

**ESFA TO COLLECT
OFF-THE-JOB
PLANNED HOURS**

20%

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**ANOTHER UCU WIN
AS LAMBETH STAFF
PAID MORE FOR LESS**



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**SHOULD YOU HAVE
A JOURNALIST ON
COLLEGE BOARDS?**



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FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2019
EDITION 280

12-MONTH NOTICE PERIOD DEFENDED

Stephenson College chair claims senior team 'retention', not merger plans, was motive

FRASER WHEILDON FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK See exclusive on page 5



CAN MOULTON COLLEGE REALLY GO IT ALONE AFTER SECOND GRADE 4?

Exclusive BILLY CAMDEN BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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IFA TO TRIAL 'GENDER-NEUTRAL' LANGUAGE

- > Apprenticeship quango wants to encourage women to apply for STEM roles
- > Claims research shows words such as 'ambition' and 'leader' put women off
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Nick Linford
EDITOR
@NICKLINFORD
NICK@LSECT.COM



Shane Mann
MANAGING DIRECTOR
@SHANERMANN
SHANE@LSECT.COM

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



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



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



Jessica Fino
SENIOR REPORTER
@JESSFINO
JESSICA.FINO@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Fraser Whieldon
REPORTER
@FRASERWHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK



Simon Kay
DESIGNER
SIMON@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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Got a story?

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THE TEAM

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| HEAD DESIGNER | Nicky Phillips |
| DESIGNER | Simon Kay |
| PHOTOGRAPHER | Ellis O'Brien |
| FINANCIALS | Helen Neilly |
| SALES TEAM LEADER | Bridget Stockdale |
| ADMINISTRATION | Georgina Heath |
| PA TO MANAGING DIRECTOR | Victoria Boyle |

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Moulton College's future in doubt after a second grade four

BILLY CAMDEN

BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

From front

Exclusive

The future of a small land-based college attempting to avoid a merger is again in question after a second shock grade four.

In 2018 Moulton College was found to be delivering "unsafe" training by Ofsted and hit with its first grade four. It was also subject to an FE Commissioner intervention over their finances, which resulted in a recommendation to merge.

But with a new chair of governors and an interim principal making improvements to the finances, the college was permitted to follow a standalone strategy and recruit a full-time principal.

The college also received an Ofsted monitoring visit in November, which reported the college was making "reasonable progress" in most areas, but "insufficient" in one field.

"The new leadership team has strengthened governance arrangements significantly since the previous inspection," the report said.

Meanwhile, minutes from a board meeting this February show that the

college's "self-assessment report" predicted its overall Ofsted rating this time round would be a grade three.

But FE Week has learnt the education watchdog has in recent days returned for a full inspection and will slap the specialist college with the lowest possible rating.

Moulton has been in FE Commissioner intervention since February 2017 due to its poor financial health. In April 2018 a report by Richard Atkins' team found a "high level of commercial loans" and that "whilst cash balances at February 28, 2018 are healthy, they are anticipated to fall back by year-end".

"A range of initiatives are already under way, though the scale of the task may warrant the need for additional short-term support," it added.

One of the cost-saving decisions was to close the college's garden centre, which is expected to be sold. The college has also received cash from the government's strategic college improvement fund.

Moulton's accounts for 2017-18 show a £19 million long-term loan from Santander, and a £3.5 million revolving credit facility with the bank, of which £3.1 million was drawn down at July 31, 2018.

Under the going-concern section

of the financial statements, it said that seeking a merger partner "will secure the medium to longer term financial security required for the college to be successful".

"A structure and prospects appraisal, led by the FE Commissioner, was concluded in July 2018, with the outcome that the college would work with a merger partner to secure its long-term future," they added.

Despite the clear financial and quality-of-provision concerns, FE Week understands that Moulton, under the leadership of its new chair David McVean, who started in February 2019, is pursuing a standalone strategy.

McVean is a former civil servant of 30 years, with his final role being "regional director for the ESFA, ensuring compliance for academies in the Midlands and south-west of England".

The board also recently appointed a permanent principal, who is due to start in September. She will take over from Ann Turner, who has been interim principal since May last year.

The college had been pursuing a merger with Abingdon & Witney College following previous recommendations by the FE Commissioner, but this has now collapsed.

"We can confirm that all merger



Moulton College

activity between Moulton College and Abingdon & Witney College ceased in December 2018," an Abingdon & Witney College spokesperson told FE Week.

Minutes from a Moulton board meeting this February stated that the "corporation had agreed that the college would remain as an independent, standalone, specialist college".

Asked about its second "inadequate" rating and the reasons why it wanted to pursue a standalone strategy, Turner told FE Week: "The Ofsted report has not yet been received and therefore the college cannot comment.

"The Moulton board will consider the findings and take the necessary actions once this is received."

She added: "The board has agreed a strategy with the FE Commissioner that we will continue to build our capacity, whilst not ruling out partnerships and mergers that ensure Moulton students get the very best experience."

The permanent principal starting at Moulton in September is Corrie Harris, the current vice-principal at the Bedford College Group. She joined the group when Tresham College, which was rated "inadequate" in 2016, merged with it in August 2017.

Harris was vice-principal at Tresham at the time of its grade four, and took on the interim principal role there for a time after its then-principal, Stuart Wesselby, resigned.

OU extends free functional skills offer to level 2

JESSICA FINO

JESSICA.FINO@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

A scheme by The Open University to provide free online functional skills courses has been extended to level 2.

Pilots offering the English and maths programmes up to level 1 got under way in February and have been accessed by 12,000 people already, according to the university.

Funded by the Department for Education's flexible learning fund, the scheme currently offers the qualification at three local college partners: Bedford College Group, Middlesbrough College and West Herts College.

It is now being rolled out at level 2.

"Functional skills are part of the core skills needed in everyday life and work," said Andrew Law, director of open media and informal learning at The Open University. "For many, they

are also an essential stepping-stone for getting into work or progressing at work and particularly via apprenticeships.

"The functional skills courses on OpenLearn [the OU's public learning platform] use The Open University's digital learning expertise to offer a free, flexible way for people to really improve these basic skills and their prospects.

"It's great to be extending our offering with local colleges to level 2 functional skills – it's a key way to begin to address the skills gap in the UK, developing people's abilities and confidence."

The government announced in March 2018 that 32 projects would share £11.7 million from its flexible learning fund to help more adults back into the classroom.

Under The Open University scheme, learners can access course materials for free online, and can learn at home or receive support and careers guidance from their local college.

When the scheme was launched Law said he was hoping to reach



up to 30,000 learners a year via the university's OpenLearn platform, which he explained is specifically designed to cater for people with "low confidence, or barriers preventing them from getting into education".

There is an open license on the materials so that others can copy and re-use the content for their own teaching and learning. The courses take between 40 and 50 hours of study to complete.

Zoe Lewis, principal and chief executive of Middlesbrough College, said her college has "already seen the positive impact The Open University maths and English courses have had across the community".

"As an inclusive college that is passionate about taking people higher, we're pleased this fantastic opportunity is being extended to even more people," she explained.

"The courses on offer are ideal for those who are looking for promotion at work, those wanting to support children with homework or to upskill."

As well as the three colleges, the scheme involves collaborations with organisations and community groups including Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Workers' Education Association, Unison and Leonard Cheshire Disability.

Paul Thompson, employer and skills manager at South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership said: "Basic levels of numeracy and literacy are essential, not just for jobs in the labour market, but in personal life as well, especially with developing a financial capability.

"The extension of the functional skills provision by The Open University is beneficial both to local capacity and in providing flexible, easy access for individuals and businesses."

The pilots will run until July 2019, at which point they will be reviewed before being made accessible "for the foreseeable future".

News

Providers forced to report off-the-job hours

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Providers will be forced to log apprentices' off-the-job training hours from September, following high-profile concern about unchallenged non-compliance with the unpopular rule.

A new data field for individual learner records (ILR) is being introduced for 2019-20 to "provide information about the quantum of off-the-job training delivered" and "to help demonstrate compliance with the funding rules", the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) revealed this week.

It replaces the "optional" field for recording how many off-the-job training hours are completed every month, introduced to the ILR in 2018-19. The new field is "mandatory" and requires providers to record "planned" hours.

In March the National Audit Office said in its apprenticeships progress report that in summer last year the ESFA had just one "red risk" associated with delivery of the programme – that apprentices did not spend at least 20

per cent of their time doing off-the-job training.

The government's spending watchdog said the agency had "limited assurance" in knowing whether the policy was followed. Audits might identify problems, but there was "scope for providers to under-deliver for some time without this being picked up".

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

Meg Hillier, the chair of the influential public accounts committee, said that it was "concerning that the ESFA can't be sure that apprentices are spending enough time on off-the-job training".

The new rules for the new ILR field state: "For apprenticeships this field collects the planned off-the-job training hours (as defined in the funding rules) for the individual apprentice in the academic year by the training

provider, sub-contracted training providers and the employer."

Guidance explains that it should record the hours for the apprentice "over the full apprenticeship (excluding the end point assessment period) by the training provider, sub-contracted training providers and the employer".

The information in the ILR may be "subject to compliance checks during the academic year and must therefore be supported by the evidence requirements set out in the funding rules for off-the-job training".

"It is important that this field should accurately reflect the planned amount of off-the-job training undertaken by the apprentice.

"Any changes to the values entered in this field during the apprenticeship may be subject to further compliance checks."

The policy, which requires apprentices to spend a fifth of their week on activities related to their course that



Mark Dawe

Planned hours – PHours			
Definition	For apprenticeships this field collects the Planned off-the-job training hours (as defined in the funding rules) for the individual apprentice in the academic year by the training provider, sub-contracted training providers and the employer.		
Reason required	To provide information about the quantum of off-the-job training delivered. To help demonstrate compliance with the funding rules.		
Schema definitions			
XML Element Name	PHours		
Field length	4	Data type	xs:int
Minimum occurrences	0	Maximum occurrences	1
Part of	LearningDelivery		
Collection requirements			
Collected for Apprenticeships (Funding Model 36)			
Valid entries			
Must contain a value in the range of 0 to 9999			
Pattern			

are different to their normal working duties, has split the FE sector since its introduction in 2015.

Many say the rule is the single biggest barrier to apprenticeship recruitment, but others see it as a vital part of an apprentice's development.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers does not welcome the new field. Mark Dawe, its chief executive, said: "The job is hard enough at the moment without ladling on more meaningless bureaucracy that puts a lot

of employers off.

"Simply recording the number of hours will tell you absolutely nothing about the quality of the apprentice's learning experience. Instead the matter should be left in Ofsted's domain with inspectors ready to look at what is being gained both on and off the job in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

"Once again the ESFA is ignoring MPs' recommendations by blurring the lines on responsibilities when Ofsted should be the sole custodians of quality."

Joy and heartbreak: contrasting emotions as funding band changes are announced

FRASER WHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Funding bands for ten of the 30 apprenticeship standards which have been under review by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education since last December were approved by education secretary Damian



Damian Hinds

Hinds this week.

Changes for those that have had their funding reduced will come into effect for apprenticeship starts from August 5, 2019, while those that have increased will have their new funding band implemented for starts from May 7, 2019. FE Week has explored what kind of impact the changes might have:

Standard name	Pre-review funding band	Reviewed funding band	Implementation date
Adult Care Worker	£3,000	Band 4 (£3,000)	No change
Lead Adult Care Worker	£3,000	Band 4 (£3,000)	No change
Healthcare Support Worker	£3,000	Band 4 (£3,000)	No change
Financial Services Customer Adviser	£4,000	Band 5 (£3,500)	05-Aug-19
Aviation Operations Manager	£5,000	Band 10 (£7,000)	07-May-19
Investment Operations Administrator	£5,000	Band 8 (£5,000)	No change
Large Goods Vehicle Driver	£5,000	Band 8 (£5,000)	No change
Butcher	£9,000	Band 12 (£9,000)	No change
Engineering Design and Draughtsperson	£27,000	Band 27 (£24,000)	05-Aug-19

Hopes that rate rise will stimulate demand

The trailblazer group responsible for designing the aviation operations manager standard is flying high, as the sole beneficiary from this week's announcement on revised funding bands.

The rate for the level 4 standard, which has a typical duration of 24 months, will be increased from £5,000 to £7,000.

The Aviation Industry Skills Board, an apprenticeship board made up of the same companies that developed the standard, has welcomed the increase, saying it "now reflects the true cost involved to deliver the standard".

The board does not anticipate that the number of providers that offer the apprenticeship will grow significantly as a consequence of this change, due to it being such a specialist field.

However, a spokesperson said they were

"hopeful" the increase would enable a greater number of employers to offer the apprenticeship.

The standard, which was approved for delivery in August 2016, has had six starts so far in 2018-19, up to March.

FE Week reported in July 2018 that the standard had been available for over a year but had had zero starts – one of three aviation industry standards that were in that position.

A spokesperson for Heathrow Airport explained it was a "very complex" standard, which could only be taught by industry experts with knowledge of specific airport procedures.

There are six specialist functions an apprentice on this standard must select, including aircraft-handling manager and flight-operations manager in an air-traffic control setting.

Disappointment after rate reductions

Three popular apprenticeship standards have borne the brunt of the cuts.

The level 3 engineering design and draughtsperson had its rate cut from £27,000 to £24,000.

The funding band for the level 2 financial services customer adviser standard will drop from £4,000 to £3,500, and the level 3 motor vehicle service and maintenance technician (light vehicle) standard has been cut from £18,000 to £15,000.

The latter has been under review since May and was the last course from the IfA's first review to have its new funding band approved; the other two have been under review since December.

The motor vehicle and maintenance technician (light vehicle) standard has had 4,823 starts since it was approved for delivery in October 2015.

A spokesperson for a provider of the standard,

Calex UK, said it was "disappointed" and that this was an outcome "it did not support".

There have been 298 starts on the engineering design and draughtsperson course since it was approved for delivery in April 2016.

Philip Davies of engineering firm Wood, who serves as chair of the trailblazer group for the standard, said: "Industry is working with providers and EPAOs to support the ongoing delivery of this apprenticeship within the new funding band."

There have been 2,675 starts on the financial services customer adviser standard since it was approved for delivery in August 2015.

A spokesperson for high-street bank Santander, lead employer for the standard, said: "Any funding reduction is clearly a disappointment but the trailblazer group is not planning to challenge this."

College's pay rises and notice period extensions for senior staff slammed as 'tone deaf' by UCU

FRASER WHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

From front

Exclusive

A college has come under heavy criticism for significantly enhancing the employment conditions of its senior staff ahead of entering a merger consultation.

After a whistleblower approached *FE Week* with concerns, the chair of Stephenson College confirmed that the board approved pay rises and notice period extensions to 12 months in 2015 for all executives, including the long-serving principal and Association of Colleges board member Nigel Leigh.

The college denied that this had anything to do with the plans to merge with a larger college which were being explored "at the time".

A spokesperson for the UCU described the enhancements as "a tone-deaf move which flies in the face of widespread calls for senior pay restraint in colleges and shows that, when it comes to pay and conditions, it's one rule for those at the top and another for

the rest of the staff".

She added that there had been a "concerning" lack of transparency around the pay rise.

According to the college's accounts, Leigh's pay has risen 15 per cent in the past three years, from £125,653 to £145,000, during which time the post-16 area review recommended that Stephenson College be taken over by North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College.

The plans for merger were progressed to an advanced stage, but it is understood that by March 2018 discussions had ended and according to NWSLC's audit committee minutes the college had agreed to collaborate with Stephenson, but Stephenson had not accepted the offer that had been made.

The chair of governors for Stephenson College, Chris Brown, became chair in December 2018 and was on the college remuneration committee at the time the enhancements were approved for senior staff.

He defended the decision, telling *FE Week*: "In 2015, the board at Stephenson College took the decision to secure the retention of a high-performing

senior management team, to safeguard student outcomes through increasingly turbulent times for the sector.

"This had nothing to do with merger explorations happening at the time.

"The number one priority was, and is always, ensuring a thriving further education offer for our local community.

"Since the board took that decision, the college has maintained a 'good' Ofsted grade and is in outstanding financial health."

FE Week spoke to a consultant with experience of mergers, who didn't want to be named but said extending the notice period could be seen as "a cynical move from the college to look after their own".

They also said they had not come across this situation before, and theorised the board may have concluded that asking the senior team to implement a merger in which they may be made redundant was "like asking turkeys to vote for Christmas".

"So, it could be argued the improved employment terms was an appropriate way to maintain stability," the consultant said.

Stephenson began exploring a

merger with Loughborough last year, and a £100,000 transition grant that had been made available was used by Loughborough to carry out due diligence.

A spokesperson for Loughborough College said the merger is currently paused while the two colleges explore unrelated matters.

"There has never, at any time, been a discussion between Loughborough College and Stephenson College regarding the executive contracts of either organisation," the spokesperson continued.

"Further, as all HR matters are part of the due diligence process, they are, and will remain, subject to a non-disclosure agreement"

It is understood that Stephenson College has since begun merger talks with Brooksby Melton College, which did not provide a comment for this story.

NWSLC also did not comment.

The criticism of the senior pay decision at Stephenson College comes shortly after the Association of Colleges said it wanted to make the process of deciding senior pay at colleges fairer and more transparent.



Chris Brown

Last September it published a senior pay code drawing on "the good practice in colleges and from other sectors and will help colleges show that they are acting responsibly, fairly and openly".

The guidance states that senior staff shouldn't get a pay rise unless all staff do, principals cannot be involved in deciding their own pay, and colleges should publish principal salaries publicly and separately.

Although the phenomenon appears to be rare, *FE Week* reported in April 2017 (following contact from a whistleblower) that the principal of City of Liverpool College, Elaine Bowker, had her employment notice period extended to 12 months at the same time as FE Commissioner intervention.

Advertorial

Creating mentally healthy learning environments

Next week, the sector will come together to celebrate Mental Health Awareness week, an annual campaign hosted by the Mental Health Foundation aimed at raising the profile of issues related to mental health and encouraging conversations around wellbeing.

The event, which will take place 13th – 19th May, signifies an important opportunity for the sector to reflect on the growing impact mental health is having on learners and staff. With more than 80% of teachers reporting a deterioration in mental health amongst students in the past two years, it's clear that more needs to be done to tackle this crisis and provide educators with the skills and resources needed to support those within their care.

According to research from the Mental Health Foundation, 1 in 10 children aged 5-16 have a diagnosable mental health condition. However, unfortunately 70% of children who experience these issues do not receive appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

Pressures of modern society including social media may have contributed to this crisis with the 'picture-perfect' images and lives portrayed online having a worrying impact on young people's self-esteem and body image. Last year, the Mental Health Foundation found that 1 in 3 people have felt so stressed by body image and appearance that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope.

Recent figures from the Children's Commissioner highlighted that a third of areas in England are reducing real-term spending on vital mental health services. This means that teachers and other staff working in education settings are being relied upon more and more to provide front-line counselling and mental health support to children and young people.

Not only is this impacting their already stretched workloads, many practitioners unfortunately have not been equipped with the skills and training required to deal with these difficult issues. In turn, this additional pressure is having an impact on the mental health and stress levels of teachers – a vicious circle which needs to be broken. With a recent study reporting that teachers are more likely to suffer job-related stress than other professions, experts warned there is urgent action required to address the pressures of teaching.

Adopting a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing can contribute to a mentally healthy learning environment, where schools see positive mental health and wellbeing as fundamental to its values, mission and culture. This involves all parts of the school working together and being committed – it needs partnership working between governors, senior leaders, teachers and all school staff, as well as parents, carers and the wider community. Of course, staff wellbeing underpins this completely.

As the UK's leading sector specialists in health qualifications, CACHE supports the initiative to make young people's mental health a priority. We aim to put a spotlight on the growing need for mental health support for teachers, so that they can lead with confidence and nurture positive mental health and wellbeing.

There is a vital need for all education practitioners to have the skills to recognise and support young people within their settings. As we know, early intervention is vital when it comes to mental health and problems will only get worse if they're not identified and addressed. Having the skills to spot early enough when someone is in need can make all the difference.

CACHE has worked in collaboration with health experts



including the NHS and mental health charity, Mind, to develop a range of high quality qualifications designed to help educators and individuals support mental wellbeing, and learn how to identify warning signs for mental ill-health. As well as raising awareness and understanding of issues, CACHE qualifications dispel some of the myths and misconceptions frequently linked to mental health.

In addition, CACHE also offers free access to a continuing professional development (CPD) service, CACHE Alumni. This service provides articles on mental health and wellbeing written by sector experts, along with advice on how to promote positive wellbeing.

Find out more about CACHE mental health qualifications by visiting www.cache.org.uk

News

Deal reached with university-backed college to increase pay but reduce teaching time

JESSICA FINO
JESSICA.FINO@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Strike action at cash-strapped Lambeth College has been cancelled after union members managed to negotiate a 3 per cent pay rise, additional leave and a reduction in teaching hours.

Members of the University and College Union at the college have walked out for a total of 10 days since November in a long-running pay dispute, but today called off further action that was due to take place in June.

The college, which merged with London South Bank University earlier this year and is now called South Bank College, has agreed to a staff pay rise of between 2 per cent and 3 per cent, backdated to September 2018, with an extra payment of £250 to all staff earning a full-time equivalent salary of less than £26,000.

All staff will also receive six months' full sick-pay entitlement and six months' half-sick-pay entitlement.

Moreover, teaching staff who are

on a contract introduced in 2014 will receive an additional five days' annual leave and a reduction in their annualised teaching hours from 864 to 828 – or, from 24 hours to 23 per week.

These contract changes will take effect from September 1, 2019.

According to its 2017-18 accounts, the college had a deficit before tax of £6.1m.

Strikes were due to take place next month after UCU members claimed their pay was falling behind in real terms “after years of below-inflation deals”.

Una O'Brien, UCU regional official, said: “Too often colleges hide behind low levels of government investment to avoid giving their staff proper pay and conditions. This deal shows what can be achieved when colleges work with us to avoid disruption and look after their staff.”

A spokesperson for Lambeth College said: “The college recognises that prior to this year it had been five years since the college had made a pay offer to its staff.

“We recognise that this has been a



Lambeth College staff during the latest strike in March this year

challenging time for our staff and were keen to address this as we begin a new stage in the history of Lambeth College as part of the London South Bank University family.”

Lambeth College has been in financial trouble since 2016, when a “significant deterioration” in its cashflow prompted an intervention by the former FE commissioner Sir David Collins.

His report, based on a visit that

September, found problems with the college's finances that were so severe it was “no longer sustainable” unless it merged.

In December 2016 the college announced it would “join the London South Bank University family in principle”. This was finally completed in January 2019.

Meanwhile, the college has been dependent on government bailouts for the past two years.

According to its 2017-18 accounts, it owes almost £15.5 million in exceptional financial support, and has agreed a support package from the restructuring facility worth £15.8 million.

“The college made a further large loss in 2017-18, it remains dependent on exceptional financial support from the government and its financial position is accurately described as ‘inadequate’”, the accounts said.

IfA to trial ‘gender-neutral’ language in bid to boost female STEM applicants

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The Institute for Apprenticeships is to trial “gender-neutral” language in a bid to boost the number of female STEM apprentices – after research found “masculine” words in job adverts, such as “ambition”, “challenging” and “leader”, deter them from applying.

The chronic under-representation of women taking apprenticeships in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is a problem the government and employers have struggled to fix.

Jonathan Slater, the Department for Education's permanent secretary, told the Public Accounts Committee in March that officials are “working hard” to increase the female proportion, which currently sits at a “hopeless” 9 per cent.

But apart from the DfE's new Fire It

Up apprenticeships campaign, which uses images and role models to portray women in STEM subjects positively, it is hard to see what else the department is doing to tackle the issue.

The Institute for Apprenticeships has been doing its own brainstorming and has decided to trial using “gender-neutral language” in apprenticeship standards. This, it believes, will “ensure that they do not put women off considering apprenticeships”.

“Research has shown that the language used in job adverts can make the job more or less appealing to one gender and therefore discourage women from applying for certain jobs,” said Ana Osbourne, deputy director for apprenticeship approvals at the IfA.

“We are looking at how this applies to the wording in apprenticeships – including for STEM apprenticeships, where the number of women is lower.”

The pilot, which will initially involve the application of gender-neutral language to the I2 standards in scope of the IfA's digital review, has been

influenced by the work of Jo Morfee, the co-founder and director of InnovateHer, who sits on the institute's digital route panel.

“Through working closely with our corporate partners we've discovered that the use of gender-neutral language has the potential to have a huge impact on the outcome,” she told FE Week, and claimed that one of her organisation's partners “saw a 40 per cent increase in female applicants for senior data analyst roles as a result of changing the language they used”.

“I've advocated for this approach and learning to be applied to how we design apprenticeship content and I'm very pleased that the institute is taking this on board,” Morfee said.

“I believe it will make a big difference to the levels of gender diversity we see in the digital pathways.”

The advert that increased female applications by 40 per cent referred to by Morfee, and seen by FE Week, lists a number of “feminine and neutral”

words that should be used in job adverts, which include: understand, support, kind, honest, dependable, co-operative and support.

It also lists “masculine” words that should be avoided, such as: active, decisive, leader, ambition, challenge, objective, competitiveness, independence, opinion, confident and intellectual.

Carole Easton, chief executive of the Young Women's Trust, said gender stereotypes, “reinforced by the language used in job adverts, are shutting women out of apprenticeships in vital sectors like construction and engineering”.

She told FE Week that the IfA's idea of trialling gender-neutral language in apprentice job adverts is “a welcome move, but should not be done in isolation”.

“Much more is needed to open these sectors up to women, including targeting job adverts at women, providing women-only taster days and raising the minimum wage for

apprentices,” she added.

Stephen Rooney, director of STEM Women, also said that job advert wording “is important”.

“It has been proven that men are more likely to apply for a job if they meet ‘most’ of the pre-requisites,” he explained.

“In order to attract more female applicants, companies should ensure that the list of required skills is as small as possible, with only essential requirements appearing on the job specification.

“Companies should also be aware that female job hunters are more likely to apply for a position if the wording focuses on team and communication skills, whereas job adverts focussing on targets and individual awards attract a greater proportion of male applicants.”

He added: “I believe that the institute will receive a greater proportion of female applicants if it uses gender-neutral language or female-focused job advert wording, and it makes sense to trial a variety of advert styles.”

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News

TeamUK announces final line-up for WorldSkills 2019

JESSICA FINO
JESSICA.FINO@FEWEEK.CO.UK

With the last seven competitors selected, Team UK is now complete and ready to compete in this year's WorldSkills competition in Kazan, Russia, later this summer.

The first 32 members were announced in March. However, the autotech, cloud computing, cyber security, chemical lab technician, floristry, plumbing and heating competitors had to wait to find out if they made the cut.

Unfortunately, the UK's patisserie competitor, Connor Stow, has had to withdraw for health reasons and will not be replaced.

There are a total of 38 UK competitors this year, which makes it the biggest team since the Sao Paulo competition in 2015.

They will battle it out with their counterparts from more than 60 countries, going for gold, silver and

bronze in 56 different skills categories ranging from 3D digital game art and mechanical engineering, through to hairdressing and landscape gardening.

All competitors will undergo a rigorous regime of Olympic-style training in preparation for the most intense week of skills competition imaginable.

"This is the biggest UK team - at 38 - since Sao Paulo in 2015"

"I still can't believe I am going to Russia to represent the UK in plumbing. It's been a mixture of emotions," said Thomas Thomas, who will be competing in the plumbing and heating category.

"The training is hard work but I'm learning new skills that I can use in my job with Aer Cymru. I'm totally focused on the competition and can't wait to join my team mates there and do my family, everyone at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor and Aer Cymru proud."

Kyle Woodward, who will compete with Adrian Cybulski in the team cloud-computing competition, said he was "quite shocked" to make it to the finals. "I was quite a low-level learner at high school but when I started at the college, my tutor, Peter Franklin, really pushed me and now I'm going to the WorldSkills finals - that just blows it out of the park for me."

Elizabeth Newcombe, competing in floristry, said the competition was a "real eye-opener for me" which has given her a boost in her confidence and skills.

"The training I am receiving from WorldSkills UK is helping me so much, not only in preparation for the competition but with my job at Rhubarb & Bramley, and I am determined to do everyone proud."

"The competition lets us benchmark UK skills against other nations"

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

A top 10 position is what the team



Floristry competitor Elizabeth Newcombe at Euroskills Budapest 2018



The 45th WorldSkills will take place in Kazan, Russia from August 22 to 27

will be vying for this time round in Russia.

Ben Blackledge, director of education and skills competitions at WorldSkills UK, said: "Our participation in the international WorldSkills competition provides the opportunity to benchmark UK skills against countries from around the world, demonstrating why business should continue to invest in the UK.

"It is essential that these competitions stay relevant to

education and industry, and to that end, we have been working with WorldSkills International and its members to ensure technological changes are being embedded in current competitions and are also a key driver for introducing new competitions."

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

FE Week is proud to be the official media partner for WorldSkills UK and Team UK.



Ben Blackledge, director of education and skills competitions at WorldSkills UK

MEET THE LATEST COMPETITORS



Autotech
Declan Porter

Employer: Donagheys Garage
Provider: North West Regional College
Trainer: Barry McDaid



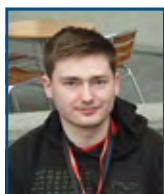
Cloud Computing
Eduard Adam

Provider: Bradford College
Trainer: Wei Jei



Cyber Security (team competition)
Kyle Woodward

Provider: Cardiff and Vale College
Trainer: Suresh Kamadchisundaram



Cyber Security (team competition)
Adrian Cybulski

Provider: Glasgow Clyde College
Trainer: Suresh Kamadchisundaram



Floristry
Elizabeth Newcombe

Employer: Rhubarb & Bramley
Provider: Guildford College
Trainer: Laura Leong



Laboratory Technician
Tonicha Jade Roberts

Employer: Eurofins Forensic Services
Trainer: Dr Dirk Wildeboer



Plumbing and Heating
Thomas Thomas

Employer: Aer Cymru
Provider: Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor
Trainer: Ronald Ferris

Awarding bodies may call for new independent funding approval process citing 'lack of transparency'

BILLY CAMDEN
JESSICA FINO
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

Awarding organisations are considering calling on the government to create an independent process for qualification funding approvals in a bid to stop decisions being driven by short-term political goals.

Their representative association, the Federation of Awarding Bodies, has floated the idea of setting up an "Independent Commission for Qualification and Apprenticeship Funding Approvals".

The federation believes the existing process by which ministers decide how and which qualifications are funded, such as the current review of qualifications at level 3 and below, currently "lacks transparency".

It fears that this review, which is likely to result in the loss of thousands of applied general qualifications, including BTECs, is a way of pushing out these long-standing qualifications

to ensure that parents and young people opt for new T-levels in order to make them a success.

"There is widespread concern that decisions lack integrity and are not based on the real long-term needs of the economy and wider society," FAB's chief executive Tom Bewick said, adding that the decisions are driven by "short-term political considerations".

He told FE Week the Independent Commission would have a role similar to that of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (which advises ministers on which medical treatments should be funded on the NHS) and the Migration Advisory Committee (which gives opinion to the government about non-EU immigration policy).

In its upcoming consultation to members about the proposal, FAB argues there is a conflict of interest of the Education and Skills Funding Agency being the same agency responsible for T-Level implementation, as well as for advising the education secretary on which level 3 and below qualifications should be funded in future.

The independent commission would be appointed by the education secretary and would have representation from experts in qualifications and from labour market economists, while ensuring the views of the provider, the learner and the employer would be represented.

The education secretary would still make the final decisions about funding rules, but these decisions would be made in response to the published recommendations of the independent commission. It would advise on the funding of all publicly regulated and funded qualifications from levels 1 to 5 and all 30 apprenticeship funding bands.

Julian Gravatt, deputy chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said: "In principle, it's right that there should be an independent evidence-based assessment of which courses deserve public funding and at what level. DfE has loaded obligations on colleges but hasn't changed funding rates for seven years."

However, he added that the AoC is "not so sure that a new statutory agency is the answer unless it is part



Tom Bewick

of a wider reform because colleges already receive public money via six different funding lines and account for themselves to five different regulators".

Mark Dawe, chief executive at Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: "For AELP, the key priority is IfATE being more transparent about its decision-making and more responsive to the employers on the trailblazers in what is meant

to be an employer-driven system. If it gets better at these, then we don't need another body.

"What needs to happen is to get everyone around the table at the start – providers, assessment bodies, employers and officials – and then determine what is wanted and the rough cost, rather than the current process, which seems random, divisive and opaque."

10TH anniversary

FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Wellington college

10TH FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

WELLINGTON COLLEGE

20 - 21 JUNE 2019

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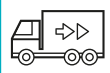
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CATH ON CAMPUS



Prison education? It's much

CATH MURRAY
@CATHMURRAY_

No college would consider it had done a good job if it allowed students to complete their studies without learning how to research information online. But this is the reality in prisons across the country. Cath Murray finds out about the challenges of running an education department on the inside

Sarah Aumeer doesn't understand why more FE tutors don't want to work in prisons. "It's much calmer than a college," says the 37-year-old education director at HMP Coldingley. "Behaviour's a lot better.

"Prison education is also a lot slower, so staff can build up a rapport with students and really focus on the subject at hand.

"A lot of people think it must be exactly like you see on TV, but actually, it's exactly the same as in FE. You just can't rely on things being there at the drop of a hat."

This could be something of an understatement. Aumeer, who has met us the prison entrance and is now guiding us through a series of locked metal gates on the way to the education block, has just spent the morning failing to submit an electronic purchase order for some printer paper.

Even when things are running smoothly, if a tutor at the prison wants to prepare lesson resources – let's say pictures of haircuts for barbering students – there's a complex protocol just to get the images into the classroom. First, they will have to look them up on a computer that's

connected to the internet and email them to Aumeer. When she receives the email on her secure computer, she will take out her bunch of keys, unlock the key box to retrieve a code for the safe and remove the USB memory stick, which she will use to transfer the images from the secure computer in her office to the computer on the adjacent desk, which is networked to the prison's secure intranet, known as the virtual campus (VC).

"A lot of guys are overwhelmed by the barriers in their way"

"That just shows how much you have to forward-think when you're teaching in prison," she says. "And how much the prisoners rely on us for their access to information."

Aumeer and her team of 16 tutors and staff are employed by Somerset's Weston College – 120 miles away from the Surrey prison – which is one of four providers of prison education nationwide. On a day-to-day basis, the team functions pretty autonomously, which has its benefits but also its downsides. "The tutors are all part of the FE community, but they don't always feel like they are," she says.

Before taking over at Coldingley in January, Aumeer was head of special educational needs for eight years at Nescot College, Surrey, and before that, worked for the council in alternative and community education.



Much of her own education came through FE. "I didn't achieve any qualifications at school. All my education was as an adult – evening

and distance learning." She's now on a scholarship at Middlesex University, doing a part-time masters in inclusive education.

If she could change only one thing at Coldingley, it would be to broaden the range of courses. Even teaching prisoners to cook for themselves could make the difference between getting by and getting into debt once they leave.

"Education has to take second place to security"

More classes to support prisoner wellbeing would also be welcome. "Anything to help them cope with the stress of being locked up for years. Many of them have lost a lot – lost

relationships and so on. Their mental wellbeing is important. I wish there was more that we could do to support that part of it."

Education not linked to employability was one of the recommendations from Dame Sally Coates' 2016 government-commissioned report into prison education, *Unlocking Potential*. Better ICT access was another.

When Alan, who is turning 51 on the day we meet, was awarded his 2:1 in criminology and psychology from the Open University, his probation officer, who had done the same degree, couldn't understand how he'd managed without online resources.

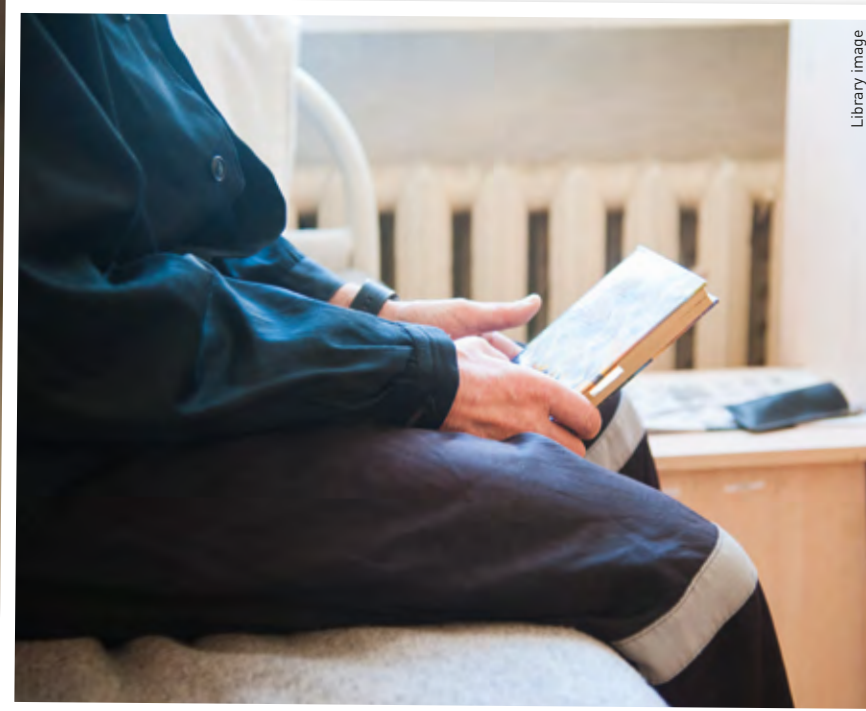
"I used to spend a lot of time on the phone to my sister," he tells me as we sit in a classroom in the education block. "A £5 phone call saying 'Can you google this?'. Then I'd say, 'Read me that article' and she'd go 'It's 127 pages' so I'd say 'Right, print me that out' and she'd send it – which is a cost of printing and



HMP Coldingley

Jonathan Brady/PA Images

calmer than an FE college...



Library image

Sarah Aumeer

postage – and I get it and say “That’s not what I want!”

The OU has about 1,800 students in 150 prisons and secure hospitals across the UK, to whom it sends printed study materials. It also recently introduced a postgraduate library scheme where students can request additional resources linked to their degree.

But the simple steps of googling for terminology or reading around a subject that most students take for granted is off-limits – and while tutors are on-hand for subjects such as functional skills, those studying at a higher level must depend on occasional phone calls or visits with a specialist tutor.

“A lot of guys fall at the early hurdles because they are just overwhelmed by the barriers that are in their way,” says Mark, a former King’s College London law student who was convicted in 2010 for the murder of his father, but maintains his innocence.

“It’s not difficult to have monitored,

restricted internet access. We have all the technology available to do that. All it needs is someone with proactivity and the right attitude,” says the 31-year-old.

Alexander completed an undergraduate law degree in prison and is now studying for a masters.

“You’ve got to give people responsibility if they’re to develop into fully functioning human beings – that’s surely what prison is there to achieve. It’s not there to infantilise you, which is inevitably what it does.

“What do you expect that end-product to be, when he finally walks out the door, if he hasn’t been able to do basic things like accessing educational material?”

Prisoners currently have six hours a week to type up assignments or access the VC, which hosts resources such as the OU’s virtual learning environment.

Sir Simon Hughes, the former Liberal Democrat MP, has been working with Ruth McFarlane, the

OU’s senior manager of students in secure environments, to lobby for in-cell laptops connected to this secure network.

“Imagine how much more work we could do,” Jermey says, who is now doing a masters in development management. “The last four nights we’ve been banged up at 5 o’clock every night [over the Easter weekend]. We could be studying, working, writing up assignments, whatever.”

“Many prisoners are woefully unprepared for the modern world”

Coldingley is a category C working prison, which means that for many of the men – all of whom have long sentences – it’s the penultimate rung on the rehabilitation ladder. The next placement is a category D open prison, or, for a few, straight to release.

The prisoners all have full-time jobs in the on-site workshops – such as making disposable earphones for airlines – for which they’re paid less than £20 a week. If they opt for the six weekly hours of education, their pay is docked to reflect this. “There’s a disincentive to take up education,” Jermey says, who spends most of the £17.89 that he earns in the graphic design studio on phone calls to family.

A few prisons are specifically devoted to training, but location can be an issue. Coldingley’s nearest town, Woking, is half an hour from central London on the train.

“I’m here because my family’s ten minutes down the road. I wouldn’t give that up for anything,” Jermey says. “I think a lot of guys are here because of the London location – yes, they’d like to do a lot more education, but they’re here because of their families.”

Education can be interrupted when prisoners are moved to another site. “I’ve been lucky; I’ve been to three prisons in nine years,” Alexander says. “Others have been through three prisons in nine months. It’s very unsettling – and if you’re moved to a new prison it may not have your course.”



Library image

Security concerns can also be a disruptor. Cordingley’s horticulture polytunnel, for example, is in a part of the prison with no overhead netting, which means it’s more vulnerable to “throwovers”. If banned goods are found to have been smuggled in this way, and it’s not possible to work out who is responsible, every student might be “sacked” from the horticulture course, Aumeer says. “Education has to take second place to security.”

Yet education is positively correlated with reintegration into society. The Prisoners’ Education Trust (PET) found that ex-prisoners who had completed one of their courses – which could be anything from book-keeping or an OU access module to a level 2 gym instructing qualification – were 25 per cent less likely to reoffend, and 26 per cent more likely to be in employment, one year after release.

The Coates report contained recommendations around improving internet access, encouraging progression to higher levels and generally making prison governors accountable for creating a “culture of education”. Three justice secretaries, one referendum and one general election later, has any progress been made?

“We’re hopeful that the culture is starting to shift,” says Rod Clark, the chief executive of PET. “And we’re gearing up for the expectation that prisons will soon become digital. At present, we are leaving many prisoners woefully unprepared for the modern world – without giving them the chance to use technology to access education, find information, apply for jobs or secure housing.”

News



Scania hits out at planned cut to heavy vehicle apprenticeship funding band

FRASER WHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

A leading manufacturer of heavy trucks and buses has warned that cutting the funding band by £3,000 for an apprenticeship that it helped to develop threatens its industry's long-term skills strategy.

Scania (Great Britain) Limited, the parent company of which has nearly 50,000 employees globally and produces heavy commercial vehicles, has addressed an open letter to Damian Hinds, as well as skills minister Anne Milton and education select committee chair Robert Halfon.

In the letter, sent to *FE Week*, the employer claims that reducing the £18,000 funding band for the level 3 heavy vehicle service and maintenance technician standard to

£15,000 threatens the healthy flow of apprentices which "our industry's long-term skills strategy relies upon".

The funding band for the standard, which has had 1,171 starts since it was approved in 2016 to March 2019, has been under review by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education since December.

Although new funding bands were announced this week for ten of the 30 standards that have been under review since December, the funding for the heavy vehicle service and maintenance technician standard is one of 20 that has yet to be confirmed.

Scania, which has employed around 450 apprentices in the UK over the past three years, says they have been told by the IfA that there is an intention to cut the funding band by £3,000. This, it says, "will have serious consequences for UK industry, society and the economy, as it will most certainly lead to fewer apprentices being taken on,

thereby adding to the burden of the nation's already considerable skills shortage".

The letter also warns that any cut in funding is likely to cause, in many instances, a "reduction in the quality of training that apprentices receive. We therefore request your support by ensuring the funding decision is reconsidered, so that there is no reduction in funding."

A DfE spokesperson said the reviews "identify the most appropriate funding band to support high quality delivery, and provide value for money for employers and government".

A spokesperson for the IfA added: "The heavy vehicle service and maintenance technician standard funding band is included in the review, and a final decision has not yet been reached.

"The employers on the trailblazer group have been consulted and are being kept fully informed on the

progress."

Anne Milton originally asked the institute to review the funding bands for 31 standards in May last year, while a further 30 were put under review in December.

The first review led to a number of popular standards, including the controversial level 6 chartered manager apprenticeship, having their funding cut by thousands of pounds.

The cuts have proven deeply unpopular with trailblazer groups of employers, which developed the standards.

This manifested itself in a surge in the number of appeals against the reviews: there were eight appeals from trailblazer groups in 2017; but in January 2018, there were more than five times that many, at 42.

The funding band cuts, specifically the £4,000 reduction to £3,000 change for the level 2 retailer standard, have also been blamed for major retailer and

employer provider Halfords scrapping its entire level 2 provision last month.

Halfords' decision, and Scania's letter, shines an uncomfortable spotlight on the government's policy of putting employers in the driving seat of the apprenticeships system.

A research paper published in March by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers and the Further Education Trust for Leadership urged the government to move away from this "unhelpful" mantra after finding it was "more rhetoric than reality".

The National Audit Office said in its apprenticeships review in the same month that lowering funding bands was one measure to control the apprenticeship budget, which the IfA warned in December was in danger of being overspent.

However, the NAO warned such measures were "likely to be unpopular and could damage confidence in the programme".



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Interviews week commencing 27 May 2019

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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.



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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.

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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.

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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 Szulczewski
[07841 017043 | sarahs@peridotpartners.co.uk](mailto:sarahs@peridotpartners.co.uk)

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

<p>Hammersmith & Fulham College Gliddon Road, Barons Court, London W14 9BL</p>	<p>Ealing Green College The Green, Ealing, London W5 5EW</p>	<p>Southall Community College Beaconsfield Road, Southall, Middlesex UB11DP</p>	<p>Park Royal College Unit 1, Nucleus Park, Central Way, Park Royal, London NW10 7XT</p>	<p>West London Construction Academy Southall Waterside, 170 Brent Road, Southall UB2 5LE</p>	<p>West London College wlc.ac.uk</p>
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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

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 and
send your CV to HRresourcing@wlc.ac.uk**



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EDITORIAL



Despite the extra bureaucracy, ESFA right to require more data on every apprentice

This week the ESFA announced that, from August, apprenticeship providers would need to report the planned off-the-job hours for all new starts.

With bureaucracy a constant bugbear in FE, it is rare that a new field is added to the Individualised Learner Record (particularly a late change) but this is an attempt to address stinging criticism from the National Audit Office.

In their second report into the apprenticeship reforms, the NAO said in March: "The ESFA does not yet have an effective way of identifying where

apprentices are routinely receiving less training than they should" and that "this is an important gap in oversight."

The chair of the Public Accounts Committee, Meg Hillier, similarly put the boot in, claiming that "it is concerning that the Education and Skills Funding Agency can't be sure that apprentices are spending enough time on off-the-job training".

In reality, collecting data on planned hours should not be controversial nor require a significant nudge from the NAO, given that providers should already timetable these hours. Plus,

it has been a requirement for ESFA-funded 16-19 study programmes since 2013. In fact, one wonders why the requirement to collect and return this data was not introduced in May 2017, along with the off-the-job rule.

But, a single figure for total planned hours for a whole apprenticeship tells you little about actually delivery.

Compliance with the rule will continue to need auditors to check providers' own paperwork and systems - although *FE Week's* April Fool story in 2017 about an electronic off-the-job card and

counter being given to every apprentice does not now seem so fanciful.

However, this mandatory field for off-the-job planned hours in the ILR is a move in the right direction and will serve two important purposes.

Firstly, as a field in the ILR scrutinised by funding auditors, it will allow knowledgeable data and funding managers to take greater ownership and responsibility for ensuring the apprenticeship delivery plan is compliant with the off-the-job minimum-hour rule.

Secondly, it will help the ESFA and IfA compare

planned hours with funding levels and help establish whether the price has been adjusted for prior learning. If a provider has all their apprentices funded at the maximum, but with a wide variation in planned hours, this is likely to be challenged.

So it's an overdue but positive step from the ESFA to collect this information, which should improve compliance with both the off-the-job and prior attainment rules.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



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WEBSITE

IfA's second funding band review: 10 of 30 standards signed off

f So adult care is still undervalued. Do you really think this is good value? Remember, adult care workers are looking after some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Mary Holmes

BMet to close Stourbridge College in bid to pay back debt

t Not the last of this type of rationalisation, I suspect.

Tom Allen

England's largest teacher union wants colleges back under local authority control

... Yes, it's obvious, isn't it? The solution to the woes of a seriously underperforming sector is to transfer it back into the clutches of an even more seriously underperforming sector. Just what fantasy world is this

union operating within?

Richard Banks

English and maths GCSE resit policy is proving successful but remains misunderstood

t Colleges are doing the heavy lifting on GCSE English and maths retakes, including more work to build on this success with support from @AoC_info. I think we can say that our sector is rising to the challenge.

Eddie Playfair

Minister and local MP in 'shock' at 'tragic' decision to close Stourbridge College

... Colleges are, and should be, subject to the same dynamics as all other organisations. As I understand it, there are 297 colleges in the UK. It's obvious that some rationalisation is appropriate. Indeed, such rationalisation should be enforced. Millions of pounds of taxpayer funds

are wasted across the sector on multiple management teams, middle managers, administrative staff, and under-hours teaching staff. Rationalisation could pump tens, possibly hundreds, of millions back into what really matters - the provision of quality education to students. Colleges exist, at least should do, for the benefit of (potential) students, not their employees.

Richard Banks

t The demographic issue mentioned at the end is really troubling. Although 16-18 numbers have dropped 10% in the last decade, they're about to start going back up again! There are fewer 16-year-olds in the country this year than at any point in the last 50 years, but this is the bottom of the dip, and in four or five years, the figures will be back to where they were.

Steve Hewitt

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Does government really care about level 2 and 3 apprenticeships?



I have worked in the apprenticeship sector for 22 years and have never known it to be so fragile and vulnerable as it is at the moment. The whole system is in disarray, funding cuts and provider-reduced allocations have started to bite, with the young community suffering as a result. Apprenticeship providers can no longer sustain high-quality delivery of apprenticeship standards with these continuous changes.

It is no surprise that Halfords' decision was based around finances, as many other organisations have had to do the same in the current climate. It's no wonder level 2s have hit rock-bottom for starts. I am continually discussing funding allocations with providers and colleges, who have categorically stated they can no longer take on 16-18 starts as they have no funding left to accommodate them. This is unheard of - when 16-18-year-olds should be a protected group.

Sue Pittock's summary article explains it all, but the government is not listening!!!! God help us.

Gail Dalton-Ayres

Experts



SKILLS ON PARADE

Sir Gerry Berragan, Chief executive, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

Five principles that should underpin quality assessment

It has never been more crucial that we ensure that we have the best regime possible to assess quality, says Sir Gerry Berragan, chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education

Our mission at the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education is to develop high-quality apprenticeships and technical qualifications in order to transform the skills landscape.

Quality is rightly at the heart of this. If employers and apprentices do not believe that apprenticeships are a high-quality product which provide the skills that are needed across the economy, then the ongoing reform work of recent years will have been in vain.

As part of my role as chief executive at the institute, I chair the Quality Alliance, which brings together the government organisations responsible for different aspects of apprenticeship quality, as well as the

key representative bodies for training providers and end-point assessment (EPA) organisations.

Earlier this year the Quality Alliance published the Quality Strategy, which sets out 14 statements of best practice across all facets of apprenticeship delivery. Our next step will be to develop an action plan to sit below this strategy, which will set out what actions each alliance member is taking to support the strategy.

I was delighted that Anne Milton, skills minister, was able to attend our most recent meeting and discussed with members the next steps on embedding quality across all levels of apprenticeship provision.

One focus for the institute is the external quality assurance (EQA) arrangements for end-point assessment. The institute has a statutory responsibility to ensure that EQA is delivered, as well as providing EQA ourselves (through our delivery partner, Open Awards) where we are

selected by the trailblazer.

Independent EPA is fundamental to the success of the apprenticeship reform programme and as volumes increase it is right that we step back and assure ourselves that we have the optimal regime in place to quality-assure this assessment.

“Independent EPA is fundamental to the success of apprenticeship reform”

Over the course of the spring the institute has been undertaking a programme of work to put in place a strengthened operational framework for EQA, including a digital service to manage the interface between the institute and EQA providers. Both of

these will allow us to better exercise our statutory duty and bring greater consistency. This is still in draft form and is currently being shared with EQA providers and end-point assessment organisations before it is due to be finalised and made public.

We have built the framework around five principles. We want EQA to be: relevant; reliable; efficient; positive; and learning. At the core of this sits the concept of occupational competence. EQA must give us assurance that EPA is not just a well-administered test, but a relevant, reliable assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need in order to perform in their chosen occupation – from commis chef to actuary to plasterer.

To do all of these things, EQA must be timely and proactive, not retrospective and reactive. It must involve people with expert knowledge of the areas being assessed witnessing assessment taking place, and it must involve some reach back to

employers and apprentices after completion, to externally validate their training and assessment – to confirm their satisfaction with the level of occupational competence achieved.

But if the principle of relevance is important, so too is efficiency. We need a system that doesn't impose undue burden on EPA organisations and is easy for all parties to understand and engage with.

So I have also written to the chief executives of Ofqual and the Office for Students to ask them to bring forward proposals for how their organisations can work with employer groups and professional bodies to provide an optimised EQA process.

A strengthened EQA system will give employers confidence that EPA is a relevant and reliable assessment of occupational competence. That is an important function and one that the institute will continue to work with other regulatory bodies in government, and professional bodies, to deliver.

BEN FARMER

Head of HR, UK Corporate, Amazon



A culture of inclusion can drive more women into STEM apprenticeships

UK business needs to create a virtuous circle of positive change, says Ben Farmer, with successful women becoming inspirational role models for the next generation of builders, innovators and inventors

The UK's ongoing STEM skills shortage is a key issue for employers such as Amazon. Vacancies for highly skilled technical roles will double over the next decade, while 89 per cent of businesses are already struggling to recruit for STEM roles. Attracting more women and girls into these careers is rightly seen as part of the solution.

The benefits of a diverse workforce are abundant, for employers and employees. Our recent research, in partnership with WISE, polled 1,000 women working in STEM and found that a 10 per cent increase of women in STEM careers would lead to a £3 billion boost for UK business.

We also found that on average women in innovation earn up to

£11,000 a year more than in other careers.

However, we also found that more than a quarter of women currently working in innovation had experienced more barriers than enablers in their careers, including a lack of confidence, having to adapt to male-dominated work environments and a lack of recognition from senior colleagues.

With these challenges in mind, it is apparent that our culture – within businesses and across wider society – must be considered as a key driver for change. The innovation and technology industries now have a deep understanding of the relationship between innovation and diversity.

In simple terms, diversity is integral to a robust creative and problem-solving process – and innovation drives the technology sector.

Anyone considering an apprenticeship should be reassured that they offer high-quality training, financial sustainability and a range of

career options, regardless of gender or background. For example we recently announced plans to create 1,000 new apprenticeships, with pay ranging from an entry-level starting salary of £9.50 an hour (£10.50 in London) and up to £30,000 a year. We also offer employee discounts, private medical insurance and a company pension plan.

“The benefits of a diverse workforce are abundant”

We're backing up these opportunities with Amazon Amplify, initiatives designed to increase the number of women working in innovation.

This includes our Women in Innovation bursary, providing funding of more than £130,000 a year for 24 female students, new global candidate inclusive interview questions, plus

a UK-wide interactive training programme to build confidence, networks and personal skills.

We also became a signatory to the WISE Ten Steps Commitments (something I'd recommend for all businesses concerned with these challenge), a framework to help organisations improve the recruitment, retention and progression of women.

While apprenticeships are vital, we also need to create a pipeline for STEM careers. For example, we offer free tours of our fulfilment centres for children and we have launched Camp Amazon, accredited by the British Science Association, which inspires young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers while taking part in real-world STEM projects.

Businesses need to tailor their solutions according to their organisational goals and resources.

But there are common themes for any employer that genuinely seeks to accommodate everybody

in their workplace: fully-funded apprenticeships and internships, flexible career pathways, flexible and remote working, return-to-work programmes, formal retraining opportunities, mentoring, peer support and robust HR policies.

Championing women working in STEM careers is one part of the solution – for example, it has been great to see how the government's Fire It Up campaign portrays women in STEM through positive imagery and role models.

We also work hard to share and celebrate the success stories of our own women working in innovation, such as Fiona McDonnell, Jacqui Chin, Lauren Kissner and Lauren Gemmell who were named in the FT's HERoes list, and Katie George who was named in the EMPower list.

These female leaders have not only helped to inspire our employees, but also helped to change how young women perceive technical apprenticeships and careers.

RUTH SPARKES

Managing director,
EMPRA



Why having a journalist on your board can be a risky business

You need more than stars in your eyes if you're determined to have media glitterati on your board, cautions Ruth Sparkes

Is it really a good idea to have a journalist on your governing body? Hopwood Hall College's latest governor, Nazir Afzal, thinks it is (Profile, *FE Week*, May 3).

It's an interesting question. It's one I deliberated with senior managers very early in my FE career. I guess the answer from my point of view is, "it depends".

It depends on why you would want a journalist on the board and what kind of journalist he or she is.

On the face of it, it sounds like a great idea – having your local paper's editor or a national journalist on the board could be really useful; they could help to trumpet your good news, advise you on actions and messages when the news isn't so good, and put a word in their colleagues' ears when

the opportunity arises.

But, that's an ideal world, not the real world.

Professional conflict of interest is almost certainly going to be an issue: crises and unwarranted breaking news.

By their very nature colleges are hubs for thousands of individuals, including teenagers and vulnerable people, and they deal with issues that, if they became public, wouldn't be helpful to the institution or their students.

A few examples from my own PR "anthology" include drugs on campus, inappropriate lecturer and student behaviour (varying levels of activity, including unlawful), student death, dodgy achievement rates, lost student portfolios, affairs, IT misconduct and a whole shedload more.

Journalists by their vocation and training are compelled to tell stories and to expose truths.

If I were a journalist rather than a

PR, I'd be writing or broadcasting this juicy news rather than managing it.

Colleges could be conflicted too.

Will senior leaders have to be more selective with the information they share with a journalist governor? Will open and frank discussions with governors be a little less open and frank?

"Conflict of interest will almost certainly be an issue"

If your reason for having a journalist on the board is for a different reason other than college promotion, then you might be on to a winner.

FE funding, social mobility, apprenticeship take-up and barriers to learning, lecturer pay, etc, are all

important issues that FE grapples with every day – but generally the perception is that the wider "media doesn't care about FE".

Every time I hear this well-worn record it sets my teeth on edge. But if you have a journalist on your board who can help to amplify FE's national issues, and if your college is willing to have a national voice and take part in national activities, then it might be worth the risk. And it is a risk.

Another option is to properly professionalise the role of PR and corporate affairs in your institution, drag it up the food chain and give the role proper credibility and responsibility. Employ someone who is suitably knowledgeable, experienced and qualified; they might be an ex-journalist or might not.

But if you absolutely must have some media glitterati on your board, instead of a jobbing journalist you might want to think about a different kind of influencer... you might want

to consider what universities do; they often have celebrity or influential chancellors.

These include: Sir Brian May of Queen, the comedian Dawn French, the Hollywood actor Jeremy Irons, the ex-BBC *Dragon* Theo Paphitis, *Great British Bake Off*'s Prue Leith, the designer Zandra Rhodes and many others.

Universities also regularly bestow honorary degrees on VIPs, which can help to raise their profiles and help to "validate" them in a particular way.

But it's still a risk – celebrities have celebrity lives and can go "off message" and cause embarrassment. You might be lucky enough to engage with an absolutely faultless ambassador, but you must choose with caution – there's a huge gulf between Belfast's Queen's University's link with Hillary Clinton and the likes of Bedfordshire and Leeds universities, both of which bestowed honorary degrees on Jimmy Savile...

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Riding will be Shane Mann, (publisher of Schools Week & FE Week), John Dickens (Schools Week editor) and Nick Linford (FE Week editor).

Every £ donated will be a great motivator on the day for Shane, John & Nick as they cycle over 100 miles.

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Bulletin



Fiona Stilwell

**Managing Director,
Activate Apprenticeships**

Start date April 2019

Previous job

Chief operating officer, Activate Apprenticeships

Interesting fact

She recently started to learn to horse ride with her daughter



Jon Graham

**Trustee, Education and
Training Foundation board**

Start date March 2019

Current job

Chief Executive, JTL

Interesting fact

He is a qualified FA referee and an ECB cricket coach



Sean Mackney

**Principal, Petroc College of
Further & Higher Education**

Start date August 2019

Previous job

Pro vice-chancellor (research, enterprise and external relations) and pro vice-chancellor (education), Bucks New University

Interesting fact

He is learning to kitesurf



Ruth Spellman OBE

**Trustee, Education and Training
Foundation board**

Start date March 2019

Current job

Chief executive, Workers' Educational Association

Interesting fact

She has always loved music and performed in amateur opera for 20 years

Movers & Shakers

...

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AMANDA SPIELMAN

Ofsted
chief inspector



JULES PIPE CBE

London's deputy mayor for
planning, regeneration and skills



KEITH SMITH

ESFA director
of apprenticeships

FURTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**GORDON MARSDEN MP, OPPOSITION / MARK COMPTON, ACCESS TO MUSIC
/ PHIL BEACH, OFQUAL / ANTHONY IMPEY MBE, FSB /
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FEWEEK

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

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

Difficulty:
 Easy

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

Difficulty:
 Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference
 To WIN an FE Week mug



Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**
 Email your name and picture of your completed spot the difference to: news@feweek.co.uk.



Last Edition's winner: Joanne Sage

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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