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FEWEEK



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FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2019
EDITION 285

THE MOVE TOWARDS PROFESSIONALISING GOVERNANCE

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RENEWING TRAINEESHIPS

- **Forgotten pre-employment scheme back in spotlight as minister 'thrilled' with research findings**
- **AELP claim victory after government commits to publishing traineeship progressions for providers**
- **Providers urged to 'seriously take a fresh look with a view to increasing the number of opportunities available'**



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Put the entire adult education budget out to tender, says AELP

JESSICA FINO

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The entire £1.5 billion adult education budget should be put out to tender owing to “persistent annual underspends and too much poor-value subcontracting”, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers has said.

It wants the “now totally discredited system” of allocating funds abandoned, including in devolved areas, which are set to take control of half the AEB from September.

Analysis by the AELP shows a budget underspend of £63 million in 2016-17 and an estimated underspend of £76 million in 2017-18 – a year in which private providers could only win AEB cash by bidding in a £110 million tender, while colleges had their contracts automatically renewed.

Colleges were, however, allowed to

bid to gain extra funding, and *FE Week* research published last week showed that, of those colleges who won in the procurement, they underspent their original procured allocations by 26 per cent.

In stark contrast, all other providers exceeded their initial contracts by 31 per cent.

Moreover, four of the 19 college tender winners failed to deliver any of their procured AEB funding, and admitted that their non-procured contracts were sufficient to meet demand.

AELP estimates that in the same year, just under a quarter of total AEB was subcontracted, “essentially by colleges to independent providers for the latter to deliver adult skills provision”.

A spokesperson said that while good AEB subcontracting “plays an important role, it is AELP’s view that too much subcontracting is not being driven by strategic planning designed

to benefit local communities”.

“This results in less money reaching frontline training because funding is being swallowed up by management fees and undesirable brokerage,” he added.

A new policy paper by the AELP has also described how the devolution of the AEB for 2019-20 has resulted in “major changes” to the way the funding is being allocated and procured across England, which has led to “unintended consequences”, particularly for private training providers.

There is now a risk that “flexible, high-quality and specialist adult education and skills provision may be removed from areas, leaving gaps for learners and potentially having a detrimental impact on the social mobility of unemployed

adults and adults in employment looking to progress”, it said.

The Greater London Authority and six other mayoral combined authorities are due to get control of half the country’s total AEB funding from 2019-20.

Nearly all of the devolved areas have procured anything between 22 and 30 per cent of their allocations. But one, Tees Valley, has put all of its devolved AEB out to tender.

The AELP said a 100 per cent procurement approach for the national and the devolved AEB would be an “effective way to ensure the funding is directly available to those providers who meet the local needs for individuals and employers”.

Under AELP’s proposals, all provider groups would be

required to bid for “realistic” funding amounts based on their capability to deliver against the priorities set out under each area’s skills plans and emerging Local Industrial Strategies.

The association has also called for greater transparency around the level of AEB that is being subcontracted, with twice-yearly reporting by the authorities and agencies of the relevant data.

AELP’s chief executive Mark Dawe said: “The uncertainty over Brexit means that it would be foolish for anyone to get their hopes up on what the Spending Review might yield for further education and skills.

“Therefore we can’t afford to tolerate any more the poor value being delivered under the adult education budget. By moving to full commissioning, more adults in local communities are likely to receive the support they need to secure sustainable employment.”



Mark Dawe

College in fight to avoid merger after second grade 4 report published by Ofsted

BILLY CAMDEN

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A troubled land-based college has officially been rated “inadequate” for the second time in a row, with Ofsted heavily criticising leaders and governors for failing to improve its performance.

FE Week revealed last month that Moulton College, which is in FE Commissioner intervention but attempting to avoid a merger, was heading for another grade four after the education watchdog found it delivering “unsafe” training in 2018.

Its latest Ofsted report, published this week, said the health and safety concerns previously identified have now been rectified, but other areas have seen a drop in performance.

“The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined since the previous inspection,” inspectors said.

Self-assessment is “often too generous in terms of grading and does not reflect accurately weaknesses that need to be rectified”.

Teachers’ expectations of students

“are too low and, as a result, too many students make insufficient progress”, and attendance levels for learners “is poor across most programmes”.

Ofsted continued: “Managers do not use data well enough to judge accurately the impact of actions that they have taken, or to inform future actions for improvement.

“Students on vocational programmes, for whom the college receives high needs funding, do not benefit from teaching that meets their specific learning and support needs.”

Moulton College had just over 2,000 learners at the time of inspection, 1,350 were on study programmes, mainly on land-based, sport and construction courses.

Ofsted found that managers and teachers “do not know how many students on 16-to-19 study programmes have completed external work placements”.

However, the inspectorate did point out that a “recently enhanced” board of governors and new leadership team have “changed the culture of the college so that it focuses on the student and staff

experience; as a result, staff turnover has decreased, and staff morale has improved”.

Following the college’s first grade four, its principal, Stephen Davies, resigned and was replaced by interim Ann Turner.

Moulton College has been in FE Commissioner intervention since February 2017 due to its poor finances, with particularly high levels of commercial loans and falling cash balances. It had been told a merger would be the best option for fixing its problems.

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

Corrie Harris, the current vice-principal at the Bedford College Group, will take the reins from next month.

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,



Moulton College

is continuing to pursue a standalone strategy.

The college’s spokesperson said the college has “radically overhauled” its workforce in the past year and governors are “confident that we have a stable, passionate committed workforce”.

Reacting to the Ofsted report, the spokesperson said: “Moulton College was disappointed with the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection, which does not reflect the significant progress made in the last 12 months.

“The college is pleased to see that the enhanced board of governors, new leadership team, the change in culture, the high priority placed on ensuring students are safe with very effective, strengthened safeguarding practices, good student behaviour and improved staff morale are all acknowledged.

“The work on improving teaching and learning has still to have the impact desired, but improvements are ongoing to ensure that every Moulton student receives the best possible student experience.”

News

Apprenticeship register reapplication process branded a 'farce' by provider

JESSICA FINO
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Exclusive

An Ofsted grade two provider has hit out at the government's "farcical" process for reapplying to the register of apprenticeship training providers, after its bid was rejected on a technicality.

According to the guidelines, providers can be exempt from filling out some parts of the application if they have received a short Ofsted inspection confirming an overall grade of at least "good" over the past three years, and they received the grade for apprenticeships in their most recent full inspection.

One provider specialising in delivering apprenticeships for over 20 years, but which did not wish to be named, was rated "good" overall in its last full inspection in 2014.

However, at this point the education watchdog didn't give apprenticeships its

own grade.

The provider's most recent report was a short inspection last year, which meant that it maintained its grade two.

During its recent reapplication to RoATP, the provider said it was a grade two apprenticeship provider. But the Department for Education rejected the bid on the basis that, technically, they do not have an apprenticeship grade.

One senior figure at the provider told *FE Week*: "When is an Ofsted 'good' not 'good'? When it's an FE & Skills remit. It's farcical that, as a provider specialising in apprenticeships for over 20 years, with an Ofsted 'good', we have to jump through more hoops to get on the register than a provider with a broader remit.

"Our time and money (or should I say the ESFA's) could have been much better spent actually recruiting and training apprenticeships."

The provider added it hasn't been given a date from Bravo (the e-tendering portal) or from the ESFA on how much time it has to resubmit with the extra

questions.

The DfE's rejection email said: "Thank you for your application to the RoATP. Your application has not been taken forward for assessment due to an incorrectly claimed exemption regarding question PR-1:

"Within the last 3 years, have you had an Ofsted inspection and been awarded an 'apprenticeship' grade of 'outstanding' or 'good' and maintained ESFA, SFA or EFA funding since that date?"

"Please note, if your last inspection was a short Inspection (where no grade is given for apprenticeships) we looked at your last full Inspection to see if an apprenticeships grade was awarded."

The email added that this rejected application does not count towards the two applications providers are permitted within a 12-month period limit.

FE Week reported last month that new applicants trying to get on to the register, which finally reopened on December 12 with more "stringent and challenging entry requirements", had



not heard the outcome of the application six months on.

A DfE spokesperson said this week that all providers that applied to be on the register in December, January and February "have been notified of the result".

"An updated register will be published in due course," she added.

RoATP reopened more than a year after the last application window closed – a time period which left many providers wanting to get on it frustrated. Some even exploited a loophole and

attempted to buy their way on.

The new register is expected to bring greater scrutiny, following various *FE Week* investigations that discovered, for example, one-man bands with no delivery experience being given access to millions of pounds of apprenticeships funding.

While all providers will be asked to apply to the register even if they were already on there, subcontractors delivering less than £100,000 of provision a year have also been told they need to register.

The resurgence of traineeships? Minister 'thrilled' with results as providers urged to increase starts

FRASER WHIELDON
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From front

Providers are being urged to "take a fresh look" at traineeships, after the forgotten programme showed up on the Westminster radar, thanks to a new report that could spark their resurgence.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education was released on Wednesday and revealed 75 per cent of learners move on to work or further study within a year of completing their programme – a stat that "thrilled" skills minister Anne Milton.

The government also announced a new traineeships achievement rate measure for the academic year 2019-20, which will help the government monitor the programme's effectiveness, in addition to £20 million being provided through the adult education budget.

The chief executive of the Association of Employment and

Learning Providers, Mark Dawe, declared victory for his organisation's campaign to get an achievement rate measure, and said this was a "very positive step towards reinvigorating traineeships".

In light of the move, he urged providers to "seriously take a fresh look at traineeships with a view to increasing the number of opportunities available".

"This is a great, flexible programme and with the right measures, funding and attitude towards it, a key programme providing a stepping stone into sustained education, training and work," he added.

The report, the measure, and the extra funding will be a boon for the pre-employment programme, which has been plagued by falling learner numbers and a lack of investment.

The policy, which was only launched in 2013, appeared to have fallen off the political radar, evidenced by *FE Week* failing to find any reference to traineeships in any of Milton's public speeches since she became skills minister two years ago.

Traineeships

Dawe said last year the government was "so consumed" by apprenticeships and T-levels, there was a danger that traineeships "don't get a look-in".

The dwindling publicity around the programme has been matched by a 26 per cent drop in the number of trainees: from 24,100 to 17,700 between 2015-16 and 2017-18.

But following this week's research report, Milton was delighted to see how traineeships are "supporting young people to start their apprenticeship journey, get their first job or go to further study".

Speaking with *FE Week* editor Nick Linford (see page 8), the minister heaped more praise on what she said should be called "pre-employment

programmes" instead of "traineeships", as the term is "slightly misleading".

"This is about getting people ready for employment," she insisted.

Traineeships are six-month programmes, which were introduced to provide 16- to 24-year-olds with English and maths tuition, work experience and work preparation training.

This week's report found a marked divide between 16-to-18 and 19-to-23-year-old trainees, with the younger group less likely to begin employment within 12 months of a traineeship – 19 per cent compared with 53 per cent.

But employers, including global professional services firm Aon, reported how traineeships have helped them to "recruit people from a range of

backgrounds leading to more diverse workforces".

Adrian Johnson, UK apprenticeship lead for Aon, told *FE Week* that since the inception of its Step Up Traineeship Scheme in 2018 the firm has offered 15 traineeships, with nine trainees going on to permanent positions.

"The recruitment of a more diverse group of professionals is key to the future success of Aon and our market as a whole, and we are proud to support these young people in their career development," he added.

Sue George, the volunteer development manager at the British Heart Foundation, which helps deliver around 120 traineeships a year nationally, said one of the benefits of the programme was "trainees are typically almost ready for the world of work", with greater confidence and a host of transferable skills.

David Hughes, chief executive of the AoC, today stressed the importance of "stepping stone programmes" like traineeships which allow people to progress to the levels of competence that employers are seeking.

Is 3aaa's Marples back in the education game?

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Exclusive

The co-founder of a disgraced training provider that is subject to an ongoing police investigation has launched a new consultancy firm that "specialises" in schools growth and apprenticeship levy strategy.

Peter Marples stepped away from Aspire Achieve Advance (3aaa) in September in the midst of a second government investigation into the firm, which he set up alongside Di McEvoy-Robinson in 2008.

A month later, the apprenticeship giant was put into administration after the Department for Education pulled its skills-funding contracts. The police have since launched a formal criminal investigation following allegations of fraud.

Marples has refused to comment formally on the investigations to date, but set up a new company in February, called Aquifer Solutions Limited, with his wife, who owns 100 per cent of the

shares.

According to its website, Aquifer Solutions is a "dynamic, action-focussed strategy consulting business that spans a wide range of sectors" and has "specific specialisms in the apprenticeship market and schools market as well as sport and consumer products".

Marples himself is the former chair of the Spencer Academies Trust and has worked in apprenticeships for well over a decade.

In the "our services" section, the Aquifer website states that it does "financial due diligence in the schools sector", "strategic review of multi-academy trusts' capacity to grow and focus", "Baker Clause reviews" and "apprenticeship levy strategy".

FE Week approached Marples for comment about his move into the schools sector on Tuesday.

He replied the next day and said: "Aquifer solutions does not work with any schools and is not focussed on the schools sector so I have no idea where you get that information from. There is no intention to work with schools in any capacity.

"It also does not work with any

businesses in the apprenticeship market, nor will it do so."

He added that the business has a "focus on the commercial arena and overseas and will continue to do that".

FE Week checked Aquifer's website following the comment and found that Marples had removed all sections related to schools and apprenticeships overnight.

When this was pointed out, with evidence, he said: "As I have said, we do no work in the schools or apprenticeship market. Aquifer Business Solutions have no intention of doing so."

The day before references to schools and apprenticeships were taken off Aquifer's website, the text stated: "We are active now in the engineering space, sport, IT and media and still doing work in the education space.

"Focussing on the multi-academy trust market - we deliver robust financial due diligence service in a cost effective way. Clear, concise conclusions to protect your board from potentially poor decision making."

In another section, it said the firm delivers "strategic review of multi-academy trusts' capacity to grow

and focus" which involve a "series of workshops and interviews and analyses of your current position, and opportunities in the market, and delivers a strategic for growth and excellence".

Under "Baker Clause reviews", it read: "A speciality of our work and specifically aimed at schools. We will advise you how to be fully compliant with the Baker Clause requirements to enable access providers into your schools to aide careers advice other than 6th form opportunities."

And under "apprenticeship levy strategy", the website said: "A specific specialism of our business is a strategic focus for business in both the public sector and private sector to utilise their apprenticeship levy. With over £2.5 billion collected by the government each year and with less than 10 per cent annually spent, this is an opportunity to use your levy to support your people-development strategies.

"We can build you a plan, we can manage your plans on an ongoing basis and can do this on a very cost-effective basis."

It is not known if McEvoy-Robinson has joined or set up any other companies



Peter Marples

after resigning from 3aaa at the same time as Marples.

When the firm went bust it had 500 staff and government skills contracts worth £16.5 million.

A previous ESFA investigation into the provider in 2016, carried out by auditing firm KPMG (where Marples is a former consulting partner), had found dozens of success rate "overclaims".

Over 4,200 apprentices were affected when 3aaa went bust. As revealed by FE Week earlier this month, nearly one-third of them had still not been found a new provider seven months after its collapse.

The police and official receiver told FE Week their investigations into 3aaa were ongoing.

NOT TO BE MISSED

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News

T-level update reveals next wave of providers and details on funding

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Plans for T-levels picked up pace this week with the announcement of the second wave of providers, a decision on how they'll be funded, and the launch of a professional development tender.

The names of 64 colleges chosen to deliver the new post-16 technical education qualifications from 2021, in four routes – digital, construction,

education and childcare, and health and science – were unveiled on Tuesday by education secretary Damian Hinds.

Of them, 14 have never been inspected by Ofsted. The rest are rated "good", with the exception of grade one Burnley College.

While a couple of university technical colleges were included in the list, there were no private providers or schools.

They'll build on the work of the 50 providers set to deliver the first T-levels from 2020.

Unveiling those selected for wave two, Hinds said T-levels are "our chance" to radically shake up technical education in England, offering young people "high-quality alternatives to our world-class A-levels from September 2020".

"The second wave of post-16 providers we have announced today demonstrates our commitment to making this happen."

Following this, the government launched its hunt for an organisation to design and deliver the second phase

T-LEVELS
THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

of a professional development offer for teachers delivering T-levels.

A tender for a contract valued between £40 million and £82 million was launched by the Department for

Education on Wednesday, which set out plans for the work to start from April 2020 until July 2024.

FE Week has pulled out the other main T-level talking points from the week below.

Industry placement concerns continue to mount

Fears that not enough employers will step up to take on T-level students for placements that must last a minimum of 315 hours have been widespread, but the biggest challenge will arguably be in the construction pathway.

Research by the Federation of Master Builders, shared exclusively with *FE Week*, has revealed more than half (57 per cent) of small construction businesses have never taken on a work experience student before.

Their survey, of 263 members, found the employers instead favour traditional apprenticeships, largely because of the unique challenges they face when it comes to having a young person on site.

These include "dangerous work environments" and the need to purchase relevant tools and personal protective equipment, as "tradespeople would be reluctant to share tools with an unskilled person".

Most construction employees might, in addition, not have a "steady pipeline of varied

work for the student to try different skills", according to the FMB. They'll also face increasing insurance premiums as a result of having a young person on site.

Just 17 of the first 50 providers will offer the construction T-level in 2020



Brian Berry

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, said the government must do better to "support this culture change" for small construction businesses.

Meanwhile, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted interviews with half of the 50 providers who reported "challenges in securing digital placements" due to the "small size of many of these businesses, as well as intellectual property and safeguarding issues".

The DfE has partly listened to concerns by introducing some flexibilities to industry placements – including allowing multiple placements, as announced last month, as well as a trial of employer cash incentives.

'Extremely tight' timescale worries raised again

T-levels were originally meant to be rolled out from September 2019, but skills minister Anne Milton announced a delay of a year in July 2017 following feedback that this timeline was too ambitious.

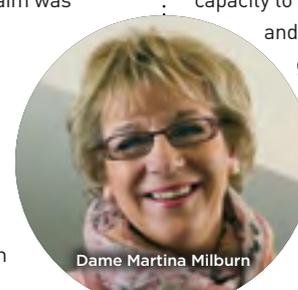
But fearing the 2020 delivery aim was still too close, the Department for Education's permanent secretary, Jonathan Slater, requested another year-long delay last May. Much to the disappointment of many, this was rejected in the first ever ministerial direction issued by an education secretary.

Since then, top government officials including the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education chief executive Sir Gerry Berragan have continued to express fears about the "worryingly tight" delivery timescales.

Now, the first T-level providers have said they share the same concern.

The NFER's research (see boxout left) said that detailed information on T-level content,

assessment and the industry placement is not scheduled to be available by March 2020, which means providers "only have about six months to fully develop their curriculum and industry placement plans, properly assess their capacity to deliver and the resources required, and address any skills and knowledge gaps".



Dame Martina Milburn

"Interviewees highlighted there was a large amount of work for them to do and the timescales were extremely tight, which could impact on the quality of their initial offer," the report added.

Meanwhile, Dame Martina Milburn, chair of the social mobility commission, appeared in front of the Commons Education Select Committee this week and called for the rollout of T-levels to be delayed for a year.

She explained the SMC has received feedback from the "business world" who warn that the 315-hour minimum industry placement component of T-levels has not been "worked out" yet.

Amidst low take-up predictions DfE to give £30k per T-level

The first wave of T-level providers are expected to recruit half the amount of students the government predicts, research has revealed.

It comes as plans for one-off payments of up to £90,000 for the early providers are unveiled by the Department for Education, as well as confirmation that a "tolerance" will be applied for under-delivery.

The NFER conducted interviews with half of the first 50 providers to deliver T-levels in 2020.

All but one said they were planning to recruit between 12 and 20 students in the first year, in "recognition of the challenges in setting up a new programme".

The Department for Education previously projected the 2020-21 cohort would total 2,500 students, but then revised this down to 2,000.

If all of the 50 providers in wave one recruit

20 students each, then just 1,000 would be studying the new qualifications in that year.

To help the first wave of providers, in part to recruit more students, the DfE said today it would offer them one-off additional payments – as part of a £3.75 million package of financial support.

The plan was revealed in the DfE's response to its T-levels funding consultation, which confirmed funding rates will range from £4,170 to £5,835 per year, depending on the size of the qualification, despite 62 per cent of respondents opposing the proposal.

In "recognition of the additional costs that are unique to the early T-level providers", the department said the additional one-off payments will amount to £30,000 per provider for each new T-level introduced in 2020, and of

£20,000 per provider introducing the Transition Framework in 2020.

"This is to recognise the costs associated with engaging in co-design of the qualifications and providers' work with the department on T-level and Transition Framework policy development," the consultation document added.

Sixteen of the first 50 will offer all three of the first T-levels, which will be taught in education, construction and digital, and will therefore benefit from one-off payments of £90,000.

The funding will be paid in 2019-20 and at the moment is only for the providers delivering in 2020-21.

Considerations are being made to also offer the payments to those set to deliver in 2021-22,

but there is "no plan to extend beyond this".

The consultation further stated that officials "understand providers are concerned they will not be able to predict recruitment to T-levels far enough in advance to feed accurate student numbers into the allocations process", and if recruitment "does not reflect the student numbers used for the allocation, then this could lead to over- or under-funding".

To ensure providers "invest in T-levels with confidence" the department is proposing to operate a "tolerance before making any funding adjustments".

"We envisage a tolerance for under-delivery during the implementation phase which will be tightened as T-levels become more established," the document stated.

"We will review actual enrolment against the first data return of the academic year. Any downward adjustment to funding would apply to the number of students outside of the tolerance."

Layoffs loom at RNN Group as DfE cuts off bailouts

JESSICA FINO

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Exclusive

One of the biggest college groups in the country has said it has “no alternative” than to cut staff numbers as it battles to cut its deficit, knowing it will “no longer be ‘bailed out’ by the government”.

The RNN Group, which has around 1,200 staff and nearly 15,000 students, has put 130 jobs at risk, with an initial 40 redundancies planned.

The group was formed following a merger between Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and North Notts College in 2016 and another merger with Dearne Valley College in 2017.

It went from an £868,000 surplus in 2016-17 to a £2.45 million deficit in 2017-18, which it said was “exacerbated by merger activities and costs”, on an income of £45.5 million.

While its cash flow increased from £2.95 million to £4.94 million in 2018, cash and cash equivalents for the year decreased by £5.5 million.

The senior leadership has now

outlined a “series of proposed cost-saving measures” after experiencing a reduction in income “across all funding streams, and increased employer costs are causing serious problems”.

Jason Austin, who became RNN Group’s chief executive last month, said: “This is an extremely challenging time for the FE sector, and colleges up and down the country are facing difficult decisions in response to year-on-year real terms government funding cuts, increased competition and declining demographics.

“There is no financial support available. Colleges will no longer be ‘bailed out’ by the government. We simply have to reduce the operating deficit.”

The Department for Education has kept many colleges afloat by offering multi-million-pound handouts in recent years. But these have now stopped following the introduction of the insolvency regime, which allows colleges to go bust for the first time.

Austin continued: “We obviously clearly regret having to put colleagues’ jobs at risk, but we have no alternative.

“We are working closely with

colleagues and unions during the consultation period to explore all options open to us to make the savings we need to achieve.”

According to minutes from a meeting that took place in March, the board recently secured a new £1 million bank loan, which the group has since told FE Week would cover a portion of the capital costs for its University Centre Rotherham, which is due to open next month.

FE Week understands the group spent around £12 million constructing the university centre.

The minutes also showed the board approved the disposal of land at its Dinnington Campus. But a spokesperson said the college had not disposed of the campus, and that it was currently investing in new electrical, plumbing and gas workshops which are being fitted over the summer.

“We are continually reviewing our assets in the light of emerging business needs, which includes considering options for both development and disposal at any of our campuses,” she said.



Rotherham college campus (part of the RNN Group)

The RNN Group was downgraded from “good” to “requires improvement” by Ofsted last month.

Inspectors said senior leaders and governors have presided over a period of “significant decline in the quality of education and training following the two mergers”.

John Connolly, the group’s formal

principal who stepped down with immediate effect last year after concluding he was no longer the “right person” to lead it, received a payment of £150,000 when he left.

According to the group’s accounts, the “emolument” was “in lieu of notice, entitled holiday pay and early access to pension funds”.

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News

Milton in interdepartmental talks to set up new youth pre-employment programme

FRASER WHIELDON
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Exclusive

Skills minister Anne Milton wants to launch a new youth pre-employment programme as early as next January.

In an exclusive interview with FE Week, Milton revealed she is already in cross-departmental discussions with ministers about the programme, which would prepare 16- to 25-year-olds for employment, whether that be apprenticeships or another route.

“I don’t think we are meeting the needs of that group of young people”

She said: “I don’t think we are meeting the needs of that group of young people who possibly leave school without the minimum qualifications.

“I think you’ve got several departments who are doing work with some of them and I think we need to join all that up and set up a pre-employment programme which would be really good.

“One of the issues for me is that if you are 16 or 17, nine months makes up a large percentage of your life, so every month that we don’t do something is a large percentage of that person’s life.”

The Department for Work and Pensions has discussed the initiative with her, as has the

Department for Education’s early years’ minister Nadhim Zahawi, as the programme could benefit people coming out of care.

But she has not consulted the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, as they are “busy and they have other things to do. They’re working with employers designing apprenticeships. I don’t think it should sit with them.”

The programme could even be implemented without the usual review and pilot programme, which the minister said would be “the worst possible thing to do because it would take for ever”.

Milton would instead rely on work that has already been done within the government on similar programmes such as traineeships, and also collect information from job centres, colleges, schools and not-for-profit organisations such as the Prince’s Trust.

Her next step will be to get ministers from various parts of government together to compile an action plan.

“If you ask me the next thing I want to concentrate on it would be that: ministers coming together behind a programme that really works, and jointly putting money in a pot to make it work.”

Without having discussed it with civil servants, Milton said she would like something “on the racks” by January – giving the government only six months to put the programme together from scratch.

For comparison’s sake, from the government’s first mention of a traineeship programme in June 2012, it took until the following May for it to be launched, after originally being scheduled to launch in September 2013.

FE Week’s interview was conducted following the release of a report into traineeships, which revealed that 75 per cent of those who take part move on



Anne Milton

to work or further study within a year of completing their programme (see page 4).

The minister said when the report was published that she was “thrilled” to see how traineeships are “supporting young people to start their apprenticeship journey, get their first job or go to further study”.

Many of the features of Milton’s new initiative are seemingly already being done through traineeships, which prepare 16- to 24-year-olds for apprenticeships, though she said the new cross-departmental initiative will not be called traineeships as that would be “slightly misleading”.

During the interview, Milton admitted her days as skills minister may be numbered, as whoever is elected the next Conservative leader and prime minister could remove her

from the post.

She said: “We are going to have a new prime minister and government, and I would like you to press me or whoever comes into this job” on creating the programme.

Milton started in the role in June 2017, having previously served as deputy chief whip.

Despite being tipped by Fleet Street to replace Jeremy Hunt

as health secretary in the cabinet reshuffle of January 2018, Milton stayed at the DfE and recently reached her two-year anniversary in the position.

She was supporting former education secretary Michael Gove in the election, who was knocked out of the race on Thursday. The contest is now between frontrunner and former foreign secretary Boris Johnson and Hunt, the current foreign secretary.



Boris Johnson



Nadhim Zahawi

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Investigates

What makes a UTC

JESS STAUFENBERG
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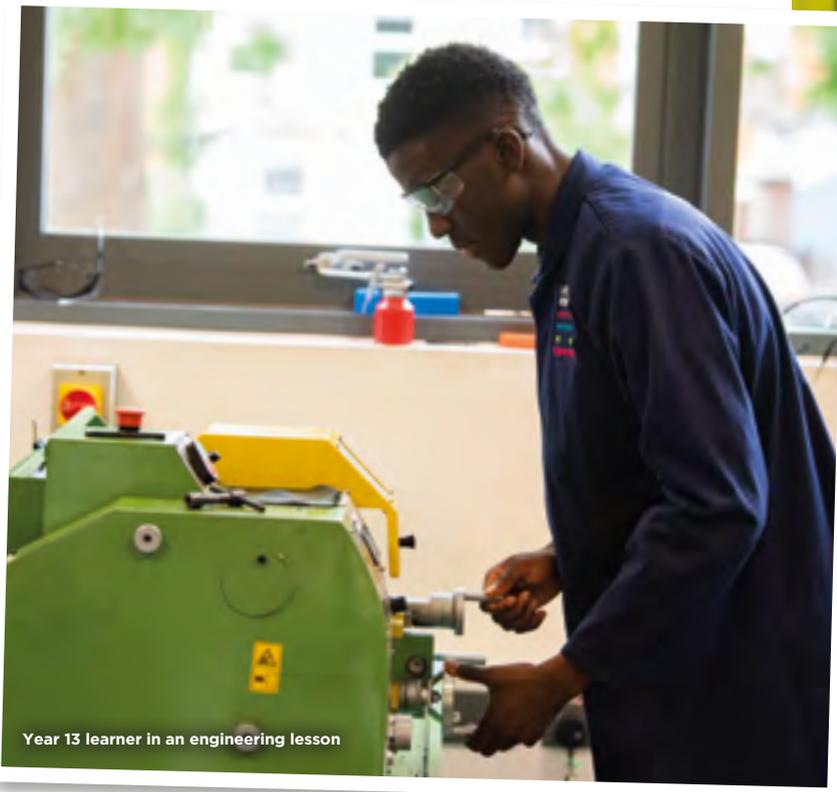
Why is UTC Reading successful while other colleges are shutting or struggling? It has a grade one Ofsted rating, but that's only one secret to its success

If Lord Kenneth Baker could take a blueprint for the beleaguered university technical college (UTC) and multiply it across the country, it's likely that he would choose UTC Reading.

Baker, who served as education secretary under Margaret Thatcher and who has pushed the UTC model of vocational education within the Department for Education (DfE) since 2010, would no doubt cheer UTC Reading's successes. Of the 34 of 50 UTCs still open that have been inspected so far, Reading is the only one to gain a grade one, have a quality Career Mark and a "World Class Schools" certificate.

"We can give a clear career pathway into STEM"

As chair of the Baker Dearing Educational Trust that supports UTCs, Baker struggles to defend the UTC model in light of ten closures following under-recruitment or low results; for others, poor Ofsted ratings have damaged their reputation. But the



Year 13 learner in an engineering lesson

model survives, with the DfE warning just last week that academy trusts that take over UTCs must preserve their technical and vocational "ethos" – or not call it a UTC.

Baker might do better to recommend trust bosses visit UTC Reading to see why this ethos is worth preserving. Specialising in engineering and computer science, it is expanding its learner numbers to meet parental demand; this year it increased its admission numbers in year 10 from 100 to 120 – and next year it is oversubscribed for year 10 and year 12 entry.

Four years after its Ofsted grade and under new leadership, how has it kept up momentum? Jonathan Nicholls,

who took over as principal in June 2017, says getting local schools on side was crucial – as was coupling with employers such as Microsoft.

"Relationship-building is critical in a local area for a UTC to build up strength," he says. "It should not be seen as [being] in competition with other schools, but providing opportunities for them."

Nicholls learnt the lesson from Joanne Harper, the former executive principal and now the deputy chief executive of the UTC's sponsor, the Activate Learning Education Trust. He meets regularly with secondary school heads about the UTC's curriculum offer, and his staff visit local years 9 and 11 to speak to potential recruits.



The schools understand that some learners would benefit from vocational qualifications offered by the UTC, such as the NCFE level 2 technical award in business and enterprise in key stage 4, and the level 3 BTEC extended certificate in computing in key stage 5. "They know it's not about us taking

students from somewhere else, it's about recognising we can give them a clear career pathway into STEM," he says.

It's a far cry from the desperate measures of UTC Warrington, as reported in FE Week and Schools Week last year, which angered local schools when it encouraged learners to move earlier than expected.

"It's about us understanding what industry needs"

Persuading learners to join the UTC at 14 is tricky, but even recruiting to year 12 is tough because of competition from further education (FE) colleges.

Another relationship, this time with employers, is the solution, Nicholls says.

"There's no doubt we experienced the same challenges as other UTCs, but



UTC Reading

UTC 'outstanding'?



Year 12 learners in a BTEC Science practical biology lesson

what set us off on a good footing were the large industry partners behind us." UTC Reading is partnered with Microsoft, which has offices in the nearby Thames Valley Park, as well as Japanese technology company Fujitsu and IT company Cisco. Others include engineering consultants Peter Brett Associates and Network Rail. Open days are held at the employers so it "already starts to feel different to what students might be experiencing in a traditional school".

This year the UTC has tightened its industry partnerships by introducing the "Pipeline Programme", in which post-16 learners have eight days on site with their preferred employers over two years. The programme, launched in September, replaces employability days at the UTC and instead brings learners face-to-face with professionals. "It's like having eight days of interviews to impress that employer," Nicholls says. "It means when they submit an application for an apprenticeship, they can say, 'you remember me?'"

If the good relationships with employers and schools put the UTC

on a steady footing when it opened in 2013, the Ofsted grade cemented parental confidence. "There's no doubt that really great outcome from Ofsted helped us to build a reputation," Nicholls says. "Parents would look at us on the basis of being an 'outstanding' provider." He appears to have made the UTC brand one of its strengths unlike some providers. For instance in 2017 Cambridge UTC renamed itself an "academy".

It was this "outstanding" grade that made UTC Reading eligible for that World Class School status, which it won in 2017 with 15 other schools. It is the only UTC to hold the title, which assesses learners against a framework of skills and competencies. And in May it won the Career Mark, which appears to be even harder to meet than the Gatsby careers benchmarks, if the enormous application portfolio that Nicholls shows me is anything to go by. Both standards were achieved in response to the Ofsted grade, he says. "It was about, how do we build on the pinnacle of an Ofsted grade? We wanted to continue to stand out."

And it's worked. There are 224 applicants for 120 year 10 places in September, and 465 applicants (including those already at the UTC) for 160 places in year 12. These are figures many UTC principals can only dream of. Nicholls says in "a year or two" the UTC should have 560 learners on roll, bringing it almost to its 600-pupil capacity.

"You have to give these things time to breathe"

The success has also given the senior team the confidence to innovate; apprenticeship routes were dropped in 2017 because FE colleges had the option covered. This year a new A-level in three-dimensional design and architecture was introduced to offer more "creative" qualifications that it is hoped can help to increase the number of girls enrolled by 1 per cent a year (currently the figure is 16 per cent).

Nicholls believes this ability to adapt sets UTCs apart from other providers. "The concept of the UTC is to provide a response to the needs in their region," he says. "It's about us understanding what industry needs."

But he is one of the lucky ones. His belief in the model is clearly shared by his sponsors: Harper sits on a



Principal of UTC Reading, Jonathan Nicholls

national group of "core principals" of UTCs. The trust has four UTCs, two mainstream secondary schools and a studio school, meaning it can draw on the expertise of staff whilst making it unlikely the UTCs ethos will be lost. The trust is supported by Activate Learning, a wider group that includes FE colleges, adding another layer of expertise.

At a national level, the picture does not look so rosy: only 16 UTCs have a grade two, 12 a grade three and five a grade four, as of April. Even at UTC

Reading, the data appears to be mixed: of those enrolled to study mainly academic qualifications, only 63 per cent of key stage 5 learners completed their programme compared with a local authority average of 90 per cent. At key stage 4, the -0.74 progress score might cause concern.

But Nicholls is adamant. "I absolutely believe in the concept of the UTC model and what it can do. You have to give these things time to breathe."



Year 13 learners in an engineering lesson working on lathes

Investigates

The move towards profe

Huge mergers, a new insolvency regime, big decisions: is it time to pay for governance?

FRASER WHIELDON
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More and more colleges are appointing directors of governance and are even paying their governors, as they look to professionalise these roles in the shadow of mergers and the insolvency regime. *FE Week* has taken closer look at how and why this practice has come about.

The importance of governors has never been higher, with colleges facing the challenge of managing an increasingly diverse portfolio of business: from colleges, to independent training providers, to multi-academy trusts.

While colleges continue to merge to create “fewer, larger, more resilient and efficient providers”, as was the plan with the post-16 area reviews which ended in March 2017, they’re also battling against tight budgets; and if poor decisions are made, they could find themselves going insolvent, as has been the case with scandal-hit Hadlow College.

Two of the biggest college chains in the country, NCG and LTE Group, have begun efforts to combat this challenge by paying their governors.

In LTE’s case, seven governors were paid a total of £11,833 in 2017-18; while three “co-optees” – people with specific skills and professions who sit on sub-committees – were paid a total of £3,000.

In NCG’s case, one governor was paid £15,000 to be a director of its subsidiary training provider, The InTraining Group.

A spokesperson said it otherwise “does not reimburse its members of corporation, except as direct recompense for out-of-pocket expenses”.

Another prominent college which has started to pay governors is the East Kent Colleges Group. In an interview with *FE Week*, the group explains that this decision was made due to the significant higher workload required following its merger (see full interview opposite).

Another way in which colleges have sought to professionalise governance is by hiring what are known as directors of governance, to supplant the traditional clerk, to work full-time on processing paperwork, recruitment, and advising governors and managers.

FE Commissioner Richard Atkins, who has spoken in the past about bringing more financial expertise on to college boards, has said hiring professional clerks is “excellent practice”.

A number of colleges, including NCG, Bolton and Sunderland, have advertised for heads, assistant heads, or directors of governance over the past year.

NCG hired an executive director of governance, assurance and risk in August 2018 – David Balme – and has advertised for an assistant director.

The group, which runs colleges across the country, justified the move by saying the role has “important oversight of a complex organisation”.

London South East Colleges also employed a group executive director for corporate services, Jennifer Pharo, in 2018. Speaking to *FE Week* (see



Richard Atkins

opposite), she described herself as the “glue” keeping the organisation together.

The ICSA governance institute’s not-for-profit head of policy Louise Thomson, said “it wouldn’t surprise her” if there has been an increase in the practice of paying governors. “There has been in the charity sector. And the FE college world is more challenging, with funding cuts and pressures to merge requiring more time of governors.”

Thomson added that if a college is facing acute financial or other pressures, its board may believe the chair needs to be more “hands-on” and as such ought to be paid for their efforts.

She explained that if the board was considering paying governors,

there should be a sound business case articulating the benefits to the college, its students and wider stakeholder constituents.

She also warned colleges that may be considering it: “Where a governor is paid and finds themselves in court for their action on the governing body, it is likely that the court will hold them to a higher standard than those not being remunerated.”

However, other colleges may find the prospect of paying governors troublesome as it would violate what Thomson called the “sacrosanct” principle of volunteerism, which many see as one that should be protected at all costs, as well as creating a possible conflict of interest.

Writing on the topic in this edition of *FE Week* (see page 16), Dr Sue

Pember, the former lead civil servant for FE funding and now director of adult and community learning group Hoxley, said: “If boards of colleges are reporting difficulty in competing with other organisations for governors, they should consider whether payment of chairs and other board members would help alleviate their recruitment problems and agree to apply to the Charity Commission (see box out).”

Indeed, aside from NCG and LTE, the other eight biggest colleges by income that were looked at by *FE Week* do not pay governors, and almost all of them said they are not considering it.

Yet with an increasing number of colleges looking to pay at least their clerks, it may only be a matter of time before governor remuneration becomes much more widespread.

SO HOW DOES A COLLEGE GO ABOUT PAYING ITS GOVERNORS?

There are special circumstances under which colleges can remunerate governors for services.

According to the Association of Colleges, these include periods when a college is restructuring or reorganising, under orders from the ESFA or FE Commissioner.

There can also be a particular problem with recruitment, or a requirement for a board member to commit a significant amount of time, which would allow for governors to be

remunerated.

As every college is a charity, if one wishes to remunerate its governors, it has to apply for permission from the regulator of the charitable sector, the Charities Commission.

As colleges are exempt from the Charities Commission’s oversight, the commission will then consult with the principal regulator of colleges, the Department for Education.

A further education corporation will likely insert the order alongside the instrument of government; while a college set up as a company will insert it into the articles of association.

However, the government says remuneration should not last the maximum duration unless it can be justified, and it cannot be approved retroactively.

A new college can include a power to allow a minority of trustees to receive specified

payments or benefits, including remuneration for serving as a trustee.

This does not require approval from the commission, but the wording will, of course, need to comply with charity law.

But where an existing college (which has not been granted permission to pay governors) merges into a new college, the new institution would need to give reasonable assurance that any payment to governors had been paid for by its own funding.

Professionalising governance

Director of governance: it's 'a nice challenging role'

FRASER WHIELDON
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London South East Colleges' director of governance Jennifer Pharo has described herself as the "glue" keeping the organisation together, as she sat down with FE Week to discuss her role as a professional clerk.

Pharo was appointed to the role in April 2018 and clerks for all the group's boards: for the college, the multi-academy trust, and its independent training company, and all the group sub-committees such as finance, audit, curriculum and search, and remuneration. It's what she calls a "nice, challenging role" with a "unique" portfolio of charities.

Very few colleges are also multi-academy trust sponsors, with Dudley College and Stoke-on-Trent counting

among the ranks.

Of her role, Pharo said: "We needed the glue to keep that together, support governors and to make sure the communication and information flow is working around what is our operating system of governance."

About one-fifth of her time is devoted to recruiting people to fill 35 governor posts across the three charities.

Other times, she is preparing briefs on a range of items, from the Augar Review of post-18 funding to the Timpson Review on exclusions; and even individualised handbooks for each governor, complete with their terms of reference.

Governors, she says, are "very appreciative" of all she does for them.

So, what should colleges be looking for in a professional clerk?

"I have a legal background. I worked as a legal executive for six or seven

years, before I moved into investment banking, but I worked within the legal arena of investment banking for about 15 years, at a large Swiss bank," Pharo says.

After her banking career, she moved into education, to pursue a dream of becoming a teacher.

She has worked in the FE sector since 2002 and has served as head of planning and performance and director of MIS at Lewisham College, which eventually became Lewisham Southwark College, as well as executive director of college services at LSEC.

"So, I've got a really good understanding of the business, about finances and the income – all the challenges that we face as a sector.

"I understand all of the regulatory topics, and I have been involved quite intimately with all the funding agencies, so I understand the funding rules and



Jennifer Pharo

how both colleges and schools operate."

In order to avoid conflicts of interest, Pharo has put together an impartiality policy to answer questions as to how she can stay neutral in meetings when she is employed by the college and has to safeguard both the governance and the executive team.

"The role that we have is the real conscience of the organisation."

She has plenty on her plate for the next few months, including operating plans for the next year for how the meetings will work and how the

information is flowing through them.

There are also the board evaluations, which she is starting in September.

On the recruitment front, the college is endeavouring to bring in greater diversity and also keep up its range of skills.

Recently, a senior Department for Education official approached them about becoming a governor. "He felt we were really, really interesting group," Pharo said. "He really wants to be part of our governing body. And so that's really complimentary for us."

Additional commitment requires remuneration

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FE Week spoke to the chair of the EKC Group remuneration committee, Jonathan Clarke, about how the decision to pay its chair came about, as well as the practice's benefits and its risks.

When the merger between East Kent College and Canterbury College, which created the group, was finalised in 2018, the committee realised there was going to be a significantly higher workload for the chair than there had been before.

"As a result," Clarke said, "the governing body wanted to ensure we had a chair who not only had the skills, but was remunerated for the additional commitment and time they would need to invest in the governance and strategic guidance of the new group".

The time commitment was too much for the then-chair, Beverley Aitken, who announced she would be stepping down shortly before the merger.

Into their shoes stepped Charles Buchanan, the chair of the merger's transition group.

The board decided to pay him £20,000 per annum for 50 days work a year, though Clarke stressed that he works much more than that in reality.

He said: "The decision to remunerate the chair was taken because of the increased need for the group to have one who had a strong business background and experience of guiding large and diverse organisations.

"The size of the new group means that it's a highly complex operation, and one which requires exceptional governance and strategic guidance.

"We believe the chair brings that to the board, and adds the professionalism required for the role as it currently is."

Buchanan, the only remunerated member of the board, is a former chief executive of Lydd/London Ashford Airport and Manston Airport in Kent. He fits the bill for what the board was looking for in the group's chair: a strong business background and experience of guiding large, diverse



Jonathan Clarke

organisations.

His role involves many of the same activities any other chair would be expected to carry out: supporting, but also challenging, college managers and meeting with stakeholders, to name but two of his responsibilities.

However, Clarke says a remunerated chair "brings a professionalism, and a wealth of experience in the world of commerce to the table, enabling the board to examine performance in a

much more strategic manner."

Paying Buchanan also means senior post-holders are able to count on their chair being available when he's required to give his input in any debate.

Clarke was careful not to recommend it to all colleges, and said there may be some disadvantages, though EKC had not encountered any.

But he said the chair, as a paid officer, was held to a higher standard

than the other governors.

Clarke also said governors had to be mindful of doing their jobs correctly, especially considering some recent "catastrophic" failures of college governance.

One such example is Hadlow College, based a few miles from EKC, which entered insolvency in May, after FE Commissioner Richard Atkins reported its board had failed in its fiduciary duty.

Yet Clarke remains optimistic about EKC Group's approach: "I don't feel that is a risk. In fact, quite the opposite – it should ensure that remunerated governors have a vested interest in outperforming others, and working even more diligently to deliver the best possible outcomes for their organisation."

There was not necessarily a "magic panacea" to recruiting professional governors, he added, but remuneration may be one possible solution.

"I think that FE, as a sector, sometimes needs to embrace new ways of doing things, and should also experiment with innovations."

News



Frampton to stay on as AoC president as Davies withdraws from race

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Exclusive

Steve Frampton will continue as president of the Association of Colleges for a second year, after his only challenger pulled out at the last moment.

Trafford College Group principal Lesley Davies had been the only challenger to Frampton. However, owing to “personal reasons” she withdrew on the last day of voting.

“Due to personal reasons I am withdrawing my application to become president of the AoC for 2019-20,” she told FE Week.

“The AoC continues to play a vital role in, and for, the sector and I would like to take this opportunity to wish the new president every success for the upcoming term, during which I will continue to offer my full support as principal and chief executive of The Trafford College Group.”

The AoC confirmed on Wednesday that Frampton will continue as president into 2019-20.

“I really do #LoveOurColleges,” he said following the announcement. “I have loved being your AoC president this last year and I am thrilled to have the honour for another year.

“I would like to personally thank Lesley for a great contest and wish her all the best. She is a great champion for our sector, and I know that she will continue to be so.

“We’ve achieved lots but there is still so much more to do”

“This has been one of the privileges of my life – we’ve achieved lots but there is still so much more to do.”

David Hughes, chief executive of the AoC, said he was “delighted” that Frampton will be on board as president

for another year.

“It was a shame that Lesley had to pull out, for personal reasons, and I want to thank her for putting herself forward,” he added.

“Steve has made a big impact over this last year, bringing with him enormous amounts of energy, enthusiasm and dedication, not least to the #LoveOurColleges campaign. I know that he’s got lots he wants to achieve over his final year as president and I look forward to working with him on it.”

Frampton, the former principal of Portsmouth College, reapplied for the role after having completed one year of his two-year term, under rules introduced after Ian Ashman served the previous maximum one-year term in 2017.

Every college which is an AoC member got one vote in the election, which must run over a two-week period.

Davies was the first person to challenge an incumbent president of the association under the new rules.

Ashman’s immediate successor,



David Hughes

Alison Birkinshaw, served only one year as president before retiring. Frampton was elected, unopposed, to replace her in May 2018.

The principal of Trafford College since 2016, Davies oversaw its merger with Stockport College in April last year, which created the Trafford College Group.

She had intended to stay on as principal if she was elected AoC president.

In her election pitch, Davies promised to work on behalf of association colleges to “ensure government puts the long-

term sustainability of colleges at the heart of its policymaking”.

During Frampton’s tenure, the association has helped shape the new Ofsted inspection framework, worked with the DfE on teacher recruitment and retention strategies, and launched the #LoveOurColleges campaign.

In his re-election pitch, he said serving as president was a “great privilege” and he was “excited for the task ahead”, referring to making sure colleges were in the strongest possible position for this year’s Comprehensive Spending Review.

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If you're an enthusiastic individual with a creative approach to problem solving as well as leading and managing change, we look forward to hearing from you.

Our attractive rewards package includes:

- A competitive salary offer
- Enhanced leave policies including 39 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- Competitive pension package
- Support for continued professional development
- Health related benefits including individual health care plans
- Access to a state of the art gym
- Onsite nursery and parking
- Restaurant facilities and FREE breakfasts

Closing date: 3rd July 2019

For further details and to apply please visit the Stoke on Trent College website: www.stokecoll.ac.uk/jobs, or email humanresources@stokecoll.ac.uk

The College is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from all sections of the community. The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. All our roles are subject to an Enhanced DBS



Head Of Teaching, Learning & Professional Development

Salary: £37,630 - £39,925
(Relocation Package Available)

Located on the edge of The Lake District national park in the northern reaches of England. Lakes College has high aspirations for staff, learners and the community it serves. As one of the founder members of the new £7.5 million northern campus for the National College for Nuclear, the Governments National College initiative aimed at addressing current and looming vocational skills gaps for national strategic industries, Lakes College will see significant investment and growth in the next few years, adding to its existing portfolio of STEM provision, making it one of the most exciting places to work in the sector. Having recently invested over £1 million in our facilities to provide our students with access to the best facilities and equipment, we ensure that all our learners are equipped with the skills, knowledge and behaviours for their chosen career pathway and next steps in life.

We are seeking to appoint a dynamic and passionate 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 Teaching Learning & Assessment strategies, continuous quality improvement planning and the professional development of our delivery teams.

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 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 evidence based teaching practice.

Closing Date: Tuesday 25 June 2019 (12:00 noon)

Interview Date: Thursday 4 July 2019

To apply and for further information www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/

South Thames Colleges Group

Assistant Principal: Inclusive Learning and High Needs

- Assistant Principal Curriculum & Performance

Carshalton and Merton

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

South Thames Colleges Group are now looking to appoint two energetic and talented Assistant Principals to work across Carshalton and Merton Colleges. One focussed on Curriculum and Performance and the other focussed on Inclusive Learning and High Needs.

Within these roles, you will lead the strategic development and quality improvement of the curriculum or SEND offer in line with the South Thames Colleges Group (STCG) objectives.

Reporting to the College Principal, these roles will drive further robust quality improvement at Carshalton and Merton Colleges whilst also initially taking a cross College lead on Apprenticeships and SEND provision accordingly.

In order to be successful in these roles, you will possess a Degree or appropriate professional qualification.

For the Curriculum & Performance role, you 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 experience of quality improvement within an FE college.

For the Inclusive Learning and High Needs role, it is essential that you have thorough understanding of Inclusive Learning, with particular focus on high needs provision and additional learning support for adults. Experience of developing specialist and mainstream curricula suited to the needs of students with additional needs is a specific requirement.

Closing date for the return of an online application form is 28 June 2019.



Dutton Fisher Associates is a national training provider supporting businesses in professional development & training. Working primarily in the Social Housing Sector we deliver accredited programmes & apprenticeships in Housing and Leadership & Management.

We are currently recruiting for the following positions:

Assistant Operations Manager - Apprenticeships

Location: Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Salary: £25,000

Housing Apprenticeship Programme Manager – North of England

Location: Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Salary: £30,000 - £35,000

Internal Quality Assurance Lead - Housing Apprenticeships

Location: Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Salary: £30,000 - £35,000

For more information on each role, please visit <https://bit.ly/2N4V8f0>

To apply, please send your CV and Cover Letter to James@duttonfisher.com

Closing date: 5th July 2019

Interview dates: 16th & 17th July 2019



Langley College is part of the Windsor Forest Colleges Group and is its centre for technical and vocational training and apprenticeships. It has benefited from a £30 million investment in its campus and is equipped with the latest industry standard equipment– including a mock hospital ward.

We are a forward thinking college formed in 2017 through a partnership between East Berkshire College and Strode's College with three main sites in Berkshire and Surrey. As a new, vibrant organisation, our ambitious teaching and learning strategy is rapidly transforming our colleges.

Head of Health and Social Care, Child Care, 14-16 and Enrichment

Up to £43,624 per annum depending on qualifications and experience

This is a fantastic opportunity for an enthusiastic, innovative and ambitious individual to inspire others to ensure students make excellent progress. We welcome applications

from outstanding managers and teachers with the experience or potential to lead on these areas.

You will lead our strong Health & Care provision including our excellent Access to HE. You will also have the opportunity to shape provision and strategy cross-college through leadership of our enrichment provision and small partnership 14-16 provision.

Closing date: 28 June 2019 (midday)

Selection process including interviews: week commencing 8 July 2019.

Generous holiday allowances –Curriculum Heads of Department work 200 days a year with up to 52 non-working days plus bank holiday.

Please apply at <http://www.windsor-forest.ac.uk/jobs-a-careers.html> and complete an online application form.

We also have a rolling programme of applications for roles – permanent and hourly paid lecturers in a number of disciplines within the College. (Applications will be shortlisted on a rolling basis and we reserve the right to interview and appoint at that point. We encourage you to apply at the earliest opportunity to avoid disappointment). We believe in supporting the development of our staff and Bottom of Form will support successful candidates to acquire a recognised teaching qualification or assessing qualification, if they do not already possess one.



Part of the Windsor Forest Colleges Group



Director of Awarding

Full time / Permanent contract
Colchester based – with some travel
Salary based on experience

With an ambitious growth plan, we need a Director to change and shape our awarding function for the future. You will already be a strong leader with experience in the further education or awarding sectors, preferably with a curriculum or quality background. Our awarding function includes product development, customer experience, assessment, certification, quality assurance and compliance.

The awarding team are ready for change and need a visionary leader to inspire them to be the best they can be.

You will be responsible for developing and delivering an innovative plan to implement strategy and ensure our customers have an outstanding experience throughout their whole journey with us.

You will be a key player in the future success of our organisation.

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Gateway Qualifications is an Awarding Organisation with over 30 years of expertise. We offer a huge range of regulated qualifications, apprenticeships and Access to HE Diplomas and can develop new qualifications and quality assure inhouse training.

If you feel that you are the perfect person to take up this exciting opportunity please apply by visiting our website for further information <https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/careers/vacancies/>.

If you would like an informal discussion please email our HR Manager, Debbie Dear at debbie.dear@gatewayqualifications.org.uk.

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Adult Education Budget – Programme Manager



Salary and days of work

This is a full time position paid at £45000

We offer 22 days holiday plus 8 bank holidays (30 in total)

The start date will be in August 2019 – exact date is open to discussion

Big Creative Training is a well-established and expanding creative industry training provider with a long track record of delivering positive outcomes for learners. Our mission is to improve the lives of young people through high quality training and creative industry experiences.

We have more than 400 young people per year going through our vocational training programmes including apprenticeships, and they all take qualifications in maths and English. We have great industry links and work with over 100 creative sector employers and SMEs.

We have recently been successful in our bid for adult education contract in London and we are therefore now looking for an outstanding Adult Education Budget (AEB) programme manager to join our team based in Walthamstow, East London.

You will need to have a strong understanding of the adult education budget and skills policy and funding. You are likely to have experience of operational or strategic delivery of adult education from either a college, provider or agency perspective. Equally you will understand how investment in skills can deliver local and regional ambitions.

This is an exciting opportunity to build a new area of provision from the ground up, within a successful and supportive framework. Candidates will have maths and English at GCSE grade “C” or above, and will be educated to degree level with evidence of outstanding practice working in a similar environment.

Key tasks

- Work in a way that promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Champion the organisational values of respect, resilience, integrity, independence and kindness
- Lead on BCT’s AEB programme including developing the new models for delivery
- Effectively manage and monitor impact and performance delivery to the outstanding standards required by BCT and the funding agencies and Ofsted underpinned by clear and accurate reporting
- Ensure that contracts and programmes are operated profitably and achieve volume and financial targets
- Provide strong leadership, support and guidance to ensure that staff are enthusiastic, have high expectations, and support learner progress in delivering their employment and vocational skills

- Responsibility for the performance management of AEB subcontracted provision. To include programme support and guidance, performance, financial and volume targets, quality and audit compliance
- Identify emerging trends, developments and research that are relevant to the programme and ensure that delivery is at the cutting edge of best practice
- Develop strong working relationships with funding agencies and regional / national networks of organisations delivering AEB

Desired qualities

- Passionate about the opportunities afforded by the AEB to positively influence the lives of our learners
- A positive role model who leads by example and models the organisational values in their everyday life and work
- Confident and assertive with excellent leadership skills
- Ability to inspire, challenge and lead staff and learners
- Great team player and able to work on own initiative as required
- Able to relate to, and develop relationships with, staff and learners
- A common sense approach and a range of life experiences
- Experience of working in the creative industries is desired but not essential
- Extremely organised and able to manage own work load effectively
- Highly motivated and driven to succeed in a rewarding environment

Benefits of working for BCT

- Company pension and healthcare cashback scheme
- Supportive and developmental environment with an innovative approach to education
- Be part of a successful and expanding organisation

Salary and days of work

- This is a full time position paid at £45000
- We offer 22 days holiday plus 8 bank holidays (30 in total)
- The start date will be in August 2019 – exact date is open to discussion

How to apply

For an informal conversation about the role please call Alexis Michaelides on **07770 601142**

If you wish to apply you must complete the application form here by 5pm on 28th June <http://www.bigcreative.education/bct-staff-application-form/>

To find out more about BCT and our approach to education please see www.bigcreative.education

Big Creative Training was rated “good” by Ofsted in 2017. You can read the full report here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/33/51619>

“Leaders and staff successfully ignite young people’s enthusiasm for learning” (Ofsted)

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EDITORIAL



Traineeships – remember them? Well, they could be in for a welcome boost

Something of a surprise this week from the Department for Education – a press release about traineeships in which the skills minister, Anne Milton, was “thrilled”.

The surprise for me wasn't the good news – that research found the majority of the first trainees in 2014 progressed into work or further training. The surprise was that the traineeship scheme was being talked about at all.

Without taking the time to check, I don't recall a DfE press release or minister choosing to talk about traineeships since their introduction at the back end of 2013.

Since then, over 300 providers have been recruiting 16- to 24-year-olds on to the pre-employment scheme at a rate of over 20,000 per year.

After the initial fanfare when launched, many providers either chose not to recruit participants

or did so in relatively small numbers.

Many struggled to sell the concept of a six-month unpaid work placement to both young people and employers, leading to inevitable design changes. Most traineeship schemes now last less than 12 weeks.

The programme has also suffered because there has been no dedicated budget. Instead, 16- to 18- year-olds are funded based on their planned hours from existing study programme funds, which has not incentivised growth. And 19- to 24-year-olds are funded from the greatly diminished national adult education budget.

This awkward placement within two very different funding streams has done little to support expansion, with numbers falling in recent years.

It has also meant there is little traineeship-specific provider

data available to highlight the successes of the programme. The government publishes little to nothing about the millions spent on traineeships, or which providers are delivering them.

And in the current Ofsted inspection framework they can include a narrative section along with a grade for traineeships. But they typically ignore the provision, arguing that there is an insignificant number of trainees without actually defining a threshold for exclusion. In 2017-18 there were just six providers awarded a traineeship grade (one grade one, four grade twos and one grade three) and in 2018-19 (the nine months from September 2018 to the end of May 2019, just two traineeships judgments (both grade three). And in the new Education Inspection Framework being introduced in September the option to include a traineeship section

and grade has been removed.

It was also perhaps surprising that in the last two chief inspector annual reports, traineeships did not feature at all.

So Ofsted has very little to say about traineeships, and in their new slimmed-down inspection reports will say even less.

The renewed interest does seem long overdue – and even seems to be extremely popular with participants. Researchers interviewed 2,153 young people on traineeships and the findings published by the government in 2017 concluded “trainees were very positive about their time on a traineeship. More than nine in ten trainees (92 per cent) said that they would recommend traineeships to other people, and seven in ten trainees (70 per cent) said that they would speak highly of traineeships when speaking to

others.”

Traineeships, a pre-employment programme for young people, should be much higher profile and more joined up with other government departments, such as the Department for Work and Pensions.

As the skills minister Anne Milton revealed to me (page 8), she is now in active talks across government with a view to doing just that.

After two years in office implementing the policies of previous ministers, such as apprenticeship and T-level reforms, she should be supported in taking ownership of a policy to renew focus and investment on supporting unemployed young people into work.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



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Banks' power diminished with insolvency threats – but a short-term gain for long-term pain?

Yet again staff in an FE College pay with the loss of their jobs and careers, courses are cut and the poorest, most vulnerable communities suffer from these cuts. We have seen from 2009 to 2019, college funding has been cut by around 30%. This drop in funding has led to: fewer hours of teaching and support for young people, a drastic reduction in the number of learning opportunities for adults, the value of staff pay falling by over 25% since 2009, college teachers earning £7,000 less on average than school teachers.

This situation is not sustainable and ultimately impacts on college students and staff, businesses, communities and the wider economy.

Bradford College UCU members are balloting on industrial action and

have begun a petition calling on the executive to demonstrate and stop compulsory redundancies.

A Cut

And yet it drew government funding for below par apprenticeships in some sectors. Good job it won't have to pay that money back.

Andrew Roberts

Interested in views on this. DfE clearly scared to use insolvency, so colleges can use that to their advantage? Rewarding failure? Should local colleges get a say? May have made better use of money? Lloyds still got £6m penalty, so cost not really shared?

Ian Pryce

Amidst low take-up predictions, DfE to give £30k per T-level and 'tolerance' for under-delivery

Looking at the numbers in the article, it's possible that there won't be anywhere

near 1,000 students in the first wave of T-levels. The impact this would have on the credibility of the qualifications should not be underestimated.

Tom Richmond

College in fight to avoid merger after second grade 4 report published by Ofsted
Every faith in Moulton's new principal to turn this around!

Djhoughton

On-the-job T-level placements: how we can avoid a high-vis failure

An epic example of stating the bleedin' obvious... And the solution is...?? Reviving Group Training Associations is interesting, but not feasible in all sectors. Geographic, rather than sector-based associations could be an idea, with the local FE providers acting as a “hub”. Worth a look??

Paul Butler

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Banks' power diminished with insolvency threats – but a short-term gain for long-term pain?



It's shocking. It just demonstrates what utter contempt our current administration has for communities and adult learners. That they would throw the value of adult education in a community to the wolves of the market through this policy. It is clear the current funding structure is broken. But, rather than fix it, government agencies blame the very people and organisations trying their best to serve their communities.

Catherine

Experts

SUSAN PEMBER

Director of policy and external relations at HOLEX



Should college governors be paid for what they do?

The subject causes heated arguments, but surely the newly professionalised world of college governance would benefit from paying those with oversight, says Sue Pember

There is a long history in the UK of the voluntary principle for the governance of public services and charities and, until recently, this has worked well in most instances. The concept of unpaid governors has been one of the defining characteristics of the charitable and college sectors and contributes greatly to public confidence in their governance.

That said, governors are entitled to have their expenses met from college budgets, but the idea of taking this further and paying governors for their attendance at meetings, or giving them an annual salary, divides governors and senior leaders.

Everyone agrees that good people should be supported to attend meetings by claiming for travel and other expenses, such as childcare; but whether

college governance is improved if the chair and governors are paid has yet to be evaluated and the subject causes heated debate.

College governing bodies are subject to charity law, and governors are the equivalent of trustees. They should not profit from the office they hold unless authorised by the governing document (Instrument & Articles, Statute or Principal Regulator).

But there are circumstances when payment is allowed, and the Charity Commission (CC) and the government have produced joint guidance on how boards can apply to the CC for permission. The guidance covers three specific areas where a governor could be paid: expenses and compensation; payment for services or extra work – for example, contributing to area reviews; and payment for professional board leadership.

Although this guidance has been around since 2013, only a handful of colleges have applied. On the positive

side, most that have done so have been successful. The main reasons for applying have been to do with the complexity of a merger and/or taking a college from “inadequate” to “good” and needing to attract outstanding people for the role.

“NHS trusts and the police commissioners pay their trustees”

In Northern Ireland, colleges have been able to pay their board members for the past eight years and a recent evaluation found that the Department of Education reported a perception of an improvement in the range and calibre of applicants competing for chairs since the implementation of payment. They also reported an increase in applications for governor vacancies from women. Also, clerks thought attendance and

engagement was improved.

Over in England, it is interesting that there have not been more colleges applying to introduce payments, but when I have talked to governors, they express concerns about whether this will open the door to external criticism and their motives for being a governor put in doubt. I think this worry is misplaced. NHS trusts and the police commissioners pay their trustees, many local authorities have an attendance allowance for councillors and some cabinet members are paid.

College governors are being asked to do much more than they were before colleges were incorporated in 1993 and are expected to do this without the type of support and reporting the previous funding bodies provided. As the funding agencies have shrunk in size, many of their assurance responsibilities have been transferred to the actual governing body. Some will say that’s the right place for them but, as seen in the past two years, governors struggle to take on

that role without being trained and the concept of governance professionalised.

It is important that the proper procedures are put in place. For example, when deciding to apply to pay a governor, the governing body must manage any possible conflict of interest and ensure that this governor takes no part in any meeting or discussion affecting their own payment or potential payment. It must also be satisfied that paying the governor for services would be in the interests of the charity and that the level of payment is reasonable.

Finally, a written agreement, including specifying the exact (or maximum) amount to be paid, should be produced.

The professionalism of governance and the role of governors is changing significantly. If boards of colleges are reporting difficulty in competing with other organisations for governors, they should consider whether payment of chairs and other board members would help alleviate their recruitment problems, and apply.

IAN ROSS

Managing director, Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd



Procured funding is unfair to independent training providers

Ian Ross explains why he has asked the education select committee to launch an inquiry into adult education budget funding

It is now two years since the Education and Skills Funding Agency launched its procurement exercise for adult education budget (AEB) funding. While colleges and local authorities receive an annual automatic funding allocation, colleges can bid to procure more through an open process.

The element of procured funding is consequently put under pressure as colleges, who already have AEB funding, have an additional opportunity to bid for more against independent training providers (ITPs) who do not have the luxury of automatic AEB allocations. This creates an element of unfairness: I have always argued that those institutions with automatic AEB allocations should

not be permitted to participate in the procured AEB process too.

“In 2016-17 £200 million was unspent”

My second concern is that many colleges underspend their AEB funding year-on-year. In 2016-17 £200 million was unspent. Last week new FE Week analysis revealed that colleges underspent their original procured adult education budget funding allocations by 26 per cent.

In January my organisation exhausted our 2018-19 AEB funding for adult classroom provision as our successful courses in Brighton and Hove attracted more learners than

forecast. From September 2018 to January this year we effectively spent our allocation, offering a variety of vocational courses along with English and maths qualifications. Many of the adult learners we enrolled had few or no qualifications. We have high completion and attainment rates (97 per cent) with 75 per cent progression into work or further learning at a higher level. Of the students who took part in our latest level 2 support work in schools, 60 per cent went on to find jobs straightaway.

I approached 20 colleges in January to enquire about opportunities for sub-contracting and every one said their enrolments and spend was on track. This was no surprise as they always respond along similar lines, yet year after year we witness huge AEB underspends while adult learners miss out on popular courses elsewhere. This is the same story across England. One

of the advantages of ITPs is that we do not have rigid start dates, unlike the colleges who tend to only start courses in September, January and April. We can start new courses monthly to meet local learner need.

The third frustration is what happens when we get to the summer; despite colleges saying all year round that their AEB funding is fully committed, come June many suddenly

“I am not pitting colleges against ITPs”

discover that they have underspends. Many of us are all too aware of offers of AEB funding that has to be spent in the next two months to the end of

July. However, if colleges were more efficient and better at monitoring their enrolments and draw-down, ITPs could have been given the opportunity to deliver provision earlier in the year with a bigger impact. I know of one funding broker who is expecting £500,000 of AEB funding to become available during June for the remainder of the academic year.

After grumbling about these issues with other ITPs for the past few years I decided to call on the education select committee to launch an inquiry. I have never engaged with a Commons committee before, so this is new to me. Change is long overdue and I hope my call builds up support and momentum across the sector. This is not about pitting colleges against ITPs, but about creating a more fair and efficient sector to benefit adult learners across the county, especially at a time when AEB funding is so scarce.

DR CHRIS JONES

Specialist adviser for apprenticeships, Ofsted



The four new key judgments of our inspection framework

Dr Chris Jones sets out the focus of the watchdog's new framework, which will be in place from September

It is always a great pleasure to attend, deliver workshops and speak at the AELP conference, especially now, as we all prepare for the new inspection framework that comes in this September.

The new Ofsted framework has four key judgements. It seeks to rebalance what we look at on inspection by focusing on the substance of the curriculum and supporting leaders and teachers who act with integrity; namely, those who do the right thing for their learners and apprentices and who resist the temptation to take shortcuts.

The framework puts the curriculum back at the centre of inspection to ensure young people and adults receive the high-quality training and support they need to improve their knowledge and skills, get a new job or promotion, or gain the qualifications they need to go to university or higher levels of training.

A new quality of education judgment will evaluate the education and training that providers offer to all their learners and apprentices. Previously, we looked at the curriculum as a small element of leadership and management, and not through a teaching and assessment lens. With this framework, we will look in greater depth at what the provider chooses to offer, how well the curriculum is ordered and structured, and whether it is taught well.

With that focus, it is also important that we look at what happens to learners and apprentices after their education and training. Did they gain the qualifications or apprenticeship they were working towards? Did they develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for their next steps? Did they progress to their intended destination?

A separate behaviour and attitudes judgment will allow inspectors to consider how effectively providers and employers set expectations for a calm and orderly environment for teaching,

training and work. Central to this is a strong focus on attendance and turning up on time for learning and work. Simply put, if a learner or apprentice is frequently absent and often late, they are not developing the employability skills they need.

“Who holds leaders to account for performance?”

On our personal development judgment – this is about looking at the things that affect all of us at every stage of our lives: mental and physical health, equality, diversity, British values and the prevention of radicalisation and extremism in all its forms. It is also about effective careers information and guidance. For apprentices, it means covering more than just the “job” they are doing and giving them chances to

learn about the range of occupations and wider skills that their training prepares them for.

Finally, the leadership and management judgment focuses on how well leaders and managers support teachers, trainers and assessors to improve their subject knowledge, teaching and assessing skills and the integrity with which they select the subjects they teach and run the organisation.

Central to the leadership and management judgment are questions about who helps the provider to develop a clarity of vision, ethos and direction. Governance is a challenging principle in further education and skills, especially in small, independent training providers. This is why, in our handbook, we focus on the process of governance and not on people called “governors”. Who holds leaders to account for performance? Who makes sure that public money is well spent?

I would also like to address the issue

of safeguarding and keeping young people and vulnerable adults safe. It is about understanding local risks relevant to where your learners and apprentices live and work. If, for example, knife crime, sexual exploitation or far-right extremism are issues that your learners could face daily, then these are risks facing all learners and apprentices, regardless of age. Leaders, managers and teachers must ensure that the curriculum provides learners with access to the support they need to deal with those issues.

Finally, the framework consultation feedback made us aware of concerns about the lack of review around further education and skills research, so today we publish research activity specifically for the sector. You can read more here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research>.

Chris Jones is due to address the AELP conference, sponsored by FE Week, on Tuesday 25 June.

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Bulletin



Amy Ammar

Regional manager for South West England and South Wales, Association of Accounting Technicians

Start date June 2019

Previous job

National account manager, Pearson PLC

Interesting fact

She once did a tandem skydive from 13,000 feet



Richard Harris

Acting Principal and Chief Executive, City of Bristol College

Start date June 2019

Previous job

Vice principal – finance and professional services, City of Bristol College

Interesting fact

Richard's first job was a milkman



Stacey Norris

Regional manager for South of England, Association of Accounting Technicians

Start date April 2019

Previous job

Relationship manager, Education Development Trust

Interesting fact

She attended the same performing arts school as Adele and Amy Winehouse



Jason Austin

CEO & Principal, RNN Group

Start date May 2019

Previous job

Vice Principal, RNN Group

Interesting fact

He is a two times gold medalist in the World Masters Championships (swimming)

Movers & Shakers

...

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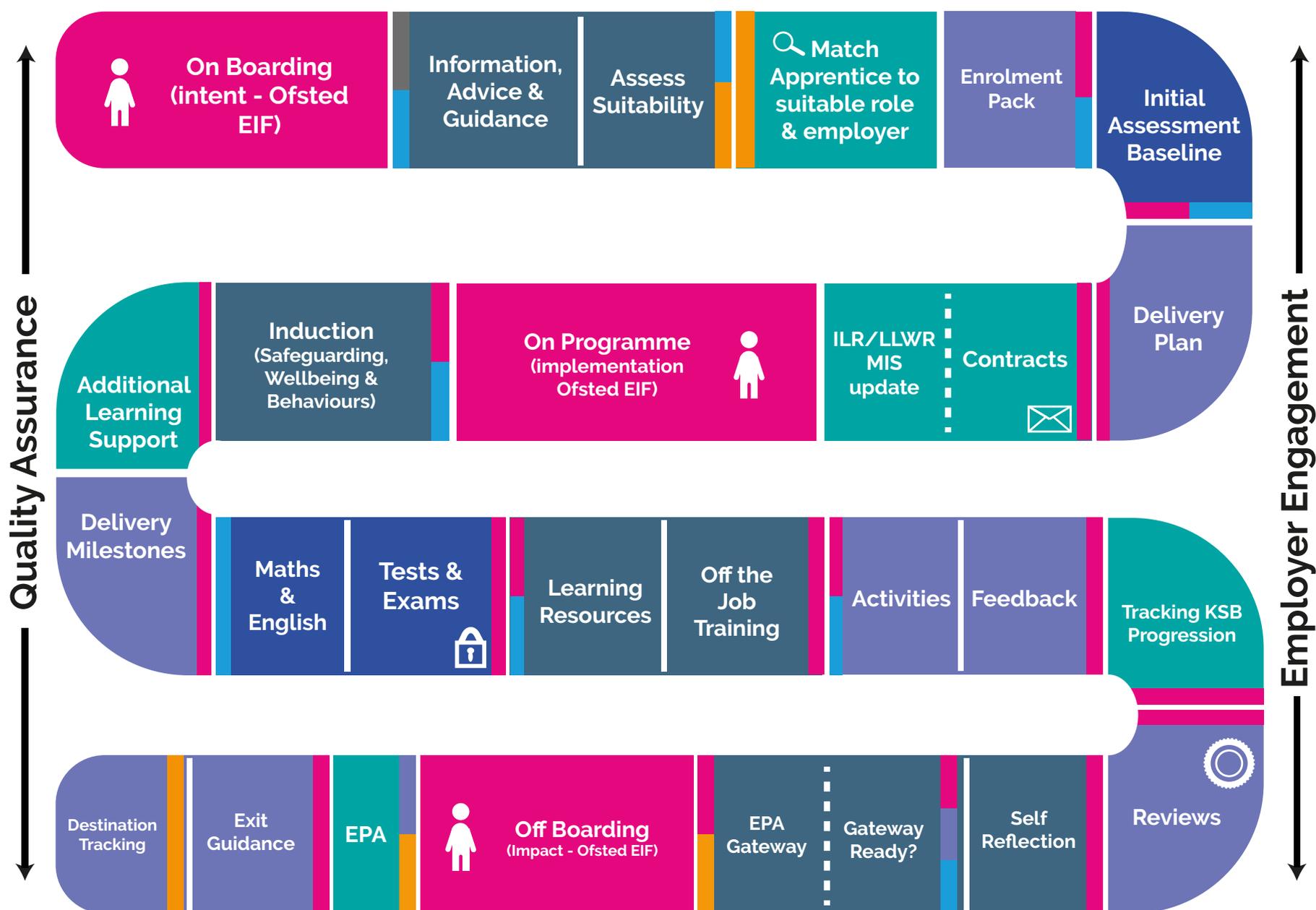
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