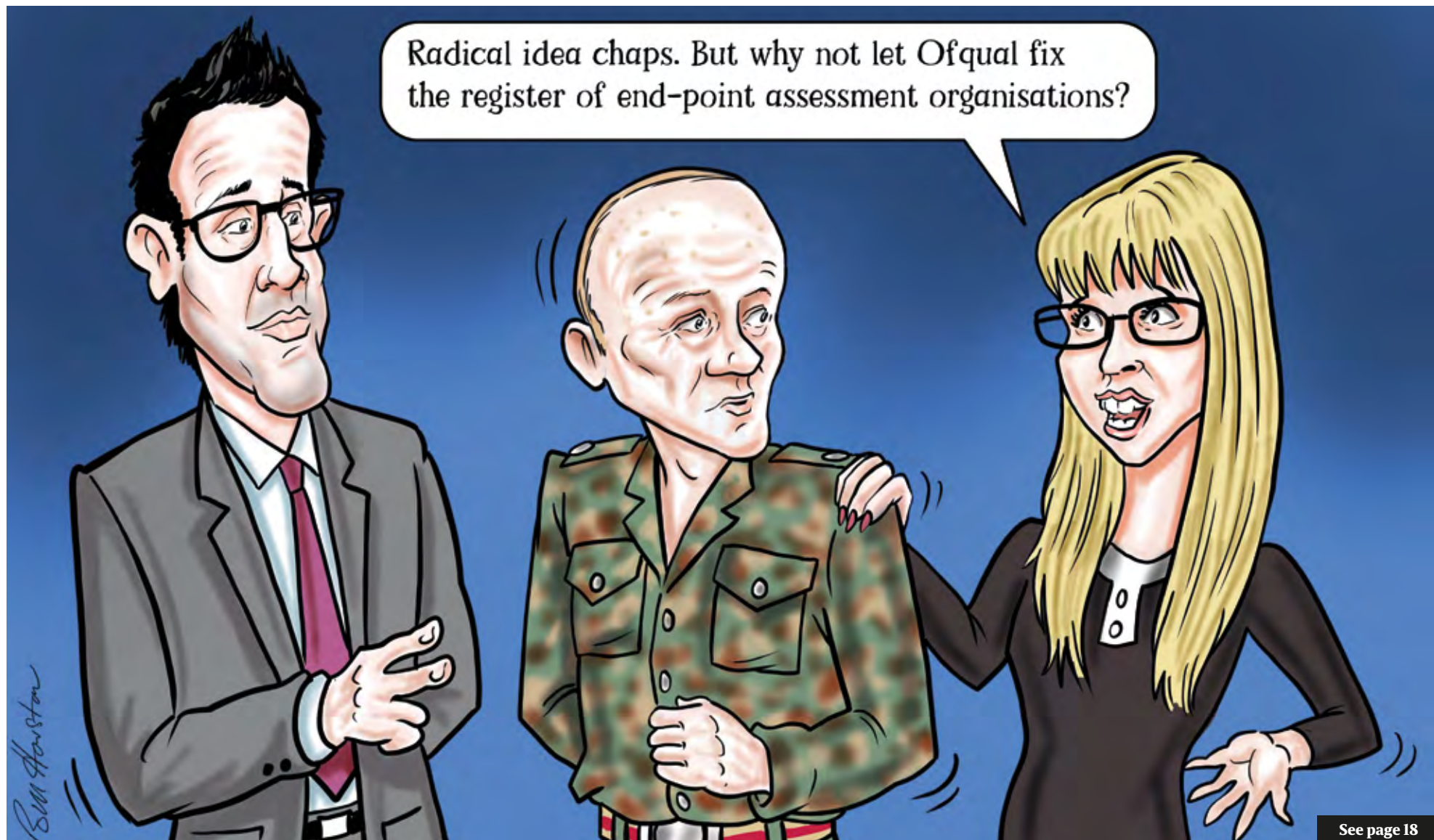




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FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019
EDITION 273



TRUTH BEHIND HADLOW SCANDAL

- Deputy CEO faked email from ESFA in effort to justify funding claims
- Business park £4m sale fails as 175m long visitor centre costs disputed
- Former chair of finance committee claims he was lied to and misled
- Whole college group now surviving on short-term government bailouts

Exclusive

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See page 12 & 13



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CATH ON CAMPUS

Education that gets out of classrooms and into the community

Page 14



Supported internships are a success for SEND youngsters
Page 20



Why has England seemingly set out to destroy adult learning?
Page 20



Apprenticeships should be high-quality pipelines to prosperity
Page 21

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News

Funding cuts see sixth-form mental health and careers provision slashed

JESSICA FINO
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Nearly half of all colleges and schools with sixth forms have had to reduce student mental health and careers support this year due to crippling 16-to-19 government funding cuts.

The finding, revealed in a new funding impact survey of 278 schools and colleges by the Sixth Form Colleges Association, marks a substantial increase on what was reported last year. It comes despite the government making both areas key political priorities.

The survey also found that over 75 per cent of respondents do not believe the amount of funding they will receive next year will be sufficient to provide the support required by disadvantaged students.

The SFCA's research was conducted on behalf of the 12 organisations behind the Raise the Rate campaign,

which is calling for the base rate for all 16-to-18-year-old students to be increased to £4,760 in the upcoming spending review, after being stuck at £4,000 for the past five years.

The association said the Chancellor's spending review is "make or break" for sixth-form education.

FE Week spoke to two colleges struggling with the financial constraints to find out how they are being affected.

Mike Hill, principal of Carmel College in Merseyside, explained that he has been forced to cut down the college's careers department and foundation

learning department for students with learning difficulties from a five-day offer to just four days.

"It has also been really difficult for us to offer permanent contracts to staff in the learning support teams because

funding is changing not only each year but also within the year, which means we are constantly having to let people go," he said.

"We now have to wait for students to appear, work out the funding and reappoint people. It has been extremely challenging."

He added: "We are almost unable to offer any extra-curricular support unless students are being funded externally. Offering students anything beyond their subjects has almost come to a halt now in colleges like ours."

Limor Feingold, director of finance at Brockenhurst College, told FE Week that his college's funding for disadvantaged students' support is set to be reduced by £180,000, or 40 per cent, next year.

"This means we will not be able to provide any more mental health support and tutorial support than we already do, even though our student numbers might be growing," he said.

Feingold added that the college has been forced to cut wellbeing support services costs and careers advice by £80,000 to meet its budget

requirements this year.

The SFCA survey said the extent of cuts to student support services has been "more noticeable" overall than in the previous academic year.

It found that the number of schools and colleges that

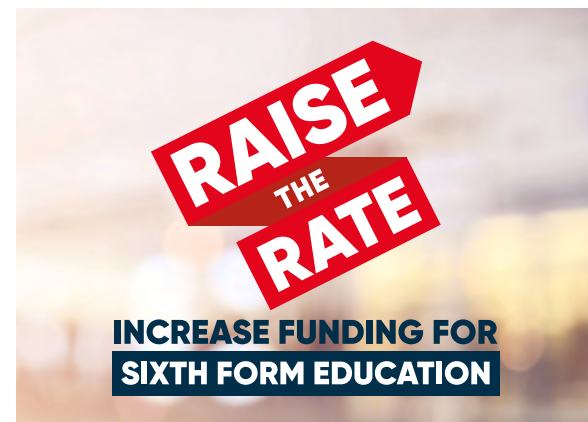
have reduced mental health support has leapt from 32 per cent to 48 per cent, while those cutting their employability skills offer has risen from 25 per cent to 41 per cent, and careers guidance from 28 per cent to 41 per cent.

A previous FE Week investigation found that colleges are increasingly sending students with serious mental health issues to accident and emergency, due to a lack of other options as a result of substantial reductions in funding in other years.

The funding impact survey also found

that 81 per cent of schools and colleges are teaching students in larger class sizes, 68 per cent have moved from a four-subject A-level offer as standard to three, and 46 per cent have reduced delivery hours of individual courses.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the SFCA, said: "Today's report makes it absolutely clear that the government must increase the funding rate for sixth-form students in this year's spending review. And this increase must go well beyond meeting the rising costs faced by schools and colleges."



Mike Hill

Latest T-level tender slammed for exclusivity and secrecy

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

The Department for Education has been accused of "locking out" small firms in a highly restrictive and secretive T-level tender.

A short procurement exercise was launched by the department on February 25 to find a company to help develop a "transitional" course, which 16-year-olds can take if they are not ready to start a T-level at level three, but who can "realistically achieve it" by age 19.

But the tender, which runs for just 15 days, has only been made available to suppliers in a specific category in its Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

The DfE has refused to tell FE Week which category it is allowing to bid, release the tender documents, list who is eligible to apply or even say how much the contract is worth.

Companies that wanted to bid in the tender but have been blocked have since contacted FE Week and expressed frustration.

Tom Bewick, chief executive of the

Federation of Awarding Bodies, is not happy.

"It concerns us that a bureaucratic system like dynamic purchasing may in fact end up locking out the diverse level of expertise that we know T-Levels requires in order to be a success," he said.

"Restrictive procurement practices of this nature and rushed timescales fly in the face of the government's own stated objectives of trying to engage more small businesses in contract tenders.

"The majority of awarding bodies are small firms, so it is wrong that they are being unduly penalised as a result."

Asked why it didn't put the tender on wider platforms, such as Contracts Finder, and open it to all organisations, a DfE spokesperson said: "For a successful delivery, the T-level transition offer needs an organisation with specific technical FE expertise.

"We judged that there are a relatively small number of suppliers who would be able to deliver the contract and the DPS allows those with the relevant experience to bid for it."

She told FE Week the department wishes to restrict the operational information within the tender document to the relevant organisations



registered to bid for this contract, and that revealing the anticipated value of the contract could prejudice commercial negotiations.

The spokesperson added that the DPS is a legitimate route to market for public sector bodies as set out under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Suppliers can self-register on to the DPS against categories of work that they are able to deliver, of which there

are 20.

The DfE then selects one or more categories of work that will be required to deliver a particular procurement and "launch" the tender.

The spokesperson was able to tell FE Week that the transition offer contract will run from May 2019 to September 2021.

The winning bidder will support the phased implementation of the T-level

transition offer in 2020 and 2021.

The course was recommended by Lord Sainsbury in his technical education report in July 2016, which the government's post-16 skills plan then adopted at the same time.

The DfE was supposed to then carry out further work and consultation on this transition year "over the next six months".

But further information on this hasn't been forthcoming until this tender.

The winning bidder will be a single supplier and provide support for "participating post-16 providers to develop, package and deliver their local T-level transition offer", which will be a type of 16-to-19 study programme, rather than a qualification in its own right.

They will also "encourage and facilitate participating providers to explore different approaches to implementing certain elements of the transition offer".

The first three T-levels, which will be delivered from 2020 by 50 providers, will be in education and childcare pathway, design, surveying and planning, and digital production, design and development.

Competition hots up for a Team UK place at WorldSkills Kazan

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Nearly 80 of the UK's most skilled young people are battling it out in a five-day competition this week that will decide if they get to represent the nation at WorldSkills Kazan 2019.

The squad of apprentices and learners have travelled to colleges all over the country for the team selection event.

The 40 best performers from across 36 skills will win a spot at the next WorldSkills competition in Kazan, Russia, in August.

Dubbed the "Olympics of skills",

WorldSkills brings together learners from around the globe who compete in areas such as landscape gardening, electrical installation, beauty therapy and jewellery-making.

FE Week went along to one of the Team UK selection events in Nottingham to see how the competitors are faring, and was joined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency's director of employer engagement, and the UK's new official delegate, Sue Husband.

"I'm always impressed by these competitions, seeing all those individuals putting themselves out there," she said. "The standard of the work they are delivering is so

impressive."

All the competitors at WorldSkills Kazan 2019 will have to complete 22 hours of competition over four days.

For most of the competitors, details of the projects they will have to complete in Russia will be released before they get there; but when they arrive at Kazan, 30 per cent of the project will be changed.

Some competitions, such as cooking, have completely blind tests.

Beforehand, though, the competitors have to go to a boot camp at Loughborough University, where they will be trained by 2012 Olympian Peter Bakare and John Walton, who was part of the training team for Team GB.

Competitors are taught how to diet, exercise and sleep to get them in prime condition. Each morning in Kazan, the competitors will be up at 6.30am for yoga and stretching.

Someone who knows what it's like to prepare for the competition is Daryl Head, who won silver for the UK in the car-painting competition at the 2017 competition in Abu Dhabi, and is now a judge for the Team UK selection.

"It was pretty intense," he told FE Week. "There was a strict plan we were following."



Landscape gardening competitor Sam Taylor

Asked how he brought his technical skills up to competition level, he said: "Repetition. Find out what you're weak at and work on those areas."

The training manager for the painting team, Richard Wheeler, said of the 2019 candidates: "Over the period of 18 months I have been training these guys up in frequent intervals. They will obviously go away, practise and their skill-set will get better."

There are two people competing for a place on the UK car-painting team and Wheeler said it will be difficult to choose between them.

"It's going to come down to their interpersonal skills, time-management, problem-solving and how they deal with

pressure."

All the candidates will find out if they have made the UK team at Loughborough on Sunday.

The 45th WorldSkills event will take place from August 22 to 27.

At the last WorldSkills, two years ago in Abu Dhabi, Team UK retained its top-10 position, with one gold, three silvers, three bronzes and 13 "medallions of excellence".

FE Week is proud to be the official media partner for WorldSkills UK and Team UK. FE Week will bring you all the latest developments in the lead-up to WorldSkills 2019 and will be onsite in Kazan to bring rolling coverage of Team UK's progress.



Aircraft maintenance competitor Balazs Sparin



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Editor asks...

An apprenticeship story of impatience, frustration and the need for more money

NICK LINFORD
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Exclusive

Anne Milton initially seemed in good spirits when I began our interview at a coffee shop at the University for East London's (UEL) Docklands campus.

It was the morning of the third day of National Apprenticeships Week and she'd just finished meeting apprentices at an informal breakfast.

“We are always to some extent in the Treasury’s hands”

Despite the event not entirely going to plan (a falling roof tile that very narrowly missed the minister but left two apprentices grazed and in need of medical attention) Milton was unfazed and keen to talk to apprentices about their courses.

But it did not take me long to trigger a change in mood, pointing out that just a few hours earlier, the National Audit Office had published a report criticising the government on a range of issues relating to the apprenticeship reforms.

“It is always a shame when these reports come out because I think they have an important part to play in the development of government policy, but by their very nature they are looking back rather than forward,” Milton said.

“It doesn't always, I think, give a very accurate picture of what we are going to be seeing in six months' time.”

Milton clearly thinks there will be significant improvements in the next six months, but what is the evidence for this?

Readers will recall that the minister predicted in February 2018 that apprenticeship starts would really take off by September, but the latest figures for December starts show they are

slipping backwards, a full 8 per cent down on the previous year.

And last October it was announced that demand from small employers would be stimulated by halving their co-investment fee halved from 10 to 5 per cent.

More than four months on, the fee reduction has not been implemented and Milton was unable to even say from when it would begin.

“I would love to make an announcement now. Sadly, with much of one's life in government, one waits for Her Majesty's Treasury to say when you can do these things. And so we are always to some extent in the Treasury's hands.”

And on the thorny issue of limits to non-levy funding (UEL successfully tendered for non-levy, but was not awarded any, and is having to turn local businesses away), the promised changes to get small employers on to the Apprenticeship System keeps being delayed.

“Like with the reduction in co-investment, I am frustrated that the machinery of government is slow and sluggish, always. So I am somebody who wants to do everything yesterday, I am a terribly impatient person, so I am as frustrated as everybody else, but we will make announcements when we can make announcements.”

“I am frustrated that the machinery of government is slow and sluggish”

Milton's frustrations should not really come as a surprise, given in her first speech as skills minister, back in July 2017. She responded to a question about the fall in apprenticeship starts by saying: “I am somebody who has absolutely no patience at all. I want everything done yesterday, and I will only forgive not doing it yesterday if it's in an attempt to get it right.”

One thing that clearly wasn't



Anne Milton

done right was the Department for Education's budgeting for apprenticeships.

My own published analysis, now confirmed by the NAO, had found the average cost of starts on standards was running at £9,000, which is double what the government had budgeted for.

“I haven't seen how they got to the figures they thought it would be,” Milton said. “But you always have to take a bit of a leap in the dark when the programme is being driven by employers.”

“Added to which, if you are going to improve quality – quality and money don't always go together – but it is likely it will cost you more. So whether the original forecasts took all that into account, I don't know.”

This raised the obvious question of whether the budget needed to be doubled to afford £9,000

per apprentice, or whether the average could be brought down by, controversially, restricting employer choice.

I ask, should public money be spent on management MBA apprenticeships at a time when 16-to-19 and level two apprenticeships are in such decline?

“I think you want money spent on both,” Milton said. “We have seen today 16-year-olds doing level 3 engineering. I mean, brilliant. But you also need businesses to be more productive, so people are thinking about how they manage. What sticks in people's throats is people on £100,000 a year and the state subsidising their MBA.”

“There is no easy answer. You put more money in the pot or you restrict what you are doing. Those are the choices.”

So it seems likely the Treasury will have to find a way to increase the size of the pot to get even close to the 3

million starts target and fund all the popular and expensive degree and management apprenticeships.

Even the NAO report points out that restricting employer choice in an employer-led system would not only be unpopular it “could damage confidence in the programme”.

“You put more money in the pot or you restrict what you are doing”

Milton concluded by saying: “I always look for more money, I will always look at whether we are absolutely sure this is where public subsidy should go – looking at both things, always.”

The logo for the Society for Education & Training, featuring the text "SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING" inside a white circle with a black and white abstract background.

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A circular photograph showing two men in a meeting. One man, bald and wearing a dark suit and light blue shirt, is smiling and looking towards the other man, whose back is to the camera.

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News

National Audit Office's apprentices

Apprenticeship budget set to run out after government got its forecasting wrong

BILLY CAMDEN
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There is "clear risk" that the apprenticeship programme is not financially sustainable after the average cost of training an apprentice hit double the figure the government had predicted.

This was the most concerning message to come out of this week's National Audit Office progress report on the levy reforms, which said the

Department for Education should assess making controversial decisions about reducing the level of public funding for certain types of apprenticeship.

In December, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education estimated that the apprenticeships budget for England could be overspent by £0.5 billion this year, rising to £1.5 billion during 2021/22.

The problem – which comes despite the volume of starts dipping – is the result of higher than predicted per-start funding, largely driven by the sharp rise in management apprenticeships with high prices, which *FE Week* was first to warn of in 2016.

This week's National Audit Office (NAO) report confirms that employers are developing and choosing more expensive apprenticeship standards at higher levels than was expected, which is "absorbing" the public funding.

"The DfE has calculated that the average cost of training an apprentice on a standard at the end of 2017-18 was around £9,000 – approximately double the cost allowed for when budgets were set in 2015," it said.

"The department projects that, even if starts remain at current levels, spending on the programme could rise to more than £3 billion once frameworks are withdrawn and all apprenticeships are on standards."

The NAO said the DfE "recognises" there are ways in which it could seek to control spending if necessary. However, these are "likely to be unpopular and could damage confidence in the programme".

Options, according to the report, could include: capping the spending of levy-paying employers; limiting the number of apprenticeships available for non-levy-paying employers; and lowering the funding bands, as the DfE has already started doing through its controversial funding band reviews.

Last month, *FE Week* revealed that the non-levy funding for providers to train apprentices from small businesses had already started to run dry and some were having to turn apprentices away. However, the government has no cash left in the system to ease the situation.

In December, Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman raised concerns

about graduate scheme rebadging, where levy funds are being spent on higher-level apprenticeships at the expense of young people on lower levels.

Just days later, during an interview with Association of Colleges chief executive David Hughes, skills minister Anne Milton said she would "look at whether it is right" for the government to "continue to fund all apprenticeships".

The NAO report again warned that levy-paying employers are replacing their professional development programmes – for example, graduate training schemes in accountancy or advanced courses in management – with apprenticeships.

"In such cases, there is a risk that the additional value of the apprenticeship to the economy may not be proportionate to the amount of government funding," it said.

"There are risks that the programme is subsidising training that would have happened without government funding,"

The report concludes: "Given these concerns, the department has some way to go before it can demonstrate that the programme is achieving value



for money and that resources are being used to best effect."

Meg Hillier MP, chair of the influential Public Accounts Committee, said she will hold a hearing on March 25 to quiz the DfE's permanent secretary, Jonathan Slater, on the apprenticeships programme following the NAO's report.

Milton told *FE Week* that it is "always a shame" when reports like the NAO's come out because "I think they have an important part to play in the development of government policy but by their very nature they are looking back rather than forward".



Meg Hillier

BAME and SEND starts targets 'lack ambition'

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The Department for Education's targets for widening apprenticeship participation among under-represented groups "lack ambition", according to the National Audit Office.

Its report warned that while the department is "on track" to meet two of its diversity goals – the numbers of starts by black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) apprentices and by apprentices with a learning difficulty, disability or health problem – there is little cause for celebration.

The BAME starts target (11.9 per cent) is lower than the working-age population for the group in England (14.9 per cent) and much lower than the proportion of BAME pupils at the end of key stage 4 (20.7 per cent).

Meanwhile, 19 per cent of working-age adults in the UK reported having

a disability in 2016/17, compared with the 11.9 per cent apprentice target on learning difficulties, disabilities and health problems.

Even while the BAME apprentice target is just 11.9 per cent, *FE Week* analysis of DfE figures for quarter one of 2018/19 found starts for the group fell to just 10.1 per cent – down from 11.2 per cent in the whole of 2017/18.

Andy Forbes, co-founder of the BAME Principals' Group and current principal of City and Islington College, said the lack of people from non-white communities starting and completing apprenticeships is a "long-standing issue".

"The disproportionately low number of BAME apprentices in particular continues to be a big concern for all of us," he told *FE Week*.

"Apprenticeships

Andy Forbes

have a low profile in many BAME communities, where there is often limited awareness of how they work. On top of that, BAME applicants often face invisible barriers of language, culture and unconscious bias when they go for interview with employers."

City and Islington College is part of the Capital City College Group. Jackie Chapman, the operations



director of the group's specialist apprenticeships arm, Capital City College Training, said: "These apprenticeship figures are troubling and the NAO and Andy Forbes are right to highlight the under-representation of non-white

people in the data."

She added: "Our own data shows that last year, a total of 1,865 people finished their apprenticeship with Capital City College Training, of whom 944 were non-white people (just over 50.6 per cent of the total). So it can be done."

The DfE claimed it has made good progress on widening participation in apprenticeships, and said the 11.2 per cent BAME apprentice starts figure for 2017/18 was the joint highest proportion reported over the past eight years.

The department said it has taken action through its marketing campaign to ensure there is clear representation from apprentices of BAME backgrounds, including showcasing apprentices of BAME backgrounds in high-status professional roles.

The DfE's 11.9 per cent BAME starts target, set in 2015, is aimed to be met by 2020, and would be a 20 per cent increase from a baseline average of 10 per cent during the 2010-15 parliament.

Since the target was set, the DfE has created the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network, an employers' network which currently has 70 members and is tasked with promoting diversity.

And in February 2018 the department launched its 5 Cities Project, which will see the National Apprenticeship Service work with the mayors of Greater Manchester, London, Bristol, Birmingham and Leicester to improve apprenticeship diversity in their areas.

Prior to this, former education secretary Justine Greening was accused of being "all talk" on growing apprenticeships amongst ethnic minorities.

She had told the education select committee that the DfE had a "big focus" on encouraging "a higher proportion of BAME young people going into apprenticeships", but the DfE was subsequently unable to identify a single policy to this end since 2015.

Apprenticeship progress report: the key issues

'Limited assurance' that providers are compliant with 20% off-the-job policy

JESSICA FINO

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The Education and Skills Funding Agency has been criticised for having "limited assurance" that the 20 per cent off-the-job training rule is being complied with.

The controversial policy, which has been cited by the sector as the single biggest barrier to apprenticeship recruitment, featured prominently in this week's National Audit Office's report.

The NAO warned that, in summer 2018, the agency identified just one "red risk" associated with delivery of the apprenticeship programme – that apprentices do not spend at least 20 per cent of their time doing off-the-job training.

The audit office said if apprentices do not receive enough of this training, they have a "poorer experience and may be less likely to complete their

apprenticeship".

The report accused the ESFA of not having an "effective way" of monitoring compliance with the rule.

"It mandates the hours of learning in apprenticeships, and may ask providers to show that learners are on course at particular points," the NAO explained.

"The ESFA's audits may identify problems, but there is scope for providers to under-deliver for some time without this being picked up.

"This is an important gap in oversight, because the provider continues to be paid as long as the apprentice remains on the programme."

Meg Hillier MP and chair of the public accounts committee said it was "concerning" that the "ESFA cannot be sure that apprentices are spending enough time on off-the-job training".

Responding to the criticism, the DfE pointed out that the requirement is set out in its funding rules, and all employers and providers must comply with the rule to legitimately access

apprenticeship funding and use the apprenticeship brand.

An FE Week investigation earlier this year revealed that apprenticeships failing to comply with this provision will be "ineligible and all funding would be recovered".

The off-the-job training policy has prompted controversy and confusion since it was introduced in 2017.

It requires all apprentices to spend the equivalent of one day a week on activities relating to their course but which are different from their normal working duties.

A survey carried out by this newspaper last year found that the sector considered the policy to be the single biggest barrier to apprenticeship recruitment, being an issue in particular for smaller companies, who claim they can't afford to let apprentices spend one-fifth of their time away from work.

Mark Dawe, the boss of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, explained that the



Mark Dawe

rule is misunderstood by many. "It's not easy to measure the quality of off-the-job training within an apprenticeship and Ofsted agrees with AELP that just counting the hours provides no indication of quality," he said.

"The preoccupation with this issue reveals a fundamental misunderstanding amongst many about the value of a work-based learning apprenticeship and why

apprenticeships are so popular with employers."

Dawe added that the FE sector should "instead be celebrating how much apprentices learn on the job and in the meantime, the government should accept the Commons education committee's recommendation of a more flexible approach to off-the-job training according to the business sector and level of apprenticeship".

DfE criticised for poor definition of 'success' in measuring apprenticeships' impact on productivity

BILLY CAMDEN

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The government has still not clearly set out how it measures the impact of the apprenticeship programme on productivity, three years after the National Audit Office's request that it do so.

In its first report – in 2016 – on the levy reforms, the NAO slammed the Department for Education for failing to define what "success" would look like in terms of intended impact on skills levels within the economy.

Three years later, the audit office recognised that the department has "improved" its performance measures but is "still not transparent in how it demonstrates the overall added value of the programme".

Its new report found that the department "reports a 'skills index' for the programme", which takes

account of the impact on earnings of successfully completing an apprenticeship, "which is an established way of calculating productivity gains".

However, the DfE "has not set out how these calculations feed into the index, or what kind of increase in the index would constitute 'success'".

Stephen Evans, chief executive of the Learning and Work Institute, said: "The ultimate purpose of apprenticeships is to improve an individual's career prospects, meet employer needs and raise productivity. The NAO is right to say that, while there has been progress, some of the current measures are partial, opaque and slow to be developed.

"For example, measuring the wages of apprentices without comparing this to the wages of non-apprentices does not really tell us much."

He told FE Week that productivity impacts need to be measured at "sector, national and regional level, rather than

provider by provider".

"We should measure the employment and wages of apprentices after their apprenticeships, compared to similar groups of people who did not do an apprenticeship," Evans added.

"There should also be independent evaluation of the productivity effects on employers within sectors and regions. Unless we do this, we won't know the difference apprenticeships have made."

In its report recommendations, the NAO said the DfE should "set out clearly how it measures the impact of the programme on productivity, and indicate the level of impact that it is aiming to achieve".

Defending itself, the DfE said it has set out its approach to measuring the impact on productivity in its Benefits Realisation Strategy. In this, the department looks at the number of people completing apprenticeships, and how their earnings have increased as a result of completing an apprenticeship,

which it views as a well-established way of measuring the impact of training on productivity.

The DfE added that it plans to publish more detail about its approach in its next Benefits Realisation Strategy update, which will be released in due course.

Recognising the improvements to performance measures for the apprenticeships programme, the NAO said: "In March 2017, the department published a broad set of performance measures for the programme. As a result, it now has better insight into the programme's impact."

Performance to date has been "mixed", the report continued. "For example, the department reported higher earnings for successful apprentices at all levels, but the proportion of apprentices remaining with their employer after completing their apprenticeship has fallen.

"In addition, the focus on starts



Stephen Evans

rather than completions obscures the large number of people who fail to complete their apprenticeship successfully – 32 per cent of apprentices in 2016/17"

The DfE said it is positive that the NAO acknowledge the department has improved how it assesses the benefits of the programme.

News

Major bank stands by college fighting for survival following second failed merger

JESSICA FINO
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Exclusive

A major high street bank will “remain supportive” of a cash-strapped college that owes it over £6 million, despite fears the college may collapse following the last-minute failure of a second merger attempt.

The future of City College Southampton, which is surviving on government bailouts, was thrown into doubt this week when Eastleigh College pulled out of its proposed merger after the Department for Education rejected its bid for funds from the Restructuring Facility.

Its first attempt to join up with another provider – Southampton Solent University – fell through in 2017, following a recommendation from the Solent Area Review.

City College's accounts for 2017/18

warned that if its second merger failed, it would “require a standalone application to be approved to ensure it is able to continue operations into 2019/20” and would have to “seek additional long-term funding from the ESFA in order to remain in existence in the long term”.

The accounts also stated that the college has £6.1 million of bank loans outstanding with Santander on terms negotiated in 2009, which has 16 years remaining.

The college's “forecast” show that one of the loan covenants will be breached, requiring the entire loan to be repaid in a single year. The accounts go on to say: “Santander has verbally stated it will not take any action on the college as it continues to work towards a merger.”

At the time of going to press, Santander told *FE Week* it remains “supportive of the college” despite its second failed merger, and the bank will continue to “work closely with them, as they explore their options”.



City College Southampton

The reassurance follows fears the college could be the first provider to be placed into administration under the new insolvency regime, which came into effect on January 31 and which allows colleges to go bust for the first time (see box out left).

The Department for Education has made clear that there will be no more long-term bailouts available to colleges following the introduction of the insolvency regime.

A DfE spokesperson would not confirm if it was considering placing the college into administration, but said: “All bids for funding from the Restructuring Facility fund are assessed through a rigorous governance and approval criteria, including whether a college is financially sustainable in the long term.”

“We are working with City College Southampton to ensure learners aren't

negatively affected.”

The college told *FE Week* it was not entering into administration, nor had it begun an Independent Business Review – the start of insolvency proceedings.

Sarah Stannard, principal of City College Southampton, said: “City College Southampton is reassured by the constructive conversations we are having with key stakeholders and their commitment to ensuring that there is robust further education provision in Southampton.”

Stannard was due to stand down following the college's merger, which was meant to be finalised by March 31, and at which point Jan Edrich, principal of Eastleigh, would have headed up both colleges.

City College Southampton has since confirmed Stannard will be staying put, while trying to reassure students,

staff and parents that it is “business as usual”.

The college, which is rated “requires improvement” by Ofsted and has around 5,000 students, has seen its financial health deteriorate to “inadequate” in recent years.

Its accounts showed that it has agreed with Santander a £500,000 ongoing overdraft facility, “however, this is insufficient to cover the expected cashflow shortfall occurring during January, February and March 2019” and an application for an unknown amount of exceptional financial support from the DfE has been approved “enabling the college to continue in operation in the short term”.

The financial statement also shows that its cash deficit deepened from £257,000 to £585,000 in 2017/18, and its total comprehensive income was just £1.3 million.

ALTERNATIVE PROVIDERS IN SOUTHAMPTON

If City College Southampton does collapse, administrators could transfer its existing learners to other local providers. The college, which is located in the city centre, has four other sixth-form colleges within a three-mile radius: St Anne's Catholic School & Sixth Form College, Bitterne Park Sixth Form, Itchen Sixth Form College and Richard Taunton Sixth Form College. Further away there is The Hamble Community Sports College and the Totton

College.

St Anne's Catholic School has an “outstanding” Ofsted rating and Bitterne has been ranked as “good” in its last inspection. Itchen and Richard Taunton both have a “requires improvement” rating.

Eastleigh College, a 20-minute car ride away from City College, could also be an alternative to learners. Located close to the city's airport, the college was downgraded from “outstanding” to “good” by Ofsted earlier this year.

The new college insolvency regime

The news of the failed merger with Eastleigh College, which has put City College Southampton in imminent danger of insolvency, came little over one month after the new insolvency regime was introduced, which set out that, for the first time, troubled colleges will be able to go bust.

The Department for Education has made clear in its new regime that colleges like Southampton, which has been surviving on government bailouts, will no longer be saved by long-term bailouts and will be placed into administration if they fail.

The insolvency regime, which came into effect on January 31, aims at making it clear how colleges will be

managed if they become insolvent, at the same time as protecting existing learners.

Prior to a corporate insolvency, government may commission an Independent Business Review into the provider to assess the options available, since the Restructuring Facility funding is no longer to be available. Some lending banks already commission these as part of their normal course of business.

In the event that a college runs out of money, they must now give the DfE notice that they want to appoint an administrator. The DfE then has 14 days to decide if it wants to apply to court for an education administration

order – for their own administrator. Then the administrator appointed by the court will be required to act to avoid or minimise disruption to the studies of the existing students.

Administrators would first seek to rescue the college as a going concern. If this fails, they would seek to transfer the business to another institution. In some cases, some or all students could be transferred to another provider, or the college may be kept going until existing students have completed their course. At the same time the education administrator would also balance the needs and rights of lenders and other creditors and realise assets for their benefit.

Finalists for AAC 2019 Awards celebrated in Parliament

BILLY CAMDEN

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The national finalists of the AAC Apprenticeship Awards 2019 were recognised and celebrated at a special reception at the Houses of Parliament on Monday.

Around 150 people packed into the Terrace Pavilion for the event, which coincided with the start of the 12th annual National Apprenticeship Week.

The event was sponsored by the chair of the education select committee Robert Halfon, who received last year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Addressing this year's finalists, he said: "There's a massive amount of work to be done and policy changes to be had but having an event like this

isn't just a nice event in the Houses of Commons, it is unbelievably important for apprenticeships.

"What this does is say we believe in the prestige of apprenticeships in our country. We want to build a skills nation and make sure every young person can climb the education and skills ladder of opportunity.

"All the award nominees are change makers, so thank you to all the providers and organisations who are here."

Mr Halfon added: "If we do this together and carry on it won't just be a few small steps it will be a giant leap for apprentice kind."

More than 350 entries were submitted from colleges, training providers and employers for the awards, which are in their second year and run by FE Week and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

There are now two types of awards: Route Apprenticeship Provider of the Year and National Awards.

The former will celebrate excellence in 13 individual apprenticeship routes, and winners will be named 'apprenticeship provider of the year'.

Organisers have also introduced an award to recognise employers and



Representatives from In-Comm, Gen2 and Abingdon and Witney College receive their finalist certificate

providers work with SEND apprentices and increasing diversity.

During the event Sue Pittock, the chief executive of Remit Training, a finalist for the SEND award, told FE Week: "It's has been brilliant to come down here with so many great people.

"Our team is super excited to see if they win on the night. SEND is a huge part of Remit with a national team who operate it. We're hugely proud of them."

And Andy Bates, chief financial officer at Gloucestershire College, up for the outstanding contribution award, said: "It's great to be talking all

things apprenticeships here. We're really proud to be shortlisted. At Gloucester College apprenticeships go right back to our heritage and now we're there trying to change the perception of apprenticeships, they're open for everyone whatever business or sector."

On stage, managing director of FE Week publisher Lsect, and chair of the judging panel, Shane Mann, said: "The majority of you here are individuals celebrating the very best in the apprenticeship sector in the UK.

"Today is about celebrating and

recognising your achievements."

And Mark Dawe, chief executive of the AELP, added: "We've got the best of the best here when it comes to apprenticeships so it really does feel like a launch of National Apprenticeship Week.

"This is what it's about. It's about celebrating providers and recognising their excellence."

Winners of all awards will be announced at a glittering ceremony during the Annual Apprenticeship Conference Gala Dinner on March 28 at the ICC in Birmingham.



Mark Dawe speaking at the event

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PEARSON
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Investigates

The truth behind The Hadlow

FRASER WHIELDON
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Exclusive

From front

The Hadlow Group has hit the headlines following allegations of financial irregularities and the departure of several senior leaders and governors. Now, *FE Week* has

learnt further details of issues which brought about the FE Commissioner and Education and Skills Funding Agency investigations, as well as the fallout from the controversy.

Deputy CEO could face police probe over faking ESFA email

The deputy principal of The Hadlow Group could face a police investigation into claims he doctored government emails to claim taxpayer funding on behalf of the group, *FE Week* understands.

Last year, as part of an Education and Skills Funding Agency audit of West Kent College, the agency asked deputy principal Mark Lumsdon-Taylor why significant sums of funding had been claimed when no activity had taken place.

He is said to have told the agency that the claims for this additional funding had been agreed as part of transitional arrangements during the transfer of K College contracts.

The ESFA asked him for evidence proving that they had given him permission to claim this additional funding, and he allegedly presented them with an email from the ESFA, which he claimed to have received in 2014.

However, when the ESFA checked their own email servers for this email, it was found that it had been altered.

ESFA investigators found no such permission to claim additional funding could be proven – and the audit concluded with a demand for a significant sum of funding to be returned to the ESFA.

Asked whether the Department for Education had contacted the police about a possible criminal investigation into certain employees of The Hadlow Group, a spokesperson said: “We do not routinely comment on investigations ongoing or otherwise.”

In addition to his role as deputy principal, Lumsdon-Taylor is also finance director of The Hadlow Group and a trustee of the Kent Mining Heritage Foundation (which is building a museum at Betteshanger Park, which is part of The Hadlow Group).

His relationship with Hadlow

College first began when he worked for chartered accountant Macintyre Hudson as its director of audit, with the college as a client, in the early 2000s.

At the time, Hadlow College was struggling financially and academically, after receiving a grade three from Ofsted.

He became finance director in 2003, before taking on a wider role at The Hadlow Group once it adopted West Kent and Ashford College in 2014.

A spokesperson for The Hadlow Group would not be drawn on the matter of doctored emails, simply stating: “Hadlow College’s board is conducting its own internal investigation and the outcomes of the investigation will determine the next actions to be taken. Until the investigation is concluded, we cannot comment further.”

Lumsdon-Taylor did not respond to multiple requests by *FE Week* for comment on these allegations.

Former chair was ‘misled and lied to’

The former chair of West Kent and Ashford College’s board and group finance committee has said he was “misled and lied to”, but would not say by whom.

Paul Dubrow stepped down last month, around the same time Hadlow Group principal Paul Hannan and deputy principal Mark Lumsdon-Taylor were suspended.

Dubrow said: “I stepped down as chair of West Kent and Ashford College as it was the honourable thing to do.

“As former US president Harry Truman said: ‘The buck stops here.’

“As chair of governors, ultimate responsibility lies with me, even though the board and I were misled and lied to.

“In spite of this, I felt it the right thing to do to resign my position.”

Dubrow would not be drawn on who misled and lied to the board; but he said that evidence he has provided to the FE Commissioner proved that it had happened.

“It would not be correct of me to give any further details at this point, as the investigation is still ongoing.”

Dubrow was the only representative of West Kent and Ashford College on the Hadlow Group finance committee,

which he chaired before he resigned.

He is also a director of a number of businesses based in Hadlow, Kent.

Last week, *FE Week* reported on how the governance of the Hadlow Group was in meltdown following the departure of a number of leaders, together with the lack of either a chief financial officer and a chartered accountant on the finance committee.

Dubrow’s departure was part of a recent raft of governor resignations from The Hadlow Group, which also included George Jessel, Harvey Guntrip and Chris Hearn.

The role of chief financial officer has now been filled by Anna Fitch, a member of the FE Commissioner’s team.



Paul Dubrow

Betteshanger: £4m failed sale and £1.2m extra cost

The Hadlow Group’s financial situation has been further thrown into doubt by revelations around the sale of a business park that never happened and building cost over-runs of £1.2 million.

According to minutes from a February 2017 meeting of the group’s finance committee, it had “negotiated a sale price of £4,000,000 for the sale of the Betteshanger Business Park to Corinthian Land”.

The group brought in James W Rae, a real estate consultant, to market the park to potential investors, but did not put the site up for sale on the open market.

The college has confirmed this sale never went ahead and Corinthian Land’s development manager Tom Billings said he had never heard of it when he was contacted by *FE Week*.

However, it is understood that Simon Wright, still listed as a director

at Corinthian Land, had looked into buying it with David Tugwell, a director at Corinthian Living and Corinthian Mountfield, which are also part of the Corinthian Group.

Tugwell said: “It was not something we ever progressed with and we never made an offer.”

The business park is part of the Betteshanger Sustainable Parks scheme, which will include a visitor centre and the Kent Mining Museum, all built on the 121-hectare site of the closed Betteshanger Colliery.

For the project’s former chair, the suspended deputy principal Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, the redevelopment of Betteshanger Colliery was a pet project.

In an article by the Kent Messenger Group, Lumsdon-Taylor was said to have spoken about the redevelopment of the colliery in “personal” terms.

He also spoke enthusiastically about the 175m visitor centre being “longer

than the Gherkin” in London. However, his labour of love was to become another financial headache for The Hadlow Group.

It has had to spend an extra £1.2 million on the project due to the challenges of building the visitor centre on the former colliery site.

Ground tests and the length of the centre meant the group needed to use piles for the foundation, which cost more than the original plans for a raft foundation.

The cost of these changes was brought up at a Hadlow Group audit committee meeting in March 2017, which discussed whether to seek financial compensation for the initial advice the group had received about the visitor centre. According to the minutes: “This advice was not correct, leading to both a significant time delay and additional project costs.”

The committee tasked Lumsdon-



Betteshanger visitor centre

Taylor to work with solicitors to find out the likely costs and returns from a settlement.

However, a Hadlow College Group spokesperson said Lumsdon-Taylor did not seek legal advice.

At an audit committee meeting in November 2017, it was agreed to defer the matter to the group board for a

final decision.

Then, at an audit committee meeting in June 2018, the committee received a “route of action”, but asked for a further update in the autumn.

The group declined to comment on whether the £1.2 million costs had been written off in the overdue 2017/18 accounts.

How Group financial scandal

The over £20m ESFA transaction unit loan application that failed

A former member of The Hadlow Group finance committee was paid on sabbatical to help the group apply for more than £20 million from the Education and Skills Funding Agency transactions unit.

Originally, in February 2018, the group enlisted the help of consultancy Edscencio, co-founded by Chris Hearn, to help with a loan restructure at West Kent and Ashford College.

Hearn offered to resign from the board, but it was decided he could declare his interest at each meeting, recuse himself from any decisions concerning Edscencio, and stay on.

In July 2018, Hearn offered to resign again, as Hadlow College had requested Edscencio's help with

their application for ESFA funding to facilitate a formal merger.

But the board wanted him to return as governor at a later date, so it was agreed that Hearn would take a sabbatical until Edscencio's work was completed.

The application was not only rejected by the ESFA, it is understood the need for funding raised significant concern with the Department for Education.

Asked about this arrangement, Hearn said: "Edscencio worked with the governors to assure that the relationship was open, transparent and declared in the register of interests."

He only resigned as a governor a few weeks ago, and the FE



Chris Hearn

Commissioner has required the group to stop working with Edscencio.

What future for chair of board leading investigation into principal and deputy?

The future of The Hadlow Group's top governor could be in doubt after

the group refused to comment on whether the rest of the board had confidence in her.

Theresa Bruton has been on the Hadlow College board for seven years and has been its chair since 2016.

She took over from Paul Dubrow as interim chair of the board of West Kent and Ashford College, having previously been vice chair, after Dubrow resigned in February.

She is leading the investigation into Paul Hannan and Mark Lumsdon-Taylor and sits on a number of committees, as well as on an advisory group for Betteshanger Business Park, making her one of the key leaders of The Hadlow Group following Paul Hannan's and Mark Lumsdon-Taylor's suspension.

Asked whether the boards of both colleges had confidence in her, a group spokesperson did not address that directly.

They would only say Bruton's term as chair of the Hadlow College will last until July, when an election for the chair and vice chair will take



Theresa Bruton

place.

The WKAC board, meanwhile, will decide on a new chair at its next board meeting.

The spokesperson did say: "We anticipate the FE Commissioner intervention and resulting report will involve a review of the role of the governors."

According to her LinkedIn page, Bruton previously worked as head of regeneration projects for Kent County Council and as a director of Visit Kent.

More bailouts or bust: FE Commissioner expected to advise this week

The ESFA clawback for claiming funds without permission, combined with the £1.2 million extra visitor centre costs and a failed application for more than £20 million in restructuring funds from the ESFA's Transactions Unit, has left The Hadlow Group in a precarious financial position.

The FE Commissioner will meet the ESFA on Friday, ahead of a decision on whether the education secretary should continue to financially support the colleges, or let either of them go into administration.

The group has this week confirmed that it is receiving Exceptional Financial Support from the ESFA, which has demanded the return of significant amounts of funding it had previously given to Hadlow College

and West Kent and Ashford College.

A Hadlow spokesperson said: "We are working closely with the ESFA to ensure we are able to meet all of our liabilities, while not compromising on the quality of the courses currently on offer at any of the Hadlow Group colleges or sites."

Damian Hinds, the education secretary, could either finance a recovery, by loaning them money and making the college sell some of its 300-plus acres of land, or he could call in the administrators.

This would mean Hadlow College and West Kent and Ashford College could become the first to fall under the new insolvency regime, which came into force on 31 January.

Auditing firms under the microscope in light of allegations

Questions are being asked about the two college auditors for The Hadlow Group, in light of the swirling allegations about financial irregularities.

Macintyre Hudson, the internal auditor, and RSM, the external auditor, were both asked whether either of them were investigating their role at the colleges; whether they believed they had performed their roles as auditors properly; and whether they think their own auditors failed in any way.

A spokesperson for RSM said: "It would be professionally inappropriate for us to comment on this matter."

Macintyre Hudson declined to comment on those questions and on

whether it would be re-employing Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, the deputy principal of The Hadlow Group, who resigned before being suspended last month.

He was brought in as a "troubleshooter" to help balance the books and, according to his LinkedIn page, he stopped working for Macintyre Hudson in February 2003.



THERESA BRUTON'S APPOINTMENTS

- Chair of the board at Hadlow College
- Member of the Hadlow Group board
- Chair of the Hadlow Group remuneration committee for both colleges
- Chair of West Kent & Ashford College Curriculum and Quality Committee
- Chair of Hadlow Group Governance and Search Committee for both colleges
- Chair at West Kent & Ashford College board

CATH ON CAMPUS



Education that gets out of class

CATH MURRAY
@CATHMURRAY_

Six per cent of adults with learning disabilities are in paid employment – something that specialist colleges are working hard to redress through their own enterprises, supported work experience or supported internship programmes. FE Week visits two Leicestershire colleges to see how they're going about it

I meet Tracey Forman at the Barrow of Treats café, a four-table eatery that serves baked potatoes, sandwiches and omelettes on the high street of the village of Barrow upon Soar.

Isaac carefully records our order on an iPad that uses pictorial representations, something that makes it accessible to most students from the nearby Homefield College.

"The students who work in here will generally be able to serve customers or cook," Forman, the college's principal, says.



Tracey Forman

"Sometimes we have students who wouldn't be able to cope with this environment."

Those students might work in one of 14 sites – including a sweet shop, internet café and various houses – that make up the Leicestershire college that educates 73 students with social, emotional and mental health needs.

"We don't have very many

"The challenge is, how do you make it a good experience for the customer?"

traditional classrooms because we are about accessing the community," Forman explains. "We don't tend to do a whole lot of formal qualifications. We will do things that will let students access the community or access employment, or move them nearer to employment."

The employment rates for adults with disabilities are dismal. In 2018, only 51 per cent of people with disabilities

were in paid employment, compared with 81 per cent of the general population. When you drill down to those with learning disabilities, the figure drops to 6 per cent, according to the NHS.

"The employment rates are still far too low for people with learning difficulties," says Clare Howard, the chief executive of the National Association of Specialist Colleges, when we chat about what I've seen in Leicestershire.

"There is an issue around the culture of making sure that we are demonstrating that this group of students could be really good for the economy, and we've got to demonstrate to employers how valuable that is."

Back in Barrow, in the sweet shop across the road, 19-year-old Robert has just packed up 20 cellophane party bags with brightly coloured sweets. He's had to calculate and count out a pound's worth for each bag, and is now sitting at the work table facing away from the shop door, his cone-shaped creations piled high.

"Somebody who didn't know about us would just come in and see Robert sitting there, and think, 'What's he doing? Why is he there?'" Forman says. "Whereas he's somebody who needs a break every so often.

"The challenge with enterprises like this is how do you make it a good experience for the customer, while not forgetting that it's a learning experience for the student."

Robert doesn't serve customers, but some students are being trained to do just that.



At the Sip and Surf internet café in Loughborough town centre, Homefield

you need to be doing."

Page, who is also studying part-time for her diploma in education and training at Loughborough College, has worked at Sip and Surf since it opened nine years ago. Touch screens have revolutionised how much her students can do – they can now all use the till, for instance, and set up the designs for the mugs and mats they print.

"The employment rates are still far too low for people with learning difficulties"

Watching the transformation of some students can feel like watching the TV show *Stars in their Eyes*, Page



Sheila Page, Sip and Surf manager

rooms and into the community



Barrow of Treats cafe, where Homefield College students serve the public

says. "They walk through the door not knowing, and then they can go through the door at the end of the three years and they've learned all these work skills that they can take away and use in a workplace, in voluntary, whatever. And you know that you've helped them achieve that."

As well as practising at the college's own training businesses, students do work placements with businesses in the community. So how many students go into paid employment when they leave?

"The number is still very small," Forman says. "Some of them could work, but the work placements don't always turn into paid work."

There's no national reporting of destination data for the 4,200 learners in specialist colleges, with most learners remaining at pre-entry level, entry level, or level 1.

Their destinations, Howard says, are likely to be split between general FE college – having used specialist

college as a stepping stone from a special school – supported living (in which case the specialist college will be training them to be independent) or into voluntary or paid work.

Those with more complex needs or health needs, or who are unable to work, will go into social care, "but we're hopeful that the education they've had in college will enable savings on the social care budget," she says.

A National Audit Office report in 2011 concluded that supporting one person with learning disabilities into employment could reduce lifetime cost to the public purse by about £170,000 and increase their income by between 55 and 95 per cent.

The estimated savings for the social care budget are about £1 million a person if adults destined for residential care are trained and supported to live in more independent housing.

Sip and Surf also functions as a

drop-in centre for staff and students, which can be useful as students often travel to Loughborough with a support worker to go for lunch at Weatherspoons. Forman, sensing my scepticism over whether this kind of activity really counts as education, counters with a story of a parent who told her that what she really wanted for her son was to have lunch together in a pub.

That means, she says, that the young person must learn how to travel independently on public transport, function in a busy public place, read a menu, order food, count money.

"Sometimes they will arrive with us in one location, only to go off on a train somewhere because that's the lesson for the morning. So it doesn't take place in a room.

"The work placements don't always turn into paid work"

"For us, going somewhere to do something is part of your preparation. As you will know in your work, you do have to go places, don't you? And you have to learn how to do that. So that's why our strapline is 'achievement through experience', because everything we do is part of the learning."

The government's supported internship programmes, which started in September 2013, are aimed at getting more people with disabilities into work through personalised learning programmes. About 700 people are now on these internships, either through an FE college or the local authority.

Five are run by RNIB College Loughborough, a specialist sight-loss college for 73 students, adjacent to Loughborough College.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



A Homefield College student does work experience in the college sweet shop

FROM FIRST-AID TO THE KITCHEN VIA A SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP



Supported intern Katie Sellers checks first-aid kits at Homefield College

Katie Sellers has been on a three-day-a-week supported internship with Homefield College since September. On Wednesdays she checks the inventory in the first-aid boxes at the college's main base, Mount Sorrell. On Tuesdays she does English and maths.

And on Thursdays she makes resources for students, such as signs to remind them what their jobs are in the sweet shop.

The 22-year-old, who hopes eventually to work in a café, has also done some work experience making cakes in the Barrow of Treats kitchen.

CATH ON CAMPUS



'This group of students could b

CONTINUED

"We were built here specifically to work alongside the mainstream college," says June Murray, the principal, a move she describes as "very progressive, very innovative" when it was founded in 1989. At the time, blind and partially sighted students might have done their A-levels in the mainstream college, with the RNIB providing additional life skills and specialist skills training.

The RNIB college now educates students with a whole range of disabilities, as a result of the shift towards the "presumption to mainstream" introduced in the Children and Families Act 2014, and an emphasis on local provision.

Murray sees this as a good thing, as long as the right kind of additional specialist support is still available: "We're looking at student choice here, and there are a number of young people who are choosing to be in their local college, stay at home in their own community. That's a positive thing. Providing, of course, they're going to get the kind of wraparound support that they need."

Unlike Homefield, RNIB operates from a traditional college campus, but it also places a strong focus on work readiness. Students can choose to work in one of the college's five "enterprises": the office, which provides photocopying and letter packaging services for internal and

external clients; the arts centre, which makes crafts to sell; the media hub, which has recently been commissioned to create a video on people with autism for the local police authority; the Bell Bar college canteen; and Sell4U, where students process items to list for sale on Ebay in return for a percentage of the profit.

Students also do long-term work placements of two hours a week over their first two years, where they are accompanied by a learning support assistant.

"All one parent wanted for her son was to have lunch together in a pub"

Gina Hufford is the work placement officer for RNIB College and part of her job is to convince employers of the benefits of taking on students. "Obviously you do get hesitations," she says, "and a lot of the hesitations are around their time – how much of their time is going to be taken up. But the students do go supported so it takes that pressure away from them, because they don't need to have a buddy all the time."

What incentives can Hufford



Jamal serves in RNIB College's Bell Bar

LEARNING ENTERPRISE SKILLS IN THE CRAFT CENTRE



Sharnai Fletcher-Hartshorn makes clothes and jewellery in the RNIB College craft centre

Sharnai Fletcher-Hartshorn sells about 200 tree ornaments made of crystal and wire to friends and family every Christmas.

"I always make over the amount I'll need, so I can't oversell," she says.

As part of RNIB College's enterprise group, she is learning the skills she'll need to start a craft business from home when she leaves college.

"I'd like to be able to run my own business, because I'm not an overly

sociable person," she says. "The idea of working for somebody else doesn't really appeal to me."

The 18-year-old wants to sell jewellery, craft pieces and clothes. "I'm very advanced in sewing. I can knit, cross stitch and embroider."

She's aware of what she's learned so far – "social skills and finance" – and what she still needs to learn – "the ability to get a business pushing forward. I will be learning that soon, in the next six months-ish."



RNIB College principal June Murray presents a certificate on awards day

offer the employers to invest in the programme?

"There is none really," Murray says. "Except for the fact that we build the relationships up with them and we help them to understand that we will be very supportive. And it's a kind of social commitment. So when you get an employer on board, they're hugely enthusiastic. What there is, is, 'If you give this young person a chance, we

think they could be a good employee for you later'. And they are!"

Occasionally a student will move on independently. One, for instance, went on a work placement at Costa Coffee last year and is now on a supported internship with the same employer.

Supported internships, Murray says, "in very crude terms" are the equivalent of an apprenticeship for people who aren't able to complete a

‘They’re really good for the economy’



employer – again accompanied by a learning support assistant.

“Obviously on the internship we want that support to be gradually pulled away,” Hufford says, “We’ve highlighted these students as able to go into paid employment, so they’re not going to have someone there all the time. Throughout the process the support kind of pulls back.”

“When you get an employer on board, they’re hugely enthusiastic”

The ideal outcome of a supported internship is that at the end of the year, the employer will take them on as a paid employee, something that is communicated from the start.

Of the five supported internships run by RNIB College last year, two led to part-time employment – about four hours a week cleaning tables at McDonalds and helping customers with queries. “That was suitable for the employer and more than enough for the students as well,” Hufford says. “There’s no stipulation on how many hours they need; it’s just an outcome for the college that we’ve got someone into paid employment, which is amazing.”

Nineteen-year-old Robbie has been competing in gymnastics for several years and wants to work in the sport. He is doing his supported internship

standard apprenticeship. It involves one day in college studying maths and English, and two days with an



Some clothes are donated for sale by students on Ebay

at Hinckley Gymnastics, where he learns about setting up the equipment, helps to run sessions, and cleans the communal areas. The club is in conversation with a provider to try to build a bespoke apprenticeship for Robbie through British Gymnastics.

These are all great examples of inclusion, Howard says, who is keen to insist that being in a specialist college doesn’t mean you’re not included in society.

“Inclusion means a lot of other things than being in mainstream. It

“We don’t want inclusion linked to the word mainstream, we want it linked to integration”

means the sorts of things you saw at Homefield. If you look at Barrow of Treats – that’s a specialist education, but they are completely integrated within the community. So we wouldn’t want the word inclusion linked to the word mainstream, we’d want it to be linked to integration and making sure that people are well supported into their adult lives and being able to make contributions to the community. You can do that within a specialist college just as well, if not better, than you can within a mainstream.”



Danielle on a supported internship at Tesco



RNIB students Aliya and Scarlett photograph clothes for sale on Ebay, via the Sell4U college enterprise

News

Radical idea chaps. But why not let Ofqual fix the register of end-point assessment organisations?

Government to 'strengthen' end-point assessment register to exclude 'rogues'

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The government is "strengthening" the approvals process for its register of end-point assessment organisations following an *FE Week* exposé that raised concerns.

In an exclusive interview with this newspaper, the chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education revealed his organisation is working with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to make the register's conditions more vigorous to "ensure we don't get any rogues slipping through the system".

Sir Gerry Berragan would not be drawn on what specific changes would be made, but did say that if the institute finds any assessment organisation that is not "fit for purpose", he will recommend back to the ESFA that they should be removed from the register.

The ESFA is responsible for the register, although several sector leaders have questioned why the job wasn't given to the exams regulator, Ofqual.

"Several have questioned why the job wasn't given to Ofqual"

Last week, an investigation by this newspaper found a sole trader and a new company with no trading history were among 14 other end-point assessment organisations (EPAO) who successfully applied to the register in February.

With the total number of companies now on the register totalling 215, sector leaders urged the Education and Skills Funding Agency to "purge" the register, fearing that a dash for growth is being made at the expense of quality.

Last month *FE Week* reported

concerns that there are currently 17 apprenticeship standards ready for delivery with no end-point assessment organisation in place, nine of which have starts totalling more than 1,500 – 1,417 of which are for the nursing associate standard.

Sector leaders also fear the EPAO register will be a repeat of what happened with the register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP), which took on many firms that had little to no trading history.

The backlash against RoATP when it was first launched led to the government closing the register for nearly a year while it came up with a new and more robust approvals process.

The ESFA relaunched the register in December, and now, applicants must have traded for at least 12 months in order to be eligible and must provide a full set of accounts. No such rules are currently in place for the EPAO register.

As well as developing a more robust EPAO register, Sir Gerry told

FE Week that the institute is going to publish a "more detailed" framework in the spring for what external quality assurance (EQA) of end-point assessments should cover.

"That will also help to quality assure the EPAOs and make sure they are fit for purpose and delivering what is required of them," he said.

It comes after the National Audit Office criticised assessment arrangements in its apprenticeship

"We are definitely going to improve our assessment arrangements"

progress report this week, which said the institute needs to "improve" to ensure they are "conducted in a fair, consistent and robust manner".

Responding to the criticism, Sir Gerry said: "Yes, we are definitely going to improve our assessment arrangements as we know more and develop, and as the demand for them increases."

An ESFA spokesperson said the application process for the register of end-point assessment organisations "is robust and we have sought to continuously develop the process to ensure it remains relevant and the bar for entry remains high".

She said management of the register is an "ongoing process", but would not reveal what is being strengthened or when the sector can expect the changes to come into force.

Asked if he thought the ESFA was the right organisation to run the EPAO register, Sir Gerry said: "The register enables people to be paid and that is what the ESFA does, it pays people. I think it is quite right that the organisation that pays them should be the organisation that verifies if they are fit for purpose."



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Closing date for applications is Monday 11th March at 5pm
Interviews to be held on Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd March.

EDITORIAL



The NAO report failed to spot the most immediate apprenticeship problem

The National Audit Office findings into the apprenticeship reform repeated a number of well reported issues and concerns, ranging from the fall in starts to an insufficient budget in the longer term.

Surprisingly, they failed to say anything about the farce of small employers being turned away because 1. non-levy funding had already run out or 2. Non-levy funding remains unavailable.

1. Non-levy funding for small employers running out

FE week was first to report apprentices being turned away in early February and a few

weeks later the ESFA said: "We can confirm that we are now in a position to fund over-delivery".

Good news? Not so fast - they still said the "over-delivery is subject to affordability" and only applying until March 2019 - so nothing had actually changed.

They also ruled out funding any non-levy over-delivery after March, even for 16 to 18 year-olds.

And on Monday, at a celebratory National Apprenticeship Week event, a vice principal of a college told me they were already debating whether to stop working with small employers entirely.

2. Non-levy funding for small employers remains unavailable

On Wednesday the apprenticeships minister Anne Milton visited UEL to speak to apprentices.

After the event I spoke to UEL and was told how they regularly turn eager small employers away because they were not awarded any non-levy funding.

Like so many universities and newer providers, they successfully applied for funds but ended up being pushed below the ESFA minimum allocation threshold.

So instead of small employers, like nurseries, being subsidised to support

young people onto level 2 and 3 apprentices the public funds are being blown on managers in big private and public organisations, including the ESFA.

The minister seems to understand how ridiculous this is, telling me: "what sticks in people's throats is people on £100,000 year and the state subsidising their MBA".

Exactly! Indefensible, yet it has been allowed with no limits and there is no sign of that changing anytime soon.

Despite the NAO failing to identify the farce of small employers being turned away whilst blue-chips fill their boots with MBAs, I'm holding out hope the Public Accounts

Committee will still quiz the permanent secretary, Jonathan Slater, about it at their hearing on March 25.

I would very much like to hear how Slater justifies locking 98 percent of employers, those classed as non-levy, out of the apprenticeship system.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



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Mystery no-notice ESFA audits spark provider panic

If you have nothing to hide, why is it even an issue?!

Catherine Albans

Second NAO report into levy reforms a 'shame', says Milton

What does that mean!! Not the sort of response expected from the person in charge. I know sorting out the ESFA/DfE issues must resemble herding cats, but "shame" is a little weak?

Marches Skills Provider Network

NAO warns apprenticeship budget set to run out after DfE got its forecast wrong

The whole apprenticeship system has lurched from one failure to the next ever since the reforms started.

Simon Crowther

The killer blow to the budget being the change in the early reforms rules from an apprenticeship being a new job to one that can be based on substantial new skills development.

Louise Doyle

What wonderful news to be hearing during National Apprenticeship Week!!!!!! NOT!!

Weir Training

AAC Apprenticeship Awards 2019 finalists celebrated in parliament

It's an honour to make the final in two categories - especially national provider of the year 2019. Bring on the big evening!!

In-Comm Training

ESFA apprenticeship assessment register needs to be 'purged'

We would be extremely disappointed if EPA became the domain of awarding bodies only.

Tim Buchanan

Levy budget bust: government agency warns of imminent apprenticeship overspend

Someone needs to get to the bottom of this. Any maths I do around this doesn't indicate the levy funds being spent. But funds are different to budget. The most plausible scenario to me is that the levy is budgeted to fund other things (non-levy) and/or go back to Treasury.

Graham Howe

REPLY OF THE WEEK

NAO warns apprenticeship budget set to run out after DfE got its forecast wrong



Another unintended consequence of the reforms to hit small businesses and those young people who we are trying to educate that apprenticeships are a valid pathway after leaving school.

Sue Fielding

Experts

LINDA JORDAN

Senior Adviser, the National Development Team for Inclusion



Supported internships are a success for SEND youngsters

The radical change has moved from focussing on young people's disabilities and problems to supporting them to live ordinary lives in their communities, says Linda Jordan

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) was delighted to be invited to join the roundtable discussion with the education select committee into the implementation of the reforms to the special education system introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. The roundtable took place on January 29 and the discussions were reported in *FE Week* on the same day.

The NDTi has had a contract with the Department for Education since 2012 to support local areas with the implementation of the reforms through a programme called Preparing for Adulthood. We have a particular focus on the 14-25 age group and have worked extensively with the post-16 sector.

The roundtable discussions were mainly concerned with some of the

challenges in implementing the new systems, which led the chair to describe the situation as a "tangled mess".

It is true that there are challenges – there are bound to be. The 2014 reforms introduced a huge change programme involving multiple partners. The legislation required local authorities to publish their local offer "of all services available to support children who are disabled, or who have SEN, and their families".

But we are also seeing success stories. The vision set out by the green paper *Support and Aspiration*, which preceded the Children and Families Act, was radical. It promoted a change from a system that focused on children and young people's disabilities and problems to one that would support them to live ordinary lives in their communities – to do the things that other children do, to develop independence, have a voice, experience high-quality teaching and learning and to move into employment.

The strategies to achieve this are called Preparing for Adulthood pathways and have a prominent place in the 2015 SEND Code of Practice. Local services now have to support young people to plan for employment, independent living and good health, and to experience friendships and

"There are 700 young people doing a supported internship"

relationships, from year 9, when they turn 14.

One of the major successes of this programme over the past few years has been the development of supported internships.

Since September 2013 the post-16 offer has been constructed to deliver

study programmes, which all young people over the age of 16 follow. For young people with an Education, Health and Care plan, a study programme can extend to age 25.

Study programmes have to include work experience, and supported internships are study programmes for those young people furthest away from the labour market. They take place on an employer's premises, with tutoring and other support in situ, and are supported by a range of partnerships.

NDTi recently conducted a survey that revealed over 1,000 young people have completed a supported internship, with 50 per cent moving into paid employment straight away. Some 83 per cent of the providers surveyed are offering supported internships, with this increasing year on year. There is an encouraging growth in the number of trained and qualified job coaches. Currently, there are approximately 700 young people doing a supported internship, with the majority supported

by an FE college and the local authority.

The Manchester College was amongst the first in the country to introduce the supported internship model and it set the bar high from the outset. They have 51 interns this year, working with large and small employers. Their provision has grown rapidly and The Manchester College team support 88 per cent of the interns into paid employment each year. Newham College has also significantly increased its supported internship offer and has 51 interns this year working with John Lewis, ASDA, Waitrose, Newham Council and the local hospital.

There is an expectation in the National Skills Strategy that over time, the majority of young people with Education, Health and Care plans will follow supported internships. This can only be a good thing. So let's make sure to focus on what is working for young people with SEND, as well as highlighting what needs to be improved.

SIR ALAN TUCKETT

Vice chair of the Centenary Commission on adult education and professor of education at the University of Wolverhampton



Why has England seemingly set out to destroy adult learning?

It's good for democracy, health, productivity and civic engagement: lifelong learning in this country must be revitalised, says Alan Tuckett

There has been a plethora of new reports from international bodies extolling the value of lifelong learning. Building on the UN's 2015 commitment to "promoting lifelong learning for all" and ensuring that "no one is left behind", the World Economic Forum, the OECD and UNESCO all agree that we need lifelong learning if we are to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution. Most recently, the International Labour Office's Centenary Commission on the Future of Jobs had, as its first recommendation, a universal entitlement to lifelong learning.

The evidence of the value of lifelong learning is powerful for individuals, communities, firms and governments alike. The benefits to workers faced with increasingly unstable and short-term

employment are clear. People with more skills, and willingness to learn, fare better at times of dislocation. For firms, too, there is a strong relationship between a culture of learning and innovation and improved productivity. And countries with high levels of participation in adult learning enjoy a wide range of benefits – with high levels of democratic engagement, improved mental and physical health, enhanced independence in old age, and greater respect for diversity all associated with adult learning.

Why then, do we do so badly in Britain, and in England in particular? We are, alas, overwhelmingly obsessed with initial education – the clockwork model that starts with early years and ends with labour market entry – at the expense of learning through the life course. As a result, over the past 15 years we have lost two million places in publicly funded further education for adults. Over the past five years we

have seen a 56% reduction in part-time (and overwhelmingly mature) students in English higher education. And alone in Europe (apart from Portugal) British employers spent less on training after the financial crash, while their neighbours spent more. If we had set

"The past five years seen a 56% reduction in part-time students in English HE"

out consciously to destroy adult learning opportunities we could not have done a better job.

We need to begin now to engage adults in learning in order to face the difficulties ahead: the replacement or transformation of job by robotics and

AI; addressing climate change; and the challenges posed by our rapidly ageing society.

There is a clutch of domestic think tanks and policy commissions beginning to address these issues. The Liberal Democrats started last summer; the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee looked at funding post-school; the UPP Civic University Foundation has reported on the needs of part-time students, and this week the Labour Party has announced its own commission.

It is 100 years since the finest public report on adult education – the Ministry of Reconstruction's 1919 Report – was published. Its argument for education for a liberal and enlightened democracy was powerfully made, and concluded that adult education, far from being a luxury, was a national necessity. It argued that learners and teachers, and not the state, should decide on curricula. It stated that however enlightened national or

municipal planners might be, they could never meet the full range of aspirations and curiosities of the communities they serve, and that voluntary associations had a key role to play in identifying and responding to emergent needs.

Our Centenary Commission seeks to address the same issues but for changed times. It asks how best to recover a strategy to revitalise education (formal, non-formal and informal) for democracy, to contest accelerating inequality and to foster a culture where learners share in shaping what is to be learned (what was once called the negotiated curriculum); how best to engage people put off by school experience; what balance to strike between state, employer and individual funding; and what we can learn from the best of current practice.

If you would like to contribute to our work do, contact the joint secretaries, john.holford@nottingham.ac.uk or jonathan.michie@conted.ox.ac.uk

ANDY NORMAN

Research Analyst, Centre for Progressive Policy



Apprenticeships should be high-quality pipelines to prosperity

National Apprenticeship Week gives us an opportunity to consider where our system is going wrong and to devise an ambitious plan to combat in-work poverty, says Andy Norman

There remains fundamental confusion as to what apprenticeships are and who they should be for. Within the context of rising in-work poverty alongside persistent skills shortages, we must set an ambitious vision for apprenticeships to be central to our efforts to build a more inclusive economy.

According to the latest data from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, there are now four million workers in the UK living in poverty, a rise of more than 500,000 over the past five years. Many rightly point to stagnating wages and the proliferation of low-skill jobs with little chance of pay progression as the driving force behind this trend. In this context, the growing public policy interest in “good work” is unsurprising.

Yet while much of this debate has focussed on how we create good new jobs, policymakers would do well to prioritise filling the thousands of well-paying technical jobs up and down the country that businesses are already struggling to recruit for.

While low-paid work has boomed, so too have skills shortages. The percentage of vacancies that are difficult to fill due to a lack of skills has grown from 16 per cent in 2011 to 22 per cent in 2017. The figures are even starker for skilled trades roles, where employers struggled to fill 42 per cent of vacancies in 2017 due to skills shortages, up from 29 per cent in 2013. CPP analysis of online vacancy data and data from the 2017 Employer Skills Survey suggests that there were 230,000 skills shortage vacancies for skilled trades roles in the UK in 2017. These vacancies had a median advertised salary of £26,500, an uplift of £13,850 compared to a full-time living wage job.

Filling these skills shortages and boosting the nation's pay requires building an effective technical education system, with high-quality apprenticeships as a central foundation. Yet while there are many examples of excellent practice, the

“While low-paid work has boomed, so too have skills shortages”

co-existence of high levels of skills shortages alongside the growth of low-paid work suggests that achieving this goal remains some way off.

The recent report from the National Audit Office into value for money in the apprenticeships programme confirms that the system continues

to face significant challenges. The report highlights problems of business apathy to the levy scheme, ongoing quality issues and the dual risk of falling participation and budget overspend. Yet perhaps more importantly, its findings also reflect an absence of any overriding vision or sense of purpose in apprenticeship policy. It confirms fears that some levy-paying firms are simply replacing existing training programs for already highly qualified staff with apprenticeships.

At the other end of the spectrum, apprenticeships remain susceptible to exploitation, with some employers offering low-level apprenticeships that appear indistinguishable from the low-skill work they should be moving people out of. Low progression rates out of level 2 apprenticeships compound this issue, with CPP analysis suggesting that 37,530 16- to 18-year-olds each year miss out on an earnings boost of

£2,100 as a result.

Apprenticeship policy should not prioritise additional training for already highly skilled professionals, nor should it trap young people in damaging cycles of low-level training and low-paid work. Apprenticeships should be high-quality vocational pipelines to prosperity, connecting young learners and those in low-paid work with the good jobs employers currently struggle to fill.

National Apprenticeship Week 2019 provided an important opportunity to celebrate the many examples of exceptional provision up and down the country. But it is also vital for the sector as a whole take a step back, consider where our system is going wrong and develop an ambitious vision for the future based on driving inclusive growth. The alternative is to accept the status quo and allow the inexcusable coexistence of skills shortages and in-work poverty to endure.

NOT TO BE MISSED

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING DATA
CONFERENCE

BIRMINGHAM

ICC

29 MARCH 2019

Places are expected to go fast, so register now to avoid disappointment. The fee is £295+ VAT per delegate (no limit per organisation), and bookings can be cancelled online up to a week in advance at no cost.

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Bulletin



Claire Holmes

Deputy Principal,
John Leggott College

Start Date March 2019

Previous Job

Assistant Principal, John Leggott College

Interesting fact

She is a keen horse rider



Kelly Rinaldi

Assistant Principal,
John Leggott College

Start Date March 2019

Previous Job

Associate Assistant Principal, John Leggott College

Interesting fact

She once featured on Supermarket Sweep



Palvinder Singh

Principal, City of
Bristol College

Start date June 2019

Previous Job

Deputy Principal Finance, Planning and Business
Development at Kidderminster College, NCG

Interesting fact

He enjoys walking meditations



David Grant

Chief Executive,
AAA Training Solutions

Start date March 2019

Previous job

Chief Operating Officer, Haddon Training

Interesting fact

He initially trained as a chef and has had a cookery
book published

Movers & Shakers

...

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2019

FEWEEK ANNUAL APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2019



27-28 MARCH 2019 ICC, BIRMINGHAM

WORKSHOP AGENDA OUT NOW!

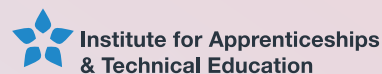
WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

FIVE WORKSHOPS ON EACH DAY FROM THE DFE & ESFA:



- Applying and reapplying to the redesigned RoATP
- Register of end-point assessment organisations development and engagement
- Apprenticeship system development and Transfer funding - how it works and moving to 25% from April
- Apprenticeship Funding Rules for training providers
- Apprenticeship Funding Rules for employer providers

THREE WORKSHOPS ON EACH DAY FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION:



- Institute: state of play - Standards
- Institute: state of play - Quality
- Institute: state of play - Funding

OFSTED WORKSHOPS:



- What inspection and reporting on apprenticeships might look like from September
- What we are learning from the New Provider Monitoring Visits



Apprenticeships & skills minister, **ANNE MILTON MP**, will provide the closing keynote speech at AAC

ACROSS TWO DAYS DELEGATES WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT FROM OVER 70 SESSIONS. THE FULL AGENDA FOR AAC 2019 IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT FEWEEKAAC.COM.

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📍 ICC BIRMINGHAM 📅 FRIDAY 29 MARCH

3 WEEKS TO GO!

Sponsored by NCFE, the event repeats the successful format of last year when apart from a brief introduction and general policy update by Mark Dawe to welcome delegates, it will offer a series of workshops across one day to enable providers to drill down into subjects to enable more effective and high quality delivery.

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WORKSHOPS

OFSTED'S NEW CIF | CHRIS JONES HMI, OFSTED

WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM APPRENTICESHIP PROVIDERS | MIKE ROGERS, BA, LLOYD THOMAS, CO-OP

EPA CHALLENGES | SARA HALL, NCFE

TRANSITION TO APPRENTICESHIPS STANDARDS | JAMES BILLINGHAM

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES | GRAHAM HASTING-EVANS, NOCN & STEPHEN JOHN, DIT

KEY APPRENTICESHIP POLICY UPDATES | SIMON ASHWORTH, AELP

REGISTER REFRESH | STEVE O'HARE, SCLO

OFSTED INSPECTION READINESS | IAN BAMFORD, PARAGON

DELIVERING GOOD STUDY PROGRAMMES | KATE LOU, SCL

OFF THE JOB TRAINING | STEWART SEGAL, AEGIS

DEVOLUTION UPDATE | ANDREW GLADSTONE-HEIGHTON, NCFE & HARMINDER MATHARU, AELP

GOOD GOVERNANCE | SUE PEMBER OBE, HOLEX

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES | LUCY DUNLEAVY, LEARNBOX & SUSANNA LAWSON, ONEFILE

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

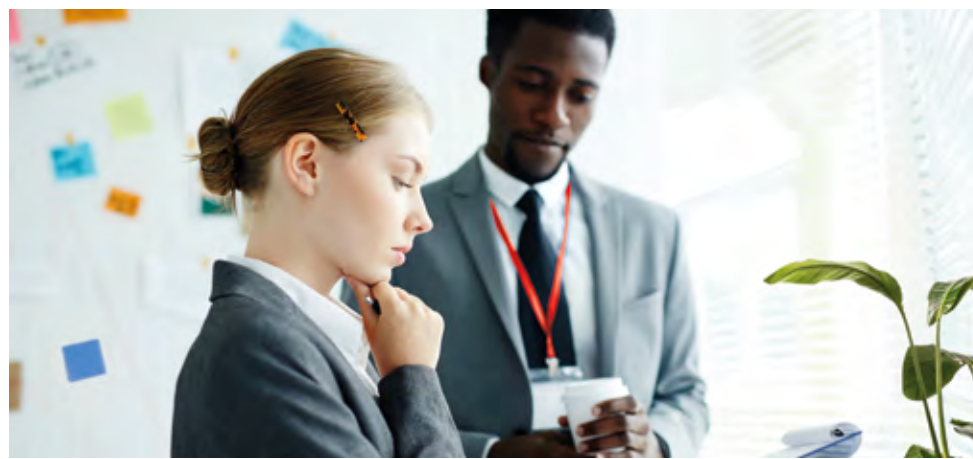
Difficulty: Medium

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: Alyson Shields

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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