SIMON@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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Got a story?

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Contact: news@feweek.co.uk
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The team

Head designer:	Nicky Phillips
Designer:	Simon Kay
Sub Editor:	Karen Shook
Photographer:	Ellis O'Brien
Financials:	Helen Neilly
Sales Team Leader:	Bridget Stockdale
Administration:	Georgina Heath
PA to managing director:	Victoria Boyle

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Learning & Skills Events, Consultancy and Training Ltd

161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

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AELP appoints a devolution director to represent ITPs

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The “real fear” that independent training providers wouldn’t get “representation around the table” in adult education budget devolution has prompted the Association of Employment and Learning Providers to appoint its first devolution director.

Harminder Matharu takes up her post on December 19, just two days before bids are due in the Greater London Authority’s tender process – the first of eight areas with devolution deals to launch its AEB tender.

AELP boss Mark Dawe said the organisation wanted someone who could “represent ITPs at the highest level” in talks with the different authorities.

As discussions around devolution developed there was a “real fear” that private providers wouldn’t get “representation around the table” and that a “strategy would be developed without thinking about what such an important group of providers can bring to the table”.

“It’s always automatic to turn to universities and colleges in the area,

they’re physical buildings in the areas, whereas ITPs are very much more about working in the employers’ premises or in the community so they’re not so obvious as an entity,” Mr Dawe said.

From August 2019, more than £600 million of the £1.5 billion adult education budget will be devolved to six mayoral combined authorities and the GLA.

One of the challenges is that each of the different areas is taking a different approach to improving the skills of its local workforce and providing skills to unemployed people to help them secure sustainable employment.

Ms Matharu, who has previously worked for the Skills Funding Agency and the Open University, will initially focus on building relationships with the seven mayoral combined authorities and the GLA.

She will also work closely with AELP’s restructured four regional member networks covering over 40 local provider networks.

“With her sector experience and policy expertise, Harminder Matharu will spearhead our drive to build and develop relationships with the combined authorities so that high-quality skills providers of all types are



Harminder Matharu

given the opportunity to deliver on each mayor’s priorities,” Mr Dawe said.

Ms Matharu said it was “really exciting to be the first to take senior responsibility within AELP for the devolution agenda”.

“I have a real appreciation and understanding of the challenges that both the combined authority officials and providers face, so I look forward to finding much common ground in taking forward the mayoral priorities.”

Nursing degree apprenticeships warning

The NHS will not meet its apprentice recruitment target unless nursing degree apprenticeships are given special treatment, an influential group of MPs has warned.

The education select committee’s report, ‘Nursing degree apprenticeships – in poor health’, based on its inquiry over the summer, was published this week.

It highlighted a series of obstacles to the delivery of high numbers of

nursing degree apprenticeships – including the greater off-the-job training requirement for nursing students, and the additional costs of apprentices’ salaries as well as ‘backfill’ for the time spent off-the-job.

The report recommends that the funding band for the level six standard should be kept at £27,000 – currently the highest funding band – or even increased in the future.

Apprenticeship starts down 24% on last year

Apprenticeship numbers fell by almost a quarter last year compared to the year before, according to final figures published by the Department for Education on Thursday.

There were 375,800 apprenticeship starts in 2017/18, a drop of 118,600 – or 24 per cent – on 2016/17’s total of 494,400, and a decrease of 26 per cent on the

2015/16 figure of 509,400.

Overall participation also fell to 814,800, compared with 908,700 in 2016/17 and 899,400 in 2015/16 – decreases of 10.3 and 9.4 per cent respectively.

Starts at level two showed the biggest year-on-year drop, from 260,700 in 2016/17 to 161,400 in 2017/18, which represents a fall of 38 per cent.

The next 7 T-levels to be taught from 2021

The programmes to be taught in wave two of the government’s T-level roll-out have been revealed.

Qualifications in health, healthcare science, science, onsite construction, building services and engineering, digital support and services and digital business services are to be taught from 2021.

The Department for Education also revealed that that T-levels will be allocated UCAS tariff points,

with each programme carrying the same points as three A-levels.

The department said that by awarding UCAS points to T-levels, young people, parents and employers will “know they are as stretching as their academic equivalents and will act as a stepping stone to progress to the next level whether that is a degree, higher level technical training or an apprenticeship”.

DfE urgently seeks answers to why level two apprenticeships fell by 38%

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The Department for Education is urgently seeking to “improve understanding” of what is behind the drop in level two apprenticeships, as the latest statistics show numbers have fallen by more than a third in the space of a year.

There were just 161,400 starts at level two in 2017/18, according to the final apprenticeship figures for the year, published on Thursday – down from 260,700 in 2016/17.

The proportion of overall starts at level two has also fallen to its lowest level yet – from a high of 65 per cent in 2013/14 down to 43 per cent in 2017/18.

It follows the DfE’s publication on

Wednesday of a call for expressions of interest to carry out research to “improve understanding of the causes and effects of changes to the number of apprenticeship starts at level two”, with a deadline of December 18 – suggesting the department is concerned about the fall.

“Level two starts are now the biggest issue we face,” said Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

“We want apprenticeships to grow at all levels, but major mistakes in the implementation of the levy have resulted in a serious undermining of the government’s social-mobility agenda,” he said.

“The crash in number of opportunities for level two and for young people are simply disastrous when the onus is now on us to train up our own homegrown talent”

Earlier this week Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman hit out at the rise in “existing graduate schemes” being “rebadged as apprenticeships”, at the expense of the “third of students who leave school without a full level two”.

And skills minister Anne Milton admitted she will look at whether the government should continue to fund all apprenticeships, after *FE Week* exclusively reported that the apprenticeships budget is set to be overspent by £500 million this year – thanks in large part to the growing

number of expensive management apprenticeship starts.

According to the call for expressions of interest, the fall in apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 compared with previous years “has been greatest at level two”.

Analysis of data shows the decrease is “most pronounced in four sector subject areas: business, administration and law; health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprise; and engineering and manufacturing technologies”.

“New research is required to inform the department’s understanding of the factors affecting changes to apprenticeship starts at level two and

the interplay with starts at level three, and to inform the policy response to this change,” it said.

Among the aims of the project are to “explore whether lessons can be learned from exceptions to the overall trend” such as where employers within the four subject areas “are in fact increasing level two starts”, and to “identify possible policy responses to the overall change in numbers of level two starts”.

Starts at level three have also been falling, but not as quickly as at level two, according to this week’s statistics.

There were 166,200 starts at this level in 2017/18, a fall of 16 per cent on last year’s figures.

But starts on advanced-level apprenticeships – those at level four or above – rose by almost a third, from 36,600 to 48,200.

The DfE was approached for a comment.



Mark Dawe

News

Skills minister will 'look at whether it is right to fund all apprenticeships'

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The skills minister has said she will "look at whether it is right" for the government to "continue to fund all apprenticeships".

Anne Milton made the remarks during an interview with the Association of Colleges' boss David Hughes on Tuesday, after she was unable to stay for questions at the association's annual conference last month.

In the wide-ranging video interview, Ms Milton also said the government must properly fund T-levels and needed to "look closely" before allowing new sixth forms to open, and stressed the importance of strong governance in colleges.

On funding apprenticeships, she said: "We will need to look ahead, when the system is really running well – and I think we're nearly at that stage – when we need to look at do we continue to fund apprenticeships for people who are already in work, people doing second degrees.

"We now need to look at whether it is right to continue to fund all apprenticeships, particularly at the sort of levels that we're talking about."

This week, FE Week revealed the apprenticeships budget could be overspent by £500 million this year alone, largely because of the surge in people doing expensive management apprenticeships.

And Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman raised concerns about levy funds being spent on higher-level apprenticeships at the expense of young

people on lower levels, during Tuesday's annual report launch.

"Levy funding is, in many cases, falling far short of the intended spirit of the policy. In some cases we're seeing levy funding subsidising repackaged graduate schemes and MBAs that just don't need it," she said.

Ms Milton was responding to a question from Mr Hughes specifically about the points raised by Ms Spielman on "degree apprenticeships, apprenticeship for people who are already in work, people who are in decent jobs, doing an MBA".

She acknowledged that such courses "cost a lot of money".

"We are now starting to look at the future of the apprenticeship levy. I think business might see that as a signal that we're going to change it, and I think that's extremely unlikely," she said.

"Do we continue to fund apprenticeships for people already in work?"

"I think in the first stages it was not unreasonable to have a very open system, taking money off business, as long as it's an apprenticeship, 20 per cent off the job, lasts for more than a year, ticks all our boxes, you can do it," she said.

The apprenticeships system "should be about that second, third, fourth



Anne Milton being interviewed by David Hughes

chance" and "it's also got to be about progression" – particularly in sectors where "people do a level two and stop there".

"We want to increase their aspiration, that they could do a level three and critically a level four where we have traditionally been weak in this country.

"We're looking at it all at the moment. I don't want to set any hares running," Ms Milton said.

Ms Milton was also asked about the likely fate of school sixth forms, about 60 per cent of which have fewer than 200 students.

She said she had been "working very closely" with academies minister Theodore Agnew on the subject, and added: "My view is we need to look much more closely when we give

permission for sixth forms to open, when we open free schools, when we create UTCs.

"Anybody that would be in competition for existing institutions. Because oversupplying means that somebody's going to lose out. There's a very, very fine balance between good, healthy competition and undermining existing provision."

Ms Milton also said she believed that most principals and governing bodies of colleges are "brilliant", but said boards and non executive director bodies play an important role.

"Nobody can deny that it's not excellent everywhere. What I want is every college to be excellent," she said.

"Which is why you need very good governing bodies who can really support

the staff in making those decisions. That's why everyone on a governing body needs to have a clear role and know what they're doing.

"When colleges don't do well and run into financial problems, it's certainly almost never down to being reckless. It's often down to a real desire to be ambitious for the college but without adequate financial scrutiny."

On the subject of industry placements in T-levels, Ms Milton said colleges will need to be "properly resourced" so they can develop a team who will manage relationships with local employers.

"It's really important we do properly fund those," she said.

"If it's a centrepiece of government policy then you've got to put money behind those words."

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IfA warns of imminent overspend on apprenticeships

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The apprenticeships budget for England is set to be overspent by £500 million this year, rising to £1.5 billion during 2021/22, according to the government agency for apprenticeships.

Robert Nitsch, the Institute for Apprenticeships' chief operating officer, presented the figures at an event for employers held at Exeter College last Friday.

The revelation has prompted widespread concern across the sector but, despite repeated requests, the institute has refused to share the slides from Mr Nitsch's presentation.

Gordon Marsden, shadow skills minister, said the secrecy was "disappointing" and "undermines what I imagine was the purpose of the exercise which was to reassure stakeholders and employers".

He vowed to write to the IfA to ask them to share the information – and "fairly sharply" to the skills minister Anne Milton, if it transpired that the Department for Education was behind the concealment.

According to Mr Nitsch's slide, the yearly cost of starts this year will be £500 million higher than the £2.2 billion budget in 2018/19.

By 2020/21 the shortfall is set to rise to £1.5 billion, with costs rising to £4.1 billion against a budget of £2.6 billion.

This is the first warning sign that levy funds are set to be overspent rather than underspent.

The problem – which comes despite the volume of starts dipping – is understood to be the result of higher per-start funding than first predicted, largely driven by the sharp rise in management apprenticeships with high prices.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, has demanded an "open debate on how the levy operates" following this revelation.

"At last it slips out into the open what we have been anticipating for months and what we predicted from the start: that more higher-level expensive apprenticeships are consuming the bulk of the levy," he told FE Week.

"We are now heading to a situation where there will be no money left for SME employers when the government is launching a £5 million promotion

campaign to the very same group."

Mr Dawe's Association of Colleges counterpart, David Hughes, praised the IfA for being "open and transparent" in initially sharing the projected spend against current budget.

But he added: "It confirms what we believe, that at some point there will need to be rationing by either number or price or both."

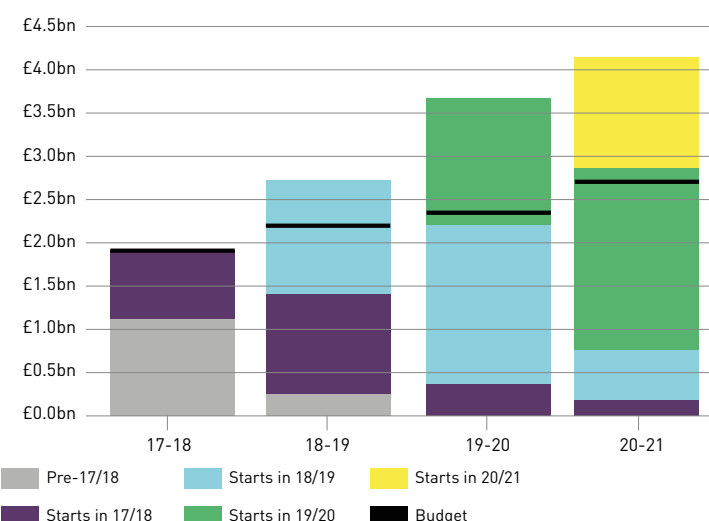
He urged both the IfA and the DfE "to come forward quickly with the range of proposals that will be needed in order to remain within budget".

The IfA told FE Week that the slide highlighted that there is currently no unspent levy, and that – if apprenticeship numbers continue to rise – there could be a situation in the future where levy contributions may be insufficient to cover the full cost of apprenticeships.

It also said that both Sir Gerry Berragan, the IfA's chief executive, and skills minister Anne Milton had referred to this overspend before – although it is not clear when.

FE Week reported in November that employers had used just under 14 per cent of their levy funds to date, with £370 million out of a total £2.7 billion drawn down.

Yearly cost of starts by year of start, 17/18-20/21



(Source: Institute for Apprenticeships)

But this draw-down by employers is just one of a number of costs that levy funds need to cover.

Other expenses include funding apprenticeships for small, non-levy paying employers, English and maths qualifications, incentive payments for 16- to 18-year-old apprentices, and extra support for apprentices who are care leavers or have special needs.

FE Week asked the DfE last month how much of the levy pot has so far

been used on these different areas, but it refused to say.

FE Week was first to warn of the "unstoppable rise" of management apprenticeships in 2016, and last month reported that just 10 management standards were responsible for a fifth of all apprenticeship starts on standards, according to provisional data for 2017/18.

The proportion has grown over the years, from nine per cent in 2015/16 and 15 per cent in 2016/17.

Damian Hinds reacts to concerns that spend on apprenticeships is soaring

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The education secretary didn't deny that the apprenticeships budget is heading for a £500 million overspend this year, when he was quizzed about it by FE Week.

Damian Hinds was asked whether he acknowledged the Institute for Apprenticeships' concern, revealed in a presentation by its chief operating officer Robert Nitsch last week, that "we are heading into an overspend" on the budget.

"In my line of work it is a daily discipline looking at budgets and how you are managing them and how you make sure they are working," Mr Hinds said in response.

"The sorts of things you're talking about can only be projections," he added.

"I didn't write the presentation that you're referring to so I can't

really comment on it further, but we will obviously be continuing to manage our budget across all areas while continuing to make sure that we are supporting the growth of the apprenticeship scheme."

According to the figures, which were presented during an employer engagement event at Exeter College on Friday, the cost of starts in 2018/19 is projected to be £500 million higher than the £2.2 billion budget for the year.

By 2020/21 the shortfall is set to rise to £1.5 billion, with costs rising to £4.1 billion against a budget of £2.6 billion.

The Department for Education has so far not commented on the figures, beyond calling them "inaccurate".

But on Tuesday, skills minister

Anne Milton said she will "look at whether it is right to continue to fund all apprenticeships" – particularly "for people who are already in work, people doing second degrees".

The rise in these high-level, high-cost apprenticeships, including management degree apprenticeships, is understood to be behind the budgetary pressure.

The IfA itself told FE Week the slide at the presentation was intended to show that levy contributions

may not be enough to cover the full cost of apprenticeships if numbers continue to rise.

It said that both its chief executive, Sir Gerry Berragan, and Ms Milton had both referred to this overspend before, although it is not clear when.



Damian Hinds

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News

DfE to consult on level four and five T-levels for introduction in 2022

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The government is going to build a “new generation” of higher technical qualifications at levels four and five for T-level students to progress on to, the education secretary has announced.

A consultation on the qualifications, which will be an alternative to degrees and apprenticeships for mostly 18-year-olds, will be launched early next year with an introduction date set for 2022.

Damian Hinds made the commitment during a speech about ending “snobbery” over technical education, in which he also announced reforms to student-destination measures and the next seven T-level programmes, to be taught from 2021.

FE Week understands that the higher T-levels will be developed using the suite of existing level four and five technical qualifications currently funded through advance learner loans, as well as the creation of some completely new qualifications.

The funding for these is expected to be detailed in Philip Augar’s post-18 education review, which is delayed while the Office for National Statistics decides whether student loans should appear in the government’s deficit figures, but is expected to be concluded in early 2019.

The introduction date of 2022 has

been set to fit with the first cohort of T-level students, who will start their two-year level three qualification in 2020.

The process will be overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Mr Hinds said: “I mentioned that level four/five doesn’t mean a lot to most of us... I want us to start calling these courses what they are: higher technical qualifications...and develop clear national recognition.

“Ensuring these qualifications are clearly badged and easy to recognise, meaning that employers are able to start looking for them on CVs and application forms, and advertising for them when recruiting to jobs at that level.”

He added: “I expect higher training to be offered by high-performing colleges and universities, alongside our National Colleges focused on specific industries such as high speed rail and nuclear. And by the new Institutes of Technology we’re establishing across the country, which will specialise in delivering higher technical training.”

The Association of Colleges asked for new higher technical qualifications to be developed in a post-18 education policy paper, published in September.

Its boss, David Hughes, welcomed Mr Hinds’ announcement.

“The secretary of state is correct; educational snobbery exists throughout all strands of society – especially amongst decision-makers and opinion-



Damian Hinds

formers – and it has led to educational ignorance around non-academic routes to work,” he said.

“This renewed focus on higher technical education, and the push for greater awareness and respect, can only be good for industry, good for the economy and good for the country.”

Mr Hinds also announced in his speech that his department will start including data on the number of students that schools and colleges send on to higher-level apprenticeships.

The change to performance tables will see apprenticeships at level four or above count towards a school or college’s score for the proportion of students who go on to higher education after their A-levels.

At present, pupil-destinations data presented in online league tables shows the number and proportion of students who go on to higher education at university but not via an apprenticeship.

Speaking to business leaders at Battersea Power Station on Thursday, Mr

Hinds warned that as a nation we have become “technical-education snobs”.

“We’ve revered the academic but treated vocational as second class – when we do it well, law, engineering, medicine – then we don’t even call it vocational,” said.

“Why has this has been tolerated for so long? I think the reason is the ‘OPC’ problem. For so many opinion-formers, commentators and, yes, politicians: vocational courses are for ‘other people’s children.’”

Education secretary disagrees with Ofsted on blaming colleges for ‘false hope’ job prospects

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Damian Hinds has said he would “not blame colleges at all” in the way that Amanda Spielman did for putting students on courses such as arts and media which have slim job prospects.

The chief inspector told the Association of Colleges conference last month that there is a “mismatch” between the numbers of students taking the courses and their “future employment in the industry”.

She went on to say this was giving learners “false hope” and questioned whether some colleges are chasing

income over students’ best interests, a view AoC boss David Hughes agreed with but that “incensed” many others in the FE sector.

It also caused a media furore, making headlines in The Guardian, The Times and the Daily Mail. A theatre newspaper and website, The Stage, even launched a poll asking readers whether or not they agreed with Ms Spielman’s comments, in which 1,327 people voted “no” and 385 voted “yes”, which prompted Ofsted to write a blog about the situation.

Education secretary Damian Hinds was delivering a speech about ending “snobbery” over technical education this week, and appeared to make

similar remarks to Ms Spielman.

“Right now, we have a training market that is driven by the choices colleges and other training providers make... For the people putting on the training there is good reason to go for cheap, popular courses that are easier to put on, easier to pass,” he said.

“We need a strategy that means both the individuals choosing their courses and the colleges putting the courses on are incentivised to develop skills that match the labour-market needs of the future... with the number of people training in proportion to the number of opportunities likely to be available.”

FE Week questioned him on this after the speech, and asked if he was

agreeing with the chief inspector that colleges have been selling students an “impossible dream”.

But the education secretary denied this.

“I’m not putting blame on colleges at all in that way but it is right that we do give young people realistic information,” he said.

“There is something of a balance between what people are going to be good at and enjoy, obviously that is an important factor in choice, but also it’s important to know where the opportunities are and where you have got a really good chance of getting into a good job which will help to give you a good standard of living and then later

on in life will help you to provide for your family.

“I do think that kind of supply-and-demand matching up and clear information for young people is vital.”

Ms Spielman’s comments followed the inspectorate’s thematic report on level two qualifications that included a graph with just 11 responses which said arts and media courses have the “least chance of progressing to employment in a relevant industry”.

Writing for FE Week last week, Debra Gray, the principal of Grimsby Institute, who spoke out during a question-and-answer session with Ms Spielman at the AoC conference, criticised the research for being based on perception not facts.

Union warns AoC risks ‘becoming irrelevant’ after another ‘insulting’ 1 per cent pay offer

BILLY CAMDEN

BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The Association of Colleges has been warned that it risks “becoming an irrelevant voice” in the FE sector after it offered staff an “insulting” one per cent pay rise again.

The University and College Union said the deal, which was presented to AoC members on Wednesday, was a “wholly inadequate” response to the pay crisis in FE which has left teaching staff being paid £7,000 less than school teachers.

Last year the AoC said it regretted only making a one per cent offer and has conceded that staff need a rise. But without additional funding from the government a larger pay rise appears not to be possible.

David Hughes, the association’s boss, said he is “deeply disappointed” that a better offer cannot be made but he “cannot recommend a completely unaffordable pay award”.

He added that his members need to “continue to focus our collective energies on pushing the government for better investment”.

The UCU said warm words were “not a substitute for fair pay” and warned this year’s repeated offer sent a “worrying signal to staff that they were not valued and that their employers were not prepared to fight their corner”.

The union pointed out that Capital City College Group has agreed a 5 per cent pay deal for over 1,700 staff, despite a large deficit, and claimed that less than half of colleges followed the AoC’s previous pay recommendation.

A walkout over pay by more than 700 UCU members caused disruption across six colleges last week – and even forced one to close for two days.

Further disruption is likely to occur in the New Year, as strike ballots opened at another 26 colleges, with a closing date of December 19.

“The offer will annoy staff who need their employers to be fighting their corner as the pay gap between them

and school teachers widens further,” said UCU head of policy and campaigns Matt Waddup.

“It is not right that staff at one college can receive a five per cent increase while their colleagues down the road get nothing for doing the same work.

“The AoC cannot continue to believe that warm words are a substitute for fair pay and they risk becoming an irrelevance.

“This offer increases the likelihood of more waves of strikes after Christmas and puts the ball firmly in the court of colleges who are prepared to follow CCCG’s lead and actually do something to tackle the pay crisis in further education.”

An AoC email to members, seen by FE Week, said the association “firmly believes” that college staff should be awarded a 3.5 per cent pay increase to at least match the school teacher pay award.

“However, due to the continued chronic underinvestment in the sector this is currently not an option,” it added.



Mr Hughes said: “Every college leader wants to pay a fair salary to be able to recruit, reward and retain the best people.

“Colleges have been overlooked and underfunded for far too long. That’s why we are working in closer

partnership than ever before with our union colleagues – including UCU.”

The UCU and AoC came together in October for a national Love Our Colleges campaign, which demanded further investment in FE in the upcoming spending review.

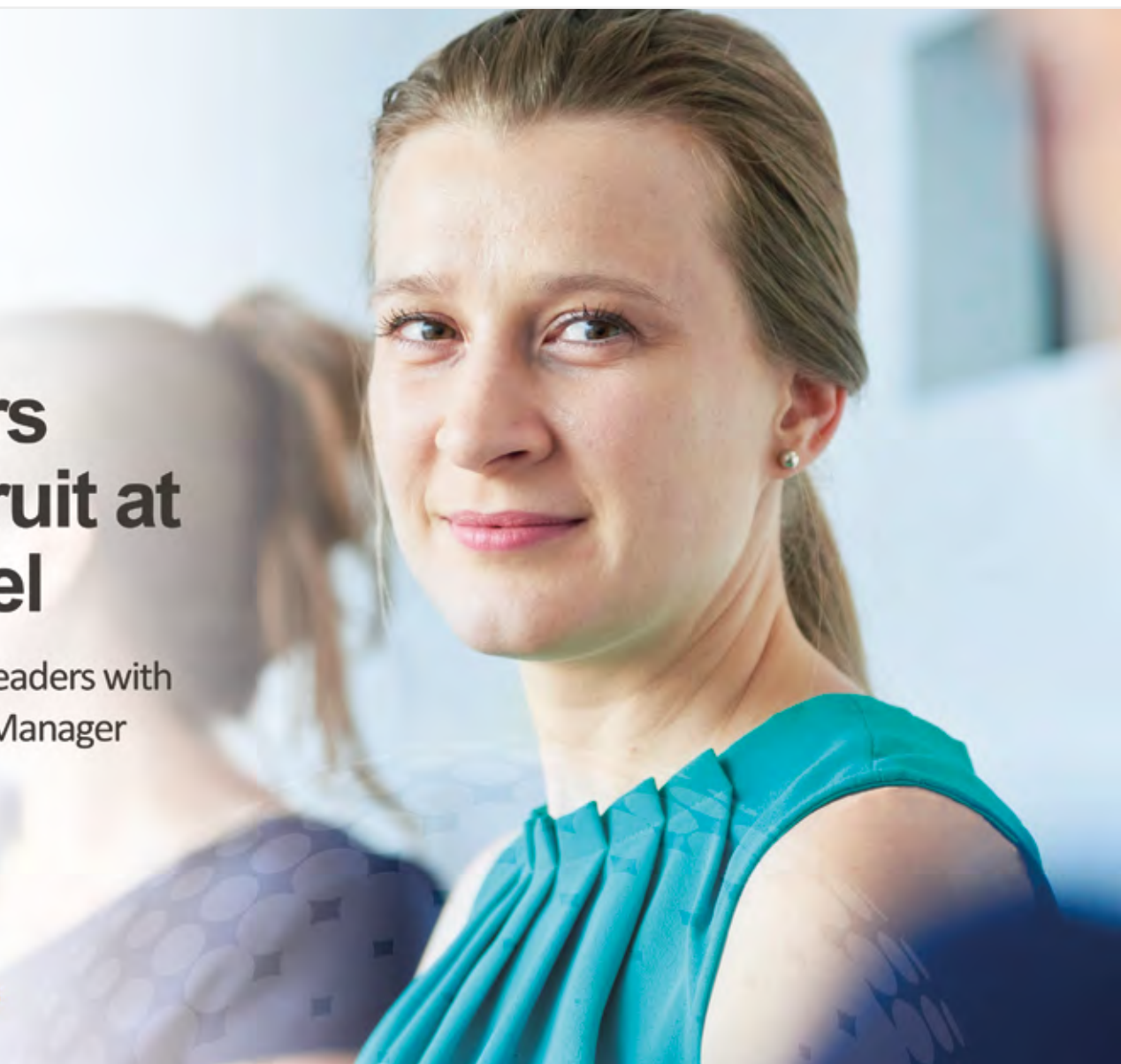


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News

Ofsted annual report warns apprenticeship levy is being spent on graduate scheme rebadging

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Amanda Spielman has amplified Ofsted's concern that too much apprenticeship-levy funding is being spent on higher levels, which is squeezing out the recruitment of young people on to lower-level programmes.

The chief inspector raised the issue in her second annual report, published on Tuesday.

"We are concerned that in many cases, levy money is not being spent in the intended way," she wrote.

"We have seen examples where existing graduate schemes are in essence being rebadged as apprenticeships. This might meet the rules of the levy policy, but it falls well short of its spirit.

"We hope the government will give greater thought as to how levy money can be better directed at addressing skills shortages."

Her concerns followed *FE Week's* exclusive which revealed the Institute for Apprenticeships is expecting an imminent levy overspend, understood to be the result of higher per-start funding than first predicted, largely driven by the sharp rise in management apprenticeships with high prices.

Ms Spielman said that along with the "sudden expansion in the number of providers offering apprenticeships", the inspectorate "continues to be concerned about access to apprenticeships for the third of students who leave school without a full level two".

The number of under-19s starting an apprenticeship has been in decline for the last two years, falling from 78,500 last year to 62,000 this year alone.

"In contrast, the number of learners starting a higher apprenticeship has been growing year-on-year since 2011/12, increasing by around 10,000 apprentices a year for the past four years," the chief inspector said.

She added that while Ofsted does "welcome" more apprenticeships at higher levels, "particularly when there is clear progression in an occupation from level two to degree level", it will not address skills shortages in England if they are undertaken at the expense of getting young people on to the programmes.

Ms Spielman's fresh criticism follows her annual report from last year which first raised the issue.

"Most apprenticeships being delivered in 2016/17 were at levels two and three, yet over a third of the standards ready for delivery were at level four and above," it said

"If this trend continues, there will

not be enough approved standards at levels two and three. This could have a detrimental impact on the recruitment of 16- to 18-year-olds into apprenticeships."

FE Week was first to warn of the "unstoppable rise" of management apprenticeships in 2016, and last month reported that just 10 management standards were responsible for a fifth of all apprenticeship starts on standards, according to provisional data for 2017/18.

The proportion has grown over the years, from nine per cent in 2015/16 and 15 per cent in 2016/17.

As a result it looks as if the apprenticeships budget for England is set to be overspent by £500 million this year, rising to £1.5 billion during 2021/22, according to figures from the IfA.

David Hughes, the chief executive of the Association of Colleges, echoed Ms Spielman's concerns.

"There's some really interesting stuff about apprenticeships and how the levy seems to be being used a lot for people who are already in work, in management positions, for higher-level and degree apprenticeships," he said.

"I'm really worried about that – as Ofsted is – because we really must make sure apprenticeships are



particularly for young people entering the labour market.

"That's what the spirit is all about, rather than giving people who are already privileged in the system more skills that probably would have been funded differently by employers in the past."

And Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said he is a "big supporter" of apprenticeships at all

levels but "the level two and threes are the most important and that is where government money should be focused".

The Department for Education would not comment directly on the chief inspector's concerns, but said: "Our apprenticeship reforms, the largest government has ever made, have put control back into the hands of employers so they will gain the skilled workforce they need to compete globally."

Joyce: Apprenticeship quality remains a 'mixed picture'

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

In July the prime minister claimed that apprenticeship quality had risen since the introduction of the levy and standards – even though Ofsted had found the reverse.

Five months on from Theresa May's comments in parliament, *FE Week* editor Nick Linford asked Paul Joyce (pictured), Ofsted deputy director for FE and skills, if things have improved.

"There is certainly a distinction between experienced and existing providers and new providers entering the market," Mr Joyce said.

In the case of existing providers he said the inspectorate was "seeing already" a "mixed picture, where some of those existing providers are changing, have changed their delivery model and approach and are adapting to the standards as opposed

to frameworks" while "some still have a way to go".

For other existing providers it was "a bit early for us to say" as some "who were 'good' or 'outstanding' would have been inspected under frameworks and older arrangements" – but he said Ofsted will "start to inspect those good or outstanding providers under the standards" in the "coming year or years".

The picture for new providers was somewhat different, however.

The proportion of independent training

providers to be rated 'good' or 'outstanding' fell by three percentage points this year, from 81 to 78 per cent, and Mr Joyce said "some of the decline" can be "attributed to relatively new providers being inspected for the first time".

In May Mr Joyce raised concerns about a "Train to Gain-type programme being badged as an apprenticeship", referring to the doomed training initiative from the 00s which gave money to highly profitable employers to train their staff when they were already willing to pick up the bill.

He told *FE Week* that those fears remained.

The fact that "between a quarter and a fifth of providers" had been found to be making insufficient progress in apprenticeship

early monitoring visits was a sign that the "fundamental basics aren't in place" – whether that is "staff not in place, training plans not in place, apprentices not knowing they're on an apprenticeship, sequencing of learning not in place".

"That has got to be a worry for everybody," he said.

But he wouldn't be drawn on whether there should be a minimum size for providers to be allowed to deliver publicly-funded apprenticeships, given the requirements of the programme.

"My view is that if you're going to go into the market you need to understand what you're going in to and need to make sure you are going to put in place the requirements," he said.

"Size and capacity" are factors in "some cases" and "you do need a certain infrastructure, a certain level of experience and expertise to be able

to deliver a quality service".

"That is what providers need to make sure they have in place" but "what that right size is will depend on individuals", he said.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency is set to introduce a redesigned register of apprenticeship providers next week, which will require providers to give more evidence of experience.

FE Week asked if that area will be subject to a similar stronger focus under Ofsted's new inspection framework, due to be launched next year.

Mr Joyce said he welcomed the "strengthening of the register".

"Certainly in our new framework, as with the monitoring visits, we are going to be paying more attention to whether those building blocks and foundations for a good curriculum, training and apprenticeship offer are in place," he said.



Sector leaders respond to annual report



David Hughes, Chief executive, Association of Colleges

It's not been a bad year for colleges in terms of improving the picture on quality: 76 per cent are rated at least good.

The interesting observations?

Perhaps top of the list is how explicitly the chief inspector describes the negative impact of inadequate funding. She points out all the issues we have been campaigning on – how it makes governance and leadership so much harder, how teaching time and resources are being cut and how student choice, support and breadth of offer are worsening.

I liked too the focus on apprenticeships that meet the letter of the rules, but perhaps fall foul of meeting the spirit of the apprenticeship levy. Management and degree apprenticeships for the highest achieving young people don't feel like a priority when SMEs are denied apprenticeship funding because of non-levy cash restrictions. It's great to see Ofsted recognising that.

I'm also struck at how much Ofsted recognises that FE is a rapidly changing policy environment. T-levels are set for 2020; the way apprenticeships are funded has changed since the introduction of the levy; and college mergers are becoming increasingly common. Dealing with these can sometimes hinder leadership and management.

Finally, I was pleased to see the focus on where our future leaders will emerge from.

So all in all, it was a nice calm morning of sensible observations. Amanda Spielman has a great knack of setting out clear, stark statements based on evidence, which tend to cut through all sorts of sacred cows and sensitivities.



Sue Pember, Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX

This report highlights how successful our community learning and skills providers are. They are the hidden gems

of the adult education system.

Annually they educate more than 650,000 learners, concentrating on working with those furthest from the workplace and/or at risk of being isolated from society. Even in the face of a 40 per cent funding decrease over the past ten years, community education services have proved their worth, their ability to provide quality provision and to remain in budget.

Adult learning providers want to support their local learners and are hoping the post-18 review of funding will recognise that a static funding system based on historical allocation is no longer appropriate.

We need a responsive funding system that recognises providers who perform well and deliver what learners want. As the inspectorate has highlighted, most of these community services are in local authorities and therefore find it easy to work with other services, such as housing and health.

Their students often have the greatest challenges. Learning often takes place in primary schools, church halls, libraries and community centres and, because many of the services are not concentrated around one site, they can quickly respond to specific community needs.

The chief inspector's report highlights the effectiveness and ability of community education services. The time is now right for the post-18 funding review to recommend a rebalancing of the post-18 spend, and to invest in those adults most in need of upskilling.



Mark Dawe, Chief executive, AELP

There is general agreement that the introduction of standards has been a positive development – with the proviso

that they are appropriately funded, especially in key sectors post-Brexit. So the chief inspector is right to air concerns over the fall in apprenticeships for 16 to 18-year-olds and at level 2.

The fact that nearly four out of five independent training providers (ITPs) are still delivering good or outstanding provision is testament to how hard they have worked to meet the higher expectations, and how well they have responded to employers' demands.

Previous ministers were keen to open up the apprenticeship market and this led to the government being far too loose in establishing the register of apprenticeship training providers. A third of those on the register have still not delivered a single apprenticeship after 12 months, and Ofsted now reveals that of the 42 providers found to be requiring improvement or inadequate this year, 30 were new ITPs. The register's refresh, which starts next week, is a chance to sort things out.

Ofsted is pleased that subcontracting is decreasing, but continues to find some poor practice. Success rests mostly on good management on the part of the lead contractor, which results from a good governance structure.

The chief inspector expressed doubts about the wisdom of the government continuing with compulsory GCSE resits for English and maths. Young people should have the choice to do functional skills instead, but ministers can't expect good provision at half the classroom funding rate.

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Apprenticeship funding

Rates for 21 standards cut in wave 1

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The popular chartered manager degree apprenticeship standard will have its funding slashed by £5,000, the Institute for Apprenticeships has confirmed.

The results of the IfA's controversial review of another 17 standards have been released, and they spell bad news for the popular management

apprenticeships and the employer groups who had joined forces to appeal any funding cuts.

The chartered manager degree apprenticeship standard will see its funding fall 18 per cent from £27,000 to £22,000 on March 4.

The operations/departmental manager will lose £2,000 in funding, falling 22 per cent from £9,000 to £7,000, while the ever-popular team leader/supervisor standard will drop 10

per cent, from £5,000 to £4,500.

The employer group behind all three management apprenticeship standards, led by the Chartered Management Institute, launched an appeal to overturn plans to slash the funding bands.

However, Thursday's announcement shows this did not succeed.

Rob Wall, head of policy at the CMI, said the cuts are "another nail in the coffin of an employer-led skills system".

He said the reduction in funding "will

damage the market for management apprenticeships, stall critical investment in management development and undermine efforts to boost UK productivity".

"The more intensive programmes that support young people and drive social mobility will be the hardest hit," he added.

Another popular management apprenticeship, the level four associate project management standard, will have

its funding cut by a third from £9,000 to £6,000 despite a campaign from the Association for Project Management against the cut.

Debbie Dore, chief executive of the Association for Project Management, warned the cut to the associate project management standard would lead to "the end of this high-quality offering" and described it as a "profoundly disappointing development".

"The employers group for this apprenticeship standard has been clear that a quality offering could not be delivered at this reduced price and we expect that most employers and providers will now withdraw.

"What makes this decision more perplexing is that this apprenticeship has been increasingly popular and successful with employers in the public and private sectors alike. Apprenticeships are supposed to be employer-led, yet in this case the views of employers have been completely disregarded."

A spokesperson for the IfA said the priority was to ensure standards "have the appropriate funding band to support high-quality delivery and provide value for money for employers and the taxpayer, whilst ensuring consistency in the way older and newer standards are funded".

"Throughout the process, we have worked collaboratively with trailblazers to ensure the review was carried out in an open way and have worked hard to resolve any concerns about changes to funding levels," he added.

The announcement, made on Thursday, follows 12 changes announced in October. Of the standards announced so far, 21 are set to receive reduced funding.

Two standards will get big increases. The aviation ground specialist standard will have its funding doubled, from £3,000 to £6,000, while the senior healthcare support worker standard will rise from £3,000 to £5,000.

Six standards will not see any change to their funding, and two – digital technology solutions professional and motor vehicle service and maintenance technician – have not yet had a decision made on their fate. The IfA announced in May it would look at the funding given to 31 standards, at the request of the Department for Education.

At the time, FE Week analysis showed that 21 of the 30 standards with the most starts in 2017/18 being reviewed.

Funding band review changes in wave 1

Standard Name	Level	Months	Original cap	New cap	Change	Implementation date	
Chartered Surveyor (Degree)	6	60	£27,000	£27,000	£0	0%	n/a
Engineering Technician*	3	42	£27,000	£26,000	£-1,000	-4%	04-Mar-19
Maintenance and Operations Engineering Technician*	3	36	£27,000	£26,000	£-1,000	-4%	04-Mar-19
Power Network Craftsperson*	3	30	£27,000	£26,000	£-1,000	-4%	04-Mar-19
Rail Engineering technician	3	36	£27,000	£24,000	£-3,000	-11%	01-Jan-19
Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship*	6	48	£27,000	£22,000	£-5,000	-19%	04-Mar-19
Software Developer*	4	24	£18,000	£18,000	£0	0%	n/a
Installation/Maintenance Electrician*	3	42	£18,000	£18,000	£0	0%	n/a
Network Engineer*	4	24	£18,000	£17,000	£-1,000	-6%	04-Mar-19
Bespoke Tailor and Cutter	5	24	£15,000	£15,000	£0	0%	n/a
Infrastructure Technician*	3	12	£15,000	£15,000	£0	0%	n/a
Healthcare Assistant Practitioner	5	18	£12,000	£12,000	£0	0%	n/a
Digital Marketer*	3	18	£12,000	£11,000	£-1,000	-8%	04-Mar-19
Dual Fuel Smart Meter Installer	2	14	£12,000	£10,000	£-2,000	-17%	01-Jan-19
Assistant Accountant	3	18	£9,000	£8,000	£-1,000	-11%	01-Jan-19
Paralegal*	3	24	£9,000	£8,000	£-1,000	-11%	04-Mar-19
Professional Accounting Taxation Technician*	4	18	£9,000	£8,000	£-1,000	-11%	04-Mar-19
Commis Chef*	2	12	£9,000	£8,000	£-1,000	-11%	04-Mar-19
Hair Professional	2	24	£9,000	£7,000	£-2,000	-22%	01-Jan-19
Insurance Practitioner	3	12	£9,000	£7,000	£-2,000	-22%	01-Jan-19
Operations/Departmental Manager*	5	30	£9,000	£7,000	£-2,000	-22%	04-Mar-19
Dental Nurse	3	18	£9,000	£6,000	£-3,000	-33%	01-Jan-19
Associate Project Manager*	4	24	£9,000	£6,000	£-3,000	-33%	04-Mar-19
Aviation Ground Specialist	3	18	£3,000	£6,000	£3,000	100%	06-Oct-18
Senior Healthcare Support Worker	3	18	£3,000	£5,000	£2,000	67%	06-Oct-18
Team Leader/Supervisor*	3	12	£5,000	£4,500	£-500	-10%	04-Mar-19
Retailer*	2	12	£5,000	£4,000	£-1,000	-20%	04-Mar-19
Hospitality Team Member*	2	12	£5,000	£4,000	£-1,000	-20%	04-Mar-19
Customer Service Practitioner	2	12	£4,000	£3,500	£-500	-13%	01-Jan-19
Digital and Technology Solutions Professional	6	36	£27,000	TBC			
Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician (Light Vehicle)	3	36	£18,000	TBC			

* funding bands approved by the Secretary of State for Education in late November 2018

band reviews revealed

Another 30 to be reviewed in wave 2

JUDE BURKE

JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A trailblazer group chair has warned that its “years of hard work” in developing two apprenticeship standards could be undone, after they were included in the Institute for Apprenticeships’ second funding band review.

The level two supply chain warehouse operative and large goods vehicle driver standards were among 30 standards named on the list announced by the IfA on Tuesday.

Both were approved for delivery in 2016 and have had just over 3,000 starts between them.

“It has taken years of hard work to get employers to see the benefits of these standards and just as we start to get decent numbers they review the funding,” said Colin Snape, deputy director of policy at the Road Haulage Association.

He told FE Week the group had already been through a review for the LGV standard as they had requested the funding band – currently set at £5,000 – to be increased, but this was rejected.

“So why it is up for review is beyond me,” he said.

“With my experiences of the IfA and Education and Skills Funding Agency I do not believe we will come out of this review in a good way,” he added.

Between them the 30 standards in the second funding band review were responsible for 42,675 starts in 2017/18 – or 26 per cent of the overall number of starts on standards for the year, according to provisional statistics published by the Department for Education.

They include the level two adult care worker standard, which had almost 11,000 starts in 2017/18, and the level three adult care worker standard, which had more than 8,700 starts.

Both are currently set at £3,000. FE Week asked the trailblazer group if it expected this rate to be reduced, and if it was concerned this would hit take-up as a result, but did not get a response.

A spokesperson for the IfA said the reviews will “ensure value for money for employers and taxpayers, and consistency in the way older and newer standards are funded”.

“Our aim is to make sufficient funding for apprenticeships available to as many companies as possible,” he added.

“We understand the review might be a concern to employers which is why we are working collaboratively to ensure the review is carried out in an open and fair way, and as quickly as possible.”

It comes as the outcomes for all 31 standards in the first wave of funding band reviews, announced in May, were revealed by the IfA (see page 10).

The second batch of standards includes two currently set at £27,000, meaning there is a high chance the rate will be cut as this is the highest possible rate.

Of the seven standards with the same funding band in the first review, five had their rates reduced, one is still to

be confirmed and only one stayed the same.

“It has taken years of hard work to get employers to value these standards”

FE Week has approached the trailblazer leads for both the level

three gas engineering standard and the level three engineering design and draughtsperson standard to ask if they were concerned that their funding will be slashed, but neither responded ahead of publication.

Terry Fennell, chief executive of FDQ and chair of the butchery trailblazer group, said he “wasn’t surprised” the level two standard had been included, given its £9,000 price tag and more than 500 starts so far.

The apprenticeship has “thus far attracted an even balance of non-levy and levy employers and we think there will be good evidence to back up costs of delivery, EPA and apprentice durations,”

he said.

“I am confident the funding panels will take on board the evidence available in order to reach the right decision,” he said.

The latest funding band review comes at a time when the IfA is warning of imminent apprenticeship overspend (see page 5).

Rate reviews got underway after the institute moved to having 30 funding bands – which represent the maximum rate paid for from the levy – to choose from, up from the previous 15.

The new structure gives the institute more choice regarding the rate it applies to each standard.

Funding bands to be reviewed in wave 2

Standard	Level	Current funding band	2016/17 full year final starts	2017/18 full year provisional starts	Total starts in last two years
Adult Care Worker	2	£3,000	513	10,463	10,976
Lead Adult Care Worker	3	£3,000	301	8,453	8,754
Hospitality Supervisor	3	£5,000	225	4,368	4,593
Retail Team Leader	3	£5,000	540	2,756	3,296
Healthcare Support Worker	2	£3,000	272	2,317	2,589
Supply Chain Warehouse Operative	2	£3,000	198	1,399	1,597
Financial Services Customer Adviser	2	£4,000	274	1,319	1,593
Public Service Operational Delivery Officer	3	£3,000	62	1,461	1,523
Large Goods Vehicle Driver	2	£5,000	208	1,236	1,444
Retail Manager	4	£6,000	99	965	1,064
HR Consultant / Partner	5	£9,000	0	1,019	1,019
Senior Financial Services Customer Adviser	3	£9,000	261	674	935
Associate Ambulance Practitioner	4	£15,000	219	678	897
Senior Production Chef	3	£5,000	13	773	786
HR Support	3	£5,000	0	724	724
Heavy Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician	3	£18,000	9	587	596
Butcher	2	£9,000	119	436	555
Travel Consultant	3	£9,000	89	421	510
Rail Engineering Operative	2	£12,000	73	403	476
Fire Emergency and Security Systems Technician	3	£18,000	99	314	413
Chef De Partie	3	£9,000	12	344	356
IT Technical Salesperson	3	£12,000	31	317	348
Housing/Property Management	3	£9,000	42	287	329
Water Process Technician	3	£12,000	69	250	319
Gas Engineering	3	£27,000	4	279	283
Bus and Coach Engineering Technician	3	£18,000	24	254	278
Engineering Design and Draughtsperson	3	£27,000	3	144	147
Investment Operations Administrator	2	£5,000	2	32	34
Aviation Operations Manager	4	£5,000	0	2	2
Highway Electrician / Service Operative	3	£9,000	0	0	0
TOTAL			3,761	42,675	46,436

News

The Asian Apprenticeship Awards: the winners

PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A project management apprentice and student mentor who defied his family's wish for him to go to university has been crowned apprentice of the year at the Asian Apprenticeship Awards.

Ahmed Munshi of BAE Systems, who has mentored nine school and college students alongside his work and studies, took home the top accolade at the award ceremony in Birmingham last Thursday.

Electrical and plumbing experts JTL won overall learning provider of the year. JTL has focused on attracting more women and people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities into the industry, and an impressive 80 per cent of their learners get their qualifications every year.

Mr Munshi, from Preston, is in the penultimate year of a five-year higher apprenticeship in project management which will lead to a degree and an associate management qualification.

Although his family hoped he would follow the traditional route to university, Mr Munshi was convinced a higher apprenticeship would be the perfect combination of academia and work.

In his entry, he wrote: "The apprenticeship has enabled me to improve my personal qualities, to be a more well-rounded individual, not simply from an occupation perspective. BAE Systems has helped me to become socially conscious, participating in activities that go beyond my day-to-day work life.

"I strongly believe a person should wake up in the morning with two feet on the ground and feel that they are making a difference to someone's life."

Olga Bottomley, head judge, said Mr Munshi was chosen as the winner because he had "embraced working life and his studies" and had an "incredibly strong social-responsibility ethic".

"He had to persuade his family of the wisdom of applying for an apprenticeship, and since that point he has become a fantastic ambassador for his company and apprenticeships more widely.

"He works closely with his local mosque and he mentors other young people. He is truly someone to watch as his career develops."

JTL has around 3,000 businesses in the building services engineering sector, and supports approximately 7,700 learners in four apprenticeships: electrical installation/maintenance, plumbing and domestic heating, heating and ventilating and

engineering maintenance.

Isa Mutlib, the awards' project director, said the awards were pleased to recognise JTL for the quality of their training and retention rate for black and minority ethnic apprentices.

"We hope we have encouraged more young British Asians to consider apprenticeships, and more employers to provide opportunities to benefit from the skills that apprentices bring."

The judges' choice award went to Sage UK apprentice Rumana Chaudhury. The Perinatal Institute was crowned small/medium employer of the year, and the BBC won large employer of the year.

The finance, legal and professional services category was won by BBC apprentice Marjana Uddin and Admiral Recruitment. Aspects Care topped the health, medical and social care category, alongside apprentice Muryim Bi from Well Springs Nursing Home, while Morrisons apprentice Maitam Rashid and Midcounties Co-operative won for retail, hospitality and tourism.

Walsall Council and Sonia Cardozo, from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, topped the charity, voluntary and public services category, while NG Bailey and Shaheeb Mohammed from Fortem won for construction services.



Top from left: Muryim Bi, Shaheeb Mohammed, Niraj Gurung, Sonia Cardozo
Middle from left: Maitam Rashid, Rumana Chaudhury, Mariana Uddin
Bottom: Ahmed Munshi

Mr Munshi took the prize for the engineering and manufacturing category, alongside Bombardier Transportation, while the Royal Air Force's Niraj Gurung and employer Liquid Print won the creative and digital category.

The event was sponsored by the Royal Air Force and featured Jasmine

Kundra, a contestant on this year's The Apprentice.

The Asian Apprenticeship Awards was launched in early 2016, following a report by the former Business Secretary Sajid Javid MP which set a target to increase the diversity of apprenticeships by 20 per cent by 2020.

Advanced learner loan participation falls for the first time

JUDE BURKE
JUDE@FEWEEK.CO.UK
PIPPA ALLEN-KINROSS
PIPPA@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The number of people taking out advanced learner loans last year fell by more than eight per cent – the first overall fall in number since the loans were introduced in 2013.

A total of 109,000 people took out loans in 2017/18, compared with 119,000 in 2016/17.

Participation at all ages fell, except for those aged between 19 and 23 which rose 10 per cent – from 20,400 in 2016/17 to 22,500 in 2017/18.

The number of adults aged 24 and above taking out advanced learner loans fell by 12 per cent last year – down from 98,600 to 86,500, while participation by the same age group at level three alone fell by 14 per cent.

Shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden said the figures "underline the bankruptcy" of the loans project. "We have consistently said they're

completely missing the mark because older people – those who the loans were originally aimed at to retrain and reskill – are increasingly reluctant, given their more complex life situations, to take them up," he said.

He urged the government to have a "massive rethink" on loans policy "that goes to all aspects of it, including the interest rate" that borrowers must pay.

Last year, FE Week

revealed that a massive 58 per cent of FE loans funding – amounting to almost £1 billion – had not been spent since 2013.

The shocking figure, which was discovered after a Freedom of Information request, was confirmed by the Students Loan Company, which confirmed that just £652 million in loan-funded provision had actually been delivered since 2013, against a massive £1.56

Gordon Marsden

billion in allocations.

FE 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.

However, the overall number of adults studying at levels three and four has fallen steadily since their introduction. Loan eligibility was expanded in 2016/17 to include 19- to 23-year-olds, and courses at levels five and six, but this corresponded with a reduction in the overall loans budget and a crackdown on loan growth requests.

FE Week analysis from last week revealed a massive 80 per cent of

providers that only deliver provision funded by advanced learner loans have been rated less than 'good' by Ofsted.

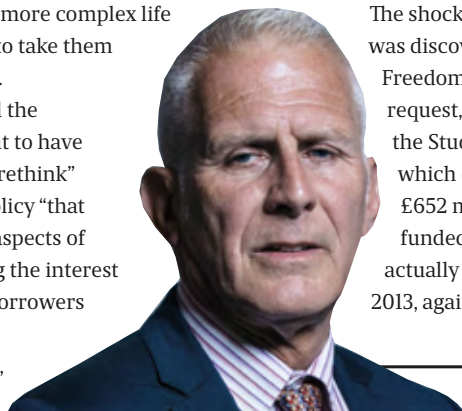
Our findings prompted Robert Halfon, chair of the influential commons select committee, to demand urgent action.

"It is shocking that so many students who are taking the risk of a loan are experiencing substandard training," he said.

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 added.

Age	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% change 16/17 to 17/18
Total Learners	59,100	75,400	95,000	119,000	109,000	-8.3%
19-23	n/a	n/a	n/a	20,400	22,500	10.2%
24-30	24,400	29,700	36,800	35,900	31,400	-12.6%
31-40	20,600	26,400	33,600	35,800	32,300	-10.0%
41-50	11,100	14,800	18,500	19,700	16,900	-14.3%
51+	3,000	4,500	6,100	7,100	6,000	-14.9%

Source: Participation with advanced learner loans (Level 3+) (2013/14 to 2017/18) by level and learner age, DfE statistics



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News

Major apprenticeship provider to Santander goes bust after Ofsted mauling

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A major new apprenticeship provider has gone bust following a scathing Ofsted monitoring report which found its directors were claiming funding for delivering little to no training.

FE Week understands the company, AMS Nationwide Ltd, had its contracts terminated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency when the findings were revealed to officials.

The private provider has now called in administrators David Rubin and Partners, and gone into voluntary liquidation.

AMS was delivering over 400 apprenticeships at the time of Ofsted's visit, including for some levy-paying employers such as the high-street bank Santander.

Inspectors were blunt in their criticism of the training on offer: "Leaders and managers do not ensure that programmes meet the requirements of levy and non-levy-

funded apprenticeships," they said.

"Most apprentices are unaware of the components of their programme and many are unsure of the planned timeframe for their apprenticeship."

Inspectors added that in "many cases", apprentices have been on programme for "three quarters or more of their planned timeframe and have completed very little work".

Learners "do not know what they need to do to meet the requirements of the programme or the end-point assessment".

Ofsted found that managers were recruiting apprentices on "inappropriate programmes".

Learners who have senior management roles, for example, were being put on customer service apprenticeships at level 2, and as a result, "fail to develop new knowledge, skills or behaviours".

"Many apprentices have been in their job roles for significant periods of time and are merely accrediting the skills that they already have rather than learning new skills," inspectors said.

AMS' directors were slammed for chasing profit while ignoring the poor delivery.

"The board of directors has met twice since AMS became a levy and non-levy-funded provider," inspectors said. "Directors focus on sales targets and finance during board meetings.

"Directors are unaware of the progress that apprentices make or the quality of the training that they receive."

Critically, they did not hold leaders to account for not having "sufficient oversight of apprentices' progress" and being "unaware of apprentices who may be at risk of not completing their programme".

Issues with off-the-job training were also raised by Ofsted.

"Where off-the-job training is recorded, the records show that the quality of the training is not high enough and is not personalised to ensure that it meets apprentices' individual needs or job roles," the report stated.

"Training advisers often complete

off-the-job training records for apprentices, and they do not record the time taken to complete the training. As a result of the weaknesses in off-the-job training, apprentices fail to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours sufficiently."

Training advisers were also criticised for not developing apprentices' English and math skills "well enough".

In a "few cases", training advisers have "poor English skills, and they mark spelling, grammar and punctuation incorrectly in apprentices' work".

Ofsted's report said AMS' managing director left in June following a "staffing restructure" in April this year, and leaders made "improvements to the planning and development of apprenticeship programmes".

The company was established in 2012 but was only accepted onto the Register of Approved Training Providers in September 2017.

Santander confirmed that AMS has gone into liquidation.

The bank told FE Week it had 32 apprentices at the time of the company

going bust, but the vast majority of them had completed their training and were due to take their end-point assessments.

It added that AMS informed the bank of its decision to go into voluntary liquidation and has been cooperative and supportive to ensure apprentices complete their final qualifications.

AMS and the liquidators, David Rubin and Partners, did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "Our priority now is to support those employers and apprentices affected to ensure they are moved to alternative high quality provision so they can successfully complete their programmes with the minimum of disruption."

AMS' damning Ofsted report was published on the same day of Ofsted's annual report for 2017/18, in which chief inspector Amanda Spielman said: "Whenever any significant new funding is injected into a sector, some unscrupulous providers will see an opportunity to make a quick profit."

National Citizen Service's rising rent spend slammed

JESS STAUFENBERG
JESS@SCHOOLSWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The government's flagship National Citizen Service trust has been slammed after its rent ballooned by more than ten-fold to over £1 million last year, following a move to new offices in west Kensington.

The trust, set up by former prime minister David Cameron as part of his "Big Society" agenda in 2011, also missed more than half of its key performance indicators last year – despite receiving £181 million from the government, annual accounts reveal.

Last year the NCS, whose providers promote four-week activity programmes to schools and colleges, was criticised by MPs for lax spending controls and poor management.

Now Meg Hillier, chair of the public accounts committee, has slammed the trust, stating it "didn't need to be based in such an expensive part of London".

West Kensington is one of the most exclusive postcodes in London, where the average house price is £1.5 million. This is nearly 150 per cent above the £600,000 average house price in

London, according to the Foxton's estate agency.

The NCS was renting school premises in north Kensington for £103,000 in 2016-17, until the school needed them back, said a spokesperson.

Its rental costs shot up to £1.1 million, according to the accounts published last month, which the trust said was down to moving to "larger premises in west Kensington". It also now leases an office in Exeter to directly manage the NCS south west programme. The spokesperson wouldn't reveal how much was spent on each site.

The trust needed to minimise attrition of staff "by choosing a location as close as possible to our previous office," said the spokesperson. The premises were negotiated below market value and were bigger because more staff were employed, they added.

But Hillier said: "That's unbelievable. They could be based anywhere."

The programme was founded on a blueprint partly designed by Jon Yates, who is now special advisor to education secretary Damian Hinds. He headed The Challenge Network, one of NCS's major providers, before joining the Department for Education this year.

Annual accounts for the year ending March 31 showed the trust missed

five of the six targets under its first objective – to increase demand to fill places and improve retention of participants.

The target for filled places was missed by 1,821, with 98,808 places filled. Only 92 per cent of participants completed the programme – a percentage point below target – and 19 per cent of signed-up pupils didn't participate in the programme – three percentage points below.

Overall, 12 out of 22 key performance

indicators were missed, albeit by slim margins.

However, the NCS met its unit cost for the programme. Set at £1,773, it came in at £1,692.

Accounts showed the number of staff rose from 104 in 2017 to 183 in 2018. The number paid more than £60,000 also rose from 18 to 48.

Kate Wood, the chief people officer, was the top-earner, being paid in the £140-145,000 bracket.

MP James Frith, who sits on the

education select committee, called for greater scrutiny of its spending on staff and premises given the failure to meet participation KPIs, and in light of the fact other youth provision is being "gutted".

An NCS spokesperson added that while they "were disappointed to narrowly miss certain targets, we were pleased to have met many including ethnic mix and special educational needs and the impact NCS has on social mobility".



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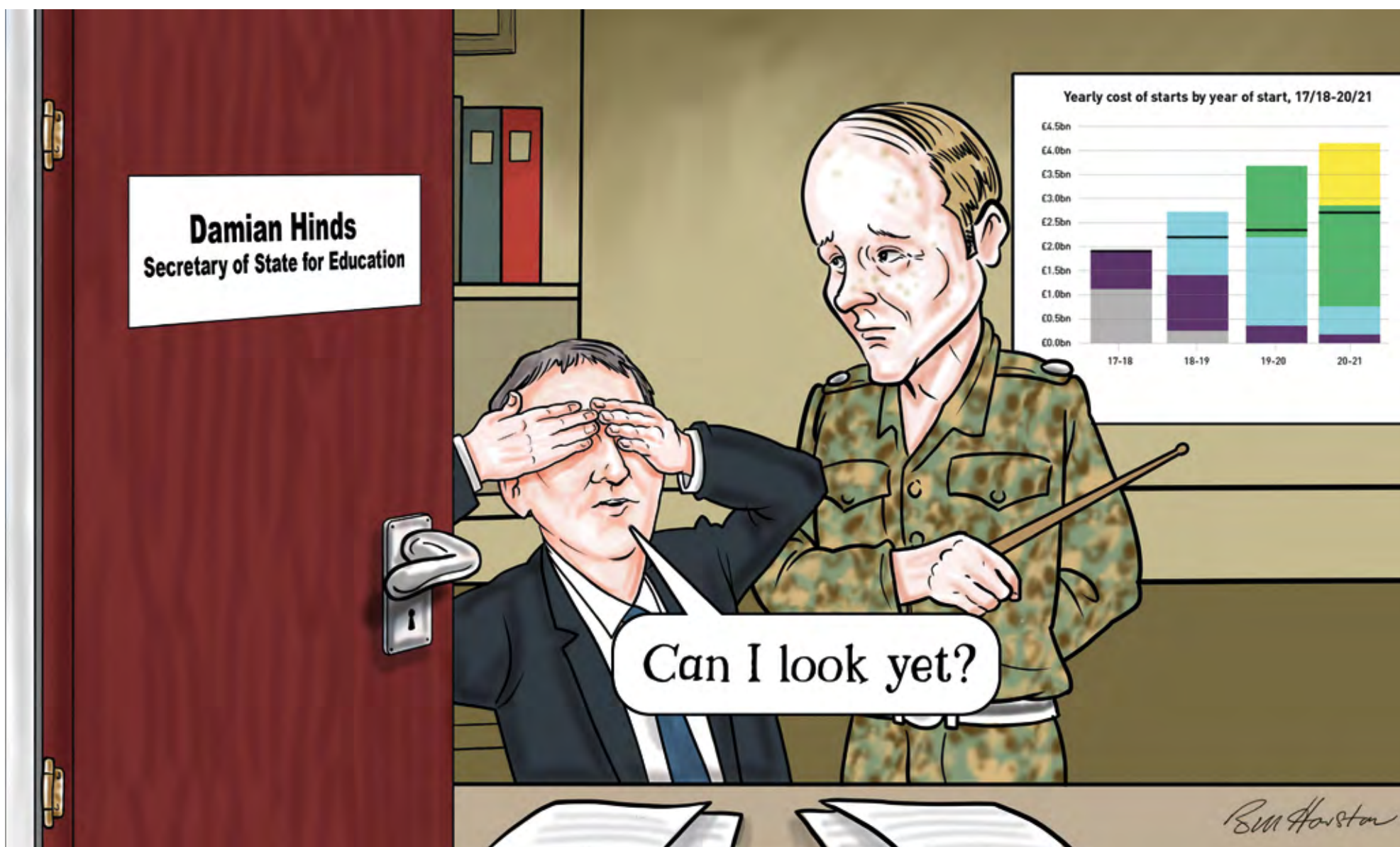
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News



AELP asks the government to listen to providers before withholding completion payments

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The AELP is urging the government to give “flexibility” to providers who make “reasonable efforts” to claim apprenticeship employer contributions, after plans to withhold completion payments for non-compliance were revealed.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency announced a clampdown on employers who fail to pay the 10 per cent co-investment fee last week.

A change to a calculation in the agency’s funding software will enforce a new rule from this month, which will see nearly 20 per cent of the total apprenticeship cash held back until employer payments are up to date.

It means that up to £4,860 of ESFA funding, 90 per cent of £5,400, would be withheld if the apprenticeship price is at the highest upper funding band of £27,000, for example.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the AELP, said his association “fully supports the policy but there needs to be flexibility where the provider makes reasonable efforts to collect the contribution and a small proportion of employers still don’t pay”.

“Nearly 20% of apprenticeship cash could be held back”

“We do find it rather incredible that even if the employer doesn’t pay the contribution, the ESFA still pays the employer the incentive payment (which can’t be netted against any outstanding contribution),” he added.

“We hope common sense will reign in the end.”

The way the agency funds providers for delivering apprenticeships training

is by paying monthly payments for 80 per cent of the negotiated price up to the funding band, but where the employer has no levy funding or it is insufficient, then co-investment must be paid, currently set at 10 per cent.

The ESFA in future will only pay the provider for the final 90 per cent of the total remaining 20 per cent, once the framework has finished or the end-point assessment has taken place and the employer has paid their 10 per cent.

Chancellor Philip Hammond announced last month that the co-investment fee will be halved to 5 per cent, but a start date for this change has still not been revealed.

The return deadline for providers to get their co-investment payments was December 6.

However, the completion payment is only being withheld until the financial

fields in the ILR show the employer has fully paid their share. Once that happens, the completion payment would be released in the next monthly funding cycle.

In a little-known monthly update for “MI managers, software writers and suppliers” published last Friday, the ESFA said: “We plan to update the apprenticeship funding calculation at R04 [Individualised

Learner Record data return deadline 6 December] to withhold any completion payments that do not meet the criteria in the funding rules.

“The rules state that co-investment due to be paid by the employer must be collected and recorded in the ILR for the completion payment to be paid.”

Additionally, the agency plans to claw back cash from providers who have not claimed the fee from employers.

“This change will also apply to any completion payments already made in the 2018 to 2019 funding year and where necessary payments will be recovered,” the ESFA said.

“We will also identify and recover any completion payments paid to providers in 2017 to 2018 funding year that were not compliant with funding rules. All adjusted payments will be made as part of the December payment run.

“Providers must ensure all co-investment is collected and recorded on the ILR in a timely manner as stated in the funding rules.”



Phillip Hammond



The Closing date for applications is Sunday 16th December 2018.
To apply for either role, please apply by completing the online application form on the Buckinghamshire College Group website. Further information on the roles, including the full job descriptions, are available on the website.

Executive Director – Curriculum Design and Planning

Salary - Range 10, £53,545.00 - £55,059.00 per annum

We are looking for an inspirational and ambitious Executive Director to join the Executive Leadership Team to oversee the design, planning and growth of vocational provision, that provides a strong line of sight to work and progression pipelines across all funding streams and market segments including Study Programmes, Adult learning, Apprenticeships, Higher Education, BEST and Full Cost Recovery.

Buckinghamshire College Group has campuses based in Aylesbury, Amersham and Wycombe serving over 7,000 learners. The College has a long term Strategic Plan (2018-2023) with a vision to provide excellent vocational and professional skills, education and training that

has a positive impact for young people and adults, businesses and the communities it serves.

We welcome applications for this role from experienced senior managers with a solid knowledge of FE and of key policies and targets for national, regional and FE education. You will have proven experience in driving quality improvement in teaching and learning and be able to demonstrate the impact of this and experience of developing successful and collaborative partnerships. You will need to have exceptional communication skills, be passionate about learning and possess excellent influencing, team management and leadership skills.

Faculty Director – Creative Business, Media and Computing

Salary - Range 10, £44,768 - £48,918 per annum

We are looking for an inspirational and ambitious Faculty Director to join the Leadership Team and be responsible for the growth of vocational provision across all funding streams and market segments including Study Programmes, Adult Learning, Apprenticeships, Higher Education and Full Cost Recovery. Ensuring vocational, technical and professional provision provides a strong line of sight to work with vocational relevance and a progression pipeline across levels and funding streams. Delivering consistent and sustained high quality standards across provision as measured against national benchmarks and regulatory body criteria.

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ESP is recruiting.

This is an exciting time to be joining a dynamic and innovative training provider. These new roles provide unique opportunities for ESP to become a world class institution and create and grow our apprenticeship offer.

We are currently recruiting a Programme Delivery Project Officer, looking for a solution focused individual who has experience of designing, developing and shaping the delivery of our apprenticeship programmes.

We are seeking two committed and qualified trainers and learning and skills coaches of Leadership and Management to drive forward our portfolio of Leadership and Management and Human Resource qualifications, including higher apprenticeships to meet the demand for skills development and the expectations of our employers.

With the learner at the heart of all we do, ESP are currently looking for an enthusiastic and driven Compliance and Quality Lead to take a lead role in the development and maintenance of robust controls and procedures with the purpose of ensuring compliance with audit requirements to meet funding and external stake-holder requirements, and contribute to improving the quality of, and compliance with the completion of learner files and accurate data recording.

An excellent opportunity has arisen within ESP for a highly motivated, learner focused, inspirational Work Based Learning and Skills Coach to join our team to deliver outstanding provision to our learners and employers delivering apprenticeship programmes including Customer Service, Team Leading, Business Management and Leadership and Management programmes.

To apply for any of the above positions, please email your CV and covering letter stating how you meet the person specification and why you would be suitable for the role to karen@esp-ac.uk

For more information on each vacancy, please visit <https://bit.ly/2zKXruk>



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This position will lead and manage cross-college provision of high quality learning support for students, with oversight for securing and sustaining improvements in all aspects of learning support. You will be required:

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- To lead on establishing best practice and the continuous improvement of approaches to assist students with learning difficulties associated with English and maths, and overcome wider barriers to achievement.

We are looking for someone with experience of SEN and Learning Support and who is confident in working in a fast paced environment, with changing priorities.

The post-holder will need to have a good understanding of how learning support is funded and of the different methods of delivery such as in class, 1:1 and small groups and will understand how will be able to demonstrate a range of strategies to enable students to succeed.

City of Bristol College offers generous holiday entitlement of 51 holiday days (including bank holiday and College Closure Days). In addition, we offer membership to the Teachers' Pension Scheme as well as a range of other benefits including a supportive package of continuous professional development.

Closing date: Wednesday 19 December 2018 (midnight)

Interview date: Tuesday 8 January 2019 - College Green Centre

Please see our website for details <http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/jobs>



APPRENTICESHIPS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

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You will support the university's strategic aim of developing and delivering a highly regarded and compliant degree apprenticeship offer by creating and implementing an employer engagement strategy for apprenticeships. You will account manage senior staff within a wide range of employers with the aim of recruiting, retaining and growing degree apprentice numbers.

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.

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

BUTTERCUPS TRAINING IS HIRING!



Who are Buttercups?

Since our inception in 1988, we have evolved from a small team solely providing workshops to pharmacy staff, to a team of over 140 delivering more than 25 blended learning courses across all pharmacy sectors. Despite the transition across the years, Buttercups' mission has always remained the same; to deliver high quality training programmes to pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, dispensing assistants and support staff working in hospitals, the community, dispensing doctors' practices and the Armed Forces.

We are the largest training provider in the pharmacy sector serving pharmacies from the largest multiples to independents, dispensing doctors, the MOD and NHS Trusts.

Buttercups Culture

Despite our growth over the years, Buttercups still maintains a "family business" culture. We all know and converse with each other - we have open plan offices and this assists with our very friendly and open culture. There is a strong ethos of teamwork and everyone is approachable. There are many opportunities to get to know people in the company that you may not work closely with, such as sporting activities and social events. We have a very healthy work social life and we believe in work life balance! We embrace the value of wellness and encourage employees who are in the office to break out for fresh air, table tennis, a musical interlude or simply coffee in our spacious and relaxing refectory. We empower employees to respond to the challenges of an ever-changing pharmacy landscape and see our diverse team as innovators building the Buttercups of tomorrow and beyond.

Our Vacancies

Buttercups Training is currently seeking enthusiastic and motivated pharmacy assessors, tutors and science graduates or teachers. The successful applicants will demonstrate excellent communication skills as well as the ability to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment to our learners via our blended learning delivery.

What do we mean by blended learning?

At Buttercups Training, we use a range of different teaching techniques to best suit the needs of our learners. The following is an overview of what we mean:

Buttercups virtual classrooms - these are interactive online classrooms delivered by Buttercups tutors.

Broadcast webinars - these are a more structured version of our virtual classroom, delivered in a lecture-like way.

e-Learning - this is online interactive learning using our suite of education tools, such as our b-Hive learner management platform and Virtual Pharmacy. Our Virtual Pharmacy is an interactive learning tool, which simulates various medicines counter scenarios and gives real-time feedback on the learner's decisions.

1 to 1 tutorials - these are delivered online or over the telephone.

VACANCIES

Assessors and Tutors

Candidates must hold relevant teaching or assessing qualifications and have experience in the pharmacy sector and/or a registrant of the GPhC.

Science Graduates or Teachers

Candidates must be located within a commutable distance to our Nottingham head office, as intensive training will be required. The following science degrees are suitable:

- Physiology
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacology
- Human Biology

For more information, please visit: <https://www.buttercupstraining.co.uk/content/vacancies>

EDITORIAL



The apprenticeship levy is public money that needs priorities - before it runs out

The Institute for Apprenticeships is forecasting a £500m overspend on the levy budget by July 2019, rising to £1.5m for the year ending July 2021.

It is clear that forecasting models for expenditure, before the Levy's introduction in May 2017, significantly underestimated the reality, in terms of starts on high value apprenticeships with prices set at their cap.

In addition, the monthly funding methodology means payments quickly accumulate for on-programme apprentices and

new starts.

As a result, in the whacky world of FE funding, we have the majority of employer levy pots currently going unspent at the same time as plausibly the IfA forecasting a huge overspend in the overall budget.

The Department for Education contacted *FE Week* to say the IfA figures are "out of context", yet the IfA stands by them (although refuses to share the whole presentation) and the education secretary, Damian Hinds, is not disputing the figures.

Hopefully the IfA and DfE will have an agreed position

before the National Audit Office publish the outcome of their second enquiry into the apprenticeship reforms early next year.

Either way, if the IfA figures are even close to reality, reducing funding rates following their review process won't be enough.

The first priority, as recommended by Ofsted's chief inspection, Amanda Spielman, should be to focus on using the funding where it is needed most.

So, more funding for training young people entering the job market. Less funding for training adults already in a job, particularly

on management degrees that employers should not be subsidised for.

The skills minister, Anne Milton, understands this.

In March, she told the education select committee that "fears of a middle-class grab on apprenticeships are valid".

In October, she said at a Conservative Party Conference fringe event: "We need to be careful we don't crowd out levels 2, 3, 4 and 5."

And when asked this week about the growth of management apprenticeships by David Hughes, the chief executive

of the Association of Colleges, she said: "We need to look at do we continue to fund apprenticeships for people who are already in work, people doing second degrees."

The fact is, levy funded employers are first in the queue to invest in apprenticeship training, but it is public money.

The government must now quickly and decisively step-in and prioritise what that training is and who it is for.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



TWITTER



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

Ofsted annual report warns apprenticeship levy being spent on graduate scheme rebadging

@lentildsley

I don't have a problem with higher and degree #apprenticeships in fact I think they are a valuable career pathway. The problem is that the levy system and funding levels weren't designed to accommodate them, so they are detracting from the original purpose of the levy policy.

DfE urgently seeking answers to why level two apprenticeships fell by 38%

@RobBrooks2

Maybe because all of your apprenticeship policies and approach over the last four years have been pushing employers

to develop level three apprenticeships upwards. You can't even support development of a level two business admin standard

@timbucksto

Well I hope they talk to a wider range of people than the usual suspects. Couple of answers: Lack of level two entry roles, not being used to accredit existing staff skills in low-skilled roles

Apprenticeships starts down nearly a quarter last year

@pyreneewanderer

The ones at L2 provide the entry-level jobs for those who were excluded at school and did not gain GCSEs. We need a balance not a competition between L2-3 & Higher apprentices. No point

having a ladder with the bottom two rungs broken!

Revealed: vast majority of loans-only providers are less than good

Christopher Blair

The reason Loan only providers were not inspected until recently is because loans only recently came under Ofsted's remit due to the expansion from 24+ to 19+ - but this was rushed and the CIF was not updated in time. Let's consider it for a second, what is more probable, that the "vast majority of loans-only providers are less than good" or that the standards they are being asked to meet are unfit for purpose and ill-suited to how loans have been set up?

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ofsted annual report warns apprenticeship levy being spent on graduate scheme rebadging

Murray Cowell

Why is it presumed to be a bad thing for companies to rebrand their often crappy graduate onboarding into a formal qualification? The point of the apprenticeship programme is to raise the standards of training across the UK. Turning an in-house graduate scheme which is being run to no particular standard into a proper training programme to nationally recognised standards achieves that aim magnificently.

Experts

JILL WESTERMAN

Governor at City Lit and former principal of Northern College, Barnsley



Why governors must take an interest in classroom matters

Teaching and learning are at the core of any college, says Jill Westerman – which is why governors need to know what happens in the classrooms

How much time does your board spend discussing teaching, learning and assessment (TLA)?

We show value in terms of where we spend our time... is the value and importance of TLA shown in the amount of time allocated to it in board meetings? Department for Education guidance and the Association of Colleges' code of good governance are clear that this is a board duty, with the code stating that "the board must foster exceptional teaching and learning".

As principal of Northern College until August this year, I had many responsibilities; some were duties and some passions. Teaching and learning was and is a passion, partly because of my background as a teacher, but also because it is the core purpose of

a college.

Every aspect of the work should focus on the creation of an environment where successful learning takes place. Therefore, the principal and the board must, in my view, take an active interest in what happens in the classroom or other places of learning.

With the clerk, I worked to present as much as possible about teaching and learning to the board. There is no easy way to do this: we included presentations from students and staff at meetings, as well as "meet the governors" coffee and cake with students.

The quality committee played a key role, allocating at least an hour in each meeting to look at an aspect of teaching and learning; staff from across the college joined the committee to discuss TLA in their areas.

When the college implemented a new system of self-observation using

film followed up with peer coaching, the quality committee discussed the plans and subsequent review in depth to ensure that the initiative was having the maximum positive impact on the quality of TLA.

"Students film each other discussing their experiences of teaching"

Colin Forrest, a quality committee member, talks about "active governance" that goes beyond simple compliance. Structured governor interactions generate an active understanding of TLA at all levels and in all places, and create conditions for leaders to prioritise TLA.

Another great example is happening at The Sheffield College, where the chair and co vice-chair, Seb Schmoller and Beri Hare, are working with other governors to ensure that the board moves from compliant governance to an active model that puts TLA at the heart of its work. A review of committees led to a new teaching, learning, quality and student experience committee.

Alongside this, the college's new principal and chief executive, and the deputy chief executive, have TLA as a major focus of their job. A governor who has been a college principal chairs the new committee and meets regularly with the senior team solely to discuss teaching and learning. There is also a strong focus in the finance committee on the requirements of TLA and the impact on TLA.

The boards of Northern College and The Sheffield College each receive reports that give a more complete and rounded picture of teaching and

learning. For example, at Northern College the board receives a detailed report on the annual "feedback fortnight", which uses different and more imaginative ways beyond routine evaluations to get qualitative feedback on TLA from students.

Students may interview and film each other discussing their experiences of teaching; as principal I sat with students at mealtimes throughout the year, but focused particularly on TLA.

The Sheffield College has introduced a "Teacher on a Page" report. Aggregated data from this will give governors a more complete and rounded view of progress in teaching and learning.

There is no quick fix to ensure that a board can have a complete view of the quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment, but giving this area thought, resource and, above all, time is vital for active governance of a learning provider.

KEVIN GILMARTIN

Post-16 and colleges specialist, Association of School and College Leaders



Don't play the blame game over the Baker clause

The lack of information about A-level alternatives will not be solved by cajoling schools into compliance, says Kevin Gilmartin. Instead, what is needed is an understanding of what is holding back any progress or solution

There's frustration in the corridors of Whitehall and among colleges and training providers over the perceived failings of schools to give students enough access and information to A-level alternatives.

Recent stories around the failure of schools to comply with the Baker clause, and a Careers and Enterprise Company survey showing that schools with sixth forms are the worst at offering careers information on different post-16 options, have provoked an inevitable narrative.

This is how it goes: "Why won't those pesky schools just let the FE colleges and training providers in to talk to their pupils? If they allowed them in, then fewer students would stay on

in their small sixth forms with their limited range of A-levels and wouldn't make the mistake of progressing to low-ranking universities to get a little-recognised degree and a mountain of debt. Instead, they would undertake an apprenticeship or vocational course and end up in a high-demand occupation, have no personal debt and help to reduce the country's looming post-Brexit skills shortage and boost UK plc's economic growth. And we all know why the schools are not complying, don't we? Students equal money."

Except, of course, it's not quite that simple.

There are numerous regulations with which schools are expected to comply. Many are financial, but there are others that may be prioritised by overstretched school leaders ahead of the Baker clause: GDPR, Ofsted, website requirements, health and safety, and so on.

In times gone by, the friendly local authority careers adviser would have

given information during careers lessons and would have co-ordinated the dates of college open events and apprenticeship fairs. But despite the much-heralded careers strategy, where is the money for schools to access these chargeable careers services?

"Many school teachers know little about what goes on at the local college"

Perception is also a reason. Many school teachers know little about what goes on at the local college. Attempts to rectify this through college principals sitting on local headteacher boards, or through colleges getting involved in joining multi-academy trusts (often as

the sponsor) only scratch the surface. The last great curriculum initiative that actively involved close college and school partnership was the 14-19 diploma. Enough said about how that ended up.

Equally, trying to get school staff to understand the world of apprenticeships, meets with the same confused look. "Just how do I get simple information on apprenticeships?" is a repeated cry. "Do I just tell them to go to the local college? What is a private training provider? What is the difference between the National Apprenticeships Service and the Institute of Apprenticeships?"

Telling school staff that this is important and they need to do more with their pupils on different post-16 options may seem self-evident. But when they respond by asking what's more important – this or an extra hour of exam revision – then the unforgiving spectre of accountability wins out.

So, the landscape is confusing and

congested, and for many the Baker clause is just another pressure. Is it really any wonder that some schools are struggling with this responsibility? However, those same schools will also often say that they would like to do more – to train staff in how to access better careers information, take time to liaise locally with other providers and improve the life chances of their students as a result.

To enable them to do this we have to address funding. Insufficient funding has consequences, including, unfortunately, less ability to provide advice and guidance.

Meanwhile, let's not have different parts of the sector blaming each other for the system's failings. Until colleges, schools and careers education are properly funded, and accountability measures are more sensible, then the government's skills agenda will struggle to take off. The government really should know this... it's called joined-up thinking.

DAMIAN HINDS

Secretary of State
for Education



FE colleges are the 'national infrastructure' for tech ed

Damian Hinds writes exclusively for FE Week about why FE colleges are vital to the government's technical education revolution

One year ago this government launched the first modern industrial strategy for boosting this country's productivity; setting out how Britain would lead the AI revolution, invest in research and development and upgrade our key infrastructure.

As education secretary, I believe one of the most critical elements for delivering this strategy is a major upgrade to our nation's skills. It's right that we invest in machinery and cutting edge technology; but you need people who are trained to use it and get the most from it. More importantly, everyone deserves a chance to develop the skills that can lead to higher paid and more satisfying work.

That's why I have set out the next stage of our technical education revolution, which will see us offer all

our young people a clear path to a skilled job.

Let me say first that for any of these reforms to succeed, further education colleges are a vital partner. I'm clear that colleges, as well as universities, will play a key part in delivering this government's industrial strategy; colleges are our national infrastructure for technical education.

Young people doing A-levels and degrees have always had clear routes to a job. In contrast we've let down some on a technical or vocational route. Frankly, as a nation, we've been technical education snobs. The result is that around a quarter of all 16-year-olds are essentially churning around our education system.

Of course, there is a multitude of training courses available if you leave school at 16, but so much choice isn't always beneficial if quality is variable – and there is limited guidance on the best one to take. That is why we are introducing 25 high-quality T-levels.

Through classroom learning and intensive industry placements, T-level students will develop the skills they need to step straight into a skilled job.

The industry placement will be a critical part of every T-level; with students able to put into practice what they've learnt.

We have been piloting these placements with students and businesses over the last year with great results.

All T-level students who complete their course will be ready to step straight into a skilled job but we recognise that some will also want to progress to further training that can take them to a higher skilled job. For example, training that could help step up from bricklayer to construction site supervisor or from dental nurse to dental hygiene therapist.

At the moment our colleges and universities don't offer much training at this level, very few students do it and, unsurprisingly, employers are

also less aware of it. The education sector would call this type of training 'level 4 and 5' and I think that's part of the problem; unless you're in the know you won't be familiar with it.

I'm determined to properly establish higher technical training in this country, so that it's recognised and sought after by employers, young people and those looking to progress in their career alike.

We will therefore establish a system of employer-led national standards for higher technical education. This will help identify and recognise existing and new qualifications that meet the knowledge and skills needed by employers. These qualifications should be clearly badged and easy to recognise so employers will start looking for them on CVs and advertising for them when recruiting to jobs at this level.

We also need to start making it clear to young people that university is not the only path to a great job.

That is why we are changing our school and college performance tables by introducing a new measure that will recognise schools and colleges for getting young people on to great higher training courses and apprenticeships as well as university. No longer should schools and colleges feel that they must push students down one route only in order to be judged a success.

I'm also keen to see us break down some of the false barriers we've erected between academic and technical routes. If T-level students want to go to university to do relevant technical degrees they should be able to. That is why I'm pleased to announce that UCAS has agreed to give a T-level UCAS tariff points in line with 3 A-levels. This reflects the size and complexity of the qualification.

By working closely with colleges and employers, we can make sure that all our young people are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

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Bulletin



Rachel Nicholls

Acting principal, Peterborough Regional College

Start date December 5, 2018

Previous job

Deputy principal, New College Stamford (she is on secondment from this role)

Interesting fact

Rachel used to be captain of Halifax Ladies rugby team and in a previous life, played rugby for Yorkshire and Humberside



Roger Guy

Senior business development manager, One Awards

Start date November 2018

Previous job

Head of operations, Finchale College

Interesting fact

Roger scored a goal on Match of the Day, during a filmed training session with the Italian team at Euro 96

Movers & Shakers

...

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



Suzanne Slater

Assistant principal, Gateshead College

Start date November 2018

Previous job

Regional manager, Northern Skills Group

Interesting fact

At the age of 41, Suzanne took up horse riding having never been on a horse before in her life and she now goes every week



Deni Chambers

Assistant principal, Gateshead College

Start date October 2018

Previous job

Director of school – creative & digital industries, Newcastle College

Interesting fact

After 10 years of dreaming Deni eventually bought a Vespa Scooter aged 28 – but then fell pregnant and swapped it for a cot

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

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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

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

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.



Last Edition's winner: Richard Alberg

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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