



# FE WEEK

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EDITION 279

## HS2 COLLEGE BAILOUT AND RENAME



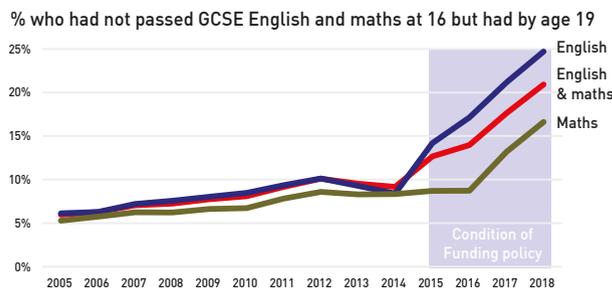
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## ENG & MATHS RESIT SUCCESS

**Sharp increase in GCSE passes between ages 16 and 19 since controversial condition of funding policy implemented**

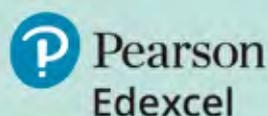
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Exclusive analysis and reaction on pages 4 and 17



**Nazir Afzal profile interview: 'No disrespect, but FE should be in The Times, The Guardian...'**

See pages 12 and 13



Functional Skills  
**Skills without limits**



## MEET THE TEAM

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# Largest teaching union wants colleges back under local authority control

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
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Exclusive

The boss of England's biggest teaching union has told *FE Week* it is "blindingly obvious" that colleges should be brought back under local authority control.

The National Education Union held its annual conference two weeks ago and last on its list of motions was one for post-16 education.

Whilst the union echoed the calls of many in FE, such as an increase to base rate funding for 16- to 19-year-olds, it agreed on a proposal that is likely to raise a few eyebrows: making colleges lose their full autonomy.

The union, which would not reveal how many of its over 450,000 members work in FE, will form a working group to investigate "how best to bring all colleges back into local authority control", with the recommendations to be "considered by next year's conference".

Its joint general secretary Kevin

Courtney, who said the idea was one he was personally in favour of, told *FE Week* the motion "isn't calling for that degree of control local authorities had in the 1980s, it is talking about planning, teachers' terms and conditions and there being an integrated system in an area".

"That doesn't mean absolute control over every bit of the curriculum offer. We think there are appropriate levels of autonomy, subsidiarity if you like, that should apply," he added.

"It is sensible when you have got school sixth forms, FE colleges and sixth-form colleges to have some sense of planning your provision across the whole road. That means to some degree, the local authority having influence once again."

The Labour Party has hinted that this is a policy it would like to adopt if it gets into power.

"We feel there's a danger with the independent model of college education that they get too far away from local communities and local education authorities," the party's leader Jeremy Corbyn told *FE Week* during the

Association of Colleges conference in November 2017.

"And what we're looking to is a model that will bring them closer to that, but not removing the important connection with local industry."

The shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden refused to rule out bringing colleges back under local authority control, as part of Labour's plans for a national education service, during the Labour Party conference in September 2018.

Courtney told *FE Week* that he thinks the policy is one that Labour would "want to look at" for its national education service, but said it is "not a conversation" his union has yet had with the party.

Asked to outline the advantages of colleges losing their independency, Courtney said: "The advantages of having a system that is fundamentally based on co-operation between institutions, rather than competition, I think are obvious.

"The current market mechanism doesn't necessarily deliver the places for sixth-formers where you need them,

it doesn't necessarily mean you get the curriculum offer that sixth-formers need, and having some more planning of that system I think is blindingly obvious.

"A national system of pay and conditions is also blindingly obviously a good thing. A step towards local authority involvement, a step away from institutional independence, is a step towards making those arrangements easier."

Courtney acknowledged that there would "have to be a process" for implementing such a system since some local authorities have "practically ceased to exist" as their funding has been "cut to the bone by central government", and extra resources would need to be found.

Julian Gravatt, deputy chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said: "For the last 25 years, colleges have been funded by, and accountable to, national government, but they have always worked closely with local councils at all levels.

"England has world-leading outcome and performance data but the systems associated with these are expensive and intrusive. Colleges receive money from



Kevin Courtney

government via six different funding lines and have five different regulators and inspectors plus close monitoring of their assessment activities by awarding bodies and of their finances by their banks.

"Transferring them to local government control would add administration costs and regulation. Before doing this, it would be worth working out what the benefits would be."

# Apprenticeship starts continue to lag pre-levy numbers, despite recent uptick

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The number of apprenticeship starts has continued to rise compared to last year, but they're still way down on the year before the levy reforms were introduced.

Provisional figures published by the Department for Education on Tuesday show that for the period August 2018 to February 2019, apprenticeship starts were up 10 per cent on the previous year.

However, they are 18 per cent down for the same period in 2016-17.

Provisional figures for February 2019 show 25,300 starts in that month, up 16 per cent on the 21,800 provisional starts published this time last year but still well down on the final figures for the same month in 2017.

The 2016-17 year is a better comparator than 2017-18, given that numbers slumped after the

introduction of the levy in May 2017.

Apprenticeships and skills minister Anne Milton was pleased with the new starts figures.

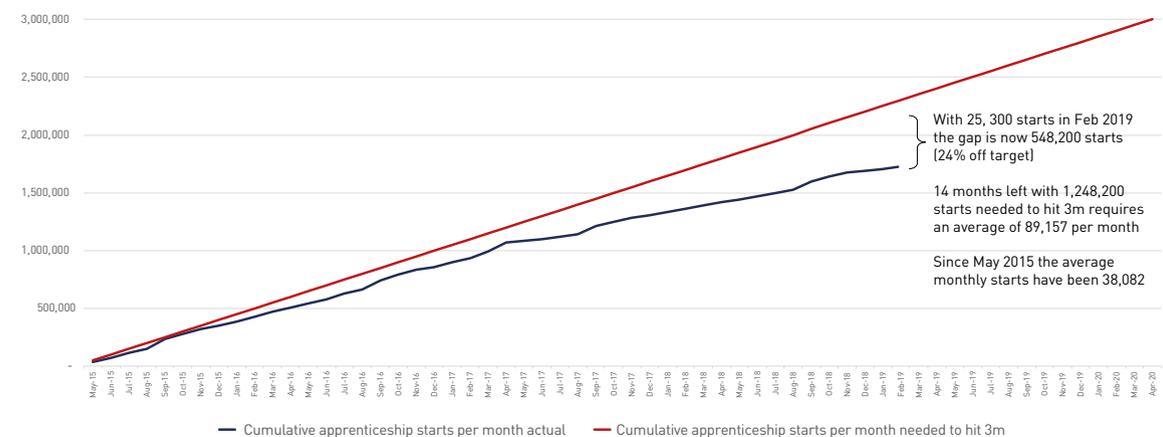
"It is great news that these figures show we are continuing to see a rise in the number of people starting their apprenticeship journey – an increase of 10 per cent compared to the same point last year," she said.

"It is also brilliant to see that over four million people have started an apprenticeship since May 2010."

She added: "Apprenticeships offer people of all ages and backgrounds a high-quality route to skilled employment with the option to train at every level in a range of exciting professions like teaching, law, data science and accountancy."

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation "still believes that introducing the levy was right, but starts being over a third down on pre-

## Monthly progress to 3m apprenticeship starts target



Analysis by FE Week

levy levels show that the Chancellor was also right to call for a fundamental review of how the funding system is working".

"As last week's report by the Federation of Small Businesses illustrated, it's increasing funding available for SMEs as major providers

of level 2 and 3 apprenticeships that is the biggest priority, and the government must use the Spending Review to restore the funding for them that was there prior to the levy," he added.

*FE Week* analysis of progress towards the government's manifesto

commitment of three million starts by 2020 shows a 24 per cent gap.

An average of nearly 90,000 starts per month is required for the remaining 14 months if the target is to be achieved. In the 46 months since 2015 the average figure for starts has been under 40,000.

## News

# English and maths GCSE resit policy helping tens of thousands

JESSICA FINO  
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From front

Exclusive

The policy requiring students to continue studying English and maths if they fail the subjects at GCSEs at age 16 continues to bear fruit, as revealed in FE Week's analysis of the government's latest attainment figures.

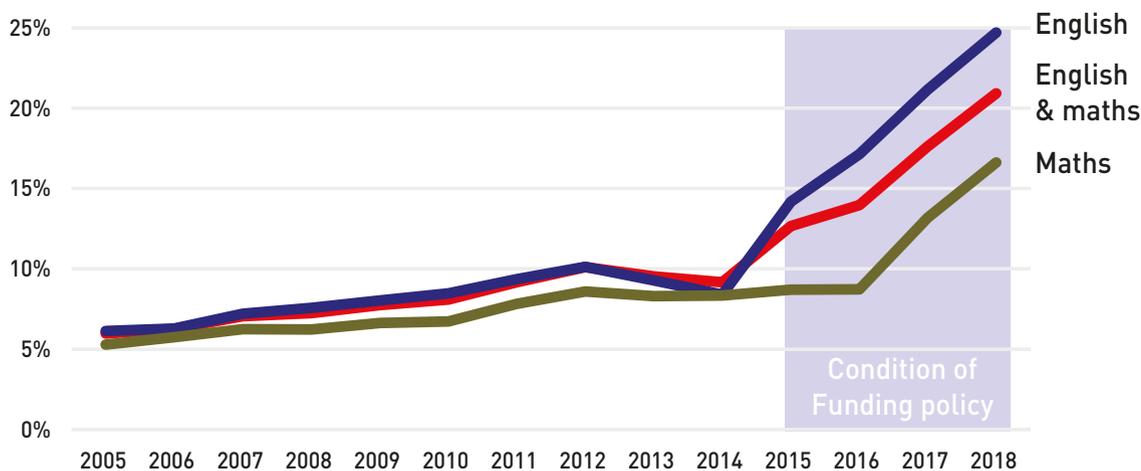
The controversial "condition of funding" policy, introduced in 2014, means that colleges must help students who narrowly failed to achieve a pass (grade C/4 or above) to retake their GCSEs, or else risk losing funding.

Despite criticism of the rule, with providers reporting demoralised students being forced to take multiple resits and wanting to deliver the alternative functional skills qualification, the proportion and number of students achieving both GCSEs after age 16 has more than doubled, from 9 per cent (21,721) in 2014 to 21 per cent (46,886) in 2018.

Stephen Evans, chief executive at the Learning and Work Institute, said the figures prove "the policy focus has clearly helped reinforce and accelerate the trend of improvement".

Writing in FE Week (see page 17), he said: "The fact more young people

% who had not passed GCSE English and maths at 16 but had by age 19



are getting the English and maths qualifications they need shows the policy is making a positive difference. But that doesn't mean the current policy is perfect.

"There are still too many young people on a Groundhog Day of multiple GCSE retakes, risking putting them off learning altogether."

Reacting to our analysis, skills minister Anne Milton said: "We are delighted to see the sharp increases in 19-year-olds who have achieved passes in these subjects at GCSE or equivalent, which is in part down to our reforms."

In 2016, Ofsted's then boss Sir Michael Wilshaw said the condition of funding

rule was "failing".

"While the policy's intention to improve literacy and numeracy levels is well intentioned, the implementation of the policy is not having the desired impact in practice," he wrote at the time.

And the current chief inspector, Amanda Spielman, said last December in her 2018 annual report: "We continue to be worried about the effectiveness of the government's policy...resit pass rates are low, at 24 per cent for English and 19 per cent for mathematics, and the impact of repeated 'failure' on students should not be underestimated."

Sector leaders have called for the policy to be scrapped, and shadow

education secretary Angela Rayner told the Association of Colleges last November that a Labour government would adhere to their demands.

But Milton told FE Week it was a "very disappointing and a backwards step from the Labour Party to say they would stop these resits".

"We know that students who leave education with a strong grasp of English and maths increase their chances of securing a job, a career or going on to higher levels of education," she added.

Gordon Marsden, shadow skills minister, hit back at the claim that a Labour government would scrap resits saying this is "simply not true", but

rather that they would stop resits being a funding requirement.

"We are committed to removing the condition of funding that is currently linked to the GCSE resit, to allow providers and teachers to work with students to find the most appropriate route to gaining the qualifications they need," he said.

"This includes functional skills, which are more useful and relevant for a significant number of them, which this government has consistently failed to support"

He added that a rise in young people "getting these vital qualifications is welcome but the current system is still failing them, with four out of every five unable to achieve their qualifications by the age of 19".

Government has "no cause to be complacent, as the department's own data shows that the vast majority of young people resitting under the current regime are not getting these qualifications," Marsden said.

David Corke, director of education and skills policy at the AoC, said: "We recognise the hard work of college staff and celebrate the success of those students who achieve their GCSEs in English and maths by 19. English and maths are key life skills and essential to student progression and employment.

"However, overall achievement for GCSE resits is poor because GCSEs are not appropriate for all students. As proposed with T-levels, compulsory English and maths resits should be funded over and above the current study programme hours and the grade 3 condition relaxed to allow for either GCSE or functional skills."

## Attainment at ages 16 and 19 in GCSE English and maths

Cohort (19 in...)	Number in cohort	Total GCSE Eng & maths passed at 16	Total GCSE Eng & maths not passed at 16	Total who had not passed GCSE English and maths at 16 but had by age 19	Total passed GCSE English and maths by 19 of number in cohort		
2005	558,273	226,015	332,258	19,850	6.0%	245,865	44%
2006	574,872	231,731	343,141	21,516	6.3%	253,247	44%
2007	593,027	245,014	348,013	24,535	7.1%	269,549	45%
2008	585,906	254,013	331,893	24,051	7.2%	278,064	47%
2009	595,831	267,418	328,413	25,449	7.7%	292,867	49%
2010	602,796	280,538	322,258	26,045	8.1%	306,583	51%
2011	600,148	291,186	308,962	28,293	9.2%	319,479	53%
2012	580,176	295,408	284,768	28,780	10.1%	324,188	56%
2013	579,939	320,682	259,257	24,724	9.5%	345,406	60%
2014	568,570	331,434	237,136	21,721	9.2%	353,155	62%
2015	562,627	331,908	230,719	29,190	12.7%	361,098	64%
2016	573,251	349,964	223,287	31,198	14.0%	381,162	66%
2017	560,158	343,106	217,052	38,246	17.6%	381,352	68%
2018	554,938	330,824	224,114	46,886	20.9%	377,710	68%

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## News

# Former college staff get a chance to challenge FE Commissioner reports

JESSICA FINO

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Former employees or governors criticised in FE commissioner reports can now read and challenge the report before it is published.

Updated guidance on FE commissioner visits, released in April, explains how reports written by Richard Atkins' team will be shared ahead of publication.

FE Week understands that Department for Education officials changed the policy on legal advice after a challenge from the lawyers of Matt Hamnett, the former principal of North Hertfordshire College.

When Hamnett heard that he would be identified in the commissioner's highly critical report on the college, following a visit in September last year, he demanded to see it.

His lawyers raised the "Maxwellisation" legal practice that allows people who are to be criticised in an official report to respond before

publication, based on details of the criticism received in advance.

FE Week asked Hamnett if he challenged the accuracy of the report and if changes were made from the draft to the final version, but he declined to comment.

North Hertfordshire College was placed in administered status soon after the publication of the report at the end of January, which found the college was facing a "financial crisis" that threatened its future following "historical corporate failure".

A spokesperson for the Department for Education said this week that colleges had received "advance sight" of the reports for "several years", but it had "strengthened the process to formally give individuals the opportunity to respond as set out in the guidance".

The decision to allow former employees to also read any draft comes as controversy surrounds the commissioner's role. Many providers are understood to be finding the reports too personal and too harsh,

with a negative report having serious repercussions for the colleges and staff concerned, including resignations.

David Hughes, the chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said in January: "We've got a very accusative, vilifying intervention regime."

Speaking directly about the commissioner's intervention, he said he believed "we've got that wrong as a sector, or they've got it wrong".

"Some of you might have been part of the intervention that I was involved in. I think we always strove as much as we could to help people learn from any intervention, that we [could] help people work through with dignity so they can walk away from something that had gone wrong and move on to something else having learnt lessons themselves and being better for it. I just don't think we've got that at the moment."

FE Week is aware that the Hadlow Group has also seen a draft of a commissioner's report before publication.

Earlier this year, Paul Hannan, the



Matt Hamnett

troubled college group's principal, and Mark Lumsdon-Taylor, the deputy principal, resigned when the commissioner stepped in to investigate concerns about financial irregularities.

Both were given the opportunity to challenge Atkins' report, which is expected to be published later this month.

Lumsdon-Taylor has scheduled a press conference for June, entitled "MARK LUMSDON-TAYLOR talks about then... now... and the future," where it is understood he will respond publicly to the report.

A spokesperson for Lumsdon-Taylor confirmed that the former deputy principal had fed comments back after reading the draft report.

## PAC to scrutinise careers quango that is failing to pay its way

FREDDIE WHITTAKER

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Exclusive

MPs will investigate whether careers funding is achieving value for money after the government abandoned plans to make the Careers & Enterprise Company pay for itself.

Meg Hillier, chair of the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, told FE Week's sister paper Schools Week that her committee wants to look into the Department for Education's careers spending, most of which currently goes to the CEC.

Schools Week revealed on Friday that ministers will continue to fund the Careers & Enterprise Company, which has to date received more than £95 million, after admitting it will not become self-sufficient.

The organisation had pledged to raise at least half of its funding from alternative sources by 2017-18, but documents obtained by Schools Week show plans to generate millions through the sale of its services never came to fruition.

"It's absolutely vital

that we're clear where taxpayers' money is being spent and what the procurement process has been," Hillier said, adding that there was a "big question" over how careers funding was being spent.

"That's the bit we will look at," she said.

The education committee has previously criticised the company's impact and spending, too. Robert Halfon, the former skills minister who chairs the committee, said the decision to continue funding the Careers & Enterprise Company from the public purse "undermines part of the basis on which it was established".

He urged ministers to "pause and reflect" on whether the quango is "a vehicle to rely upon for transforming careers education".

Dr Deirdre Hughes, former chair of the National Careers Council, said: "Given the acute lack of school funding, surely it's time to rethink and allocate the majority of the money to schools and colleges, working



Meg Hillier

in partnership with Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities and the National Careers Service, instead of expensive London-based staff and a plethora of external consultants."

Announcing the creation of the company in 2014, former education secretary Nicky Morgan said that "in the longer term, the company will sustain itself".

But CEC's new sustainability plan shows the company and the government "no longer envisage

million from the commercialisation of its "passport for life" scheme, which is still not up and running.

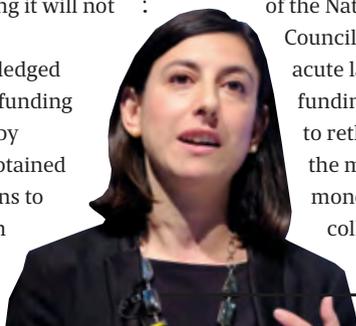
The company also hoped to make £1 million by developing and selling a service which runs psychometric profiling of company workforces, and £4 million in corporate sponsorship.

But the company has "leveraged" just £16.5 million from "other sources" since it was launched, including £6.5 million from LEPs, which are themselves part-publicly funded.

When asked what had happened to the various proposals for revenue generation formed in 2016, a company spokesperson said that plan had been "completely replaced", given CEC's new role.

Claudia Harris, the company's chief executive, said ongoing government support would "ensure continued rapid progress in line with its careers strategy and make sure all young people receive the vital opportunities and inspiration they need".

A DfE spokesperson said: "Since the launch of our careers strategy in 2017, the remit of the Careers & Enterprise Company has expanded and this government recognises that grant-funding is necessary to fulfil their important role."



Claudia Harris

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## News

## Social Mobility Commission joins chorus calling for greater 16-19 funding

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

The funding rate for 16- to 19-year-olds should be increased by a "significant amount" in the upcoming spending review, the Social Mobility Commission has said, piling yet more pressure on the Treasury.

The commission's 2018-19 State of the Nation report says funding for the age group has "fallen 12 per cent since 2011-2012 and is now 8 per cent lower than for secondary schools", leading to "cuts to the curriculum and student support services that harm disadvantaged students".

The base rate funding per 16- to 18-year-old student has been stuck at £4,000 per year for the past five years. Campaigns including "Raise the Rate", which is led by the Sixth Form Colleges Association, are calling for this to be increased to £4,760.

Meanwhile, the Association of Colleges has said the rate should be upped to £5,000, in order to avoid a T-levels crisis.

"Further education provides alternative life chances for all 16-plus age groups," said Alastair Da Costa, a Social Mobility Commission commissioner and chair of the Capital City College Group.

"Consistent budget cuts have made it more difficult to provide opportunities for everyone. But as 75 per cent of disadvantaged 16- to 19-year-olds choose vocational education, the cuts represent a class-based segregation of the school system."

David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said the case for more FE funding is "so strong now, we simply are awaiting the Treasury to acknowledge and respond in the spending review this year".

This week's social mobility report found that "twice" the number of disadvantaged 16-18-year-olds are in FE colleges compared to school sixth forms and that this "segregation" within the education system has risen by 1.2 per cent since 2013.

The commission said the government should "introduce a Student Premium for disadvantaged students aged 16-19 that models the Pupil Premium in schools, with a goal of targeting funding and focussing on raising attainment for disadvantaged students".

It also found that, driven by funding shortfalls and a £2,500 difference in pay between FE and school teachers recruiting and retaining teachers in FE colleges is a "major problem".

## DfE to reopen academisation option for SFCs

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
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Exclusive

The government will reopen the option for sixth-form colleges to academise in the post-area review era – but they could have to fork out the full conversion costs themselves, *FE Week* understands.

Converting to academy status, and in doing so enjoying the luxury of not paying VAT, has been a possibility for nearly all SFCs since former chancellor George Osborne changed the rules in November 2015.

However, the window of opportunity closed in March when the £726 million restructuring facility – a fund designed to help colleges implement area review changes – ended and reverted to the Treasury.

SFCs and their representative body the Sixth Form Colleges Association have been campaigning for this "arbitrary" deadline to be extended indefinitely, and *FE Week* understands their wish is to be granted.

Formal guidance on how to academise now that the area review process and restructuring facility has ended is being worked on and will be

issued before the summer when the Department for Education intends to reopen the option.

It is not known, however, whether SFCs will have to pay the full conversion costs themselves, which can range between £40,000 and £90,000. Schools are currently given a £25,000 conversion grant if they academise.

"This is a welcome and sensible development and we expect updated guidance to be published later in the year," said James Kewin, the deputy chief executive of the SFCA.

"This guidance could bring some consistency to the type of academisation that is permitted and hopefully confirm that the academy conversion grant available to schools will also be available to sixth-form colleges."

The news has been welcomed by many SFC principals.

"Richard Huish College was unable to academise through the area review process because of the complexities of providing education for international students," said John Abbott, principal of Richard Huish College.

"Whilst this remains an ongoing issue, the growth of the Huish group, which now includes one secondary and four primary schools, as well as the sixth-form college, means

there is a growing logic and desire that the college becomes a 16-to-19 academy in order to formally consolidate the group."

Jim Grant, principal of Cirencester College, told *FE Week* his college was unable to convert during the period following area review as "we ran out of time in getting a model agreed before the ESFA deadline".

"So we are delighted that there will be further opportunities and we look forward to seeing the full details and developing our academisation plans further," he said.

Becoming an academy means SFCs no longer have to pay VAT – letting them off an average annual bill of £385,000.

The first to convert was Hereford SFC in March 2017. Twenty-one have since followed suit, leaving 59 designated SFCs. Three of these are, however, in the process of converting.

A group of 14 which are Catholic-run have, however, been completely prevented from converting due to their religious character, which



Mike Hill

would not be maintained under current government rules.

If they converted, they would lose protections in areas of curriculum, acts of worship and governance. The SFCA and Catholic Education Service have been trying to get the government to add a clause to the education bill to rectify this, but the DfE has not obliged.

Mike Hill, the principal of Carmel College in Merseyside, a Catholic SFC, told *FE Week* the situation was "extremely frustrating because the other sixth-form colleges close to us that have academised are surging ahead and we feel we're being left a little bit out on a limb".

He pointed out that being an academy would allow him to give his staff the schools pay award – a 3.5 per cent salary rise – which is not available to FE lecturers.

"I have a concern here that in the near future, some of my staff might be saying, '10 miles away there's a sixth-form college that is paying the teachers' pay rise because they've had funding', but unfortunately here we won't be able to do that," he explained.

A DfE spokesperson said the department is "currently considering whether sixth-form colleges may still elect to convert to 16-19 academies" and "further guidance will be issued in due course".

## BMet to close Stourbridge College in bid to pay back debt

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

A college that underwent a £5 million makeover just four years ago is set to close, following a review by the FE Commissioner.

Stourbridge College, which makes up Birmingham Metropolitan College, alongside four other main divisions, will transfer its 900 learners to two other nearby colleges in September.

Dudley College of Technology will take on its apprenticeship provision, art and design, construction equine, foundation learning, digital and ICT and motor vehicle; and Halesowen College will take over responsibility for business, early years, health and social care, public services, sport and science.

BMet said a consultation on staff redundancies has not yet started, but that it is aiming to "protect as many job roles as possible" for the 200 employees affected.

The Stourbridge College building and land will be disposed of. BMet will manage the sale of the property, which has not yet been valued.

It had £5 million spent on it in 2015 and encompasses "centres of excellence" for engineering, health and social care and early years.



Stourbridge had a long-term debt of £7.6 million when it merged with BMet. The college group said it is "currently working on a recovery plan to repay the outstanding balance and will work closely with the ESFA on this".

BMet is currently subject to FE Commissioner intervention and owes the government millions in bailout cash. Its latest accounts, for 2017-18, suggest that site sales would be the main way of getting the college out of trouble.

The decision to close Stourbridge was made following an eight-week review by the FE Commissioner and "has not been taken lightly", according to BMet principal Cliff Hall.

"Stourbridge College is performing really well and offers fantastic post-16 vocational options for students. I am proud of all we have achieved since we took over in 2013," he said.

"We will now enter into detailed discussions with both Dudley and Halesowen on the practicalities of these arrangements.

"Our priorities will be to work in the best interests of learners, to protect provision and to ensure we provide them with clear pathways for the future."

BMet had an income of £58.5 million and 20,000 learners in 2017-18, making it one of the largest colleges in the country.

It has held a government financial notice of concern since July 2015.

Its latest set of accounts show that the college owed the Education and Skills Funding Agency £7.7 million at July 31, 2018, of which £6 million was exceptional financial support.

The college has also been granted an additional bailout of £4.3 million from the agency, which was expected to be paid in January 2019 after it

"implemented an institutional review", according to the financial statements.

These state that the college sold another building for £9.9 million in 2017-18, of which £7 million went to repaying exceptional financial support.

At the time of the accounts being published, BMet was in the process of selling two other buildings that are currently not being used, which the college is hoping will raise £5.3 million.

Its former principal, Andrew Cleaves, was paid an annual salary of £266,000 but resigned with immediate effect in September. A month later the college was hit with a grade three Ofsted report for the third time in a row.

Lowell Williams, chief executive of Dudley College, said his provider is "very well placed to ensure there is continuation of learning for all BMet's Dudley-based students".

"We can absolutely guarantee a place for every current learner and every new applicant, either in Dudley, Brierley Hill or Halesowen, and no employer provision will be lost," he added.

David Williams, principal of Halesowen, said: "Our message to parents and learners is very clear – there is nothing to worry about. We will provide a way for every learner to complete their studies and for new applicants, there is a place for all of you."

# HS2 college needed last-minute DfE bailout to sign off accounts

FRASER WHIELDON  
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From front

The government had to promise a last-minute gift of £4.55 million to avoid a National College being unable to sign off last year's accounts.

The unplanned bailout to the National College for High Speed Rail came on top of an additional in-year £3.6 million working capital loan from the DfE.

## "It plans to ditch 'high speed' from its name"

Accountants forecast a £7.5 million shortfall over the next seven years, and stated that the extra funding needed to be confirmed "before the end of January 2019 in order to support the going concern statement", according to minutes from a December meeting.

Just this week, the college announced plans to ditch "high speed" from their name as part of a plan to offer a broader range of transport and infrastructure-related courses (see panel left/right/below).

The college's 2017-18 accounts state that the extra cash would be received in three instalments, £2 million in 2018-19, £1.75 million in 2019-20 and £800,000 in 2020-21. The college has confirmed it will not need to pay this back to the government.

FE Week understands that the



Justine Greening

shortfall had in part been caused by the funding band for the level 4 high-speed rail and infrastructure standard being set at £21,000, rather than £27,000, as had been forecast by the college.

At the time, the DfE, the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd (a quango with ties to NCHSR) met to discuss financial aid for the college and it was made clear that "the departments will not let the college fail", according to minutes from a December 2017 meeting of the college's board.

Total income for the NCHSR from apprenticeships last year was just £154,000.

The NCHSR's 2017-18 accounts also

show it received a working capital loan of £8.3 million – which it received in two tranches: £4.7m in April 2017 and £3.6m in January 2018 – "to help with start-up costs that have been incurred in establishing the college," according to a spokesperson. This needs to be paid back by 2030.

The college, which was opened in October 2017 by then education secretary Justine Greening and has campuses in Birmingham and Doncaster, opened in 2017 and had already received £40 million in capital funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to construct buildings and purchase equipment.

A further £12 million was provided by the Sheffield City Region combined authority, and the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. HS2 Ltd also loaned NCHSR £2,906,000 in 2018 and £2,804,000 in 2017.

The college signed up just 96 students when it first opened, even though it aims to be taking on 1,200 a year by 2022. Its recruitment problems have improved this year (see panel below).

Dame Cheryl Gillan, Conservative MP for Chesham and Amersham, has submitted several written questions to the DfE about the college, and on seeing FE Week's findings said it "clearly calls into question whether this is value for taxpayers' money".

NCHSR's commercial financial

## Event space income exceeded funding for training last year

The National College for High Speed Rail made more money from catering and events in 2017-18 than it received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for training apprentices.

According to its accounts for that year, it made £216,000 from catering and events and received £154,000 from the agency for apprenticeships.

The college's website has a page set aside for catering and events, boasting of "state-of-the-art facilities," which it claims could "help take your event to the next level".

There are also two separate events coordinators for the two campuses, who help coordinate external events for NCHSR, which has previously included the Skills Show.

In addition to the rent money, the college's 2017-18 accounts also show it made £253,000 from "miscellaneous income".

So, the college's real income was

just £623,000.

The rest was made up of £4,610,000 from the fair value of donated assets, and £6,492,000 from the release of government capital grants.

While making a not inconsiderable sum from catering and events, the college failed to reach its target of 639 learners for this September, which was mentioned in minutes from a board meeting in May.

Instead, 336 learners were enrolled in 2018-19. The college said it revised its learner target to 396 for this year, which the college is "on track to meet".

The 639 target caused a team from the ESFA to remark "they had never seen such growth," after the college had just 93 students enrolled in its first year.

Those 93 were less than half the 226 learners the college had forecast to have on roll, as it acknowledged in its 2016-17 accounts.

director Martin Owen said: "Our first full-year of operation produced a strong set of accounts, and while we have been reliant on grant funding for the college's first phase of delivery, we're managing our finances carefully to ensure the college is moving into a strong, financially sustainable position."

## "Just 96 students signed up when NCHSR first opened"

NCHSR is one of four national colleges to have opened since they were announced in 2015, while another one, the National College for Onshore Oil and Gas, has been delayed.

A DfE spokesperson said the national colleges had faced challenges initially, but the department had "confidence in the contribution they will make to Britain's workforce".

The financial assistance, the spokesperson added, was provided "where appropriate, as the colleges

establish themselves and work towards financial stability".

There are uncertainties around the future of High-Speed Rail 2 (HS2), with which the college has close ties: the chair of its board, Alison Munro, was chief executive of HS2 Ltd, the company responsible for developing the rail line, and NCHSR chief executive Clair Mowbray started work at HS2 Ltd in 2014 to lead on the development of the college.

Last month, the government postponed HS2 Ltd's "authority to proceed" with signing construction contracts for HS2 by six months, which would time it close to the likely date of the Budget.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Elizabeth Truss has confirmed HS2 will feature in the Treasury's upcoming Spending Review, which could lead to the £56 billion project being axed, according to reports.

After seeing FE Week's analysis of NCHSR, the Conservative MP for North West Leicestershire, and longstanding HS2 critic, Andrew Bridgen stated his belief that the rail link is a "white elephant" and said the college could be described in the same manner.

## National College looks to rename in a move that would railroad the rocketeers

The National College for High Speed Rail has opened a consultation on changing its name to the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure and is looking at expanding into other areas of transport, such as light rail, metro and freight, highways and airports.

But, if the college is allowed to change its name to the National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure by the

education secretary, it intends to go by the acronym ATI. This, however, could land it in trouble with the Aerospace Technology Institute. Asked whether it would be objecting to this, a spokesperson for the Aerospace Technology Institute said it would be "reviewing" the proposal and responding to the consultation "where appropriate".

NCHSR's consultation on changing its name is running until 29 May.

News

# AoC Sport National Championships

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

The southeast retained the coveted Wilkinson Sword trophy when it stormed to victory for the third successive year at last weekend's AoC sport national championships.

The battle for the top spot was once again with their neighbouring rivals, the southwest, but the southeast proved too strong, finishing 42 points ahead.

Coming in third was the West Midlands, who finished 50 points behind the champions.

They were competing in the 41st annual championships, the biggest sporting event in the college calendar.

## “The whole weekend was incredible”

More than 1,700 students took part in three days of competition across 13 different sports – golf, squash, football, hockey, badminton, cricket, rugby, tennis, volleyball, basketball, cross-country, netball and table-tennis.

They hailed from 131 colleges in 11 regional teams and competed for gold, silver and bronze medals.

### Wilkinson Sword standings

1st	South East	210
2nd	South West	168
3rd	West Midlands	160
4th	East	154
5th	Yorks & Humber	151
6th	North West	129
7th	East Midlands	127
8th	Wales	116
9th	London	96
10th	North East	83
11th	Northern Ireland	2

Helping the southeast to the winner's podium was Chichester College's female football academy. They saw off eight other college sides – many of them elite category sides with links to The FA Women's Super League – and went undefeated to claim gold.

“It is unbelievable,” said their captain Gracie White, who put the

victory down to “raw passion”. “The whole weekend was incredible and to wake up as champions is an amazing feeling for all of us.

“Some of the other teams had international players and had experience playing in the Super League, so we knew it was going to be tough. I don't think any of us could



have dreamed that we were going to come away with the championship.”

Worthing College, who merged with the Chichester College group in April, also took gold in the netball competition.

Shelagh Legrave, chief executive of the group, said of both teams: “They demonstrated great character and determination to win gold and be crowned national champions. It is a tremendous achievement and one that they will be able to look back on in years to come with pride.”

Zak Mahamed, from Itchen College, Southampton, carried on the family

tradition of winning the men's cross-country for the southeast.

## “We were determined to finish on a high”

His older brother Mahamed, who has now left college, won the race three years in a row, which included a victory as southeast team captain in 2017.



Zak Mahamed (Itchen College) running for gold in the men's cross-country



Godalming College (left) sticking it to Worcester 6th Form College in the men's hockey tournament



Gateshead College (left) vs Barnet and Southgate College in the women's football



Chichester College Women's Football gold medal winners



Newcastle Stafford College Group women's volleyball winners and AoC Sport Team of the Year

# Championships: south east reigns victorious



The south east picking up the Wilkinson Sword

Godalming College's men's hockey team also claimed gold for the region.

"It has taken phenomenal commitment from the players who have become a real hockey family, supporting each other, turning up for each other's matches and never missing training," said Godalming's sports lecturer Vicky Shelbourn.

The championships kicked off with an opening ceremony in which Newcastle Stafford College Group women's volleyball team was named the AoC sport team of the year.

The team won Volleyball England's West Midlands senior league this

year and in February became the first ladies' college team to qualify for Volleyball England's student cup finals, competing against top universities that included Oxford and Cambridge.

Building on this success, the team went on to claim gold last weekend after finishing as runners-up for the past three years.

Team captain, Lauren Cadwgan, said: "We are a very close knit team and this is the last year we will all play together, so we were determined to finish on a high.

"Both the team of the year award and the victory in the AoC finals meant

an awful lot to us all."

Craig Heap, a former Olympian, Commonwealth gold medallist, TV judge and gymnastics commentator, hosted the opening ceremony.

**"This proves how much colleges value sport"**

One of the highlights from the night was a performance by Explosive, a



Leeds City College's Explosive dance group performing at the opening ceremony

modern dance group of Leeds City College students. The Nottingham School of Samba also took to the stage with a line of drummers to open proceedings.

Following the ceremony on April 26, three days of sport got underway across the University of Nottingham's David Ross Sports Village, as well as at Trent Bridge, Nottingham Wildcats Arena, Morley Hayes Golf Club and Nottingham Tennis Centre.

The event was also supported by 375 staff, 45 student volunteers and countless officials.

A closing ceremony, featuring the all-important presentation of the Wilkinson Sword, rounded proceedings off on Sunday.

"Despite tough times for colleges,



Craig Heap hosting the opening ceremony

more than 130 took part this year, which proves just how much colleges value sport and recognise its positive impact on students," said AoC Sport managing director Marcus Kingwell.



Victory! Peter Symonds College winner of women's hockey



North West women's rugby in action



Sam Wells from Winstanley College



Serves up: Petroc competing in the women's volleyball

# Profile

Introducing...

# NAZIR AFZAL

Chair, Hopwood Hall College, Manchester

CATH MURRAY  
CATH@FEWEEK.CO.UK

**Nazir Afzal is “desperately concerned” about how the government treats FE. One answer, he says, is to raise its profile (and it will require more than a ‘Love our Colleges’ campaign).**

The chair of north Manchester’s Hopwood Hall College has encouraged a Channel 4 news presenter to apply to his board and wants to persuade his TV contacts to make a drama about FE on the premise that media engagement is the way to raise the profile of the sector nationally.

“No disrespect to *FE Week*, but we should be in *The Times*, *The Guardian*. We need to be mainstreaming this conversation,” Nazir Afzal tells me from a golden throne next to mine.

We’ve found the only quiet space in a corner of the lobby at the Aagrah Midpoint, a dining venue on a retail estate on the outskirts of Bradford, which, we surmise from the regal furniture, also caters for weddings.

“Why not get a national media person to be on your corporation board?” Afzal says. “Claire [Fallon] wants to be, she lives in Greater Manchester – good friend of mine – and she has applied. We should be identifying where there are gaps on our boards and fill them.”

Pronouncements like this are easier to make, perhaps, when you count national journalists among your “good friends”, are a go-to interviewee for news programmes and have even had a BBC TV drama starring Maxine Peake made about your work.

Three Girls tells the story of how Afzal, then a chief crown prosecutor, took the decision to prosecute the Rochdale grooming gangs in 2012 at a time when no one else would take the victims seriously.

As well as attracting the ire of some British Pakistanis who believed he was betraying the community, the far right decided ran a letter-writing campaign calling for him to be deported. (One of his fail-safe speech jokes is that he was born in Birmingham and he wasn’t going to let them send him back there.)

He had protestors outside his house and his children had to be taken to school by taxi for three months.

In 2015 he retired from the Crown Prosecution Service, where he’d worked for 24 years, to become chief executive of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners – only to resign a year later when he was forbidden from media appearances after the Manchester bombing at the Ariana Grande concert.

## “FE has been shafted by Her Majesty’s governments for years”

“My board were approached by every media group in the bloody world.” (He pauses to apologise for swearing.) “The public wanted to hear from me. I wanted to say things about the violence against women and girls element to it. I wanted to talk about how we as communities are addressing this issue. What we need to do. And my board were simply saying I couldn’t say anything. So I walked out.”

Now he’s a freelance consultant he’s free to say whatever he wants and is writing his memoirs. He will talk about his origins – the son of Pakistani immigrants, he grew up with seven siblings in a two-up, two-down, in Small Heath, Birmingham, and has previously spoken about being the victim of race-based bullying at school – his career and then “become a bit of a polemic near the end”.

So what change does he want to see? “Everything, not just the legal system ... the country.

“Things like the fact that we rely on NGOs to deliver the services that the government should deliver. Or with refuge provision, we expect the victim to go into refuge but we leave the perpetrator in his home. Get the perpetrator out and leave her in the home.”

Afzal spends one week each month in Pakistan, working for the Department for International Development, and advises the Welsh government on strategies to eliminate gender-based violence.

To steal a half-hour in his busy schedule, I’ve tracked him down to a conference organised by a charity called Together Against Grooming, where he is, understandably, something of a big deal.

Jo Cox’s sister has just approached him to say thank you for a tweet refuting a claim by Peter Hitchens that the MP’s killer was mentally ill. He’s happy, he tells me, to use his platform to speak out on issues he has expert knowledge on, whatever the backlash.

FE is his most recent cause. He’s been involved in education for years: he was a governor at West London University, then Brunel University, where he became pro-chancellor. He describes the five years of graduation ceremonies as “the best days of my life. Three days a year where I’m shaking thousands of hands ... so rewarding.”

But the more he learned about FE, the more he started to see it as “the poor cousin of the education system. For the past 20-odd years, the investment has been going into schools and, of course, universities.

“But the FE sector, that’s just been ignored. You know the data more than me: 45 per cent reduction in [adult education] funding and so on. It makes zero sense to me. So I thought ‘Hang on a minute. What’s my next challenge in the education sector?’ That’s the one that attracted me. And then, by

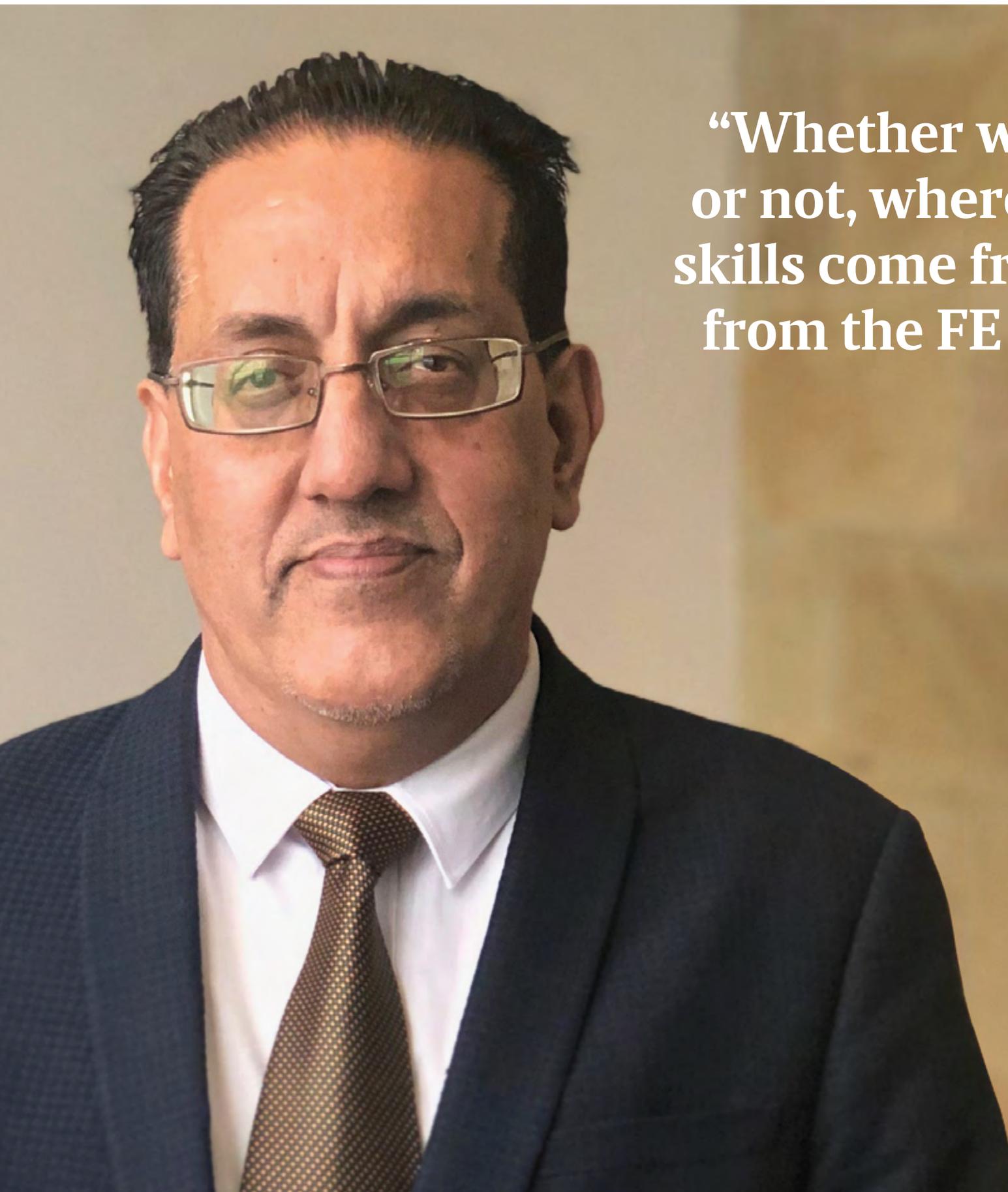
pure chance, Hopwood Hall became available and I decided to apply for it.”

He’s not afraid to use colourful language to describe the inequity in the system. In January he used his regular diary piece in the *New Statesman* to argue the case for more funding for FE, or “how it has been shafted by Her Majesty’s governments, going back years”, he paraphrases.

“I’m desperately concerned about how the government treats FE,” he says. “Whether we Brexit or not, the skills that we require as a country, where do they come from, if



FE Week’s Cath Murray meeting Nazir Afzal



“Whether we Brexit or not, where will the skills come from, if not from the FE sector?”

they're not from the FE sector? It just seems so shortsighted to me that the government is not supporting FE in the way that it should.”

Afzal's two eldest children have so far taken the university route: one is studying law in Bristol, the other politics in Glasgow. The other two are still at school.

He's critical of the Association of Colleges' Love our Colleges campaign, for having launched “far too late.” (It was launched in September, the month before the chancellor's autumn statement.)

“Budgets are organised months in advance. With the spending review

coming up we should be engaging really early on to get our messages across to the treasury and others.”

Skills ministers need a higher profile, he adds. “Given that I probably can't put a face to Anne Milton myself, the public might struggle.”

He attributes the doubling of the budget for the Crown Prosecution Service, from £300 to £600 million between 2000 and 2005, to prosecutors such as himself working hard to raise its profile through “engagement with the communities, using the media more effectively, talking about our casework”. He

wants FE to take a similar approach.

“We [the CPS] went from being perceived as an organisation that

**“The public might struggle to put a face to Anne Milton”**

just did a fairly good job, without any fanfare, to one where we blew our own trumpet for years. So when it came

to the spending reviews under Blair's government, our budget increased and increased and doubled by the time 2005-06 came around. We could do that for FE.”

Public figures such as Steph McGovern, the business presenter for BBC Breakfast, have been blowing the FE horn for years. What would Afzal do differently?

“A lot of people have been through the FE sector and now achieved great success in life. Sizeable people with sizeable personalities, with great profiles. We need to engage with them to become our ambassadors. We need to explain what value we are adding.”

To this end he's been instrumental in getting the chairs of all ten Greater Manchester colleges to agree to pool marketing resources and work together on putting out a united message, under the auspices of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

But doing it in one city is not enough, he says. “On our own we can only do so much. We need to build capacity, share learning. Ultimately we have one message to deliver, which is about how fantastic FE is and what potential it supports, and the journey it takes people on. We need to do this together.”

## News



# New DfE Skills Index shows significant decline in added-value of FE since 2012

JESSICA FINO  
JESSICA.FINO@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The overall added value of the FE and skills system in England has fallen from a baseline of 100 in 2012 to just 73, new government data shows.

The Department for Education this week published for the first time a "Skills Index", which shows how the aggregate value of the skills supplied by apprenticeships and classroom-based learning each year has changed over time, following pressure from the National Audit Office to release it.

It shows that the overall FE skills index has declined every year from 2012 to 2016-17, flattening out in 2017-18 at 73.

The drop from 100 to 73 came about as classroom-based provision fell to 48 while apprenticeships increased to 118.

The classroom Skills Index collapse was driven mostly by a reduction in learners achieving classroom-based

qualifications, due to a large decrease in the number of achievements at full level 2 and 3 programmes, the department explained. This, however, has "stabilised" in more recent years.

## "The FE skills index declined every year from 2012 to 2016-17"

The apprenticeships Skills Index rise came in part as the "number of apprenticeship achievements increased by 10 per cent between 2012-13 and 2016-17, with an additional slow but steady shift towards advanced and higher level apprenticeships and higher value sectors since 2014-15."

There is also a "value-added" measure, which is calculated by "multiplying together the number of funded learners that achieved

qualifications" with "the proportion of learners that were employed" with "the percentage earnings returns" and with "the average real earnings for employed achievers".

For classroom-based training, value-added decreased by 2 per cent in 2017-18, following a sharp decline of 11 per cent in 2016-17.

For apprenticeships, the value-added has increased year-on-year since 2012-13, rising 2 per cent in 2017-18.

The department said this was a "conservative" estimate since it does not evaluate the value that was added by the switch from frameworks to standards, which is not yet available.

The index has been published for the first time after The National Audit Office criticised the DfE for not being transparent about how it demonstrates the impact of the programme on economic productivity in its apprenticeships progress report, published last March.

Permanent secretary Jonathan Slater told a subsequent Public Accounts Committee hearing the index would be published this month and that it was expected to show, "in line with the significant reduction in the number of starts, that you would see a dip and then a rise and continued rise to where it has been in the past".

## "The National Audit Office pressurised the DfE to release the report"

In the document published this week the department stated that apprenticeships accounted for 36 per cent of the total value-added in 2012-13, increasing to 58 per cent in 2017-18, while classroom-based accounted for

42 per cent. The contribution of level 2 training to the value-added measure decreased from 37 per cent of the total to 22 per cent between 2012-13 and 2017-18.

Moreover, added-value per learner fell by 2 per cent, driven by a 4 per cent decline in classroom-based qualifications.

The DfE explained that apprenticeships typically have higher employment rates and higher wage returns than classroom-based qualifications.

Tom Richmond, a senior research fellow at Policy Exchange, said the index is "so high-level – one set of figures for all classroom-based learning and another set for all apprenticeships – that it becomes virtually impossible to use the index to make any targeted policy decisions either now or in future".

You can read Tom Richmond's full opinion piece on the Skills Index on page 16.

**WEST LONDON COLLEGE**

**Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality**

**Location:** West London College  
**Salary:** Up to £110k  
**Reporting to:** CEO & Principal

**Responsible for:**

Assistant Principal (Ealing)  
 Assistant Principal (Hammersmith)  
 Assistant Principal (Southall Community College, West London Construction Academy and Park Royal College)  
 Assistant Principal (Quality & Performance)  
 Director of MIS

*An opportunity to shape the curriculum and improve the life-chances of thousands of people across West London through education and skills.*

West London College continues on a journey of organisational recovery and is making excellent progress. With a new CEO & Principal appointed in September 2018 and support being provided by the Department for Education, there is a real feeling of optimism and opportunity as the College resizes, refocuses and starts to develop areas

of specialism which they'll become renowned for. A multi-million-pound plan for complete campus redevelopment will see the College providing its students and staff with state-of-the-art learning environments to learn, teach and grow communities of learners in.

*The post holder will strive to improve lives through, education, training, skills and development, fostering social and economic success, in line with the College's overall mission.*

Principally serving the communities of Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham Boroughs, and with five campuses covering 12 miles across West London, the College sits at the centre of opportunity for creative, corporate and construction partnerships. Its positive relationship with its London Boroughs will see both High Needs and 14-16 provision grow, and its links with global organisations including Berkeley Homes will see it provide skills-based education and training to a growing workforce in the built environment sector.

As Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) you'll take the strategic lead on curriculum design, planning, data, and quality oversight across all five campuses. With substantial responsibility across the College, your experience in FE leadership will enable you to quickly assess areas requiring immediate improvement, whilst working closely with the CEO and a collaborative executive team to develop the emerging strategy of the College.

It is expected you will be people-focused strategic leader with experience of leading improvements of a similar scale and complexity to those required at West London College. Through adopting an iterative approach to developing the College's specialisms of the future, through corporate partnerships and stakeholder engagement, your focus on providing an outstanding student experience will be at the forefront of your planning and everything you do.

**For a confidential discussion about the role of Deputy Principal at West London College please contact our advising consultants at Peridot Partners:**

Drew Richardson-Walsh  
 07739 364033 | [drew@peridotpartners.co.uk](mailto:drew@peridotpartners.co.uk)  
 Sarah Szulcowski  
 07841 017043 | [saraha@peridotpartners.co.uk](mailto:saraha@peridotpartners.co.uk)

**Closing date:** 9:00am on Monday 20th May 2019

- Hammersmith & Fulham College**  
 Gliddon Road, Barons Court, London W14 9BL
- Ealing Green College**  
 The Green, Ealing, London W5 5EW
- Southall Community College**  
 Beaconsfield Road, Southall, Middlesex UB1 1DP
- Park Royal College**  
 Unit 1, Nucleus Park, Central Way, Park Royal, London NW10 7XT
- West London Construction Academy**  
 Southall Waterside, 170 Brent Road, Southall UB2 5LE



**South Thames Colleges Group**

**Assistant Principal Curriculum & Performance**

Carshalton & Morden

Salary £73,979 to £91,899 per annum inclusive of London Allowance

Here at South Thames College Group, we are now looking to appoint an energetic and talented Assistant Principal Curriculum & Performance to work across Carshalton and Merton Colleges and take on the cross-group responsibility for Apprenticeships.

In order to be successful in this role, you will possess a Degree or appropriate professional qualification and will have significant and successful experience of teaching and learning in Further Education, in particular proven success of driving improvement and securing strong outcomes for students.

The ideal candidate will have thorough understanding of the FE sector and significant and demonstrable experience

of quality improvement within a further education college, including the development of curricula suited to the needs of employers. Excellent people management and data analysis skills are a must. If you think you have the required experience, drive and skills to be successful in this role then we'd like to hear from you.

**To apply, please visit <https://careers.carshalton.ac.uk/>**

**Closing Date: 13th May 2019**

The South Thames Colleges Group is made up of Carshalton College, Kingston College, Merton College and South Thames College, which merged on 1 August 2017. South Thames Colleges Group is one of London's largest providers of post-16 education and training and is an ongoing and significant contributor to its local communities. We aim to put students' success at the heart of everything we do.



**We are a forward-thinking education provider formed in 2017 through a partnership between East Berkshire College and Strode's College with three main colleges in Berkshire and Surrey.**

As a new, vibrant organisation, our ambitious teaching and learning strategy is rapidly transforming our colleges.

Our new teaching contract offers teachers an enhanced salary scale and increased excellent holiday entitlement that reflects school holidays.

Are you a talented leader who will value, support and develop our teachers to be outstanding? These two exciting roles are based at our Langley College in Slough, Berkshire: our flagship centre for technical provision recently transformed by a £30m investment.

**Director of Langley College**

This crucial role is a fantastic opportunity for an experienced FE professional looking for a senior role to make a difference. A strong leader with a track record of inspiring teachers and improving quality of education, your record will include successful leadership of technical provision.

**Contract: Permanent**

**Salary: £52,520**

**Head of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

You will lead our new teaching and learning strategy at Langley College. You will have a strong track record of teaching in technical and vocational education, be able to support and challenge teachers to continually develop their professional practice. You will also lead the teacher training provision, including our innovative QTLS support.

**Contract: Permanent**

**Salary: up to £43,624 depending on qualifications/experience**

**Closing Date: Midday on Monday 20 May 2019**

**Interviews week commencing 27 May 2019**

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**GCSE English Teacher - ref 529**  
**GCSE Maths Teacher - ref 530**  
**GCSE Science Teacher - ref 531**

37 hours per week, permanent | £22,985 - £28,159 per annum (Performance related pay up to £32,642)

An excellent opportunity has arisen for highly motivated, learner-focused, inspirational individuals to be involved in a new venture at Barnsley College. We are introducing a Junior Apprenticeship Academy (Direct Entry), for 14-16 year olds to become full time students from September 2019. The provision is aimed at young people who are not benefitting from school and are motivated by a more practical curriculum.

The main duties of the positions will be to provide innovative, outstanding and engaging teaching, learning and assessment. To ensure progress of all learners from accurate starting points, high quality assessment and feedback and attainment of end qualifications, and to maintain the College's outstanding track record for learner achievement.

You must have a minimum of a teaching qualification (PGCE/Cert Ed or equivalent level qualification) and a successful history of delivering one or more of these GCSE subjects within either the FE or secondary sector.

If you have the drive, skills, abilities and qualities to make a real difference then we'd like to hear from you.

As part of the Apprenticeship Academy there will also be opportunities for:

**MIS Administrator – ref 533**

**Attendance Officer – ref 532**

**Student Support Workers – ref 535**

**Tutorial Learning Mentor – ref 536**

Please visit <https://www.barnsley.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies/> for further details about all posts.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 19 May 2019.

The successful candidates will receive 55 days (academic roles) or 47 days (support roles) annual leave entitlement (including bank and public

holidays), access to either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or Local Government Pension Scheme, a commitment to support job related training and development, and access to a range of other staff benefits.

Barnsley College is committed to creating a dynamic and diverse workforce and welcomes applications from all candidates regardless of their gender, disability, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith. Disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.

The college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.



## CITY OF NEWPORT CAMPUS HEAD OF SCHOOL - ENGINEERING SALARY £48,789 PER ANNUM

Coleg Gwent is one of the largest colleges in the UK, with five major campuses located throughout South East Wales. Within easy access of the M4 corridor and surrounding rural areas, the City of Newport Campus serves a large and diverse range of learners, usually recruiting in excess of 4500 students per year; of which 1900 are full-time. The campus is within easy reach of some of the most beautiful countryside in South Wales and the area offers many attractions for those seeking to relocate.

The School for Engineering has within it over 30 staff and oversees a wide range of curriculum that includes CAD, Mechanical & Electrical Engineering, Motor Vehicle, Vehicle Body Repair and Fabrication & Welding provision. This spans across courses for school-link, WBL & HE learners and significant part-time commercial activity.

We wish to recruit someone who can continue to develop an already successful School, particularly focussing on outcomes on FT and WBL programmes and further increasing non-core income activity. You will need to be innovative, creative, thorough and determined. You will also need to demonstrate that you are an enthusiastic manager with a record of success in improving performance and leading teams. A background in "Engineering" or a related STEM subject area is desirable.

As one of our key managers, you will provide leadership to staff and direct, develop and manage the delivery of excellent teaching and learning. You will also possess the skills to enhance and develop the existing curriculum. A fully qualified teacher with significant experience in post-16 education, we will need you to quickly establish yourself within the leadership and management team on the City of Newport Campus working with other Heads of School, both at the Campus and cross-College.

The College offers many good employment benefits including generous holiday entitlement, pension scheme and many on-site benefits and facilities. You will join a college that is ambitious, purposeful, committed and supportive. If you want to make a difference, this is the place to do it. For our part, we'll make sure that you are given a warm welcome, plenty of encouragement and a good deal of job satisfaction.

Applications may be submitted in Welsh and will not be treated less favourably than applications submitted in English. The ability to use the Welsh language at basic level (or willingness to undertake training) is desirable.

The College is committed to safeguarding, ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people. Employment is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced

Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service and registration with the Education Workforce Council.

Please note that successful candidates will be expected to pay for the Enhanced Disclosure and registration with the Education Workforce Council (EWC).

We particularly welcome applications from candidates who speak languages other than English and also from under-represented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion, in line with our Equality Opportunities policy. All campuses are accessible and facilities such as prayer rooms are available.

We are committed to the recruitment and retention of disabled people, and are a Disability Confident Employer.

To apply, please visit [https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/thecollege/jobs\\_and\\_careers\\_\(323\)](https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/thecollege/jobs_and_careers_(323))

**Closing Date: 12:00 noon Thursday 16 May 2019**

**Interview Date: Friday 24 May 2019**

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## Head of Teaching, Learning & Professional Development

**Salary: £37,630 - £39,925**

Lakes College is a 'Good' College serving West Cumbria and the beautiful surrounding areas incorporating the Lake District National Park. We have a clear vision to 'Unlock Potential' in all of our learners.

We are seeking to appoint a Head of Teaching, Learning & Professional Development who demonstrates outstanding educational leadership. The successful candidate will inspire and motivate staff to deliver the highest standard of learning experience to influence the life chances of our learners.

You will provide leadership, direction and motivation on college wide continuous quality improvements in Teaching Learning & Assessment and the professional development of our delivery staff.

The successful candidate will have relevant experience with the ability to inspire and challenge staff creating a dynamic culture of innovation with outstanding learning, teaching and student success throughout. You will lead, with support from senior and operational leaders in raising standards through continuous quality improvements linked to coaching, mentoring and development of teaching practice.

**Closing Date: Friday 10 May 2019 (12:00 noon)**

**Interview Date: Thursday 23 May 2019**

To apply and for further information [www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/](http://www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/)

# West London College is Hiring!

## Construction Teachers, Assessors, IQAs, Apprenticeship Skills Trainers & Master Technicians

West London College has a successful track record in Construction training and has recently been awarded the Mayor's Construction Academy West London Hub status. With 90,000 homes being built, the Heathrow expansion project, HS2 and the Old Oak Park development, there is no shortage of construction projects in West London.

To meet this demand, we need to expand our construction training workforce and are looking to hire a number of skilled and experienced Construction teachers and skills trainers to join our existing team, with full time, part time and flexible opportunities available.

Ideally candidates will have considerable industry experience and have a passion and aptitude for teaching, training or assessing. The College will be offering a generous package including a competitive salary, membership of a pension scheme, generous holiday entitlement along with salary sacrifice schemes and other industry benefits. The College will also support successful candidates to acquire a recognised teaching qualification or assessing qualification, if they do not already possess one.

We are holding an Open Recruitment Evening on **Tuesday 21st May 2019 from 4:00pm until 8:00pm** at our specialist construction Park Royal College campus, where we will showcase our range of courses and welcome industry experienced talent for a range of job opportunities.

To register your interest in attending:  
**visit [WLCRecruitmentEvening.eventbrite.co.uk](http://WLCRecruitmentEvening.eventbrite.co.uk) and send your CV to [HRresourcing@wlc.ac.uk](mailto:HRresourcing@wlc.ac.uk)**



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## EDITORIAL



## English and math GCSE resit policy is proving successful but remains misunderstood

As we report this week, the latest DfE attainment figures reveal that since the introduction of the 'condition of funding' rule there has been a massive increase in those at first failing, but subsequently achieving English and maths GCSE by the time they are 19.

In fact, calling it a massive increase is probably an understatement.

The controversial funding requirement that young people with a grade D or 3 in English or maths continue to study the GCSE has led to a more than doubling of beneficiaries.

Prior to the introduction

of the policy in 2014 less than 10 per cent of young people went on to achieve at resit, which has since jumped to 21 per cent.

Or to put it another way, in 2018 there were 25,165 more young people achieving English and maths GCSE by age 19 after their first attempt than in 2014.

Along with the hard working learners, the FE sector should take a great deal of the credit for successfully giving tens of thousands more young people the chance to achieve these life-changing qualifications.

Whatever your opinion of the qualification content and whether it is

contextualised enough, there is no denying achieving the GCSE opens doors.

Many employers won't accept a job application without the GCSE pass, so unless this changes there is little point arguing the Functional Skills qualification at Level 2 is in reality an alternative.

But instead of celebrating and taking credit for helping tens of thousands more young people, most in the FE sector still seem to want the policy scrapped and complain about young people being forced to retake the GCSE.

In my experience, many who complain don't in

truth properly understand the condition of funding policy when it comes to GCSE resits.

Firstly, it only applies to those with a grade D or 3, so those who have already nearly achieved the pass.

Secondly, it is unlikely anyone need be forced to study the GCSE given the policy includes a non-compliance tolerance of 5 per cent of learners.

And those that complain about the policy probably think that colleges already choose qualifications based on what will give learners the best chance of a positive progression, like entering the labour market.

Sadly, the last decade

has shown that college leaders (perhaps inevitably) follow the performance regime, which rewards passing qualifications well above sustainable outcomes like employment.

Hopefully, these stunning attainment statistics will give the Association of Colleges, Ofsted and the Labour Party pause for thought.

All policies can be improved, but it would be a wrong and retrograde step to scrap this one.

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

## Readers' reply



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### Plans for PhD-level apprenticeships thrown into doubt

Apprenticeships, employer-funded work-located skill development, are excellent forms of skill development at all levels, including level 8. The issue to be addressed is the funding. Levels 2 and 3 must be fully government-funded to at least age 18. Above that, government funding must be what is affordable.

Graham Hoyle

The only way higher level apprenticeships won't become embarrassing is if the pay rates for apprentices goes up with the level. At level 8, it should be comparable with other industries, so £30+/hr.

Paula Goddard



Good to see IfATE are concerned that £300 million from the levy is cross-subsidising an already whopping £12 billion higher education budget. And I'm sorry, there is no system in the world that would fund a PhD as an "apprenticeship". They are purely academic programmes.

Tom Bewick

### Monthly apprenticeships update: February starts up 16% but down on 2017



So are we saying that we have had fewer starts and we are still running out of cash??? I think that deserves a slow hand-clap if ever one was deserved

Karen Bailey

### Increase 16-19 funding by 'significant amount', Social Mobility Commission urges

Having worked in FE for



over 25 years I know how valuable a role the sector plays in encouraging and supporting young people from disadvantaged communities to achieve their full potential This is appalling and undermines social mobility!

Ian Nichol



Extra funding is needed and would be welcomed by the entire #FE sector. The current levels are not sustainable.

Judith Doyle CBE

### Monthly apprenticeships update: February starts up 16% but down on 2017



I think the graph showing expected expenditure to reach 3 million vs actual spend to date would basically be this graph but the other way round!

Steve Hewitt

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

### Small businesses outline 'serious concerns' with stretched apprenticeship budget



Some interesting points from this survey. Strongly suggest that if a new survey was to be held in three months' time, the biggest issue will be lack of funding to the provider network to allow non-levy companies to recruit. We are an Ofsted "outstanding" provider, working mainly in manufacturing and engineering level 3 programs.

We have received a contract which allows for £6,000 of new non-levy business for the coming year, our carry-over requirements eat into approximately £100k of the new starts pot. Surely this is known by ESFA. Essentially, this leaves a very difficult decision when talking to these companies who are turned on by a reduced 5 per cent contribution. Great news, but not if the provider has none of the 95 per cent in its contract.

Really hoping for the spending review to correct this very soon, otherwise we will have some very sad applicants and disgruntled (at best) companies.

Alan Jones

## Experts

# TOM RICHMOND

Founder and  
Director of EDSK



## What have we learned from the new skills index? Not much

**The long awaited “skills index” is too high-level to contribute to any targeted policy decisions, says Tom Richmond**

“The Department for Education (DfE) has not defined what success will look like for the programme, in terms of intended impact on skills levels within the economy, nor what indicators they will use to measure success.” The National Audit Office (NAO) was, as ever, unfailingly polite in its report about the state of the government’s apprenticeship reforms in 2016.

Even so, its message was hardly subtle. Four years after the infamous Richard review kicked off the sweeping changes to how apprenticeships are designed, delivered and funded, the government still didn’t know what it was trying to achieve or how it would know if it had achieved it.

Fast forward to 2019 and the NAO reported that some improvements

had been made, as the DfE had started collecting data on earnings and how many apprentices stayed with their employer over time. The NAO also stumbled across something called the “skills index” that was viewed as a proxy measure for the reforms’ impact, but even then the DfE had not set out how its calculations fed into its index or what kind of increase in the index would constitute “success”.

We finally have an answer to at least some of these questions following the publication on Monday of the “skills index” for the first time. The index, which aims to monitor the aggregate value of the skills generated by apprenticeships and classroom-based learning over time, uses four sources of data: the number of funded learners that achieved qualifications in that academic year; the proportion of learners that were employed after achieving their qualification; the percentage earnings returns to having achieved a qualification; and the

average real earnings for employed achievers.

The overall trend in the index is unsurprising, yet disheartening. Since the index was benchmarked at a score of 100 for 2012-13, it has dropped to a score of just 73 in 2017-18. Although the score for apprenticeships has

**“Apprenticeships present a healthier picture than classroom provision”**

actually risen from 100 to 118 over this period, the collapse of classroom-based provision from 100 to 48 has dragged the overall index down with it. Significant funding cuts to FE, with the disappointing uptake of FE loans, have inevitably taken their toll on

learner volumes.

In general, apprenticeships present a healthier picture within the skills index relative to classroom provision. The move towards higher-level apprenticeships and older learners seems to have contributed to a slight increase in the average “value-added” attributable to each apprentice (probably through higher earnings), although this shift in emphasis within the apprenticeship system remains controversial.

So what have we learned from this new index? Not much, in all honesty. It is potentially a useful tool in the sense that it captures how many learners start and finish their training, in the classroom and workplace. Incorporating earnings and employment data into the evaluation of vocational education is a sensible step too, as we cannot afford to use precious funds on sub-standard courses that do not benefit learners.

That said, the index is so high-level – one set of figures for all classroom-based learning and another set for all apprenticeships – that it becomes virtually impossible to use the index to make any targeted policy decisions either now or in future.

If the number of apprentices went up, but their earnings went down, should the DfE remain calm or start to panic? How important are employment rates compared to the number of starts? Without the granular data provided by level, sector and age breakdowns, it is hard to see how anyone outside the DfE will be able to utilise this index in a meaningful way.

Perhaps the most telling aspect is that the index has only emerged now, almost seven years after the government’s major skills reforms began. This uncomfortable truth arguably says more about the rigour and substance of the reforms than any index ever will.

# CEARA ROOPCHAND

Policy officer, Association of  
Employment and Learning Providers



## My three wishes to transform the future of traineeships

**There are practical steps we can take to get traineeships back into the limelight – where they fully deserve to be. By Ceara Roopchand**

One of the dangers of sector reforms is the tendency for older programmes to be left languishing, often sidelined with the hope that they will continue to function without requiring too much intervention by policymakers.

With apprenticeships in the spotlight following the levy reforms in 2017, and increasing focus on the soon-to-be-introduced T-level programme, technical education has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years. But in the case of traineeships, persistent barriers have impeded the programme from becoming the success originally envisaged.

Introduced by the government in 2013, traineeships are designed to enable young people who lack work experience to progress rapidly to employment, an apprenticeship or

into further education. The latest available data paints a dismal picture, with starts declining year-on-year between Q1 2015-16 and Q1 2018-19, with only 17,700 starts last year, but these numbers haven’t attracted much attention against the massive slump in apprenticeship starts that occurred in the levy’s first year.

The barriers to success include the ongoing perverse measures of the Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) as defined by the ESFA, which penalise providers even when trainees are successfully progressing into the primary progression outcomes.

As a result, many providers have reluctantly withdrawn from delivering traineeships to the detriment of young people, many of whom are NEET or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Employers have also been put off by bad publicity in 2017 relating to two large companies offering unpaid, but good-quality and valuable, work

experience.

The fact that in one of these, around 40% of the trainees progressed into paid employment via an apprenticeship was somehow lost in the media coverage. With questions now over the viability of some level 2 apprenticeships, we’re witnessing an

**“I’m not aware of a single keynote by a minister backing traineeships”**

unfortunate example of the ladder of opportunity being pulled from young people before they even get a chance to step on it. In AELP’s view, the point about having no formal position on paid or unpaid work experience should be a lesson government needs

to consider when looking at the industry-placement aspect of the T-levels.

If I were to stumble upon a magic lamp on my next trip to the DfE, what would my three wishes be? Firstly, I would wish to address the QAR methodology which AELP has consistently said is not fit for purpose for traineeships and continues to punish providers due to ongoing issues between the main programme (progression) and component parts (qualifications).

A success measure methodology that takes into account whether progression is achieved or otherwise, in addition to achieving component aims, is a more practical measurement and likely to be supported by providers.

The second wish is to address the lack of flexibility in the current funding system on which this highly effective programme is based. A good starting point is to review how growth requests are managed, moving to a

flexible process rather than a lagged model to meet demand and help support the growth aspirations of providers.

Furthermore, the calculation for growth allocations should be made clearer to providers. However, we should acknowledge and welcome this week’s announcement from the ESFA offering additional in-year growth for 19-24 traineeships.

Our last request would be for more visible government support of the traineeship brand. Traineeships briefly shared the platform with apprenticeships as part of the government’s flagship skills programmes but publicity and public support for the programme have dwindled dramatically.

I am not aware of a single keynote speech from a minister backing or publically promoting traineeships. It would be far better to avoid variations in support between further education programmes to maximize the awareness and choice of opportunities.

# STEPHEN EVANS

Chief executive, Learning & Work Institute



## Mind the doors: young people are now getting more chances

**Progress has stalled on improving qualifications for young people, but there are signs of progress on English and maths, says Stephen Evans**

First, the bad news. The proportion of 19-year-olds gaining a level 2 or level 3 qualification has stalled. More than eight in ten have a level 2 qualification, and six in ten a level 3. This has fallen over the past five years, following generations of improvement. T-levels and apprenticeships have a lot of work to do to plug this gap...

But on to some better news. The number of young people gaining good grades at English and maths GCSEs or equivalent, so crucial for life and work, is rising.

The percentage of 16-year-olds gaining these qualifications has been rising for some time – up from 40 per cent in 2005 to 60 per cent today. But until recently, few young people who missed out at 16 went on to gain English and maths level 2

qualifications by age 19. Of the 330,000 16-year-olds who didn't get an English or maths GCSE at a "good" grade in 2002, only one in twenty had done so by age 19. By 2014, this had risen to one in ten.

**“The number of young people gaining good grades at English and maths GCSEs is rising.”**

In the same year the condition of funding was introduced requiring study to level 2 English and maths after age 16 for those not qualified to level 2. Today, 224,000 16-year-olds did not get their required GCSE English and maths grades. But one in five of

these went on to gain good GCSEs in English and maths by age 19, rising to 27 per cent, including functional skills qualifications. The policy focus has clearly helped to reinforce and accelerate the trend of improvement, though progress is faster for English than maths.

Why is this a big deal? The 2011 Wolf review, which led to the condition of funding, highlighted how fundamental English and maths are to life and work, that progression rates for these skills are low in England after the age of 16, and that the lack of requirement to study these subjects after this age is unusual compared with other countries. Since then, research has shown the huge impact missing out on a grade C (before the change to the marking scheme) GCSE can have on a young person's prospects.

Too often, GCSE English and maths at age 16 have been a sliding doors moment. It shouldn't be that way, and the statistics suggest more young

people are now getting more chances.

The fact more young people are getting the English and maths qualifications they need shows the policy is making a positive difference. But that doesn't mean the current policy is perfect. There are still too many young people on a Groundhog Day of multiple GCSE retakes, risking putting them off learning altogether. Recent tweaks and clarifications to the policy should help, including clarity that those with GCSE grade 2 or below

**“Too many young people are on a Groundhog Day of GCSE retakes”**

don't need to then continue on to GCSE, but there may be further to go to

“soften the edges”.

More can also be done to invest in teaching and support, to better share data on previous attainment, and to build the evidence base and share best practice. We also need a strategy for the many young people not currently in education – whether they are in work or on benefits – to improve these core skills.

That includes looking at how functional skills operate in work-based learning such as apprenticeships. Last, studies of literacy and numeracy show that qualifications don't always translate into skills – learning happens best when it's linked to real-world scenarios and reinforced.

The Learning and Work Institute's youth commission will look at all these issues. But that shouldn't distract us from celebrating the fact that more young people are getting English and maths qualifications. Our challenge is to make sure even more young people can build the skills they need.

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# Bulletin



**Michelle Howard**

Executive director,  
The Lancashire Colleges

**Start date** May 2019

**Previous job**

Business development manager, Manchester Metropolitan University

**Interesting fact**

She once completed a tandem skydive for charity



**Brad Rushton**

Managing Director, SCL  
Education & Training

**Start date** March 2019

**Previous job**

Commercial director, SCL Education & Training

**Interesting fact**

He signed his first schoolboy contract with West Bromwich Albion at 14 years old, and continued to play for the team until age 16



**Sean Pearce**

Chief operating  
officer, Ofqual

**Start date** January 2019

**Previous job**

Director of finance, West Midlands Combined Authority

**Interesting fact**

He is currently preparing for a 'Mad May' of 100 mile bike rides and sprint triathlons



**Andrew Cropley**

Principal, West  
Nottinghamshire College

**Start date** July 2019

**Previous job**

Principal, Craven College

**Interesting fact**

He is a trained meteorologist and oceanographer

# Movers & Shakers

...

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

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You'll also get the opportunity to network and share best practice with peers from organisations based around the country.

## We'll be joined by a fantastic panel of speakers

**Mark Dawe - CEO - AELP**

English and maths in the skills system

**Catherine Sezen - Senior Policy Manager, FE - AoC**

Resits, reformed Functional Skills, transition and T Levels - the future of post 16 English and maths in a changing landscape

**John Dixon - CEO - YourCode Group**

How alternative qualifications help me succeed

**Stephen Evans - CEO - Learning and Work Institute**

New ways to engage people and deliver learning

**Limited places available, visit [ncfe.org.uk/conference](https://ncfe.org.uk/conference) to book your tickets now!**

### Event details

**Date:** Wednesday 22 May

**Time:** 09.30 – 16.30

**Venue:** Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury

**Price:** £59

**visit** [ncfe.org.uk/conference](https://ncfe.org.uk/conference)

**email** [events@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:events@ncfe.org.uk)

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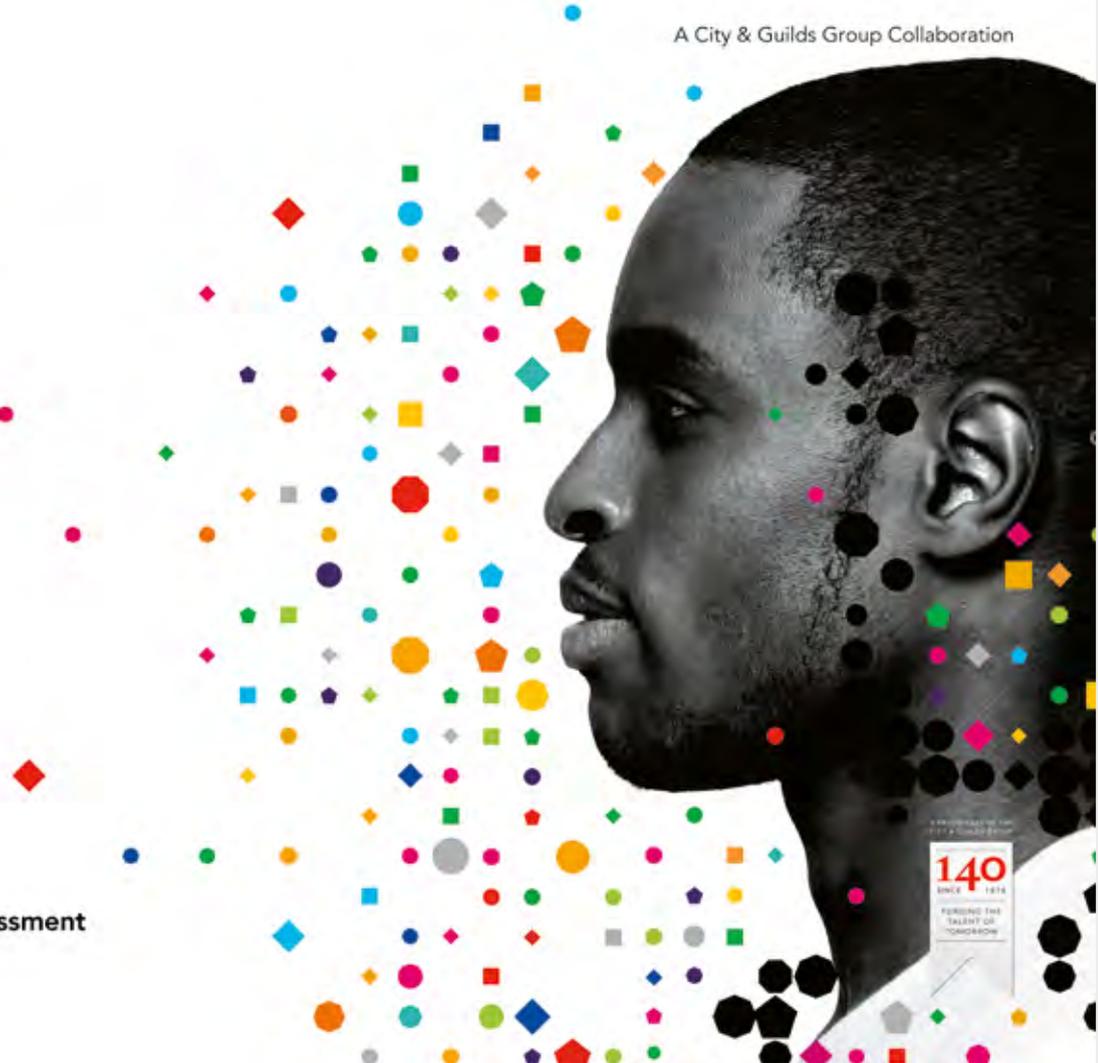
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## FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

1		4	5					9
		3	6		1			
6	8			9			4	
4				2				8
	9						7	
8				7				5
	4			1			5	3
			8		4	2		
5					3	1		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](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk).



Last Edition's winner: Allan Lewis

## Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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