



FEWEEK



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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18 2019
EDITION 294

DFE DEMANDS T-LEVELS DELIVERED FOR 20 YEARS

Providers risk handing back £38m capital fund if they quit within next two decades

EXCLUSIVE FRASER WHIELDON FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK See page 14

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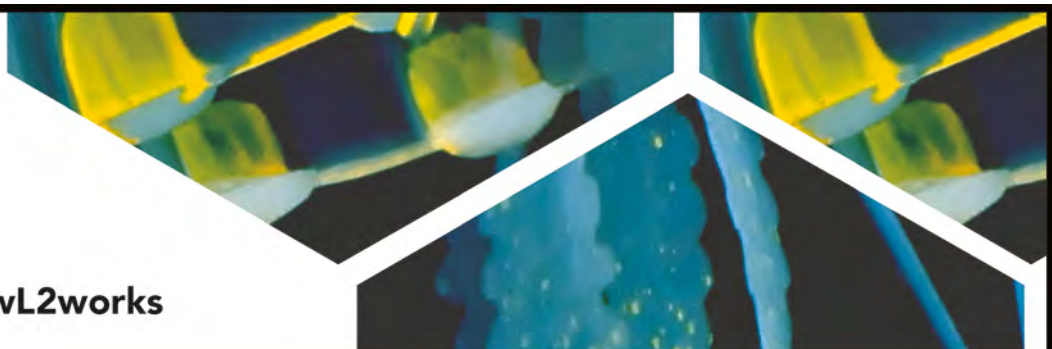
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Training for 500 apprentices at 'world-leading' security firm slammed by Ofsted

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A new provider that trains nearly 500 apprentices for a "world leading" security company has been rapped by Ofsted.

Inspectors listed a catalogue of issues with the training delivered by EGS Nationwide Limited, which was found making 'insufficient progress' in two areas of an early monitoring report.

The sole employer it works with is G4S Care & Justice Services (UK), which was itself branded 'inadequate' across the board by the education watchdog in a 2013 inspection. It later had its own government skills contracts terminated.

It appears that G4S is continuing to let its trainees down, after Ofsted said in today's report that leaders at EGS "do not take enough steps to ensure that the employer fulfils its obligation to apprentices".

"The employer does not adequately release apprentices to complete off-the-job training or provide apprentices with a workplace supervisor," inspectors said.

"Therefore, too few apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours."

Supervisors are "too often based in different locations" meaning the majority of apprentices "do not receive first-hand feedback on their progress in the workplace and cannot access the support that they need to achieve their goals".

Ofsted also found that around a fifth of apprentices should have completed their programme by now but cannot progress to their end-point assessment because of leaders' poor arrangements.

Inspectors said that leaders "do not have adequate oversight of apprenticeship provision" and they "do not measure progress to identify the necessary steps for apprentices to complete their programme on time".

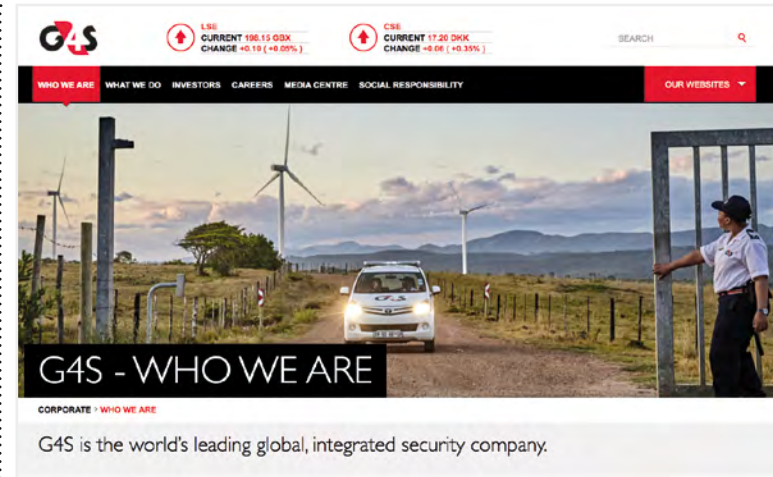
"Of the apprentices who are past their planned end date, most of those who need to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and maths have not done so," they added.

At the time of the monitoring visit, EGS trained 499 apprentices based in locations around the country for G4S.

Over two thirds of the apprentices are studying the level 2 customer service standard, while just over a quarter are studying the level 3 team leader. The remainder are studying the level 3 business administrator standard.

A spokesperson for EGS said the organisation "remains committed" to delivering apprenticeships and is "working with both Ofsted and employers to ensure findings are addressed".

Tony Summers, head of apprenticeships for G4S in the UK, said the employer works "hard" to ensure staff get the "internal support they need to further develop their skills and we have processes in



place to make sure programmes are delivered to our own high standards".

"We are working closely with EGS to support them in acting on the recommendations made by this inspection," he added.

Ofsted did praise EGS leaders for using their "knowledge of the security industry to plan the curriculum to meet the employer's training needs".

EGS was found making 'reasonable progress' in safeguarding, an area which Ofsted said is given a "high priority".

Any provider found making 'insufficient progress' in an early monitoring report is usually suspended from recruiting apprentices until it improves to at least 'requires improvement' in a full Ofsted inspection.

Colleges Week proves there's a whole lotta love out there

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Thousands of students, staff and people who love colleges across the country signed pledge cards and handed them to their local MP to mark this year's Colleges Week.

Members of Parliament were asked to commit to writing to the chancellor to ask him to include a long-term funding plan for colleges in the next comprehensive spending review, ask a question in the Commons about FE funding, and to go and "see the life-changing work that colleges do every day".

Now in its second year and organised

by the Association of Colleges, the week of activity is part of the Love Our Colleges campaign. It is used to demonstrate why investment in the sector must be sustainable.

A march on parliament was the centre-piece of the inaugural campaign in 2018 and appeared to make a difference after the Treasury announced a £400 million funding boost in August.

Social media was where support for the campaign was most visible this year, with multiple ministers expressing their support, and colleges sharing their achievements.

On Monday, the Department for Education tweeted a video of education secretary Gavin Williamson from his visit to Exeter College the week before.

"It's really important that we celebrate everything that's done in our colleges," he said.

"Not just about what the students are doing there, but of course also the teachers and the lecturers and all those who

make our colleges such an amazing success."

Many Twitter users responded to a call out to #makeasongFE.

Rhian Short, marketing and communications manager at the Learning and Work Institute, started the trend off with 'Oh what a night school'.

Other suggestions included the reimaging of Robyn's 'Dancing on my (adult learning) loan,' Stevie Wonder classic 'Isn't FE Lovely' and the Spice Girls' '2 Become 1' being proposed in reference to area reviews.

Trade union UNISON also joined in the fun with an adaptation of Rage Against the Machine's Christmas number one 'Skilling In The Name Of'.

AoC chief executive David Hughes said: "Colleges Week 2019 has been another great example of colleges proudly showing the impact they have on our society.

"I'm really pleased with how the week has gone – following the hashtag alone has introduced me to hundreds of student stories, staff passionately describing the work they do, events with employers and students signing pledge cards.

"The key message behind the week is that colleges are vital to every community, to millions of people, to communities and to the labour market. They need to be supported and invested in, and now that we have raised the profile I am sure that will happen."



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News

AQA to pay out £1.1m for 'serious breaches' on exam re-marks

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AQA has been fined £350,000 – the largest ever handed out by Ofqual – and will compensate schools and colleges by £740,000 after “serious breaches” of rules over re-marks.

The exam board failed to ensure re-marks and moderation were not carried out by the original marker, nor by someone with no personal interest in the outcome.

Ofqual said around 50,000 re-marks or moderations were affected, equating to around 7 per cent of all re-marks carried out by the exam board each year.

AQA said around 3,000 centres were affected and will receive between £110 and £440 in compensation. AQA could not provide a numbers breakdown by schools, sixth form colleges and general FE colleges.

Ofqual said the issue with the re-marks was a result of “failings in AQA’s online marking system, the limited availability of reviewers in low

entry qualifications and the relatively small size of some marking and review panels”. It said AQA had not ensured its workforce was of “appropriate size and competence” to manage risks.

It added there was “no evidence” to show any learners or centres had received the wrong outcome, but said the issues were “serious breaches” of conditions that are “integral to the effectiveness and purpose of the system of reviewing marking and moderation”.

“The failures therefore have the potential to seriously undermine public confidence in the review of marking, moderation and appeals system, and the qualifications system more generally”.

Ofqual said the re-mark issues spanned 2016, 2017 and 2018. Although the majority of the re-marks affected (93 per cent) involved individual, anonymised answers, 7 per cent involved reviews of whole exam scripts.

Mark Bedlow, AQA’s interim chief executive, said the problem was a “past technical issue” that has now been resolved, and insisted in the “vast majority of cases” it involved “one isolated, anonymised answer from a

paper being reviewed by the senior examiner who originally marked it”.

“But reviews should always be carried out by a fresh pair of eyes and we’re sorry that, for a small proportion in the past, this wasn’t the case.”

The £350,000 fine is the largest ever handed out by Ofqual. The second largest fine handed out is believed to be the £175,000 exam board OCR was ordered to pay last year for a blunder involving a Romeo and Juliet question.

Separately, AQA has also this week been handed a £50,000 penalty because its marking scheme for its A-level French exam in 2018 was “not fit for purpose”.

Ofqual said the French mark scheme did not take into account all evidence or allow for the level of attainment demonstrated by some students to be reflected in their marks.

This affected “a small number” of students’ university choices, but AQA did liaise with UCAS and universities to ensure no one missed out on a place as a result.

It also said AQA missed opportunities to identify the problem and did not



manage the incident appropriately at first.

Bedlow accepted the mark scheme was “too prescriptive”, and said affected learners received the “extra marks they deserved”.

At the start of September, AQA’s chief executive Toby Salt stepped down after two years in the role, citing health and family reasons.

AQA failed to spot re-mark issue AQA’s response to the re-mark issue has also been criticised, after it emerged the exam board had been alerted to two incidents of this nature through appeals

in 2016 and 2017.

Ofqual said the exam board had failed to notify it of the incidents despite having reason to believe they could result in an adverse effect.

Ofqual only discovered the problem in September 2018, when it undertook a review of AQA’s appeals process and discovered some re-marks and moderation had been carried out by the same person who conducted the initial marking or moderation, and asked AQA to investigate further. AQA formally notified it of a potential breach in November.

Union presents £700m sixth form college invoice to DfE after march across Westminster

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“We want the Department for Education to love our colleges” was the message from sixth form staff marching across Westminster to hand officials a £700 million invoice today.

After 25 colleges voted to take

strike action today, staff turned up in their hundreds in Westminster to sign the invoice they say represented the funding shortfall for post-16 education.

The strike was orchestrated by the National Education Union (NEU) and joint general secretary Mary Bousted told the strikers: “We want the DfE and the government to love our colleges and value the essential work you do.

“We want them to listen, and we want them to act.”

NEU’s joint general secretary Kevin Courtney said he was “pleased” with the £400 million promised for 16 to 19 education by the Treasury in August, but “we just think there is another £700 million after that we are going to need to get from them”.

Shadow FE minister Gordon Marsden had been due to speak, but had to pull out due to Brexit duties; but Labour MP and NEU member Nic Dakin did attend, and said: “Keep putting pressure on us in Parliament, because we need it.

“I bang away week in and week out on 16 to 19 funding – I am a boring record; I need more boring records to get the message out.”

The march set off from Sanctuary Building, opposite the Home Office, past the Houses of Parliament and then down to the DfE.

Asked why she was out on strike, Niamh Sweeney from Long Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge answered:

“There are schools expanding their sixth form in Cambridgeshire, funded at almost £2,000 more per student than we are.

“We’ve had huge cuts in subjects, support staff have lost their jobs, we don’t have in-classroom support for any learner with SEND anymore and it’s dramatically impacting on young people’s life choices.”

NEU representative for City & Islington College Pippa Dodswell said their support services, such as IT and HR, had been “absolutely decimated” and centralised following a merger with Westminster Kingsway.

Manish Patel from The Sixth Form College Solihull said the funding cuts had led to “bigger classes, cuts in the arts and humanities and languages – so it’s not equipping students for the 21st century economy”.

When the march arrived outside the DfE, Bousted and the NEU’s national executive member for post-16 Jean Evanson handed the invoice to a member of staff while the strikers



NEU joint general secretary Mary Bousted (left) and NEU’s national executive member for post-16 Jean Evanson (right) with the invoice at the Department for Education



The march passes the Houses of Parliament

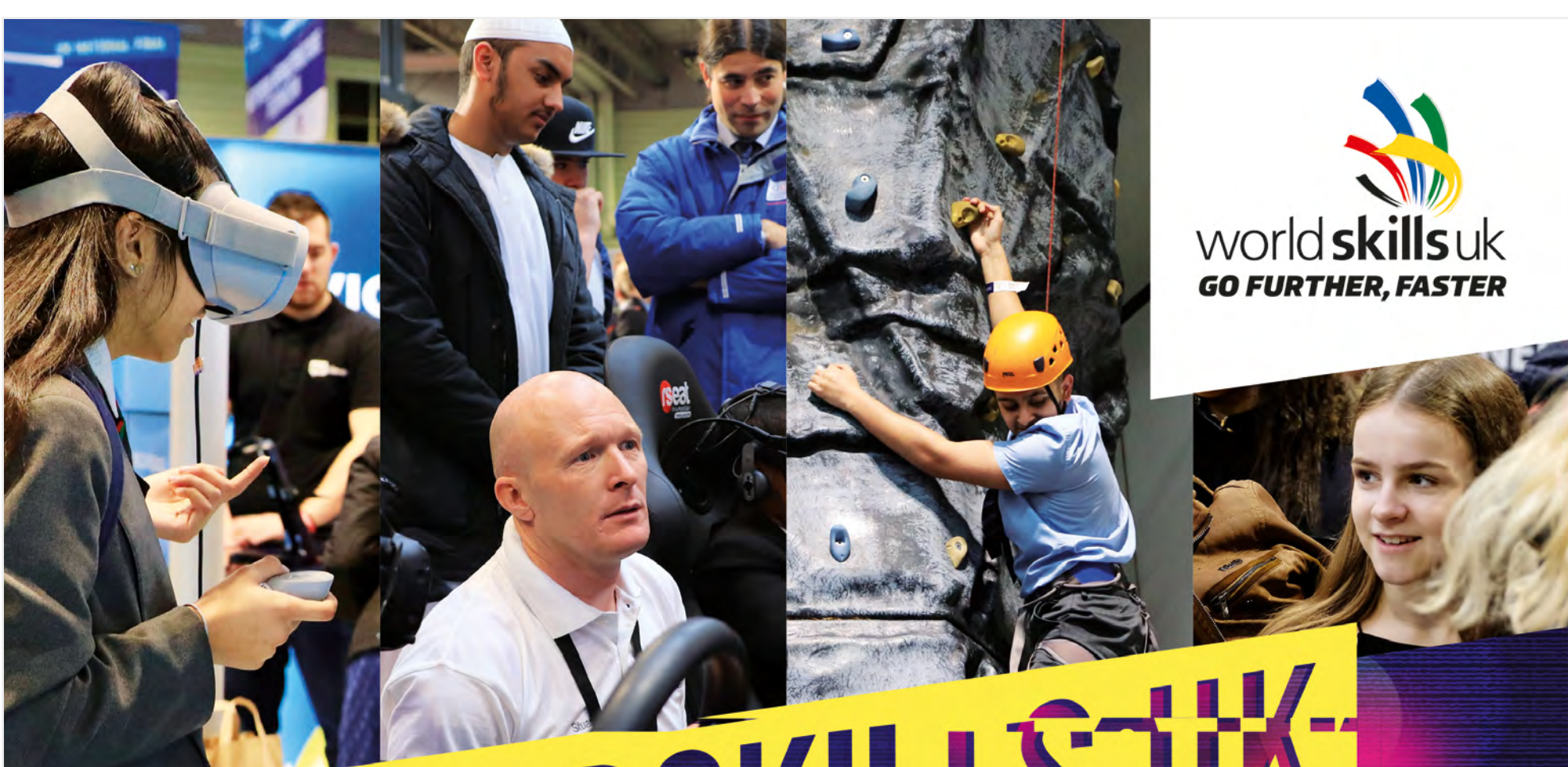
lined the pavements by the entrance.

While sixth form college staff participated in the strike, none of their principals was there in support.

The Sixth Form Colleges Association, which runs the Raise the Rate campaign calling for more 16 to 19 funding, said the leaders did not back the action as it would have disrupted teaching.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the SFCA, added that it was “important to note that this strike action is not targeted at the colleges”.

The NEU is looking at further strike action on November 5 and November 20.



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News

'Worryingly low' number of BAME FE leaders to be tackled with new scheme

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Exclusive

A 'Diversity in Leadership Programme' is to be launched, following analysis published by FE Week which found just 7 per cent of college principals are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME).

The Education and Training Foundation is aiming to roll out the scheme by Christmas.

It will have four strands: unconscious bias workshops; one-to-one coaching for aspiring leaders; a diversity charter for the whole FE sector to sign up to; and new toolkits.

The programme, which will be offered free of charge, comes hot on the heels of an FE Week investigation from July that found the number of colleges led by a non-white principal has fallen to a low of 7 per cent.

And analysis of staff individualised record data compiled by the ETF, published last year, indicated that just 6.8 per cent of senior and middle managers in FE colleges hail from a

BAME background.

Ali Hadawi, principal at Central Bedfordshire College, welcomed the ETF's scheme, especially if it adopts a "two-pronged approach".

"If it has one on practitioners to support and nurture and another which has a targeted strand of work on governing bodies especially in colleges that are about to recruit a new chief executive or deputy, to work with governors (and especially chairs), then it would be a good approach," he told FE Week.

Kirsti Lord, the Association of Colleges' deputy chief executive, said the number of diverse FE leaders is "worryingly low" and her organisation will work closely with the ETF "to increase the numbers of BAME leaders so staff in further education reflect the communities they serve".

Mark Wright, the ETF's head of leadership development, added that the diversity scheme is needed because "people from diverse backgrounds will naturally bring in thoughts and different perspectives which helps break out of the groupthinking that some colleges have fallen into in the past".



Ali Hadawi

A series of groups aimed at increasing the number of ethnic minority college bosses have ended in recent times.

This includes the disbanding of the AoC's BAME Principals' Group in 2017, the failed attempt to revive the Network for Black and Asian Professionals in 2016, and in 2015 the closure of the Black Leadership Initiative, which was launched in 2002.

An equality and diversity steering group has been set up by the AoC in

recent months to reverse this trend.

Lord said the group is "beginning to take shape" and its first meeting took place in May. The AoC could not say who the members of the group are at this stage.

A £130,000 tender seeking a partner to implement and help design the Diversity in Leadership programme was launched by the ETF last week.

"The aim of this programme is to challenge bias, remove obstacles to achieving leadership roles and to use tools such as coaching to motivate and build confidence in aspiring leaders across the sector so they can develop sufficient leadership capacity to achieve senior leadership roles," it said.

Wright told FE Week that the unconscious bias workshops were trialled earlier this year and will involve one-day sessions aimed at team leaders, governors and senior HR practitioners in FE.

"It is about getting the right people in the room who can make a difference because they are the decision makers across the organisation," he explained.

The one-to-one mentoring side of the programme will include around

seven coaching sessions over a number of months in which candidates will be trained to identify "some of their own internal blocks to wanting to take steps forward".

"Often, people from diverse backgrounds feel the weight of society saying they shouldn't be taking those positions and that gets internalised – so it is partly unpicking that, building up their leadership skills to make them feel confident to want to go forward," Wright said.

He added that the diversity charter will be a significant part of the programme, which will be co-created with the whole FE sector.

"FE doesn't have one as such, although it is something that is quite well developed in HE and in schools. Although colleges are mindful of diversity there is not really that head of steam that would be created by a diversity charter."

Wright was keen to stress that the Diversity in Leadership programme is not limited to people from BAME backgrounds. People of all genders, sexuality and physical ability can sign up.

More UTCs to recruit from year 7 as trust softens stance on entry age

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Exclusive

Two more university technical colleges have ditched their 14 to 19-year-old intakes to recruit from 11, with predictions that many more will follow.

UTCs in Plymouth and Wolverhampton have been granted permission to open to 11-year-olds from next September.

They join The Leigh UTC in Dartford, Kent, which opened a feeder school on its site in 2017. Other UTCs are expected to follow suit.

Policy experts and ministers have long suggested the recruitment of younger students to solve the pupil recruitment crisis that has faced the UTC model since its inception.

But until recently the influential Baker Dearing Trust, which supports the colleges, has vehemently opposed a change in entry age.

However, Simon Connell, the trust's new chief executive, told FE Week last month that it could be a "pragmatic solution" for colleges with low rolls.

A Baker Dearing Trust spokesperson said it expects "many more UTCs to apply to extend their age range in 2021".

"Baker Dearing is supportive of UTCs wanting to do this where it is appropriate," they added.

Plymouth UTC, which has struggled with recruitment and standards since it opened in 2013, is hoping the addition of year 7 and 8 learners will improve its fortunes. The college already accepts year 9 students, but has only 150 pupils in total, although it has room for 650.

Polly Lovell, its principal, said that since joining the Reach South

academy trust last year the UTC had been running taster sessions for year 4 and 5 pupils at nearby primary schools and has had "real interest from parents".

She admits that recruitment at 13 or 14 is "not a natural transition", especially in Plymouth where parents have a "quite traditional" approach to education, and said the move to recruit students at 11 "will definitely support our financial survival".

"It's a difficult sell to say 'actually you're going to move after you've made all your mates and got to know people in your year group'. Year 7 is much more of a natural move."

Lovell said the UTC, which went into special measures in 2016 shortly after she took over, had been on "a really challenging journey".

"It was a long, hard battle of changing pupils' views of the UTC," she said. "We've changed the curriculum, the staffing, we've

changed the uniform, the whole model really."

In Wolverhampton, recruitment at the West Midlands UTC was already starting to improve after Ofsted rated it 'good' with some 'outstanding' features last June. However, it is still only one-third full.

Av Gill, West Midlands' principal, said he wanted to extend the UTC so that more students could benefit from its offer. The struggle to recruit at upper ages was not his "main rationale".

However, he acknowledged his student numbers would "definitely be healthier moving forward" as a result.

"We were actually already seeing a pickup without [recruiting at year 7], probably because we had the Ofsted. I was expecting an uplift anyway, and slowly I felt that would feed through."

Both UTCs will require some changes in order to accept year 7s. Plymouth UTC has the space, but



Polly Lovell

Lovell acknowledges she will have to make timetable changes and recruit more staff with key stage 3 experience. There are also plans to build a new games area, and a nearby mothballed building can be brought into use if numbers explode.

West Midlands UTC will need new buildings, Gill admits, but he said government funding would be available.

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News

Colleges reach all-time high

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU
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Exclusive

A record high proportion of Ofsted-inspected colleges are now rated 'good' or 'outstanding', *FE Week* can reveal.

Our analysis of inspection grades shows an impressive 78 per cent of all general FE colleges have been placed in the top two categories as of August 31, 2019, up from 76 per cent in 2017/18.

It is the highest proportion since comparable records began in 2015 and brings colleges within just three percentage points of the FE and skills sector average of 81 per cent.

The achievement is set to feature in Ofsted's chief inspector's annual report in December, and has been praised by the education secretary.

"I am very pleased to see that

the standards of our colleges are continuing to rise," Gavin Williamson said after being shown *FE Week's* analysis.

He described FE as a "vital" part of the education system and expressed his thanks to all lecturers, leaders and support staff for their hard work.

"It is the highest proportion since comparable records began"

FE Week's analysis shows that colleges have bounced back from a low of 69 per cent in 2017, after 71 per cent were graded 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted in 2016.

A total of 77 per cent of colleges were found to be in the inspectorate's top two categories in 2015, when the current methodology started to be used to calculate the percentage of providers judged 'good' or 'outstanding'.

There are currently no general FE colleges with Ofsted's lowest grade of 'inadequate,' matching the 0 per cent score of grade four ratings last year.

However, part of the reason for this is the mergers of poorly-rated colleges which have been carried out over the past two years. When two colleges merge, both have their Ofsted grades wiped.

Between September 2015 and March 2019 the Department for Education carried out post-16 area reviews, which resulted in 57 mergers by April 1, 2019.

Interestingly, a quarter of all colleges (42 out of 171) currently have no grade Ofsted because of these mergers, up from 38 last year.

Ofsted said merged colleges are "treated as new entities, and we inspect them within three years of the merger".

"This explains why there are a proportion of general further education colleges that have not yet received their full inspection in each year," a spokesperson added.

"This in turn reflects the historically high number of college mergers that have taken place since 2016.

"However, a number of newly-merged colleges that have not yet had their full inspection have received a monitoring visit (which is an interim type of inspection), especially those that had predecessor colleges that were previously judged 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement'."

FE Week's analysis shows just two colleges fell out of the top 'outstanding' category last year, with Eastleigh College receiving a grade two and Swindon College dropping to grade three.



Nelson and Colne College also lost its grade one after a merger with Accrington and Rossendale College, which was previously rated 'good'.

Fourteen colleges moved up to grade two in 2019. Six colleges dropped down from 'good' to 'requires improvement' between 2018 and 2019.

David Corke, director of education and skills policy at the Association of Colleges, said: "This analysis shows that the number of colleges rated outstanding or good is at an all-time high.

"Colleges up and down the country are some of the best places to study and train"

"The excellent work and support provided by teachers and staff means colleges up and down the country are some of the best places to study and train."

Williamson said the Department for Education has worked closely with Ofsted in developing its new inspection framework, which was

rolled out in September.

"We are fully united in our drive to ensure all young people can benefit from a high standard of education," he added.

"We recently announced a funding boost of £400 million for our sixth forms and colleges – the biggest injection of new money into 16 to 19 education in a single year since 2010 – so that we can continue to develop world-class education and skills, as well as the supply and quality of the FE workforce."



David Corke



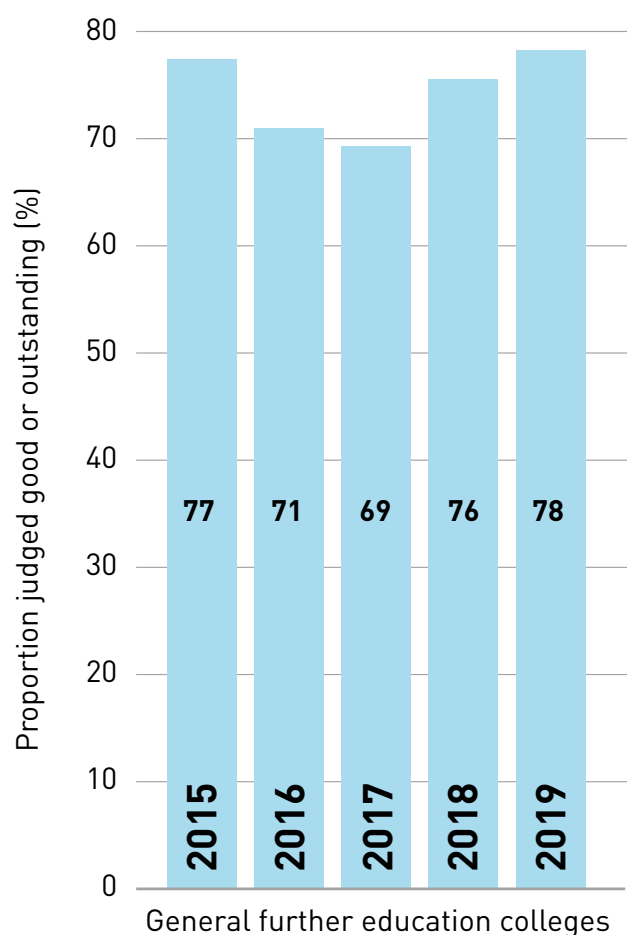
Gavin Williamson

A summary of Ofsted results for 2017/18 and 2018/19

Grade	As at 31 August 2018					
	GFE Colleges			All FE & Skills providers		
Grade 1	19	14%	76%	156	15%	81%
Grade 2	87	62%		675	65%	
Grade 3	34	24%	24%	178	17%	19%
Grade 4	0	0%		23	2%	
Total	140			1032		
Null (never been inspected)	38			649		

Grade	As at 31 August 2019					
	GFE Colleges			All FE & Skills providers		
Grade 1	16	12%	78%	154	14%	81%
Grade 2	84	65%		732	67%	
Grade 3	29	22%	22%	164	15%	19%
Grade 4	0	0%		42	4%	
Total	129			1092		
Null (never been inspected)	42			808		

in Ofsted inspection ratings



Declining Ofsted oversight

The number of Ofsted inspections to general FE colleges almost halved last year.

Only 19 per cent of all colleges were visited by the education watchdog in 2018/19 compared to 36 per cent the year before.

This equates to oversight of 33 out of 171 colleges in 2018/19, following 64 out of 178 colleges being inspected in 2017/18 – a 48 per cent drop.

Overall oversight across the whole FE and skills sector dropped from 19 per cent being inspected in 2017/18 to 12 per cent last year.

A spokesperson from Ofsted told *FE Week*: “Ofsted inspects colleges, and all further education and skills providers, in a risk proportionate way and in accordance with the timeframes detailed in the inspection handbook.

“We do not inspect providers simply for the sake of doing so.”

One of the likely reasons for this decline in oversight is funding cuts to the inspectorate.

Ofsted is in line to lose £15 million between 2016/17 and 2019/20 from its inspection budget, which is predicted to fall by 10 per cent from £141,685,000 to £127,100,000.

Another cause for the reduction in inspections could be the number of college mergers after the Department for Education carried out post-16 area reviews.

After August 2017, colleges classed as ‘new’ because of mergers will receive a full inspection within three years of their creation.

And from August 31, 2018, a policy change was introduced to extend short inspection cycles from three to five years.

However, Ofsted did not agree with the premise that area reviews and the number of mergers may have prevented it from carrying out more inspections.

“We inspect as we find: if a college is providing further education, then it is subject to inspection,” a spokesperson said.

“It’s not relevant to think of area reviews or mergers as somehow blocking inspection. They continue to happen just as Ofsted continues to inspect colleges.”

David Corke, director of education and skills policy at the Association of Colleges, provided further explanation of the decline in oversight: “As the new inspection framework is rolled out, it isn’t uncommon to see a dip in inspections under the current framework, which is in

its last year.

“Several inspections within the new EIF have taken place recently, with early reports suggesting it is more authentic and developmental.”

FE Week’s findings follow greater emphasis on oversight of FE colleges, with both the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the National Audit Office launching their own investigations.

The government announced Dame Mary Ney would lead a review into the way the Department for Education monitors college finances and financial management at the end of August, with college leaders later being asked to submit their views on ESFA oversight.

Earlier that month the National Audit Office said it was also preparing to launch a value-for-money review on the management of colleges’ financial sustainability.

And in September Ofsted announced plans to publish financial ratings as part of inspection reports in the future.

The move will not be part of the watchdog’s new inspection framework, which launched in the same month, as a spokesperson told *FE Week* it is something for a “longer-term piece of work with the government”.

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Gillingham	17 January 2020
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Bristol	31 January 2020
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News

Damning FE Commissioner reports published for 3 struggling colleges

'Significant concerns' over Hartlepool's financial sustainability

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The FE commissioner says there are "significant concerns" about Hartlepool College of FE's financial sustainability.

An intervention into the college reveals "financial uncertainties put the student experience and opportunities for learners at risk".

Hartlepool has had an operating deficit for the past two financial years, with its total borrowing costs as a percentage of income at 57 per cent.

A broken loan covenant with a bank has not been resolved; the report says the college must push for the process to be finished so it can find out the future terms.

Hartlepool entered formal intervention in April after it told the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) last October it would have inadequate financial health for 2018. It was issued with a financial health notice to improve at that time.

Richard Atkins, the commissioner, will now consult with local authorities about a local provision review for Tees Valley and Durham.

A letter from Lord Agnew, the minister with financial oversight of colleges, to Aidan Mullan, Hartlepool's chair, said there was an "urgent need to take swift actions in order to address the significant financial challenges facing the college".

When Atkins' team intervened in June, it found that aside from the financial issues, there was "an urgent need" for the board to replace its chair and many of its governors.

Most independent members had served more than the five to ten years considered good practice, and the chair had already served the 12 years considered proper.

Principal Darren Hankey said the financial performance of the college for 2018-19 is "much improved and, subject to final ratification, will see the college achieve a 'good' ESFA rating".

Brooklands future's shaky following £20m subcontracting scandal

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A college faces "multiple, difficult and high-risk" challenges after being rocked by a £20 million subcontracting scandal that has put its future in doubt, a minister and the FE commissioner have said.

Richard Atkins' team was sent into Brooklands College in Surrey after FE Week revealed it had passed millions of pounds over to a mysterious private provider, SCL Security, which triggered an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) investigation.

The commissioner's review involved intervention visits in January and May, and the college has now been placed into "supervised college status" – which means the ESFA will attend all future board and finance and resources committee meetings.

It found that the "most critical area

of work – the detailed external audit of SCL Security sub-contracting" – has "not been progressed in a timely manner".

Governors had placed "too much trust" on assurances provided by Gail Walker, the former principal and chief executive.

"The board believed that systems and audits of the college's subcontracting work were robust enough to identify issues relating to subcontracting compliance," the report said.

Worryingly, "no thought had been given by governors to the development of a mitigation plan should the SCL investigation place a financial liability on the college".

The "possible contingent liability" of a £20 million clawback was named as the most "substantial" risk facing the college.

The ESFA investigation was "ongoing" at the time of this report.

Lord Agnew, the DfE minister with financial oversight of colleges, said:

"It is clear from the commissioner's

report that despite the board putting in place measures to drive forward the recommendations from the January visit, the college's response to concerns around SCL have not been adequate."

Brooklands' wider financial position also posed a threat to its future. The commissioner found the college's Weybridge campus required "major investment and re-sizing".

"The cost of low space utilisation, high running costs and backlog of planned maintenance adds further financial pressure and risk," his report said.

FE Week revealed last week that Brooklands was considering selling a historic mansion on its Weybridge site. This week's report confirmed that the college's new estate strategy involved "potential land sales".

Brooklands' principal and chair resigned after the launch of the ESFA investigation.

Atkins' report said the interim chief executive and interim principal "work

well together and are knowledgeable and competent in their roles".

However, "due to the number of complex issues and risks, the FEC team recommendation is that the college would benefit from an experienced principal appointed on an interim basis as soon as possible".

Leaders had been effective in driving through change since the January 2019 assessment, but the college still faced "many significant risks".

Staff interviewed by the commissioner felt that the college "needed to merge to survive" and to reinvest in Weybridge campus.

The report noted the SCL scandal "could be a potential block to a merger".

Andrew Baird, who was appointed interim chair of Brooklands earlier this month, said: "The report makes a number of important recommendations and the college is addressing these as a matter of urgency.

College leaders unaware of 'imminent' insolvency risk

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Moulton College is in a "perilous position" and its chair and new principal do not appear to "fully recognise" the impact of possible "imminent" insolvency, says the FE commissioner.

Richard Atkins found that "too many students have been failed" by the Northamptonshire college. It must swiftly demonstrate progress in student attendance, progress, retention and achievement.

A culture of "accountability and responsibility and holding managers to account needs to be developed rapidly". Governors, meanwhile, were criticised for not holding previous managers to account.

The FEC team found that "under the previous management regime, reports

to governors were overly optimistic and not fully transparent with problems hidden".

The report warned that there was a "general feeling of a lack of urgency in addressing quality and financial matters and lack of recognition that the college could become insolvent in 2019-20".

It added: "It did not appear that the impact of possible insolvency, which would include the college being placed in education administration, and the perilous position the college finds itself in was fully recognised by the board or the incoming new principal."

Moulton College has been in FEC intervention since February 2017 after being referred by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) following an inadequate financial health score for 2015-16.

The report described the college as being in "a very difficult and challenging

position", highlighting its second consecutive grade four Ofsted report, huge debts and declining learner numbers.

The college's financial recovery plan was "not fit for purpose".

Moulton has been put into supervised college status with immediate effect and the ESFA will attend all future board meetings and finance and resources committee meetings.

Lord Agnew, the minister with financial oversight of colleges, said: "As this is the college's second consecutive inadequate assessment, I am particularly concerned about the quality of provision... Urgent action is required to address these problems.

"It is clear from the commissioner's report that the college has entirely underestimated the seriousness of its financial weakness and the issues with quality of provision."



Richard Atkins

The FEC concludes that if the planned cash receipts were not received by December "the college's auditors will need to consider if the college is a going concern and it will need to be considered for education administration".

The reduction in enrolments, which made the 495-hectare estate expensive to run, were also noted.

Corrie Harris, who was appointed chief executive in July, said: "We have moved quickly to address the balance of the recommendations the commissioner included in his report, as well as making changes we believe are necessary to vastly improve the offering here.

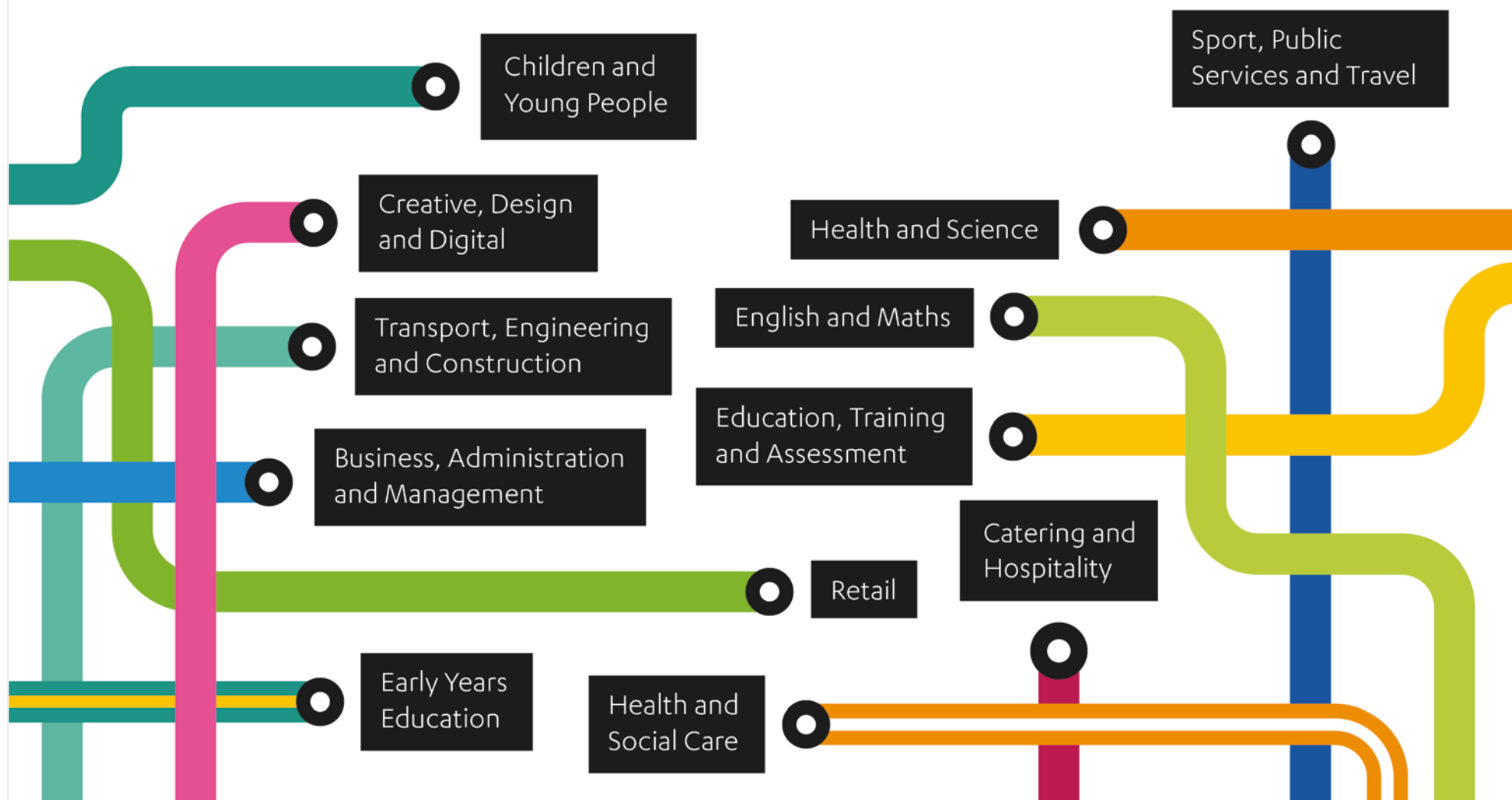
"We have made substantial progress to that end in the past three months."

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Profile

Introducing...

CHARLOTTE BOSWORTH

Managing director, Innovate Awarding

JESS STAUFENBERG
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Charlotte Bosworth, the managing director of Innovate Awarding, is quite happy to be known as the “end-point assessment woman”. Jess Staufenberg meets the very determined champion of apprenticeships

The managing director of the small apprenticeship assessment body, Innovate Awarding, has the ear of the Department for Education. How? She has a history of turning up when no one tells her to, and it's got her a long way.

Charlotte Bosworth's extraordinary career begins from a council estate in the West Midlands to a top role at the examination board OCR, before joining Innovate more than two years ago to focus on apprenticeship assessment. Under her watch, revenue has increased fourfold and the number of permanent staff has more than tripled.

Her staff numbers are nothing of the size of the big assessment players such as Pearson, but apprenticeships are the name of the game for the DfE, and it knows it needs help. A chat with the bubbly Bosworth, 46, reveals that she is becoming its “end-point assessment woman” – and today she's got straight-talking words for the department.

A determination to be taken

seriously started young. Self-confessed “ginger geek”, at 10 she was already worried about her prospects at the local comprehensive in Coventry – so she decided to try for a selective school two bus rides away. “My family didn't really have a large amount of money and educational ambition wasn't a thing. But I'd gone to a library and read about this school. So I pushed myself so I could go.”

“I didn't want anyone to know I was the poor kid”

Her parents couldn't understand why she didn't want to go to the local comp, but she was determined. She was interviewed and accepted at her chosen school and made the one-and-a-half hour journey there and back every day until she was 16. Many years later, when working on assessments for the same school, the same headteacher told her: “You are the only child we ever interviewed who arrived without their parents.”

A young Bosworth also realised she wouldn't be able to join school skiing trips if she didn't take things into her own hands. At 13 she began working in a hardware store every Saturday. She saved her pay and was able to visit France with her fellow pupils. “I was desperate to go, I'd never been to another country. But I didn't want anyone to know I was the poor kid. There was an element of not wanting to share that.” Her favourite subjects were English and drama, and she talks glowingly of a teacher, Mrs Chadwick,

who “absolutely inspired me throughout”.

But Bosworth's personal outlook has not become that of the fanatical grammar-school advocate who promotes a classical education. She is too aware of the pull for paid employment, which led her to eschew sixth form for secretarial training. “I wanted to earn money for some of the reasons I've laid out,” she says. And so she entered a “youth training scheme” that she jokingly calls “apprenticeships for old people”.

Placed in a law firm, her boss decided after three months she should be trained as a legal executive instead, briefing barristers before court. She also took two jobs in pubs. By the time she was 18, she had her legal qualifications and a mortgage on a 1930s terraced house.

But despite benefiting from an apprenticeship-style education, Bosworth's commitment to a career in apprenticeships was an accident. Aged 22 she was working as a legal executive for a big plant hire company, flying to the US and back, when she discovered she was pregnant with her son. International travel out the window, she returned home to Coventry and became an administrator because the 2-10pm shift fitted in with childcare. Where was the job? At RSA, or, as it became known in 1998 following a merger, the OCR examinations board.

“There were so many staff development opportunities and I just sucked it all up,” Bosworth says, who was juggling single parenthood at the same time. “I kept getting more qualifications

along the way!” In three months she was the manager for her shift team, and by 30 she was a senior manager. From 2013 she was director of skills and employment, responsible for vocational qualifications. Her husband – she met him at OCR – still works there as director of operations.

By the time of her departure in May 2017, Bosworth “realised that vocational education brings out the passion in me – maybe based on my own story”. She's been a governor at Walsall College in the West Midlands for two years, and a board trustee for Career Colleges for three years. The FE sector was becoming her new home. You can see why: having fought so hard to work and qualify in the face of disadvantage and single parenthood, the sector's embrace of employment and learning must resonate.

“I wanted to be working with



Speaking at the AAC conference



“Everyone is in education to get a job”

employers to improve education. Ultimately, everyone is in education to one day get a job.” Bosworth felt too “constrained” in her OCR role to try out new ideas, and so leapt at the chance to lead Innovate Awarding. She explains, for instance, that routine work with the transport company Stagecoach led her awarding body to create new end-point assessments in passenger transport.

Innovate approves 39 apprenticeship standards across hospitality, retail, adult care, health care and more, including my personal favourite, mixology, or cocktail-making. Bosworth’s team has grown in just over two years from 26 to 87 full-time staff, plus 98 temporary workers. “You were a good appointment”, I tell her. “It seems so,” she says with a smile.

But for someone who has made

a success out of arriving keenly and unprompted, Bosworth is now facing the opposite problem from the apprentices she works to help. Of all the end-point assessments booked with Innovate, an astonishing 60 per cent were rescheduled or cancelled this year. The government has been in hot water about not sorting end-point assessments quickly enough. But Bosworth says the DfE is “not on top of” the fact that even where end-point assessments are ready, the logistical challenges mean many are not happening – a huge waste of time and money.

“If I had a wishlist for the DfE and Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA), it would be for them to fully understand the infrastructure and logistical issues of end-point assessment. You’ve got to get three people – the employer, the apprentice and our examiner – in

the same place at the same time. But then if that employer suddenly has a huge barrage of additional sales, the apprentice is being put on other shifts and the assessment is cancelled.”

“Apprenticeships are where you can have real impact”

She also ticks off apprenticeship providers, who she says are abandoning their charges as soon as the apprentice decides he or she is ready to be assessed. “Providers often act like they’ve got nothing to do with them anymore. They should be checking projects are submitted on

time and the apprentice actually turns up to the assessment.”

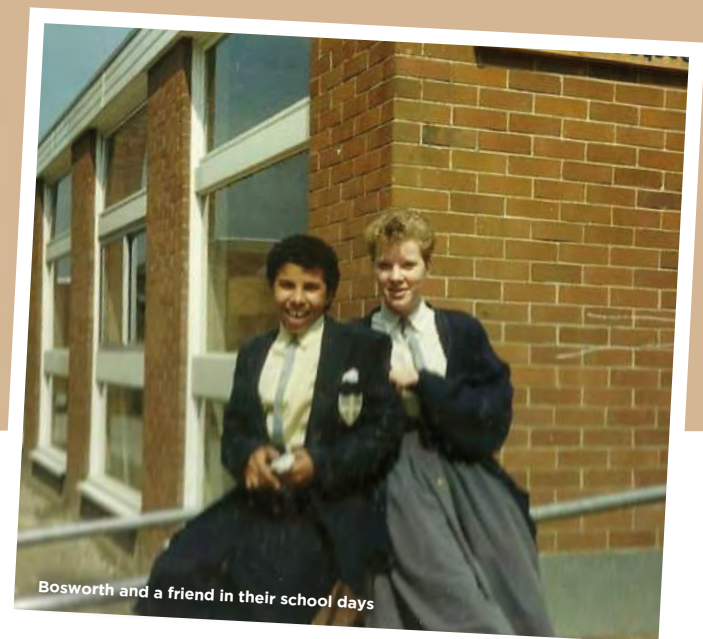
One suggested solution is new vocabulary. She wants “end-point assessment” to be called “end-point examination”, so apprentices understand the importance of turning up. “It’s not about putting the fear of God into people. It’s about saying, you’ve done all this hard work, and this examination is to show that.”

She’s in the position to push the change. She chairs the end-point assessment group at the Federation of Awarding Bodies, and the end-point assessment group for the Association of Employment and Learning

Providers (AELP).

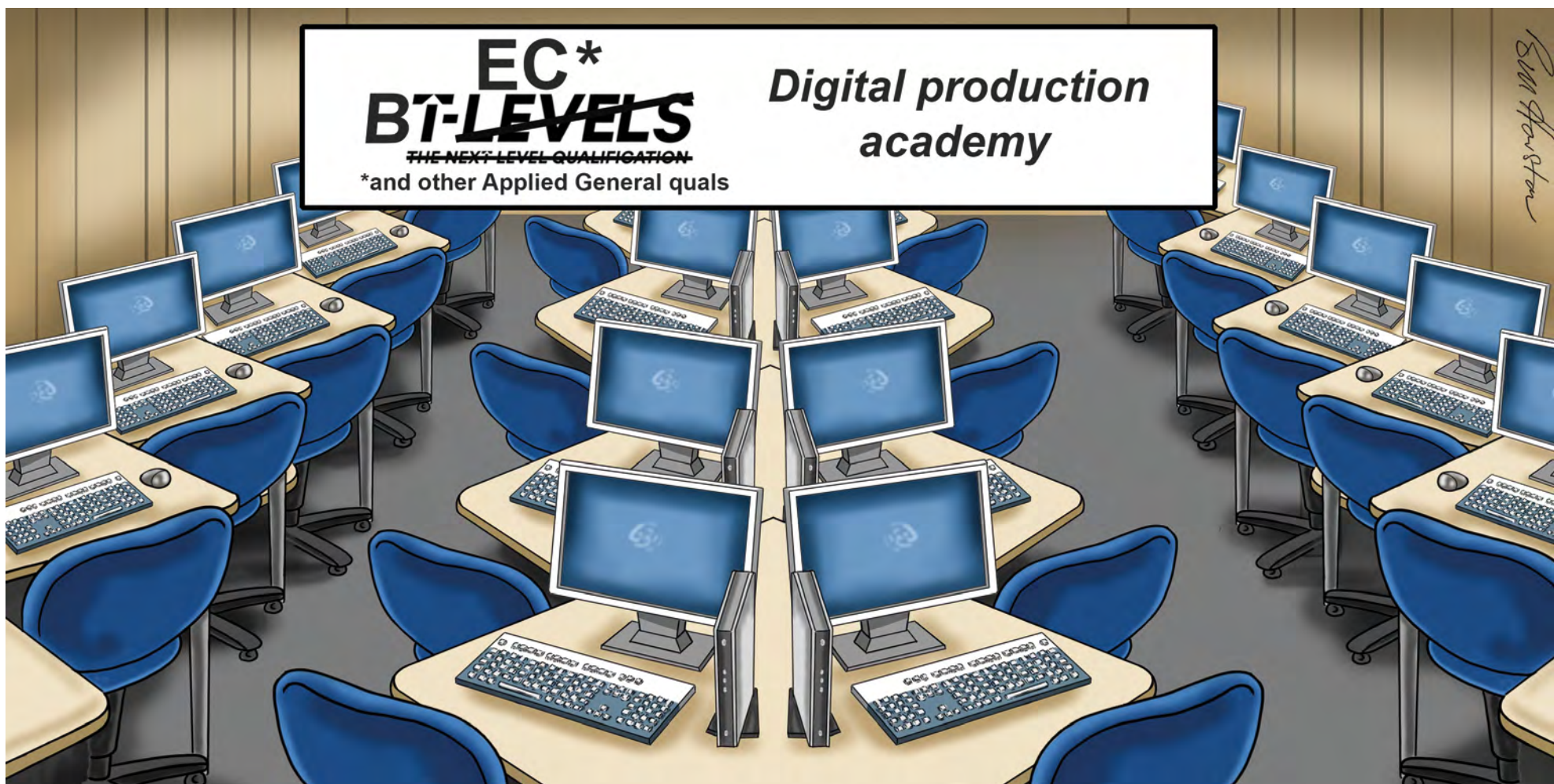
Such influence gets noticed. Bosworth has got “massive engagement from the DfE” and meets regularly with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the IfA. I ask if she is the “end-point assessment woman”.

“That’s where I’m trying to get myself to. It particularly interests me because the apprenticeship space is where you can have real impact. It doesn’t matter what your starting point is, it doesn’t matter what your background is, apprenticeships can really unleash talent in people you didn’t know they had.”



Bosworth and a friend in their school days

News



Providers risk handing back £38m in next 20 years if they quit T-levels

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Exclusive

Colleges will have to keep on running T-levels for at least 20 years if they want to avoid handing back millions in capital funding.

A pot of £38 million has been made available to colleges and schools to help build new classrooms and refurbish buildings in readiness for the introduction of the new technical qualifications next year.

The Department for Education this week confirmed to *FE Week* that providers who win the funding risk having to hand it back if they stop offering T-levels within the next two decades.

"The terms of grant will require providers to use the premises funded for supporting the T-level curriculum for 20 years," a spokesperson said.

"If a provider withdraws from T-level delivery, we reserve a right to

recover any capital grant we have paid."

Sixth Form Colleges Association chief executive Bill Watkin called this "a significant commitment" which sends out a clear message: investing in T-levels is a long-term strategy.

He said the capital grants are helping providers invest in dedicated teaching spaces and industry-standards kit which "will make a huge difference to schools and colleges' ability to hit the ground running from September 2020".

But, Watkin added, colleges will always be reviewing their curriculum to reflect student voices, shifting population profiles and a changing local economy: "Who knew, 20 years ago, that the Ebacc would be shaping student choices today, or that maths would be the most popular A-level, or that criminology would be booming?"

Deputy chief executive at the Association of Colleges Julian

T-LEVELS

THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION

Gravatt said the clause was a "backstop" and his organisation was "confident T-levels are here to stay".

But he added: "T-levels will only be suitable for a minority of college students so the DfE needs to get a move on and sort out its capital funding plans for the facilities used by the majority; the Post-18 review panel recommended a £1 billion three-year programme."

Eleven colleges have been awarded a slice of the £38 million capital funding pot to date, with grade one Barnsley College the prime beneficiary so far, receiving £2.2 million.

There have been a number of changes with regard to which providers will be delivering the flagship new qualifications as the sector hurtles towards roll-out: it was announced this month Scarborough Sixth Form College was pulling out of offering the digital qualification in 2020.

At the time, Gavin Williamson, the secretary of state for education, welcomed the decision, which Scarborough cited as being "due to our geographical location, it is proving difficult to secure sufficient work placements".

Furthermore, Big Creative Training

and the London Design and Engineering UTC were removed from provision in February because T-levels "did not fit with the specialist nature" of the former and the UTC received a grade three from Ofsted.

Providers must have either a grade one or two from Ofsted, and 'satisfactory' financial health to deliver T-levels.

A school was removed from the programme for receiving an Ofsted grade three, while two others pulled out, in October.

But at the same time, Suffolk New College was added to the list of providers from 2020.

"We always expected there to be a certain amount of fluctuation of providers, and the pathways they offer, as we progress towards September 2020," a DfE spokesperson said when Scarborough withdrew.

"However, we continue to have an excellent group of high-quality providers offering a variety of pathways across the country."



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The above vacancy closes at midday on 13 November 2019
Interviews/tests will be held: 21 November 2019

Job description/person specification and details of how to apply can be downloaded from our website: www.eastnorfolk.ac.uk/jobs

EN is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all our students. Applicants must be willing to undergo appropriate screening, including checks with past employers and enhanced DBS clearance.

Excellence, Care, Diversity and Integrity



Hopwood Hall College is recruiting!

Hopwood Hall College is a Sunday Times Top 100 employer 2019 and employs approximately 450 staff in both teaching and learning and support services. Staff are based at either our Middleton or Rochdale campus.

Hopwood Hall College is an accredited Disability Confident Employer. Our Equality & Diversity statement is designed to ensure that unfair discrimination does not take place in any part of our recruitment process.

The College is a Living Wage employer, paying all directly employed staff the real living wage rate with plans to extend this to all regular, onsite sub-contracted staff as well. The real Living Wage is higher than the government minimum and is voluntarily paid by businesses who believe their staff deserve a fair day's pay for a hard day's work.

Please see our current opportunities below:

Occupational Health Advisor

£32,225.37 per annum, pro rata (£13,428.31)

Work Based Tutor – Fire, Emergency and Security

£29,543.48 per annum

Work Based Tutor – Electrical Engineering

£29,543 per annum

Work Based Tutor – Plumbing

£26,401 to £29,256 per annum

Work Based Tutor – AAT

£21,851.57 - £26,401.97 pro rata per annum

Advanced Student and College Services Apprentice

National Minimum Wage

Teaching Assistant – Health and Childhood Studies (Fixed Term)

£18,988.60 pro rata, per annum

Lecturer – Public Services

£23,503.50 - £32,459.44 per annum

For more information on each vacancy and to apply, please visit: <https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/about/jobs>



Bishop Auckland College

Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality

Bishop Auckland College is a great place to study and work and we are proud of our distinctive internal culture. Our staff work together as a tight-knit team, totally dedicated to our students, the College and the communities we serve.

As an outward-facing organisation we recognise the critical importance of collaboration in order to lead change and influence local agendas. Through our many partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, the College has established its place at the heart of the community and as a key partner in the regeneration of Bishop Auckland and South Durham.

We have worked hard to simultaneously manage costs and develop strategic opportunities, and our financial health is good.

Recent developments include our partnership with the specialist engineering and manufacturing centre, South West Durham Training, and the launch of our first full degree level programme, in partnership with the Open University. We also recently introduced alternative provision for 14-16 year olds who are not thriving in mainstream education.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection challenged us to think differently about some aspects of our work and to embrace opportunities; are you a leader who could help to steer our College community with agility and vigour as we navigate through our exciting journey of transformational change?

The successful candidate will have recent senior management experience within a 'good' or 'outstanding' college.

If you would like to arrange an informal discussion regarding this exciting opportunity, please contact Natalie Davison-Terranova (Principal/Chief Executive) on 01388 443003.

Salary: Competitive

Closing date: Wednesday 13 November 2019

Interviews: Up to two days
28 and 29 November 2019

Reference: RS19/20/VP01

For further details and an application form please email katie.hinch@bacoll.ac.uk or contact us on 01388 443038. You can also view further information on the College website www.bacoll.ac.uk

It's an exciting time to join our team and compare these terms and conditions....

Head of Department: You will be expected to work 200 days a year with up to 52 non-working days plus bank holidays, combined with a competitive salary and other staff benefits as part of the package.

Curriculum Manager: You will be expected to work 195 days a year with up to 57 non-working days plus bank holidays, combined with a competitive salary and other staff benefits as part of the package.

...with where you are now. *Interested?*



We are looking for inspiring and ambitious leaders and managers to develop and deliver leading edge technical and vocational curriculum. Langley College sits at the centre of opportunity, working closely with Heathrow and other employers to develop progressive and innovative curriculum. Its curriculum offer is strong and diverse including STEM, Service Industries, Apprenticeships, Adult and HE.

Head of Construction and Building Services

Head of Motor Vehicle and Engineering

Competitive Salary

These two exciting roles are based at our flagship centre for technical provision, recently transformed by a £30m investment and equipped with the latest industry standard equipment, workshops and studios –including its own

multi-trades bungalow.

You will be a people-focused, ambitious leader with a strong track record of building high performing teams, high expectations of students, and a passionate commitment to the power of teaching and learning. With an appropriate teaching commitment, you will still be able to demonstrate and continually up-date your own teaching skills on a choice of full-time programmes, evening courses and apprenticeships ranging Levels 1 to 3, practical and theory.

Curriculum Manager Construction and Building Services

Curriculum Manager Motor Vehicle and Engineering

Competitive Salary

If you are looking for your first step into a management role or to expand your experience, then these Curriculum Manager roles could be the opportunity

for you. Reporting to the Head of Department, Curriculum Managers must be great teachers who will bring their trade experience supported by professional qualifications, delivering full-time programmes, evening courses and apprenticeships ranging from Levels 1 to 3, practical and theory. You will also have the ambition and ability to manage a team to ensure that our students have the best experience. With a reduced teaching commitment these roles will give you the space to develop your management skills.

Closing date: 25th October 2019 (midday) | Selection process: week commencing 4th November 2019

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

Part of The Windsor Forest Colleges Group



Opportunities at Milton Keynes College

Milton Keynes College are seeking passionate and innovative Lecturers/Teachers to deliver a variety of accredited qualifications to a diverse group of learners at their 2 campuses in Milton Keynes – Supporting students to build their confidence, develop their skills and achieve within the college environment. This could be on either an occasional or permanent basis depending on your current circumstances.

Permanent vacancies can be part time or full time hours, these are advertised individually and require a separate application.

Occasional requirements can be varying and change frequently so flexible availability is essential. Requirements can range from short notice short term cover to longer term sickness cover or recruitment gaps and anything in between. If you hold expertise or interest in more than one area – For example: Maths and English, this could give you the opportunity to cover across multiple courses as an occasional teacher.

Milton Keynes College are currently keen to hear from individuals with one or more of the below skill sets to support their curriculum delivery:

Science – Level 2 Applied Science & Forensic Science/Level 3 Criminal Investigations

- Areas covered:
- Principles of Science
- Scientific Skills
- Physiology of Human Body Systems
- Biology and our Environment
- Applications of Chemical Substances
- Criminal Investigations

Maths & English – Functional Skills/GCSE

- Functional Skills/GCSE Maths – delivery runs across our whole curriculum alongside students primary courses.
- Key qualities – strong classroom management, high student engagement, creative teaching style

Computing – Level 3 – Level 5

- Teaching Level 3 – 5 HNC/HND level
- Areas within Computer science and IT
- Networking
- Cyber security
- Data services
- Project management

More about the College

Milton Keynes College is proud to be an open and inclusive general Further Education College welcoming learners of all levels and delivering an exceptional educational experience. The College offers a broad range of qualifications with more than 3,000 16 – 18-year-old full-time students studying vocational courses, apprenticeships and Higher Education at our campuses in Milton Keynes. In addition, the College delivers employability and skills training programmes to 3,000 people in local community learning centres. For nearly 30 years, we have worked with offenders in both custody, and the wider community and currently work with 19 prisons across England; this includes 13 prisons, which make up the Long Term High Security Estate, and 6 category B, C & D men's prisons.

All our vacancies can be found on our careers pages. You can also set up job alerts via the website if there is nothing of immediate interest or suitability.

Campus based roles - <https://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/working-for-us/vacancies/>
Prison based roles - <https://www.mkcollege.ac.uk/prison-services/vacancies/>

If you wish to express an interest in future opportunities at Milton Keynes College or have any specific queries please contact The Recruitment Team – recruitment@mkcollege.ac.uk

Learning Quality Manager, Tutors and Recruitment Consultants



Step Ahead is a progressive and successful company with an excellent reputation in Recruitment, Training and Employability.

Due to our superb track record and recent success in securing new contracts, Step Ahead is expanding and we are looking for:

An experienced Learning Quality Manager with knowledge and experience of ESFA/ ESF/ AEB funding and performance rules and of the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework. You will have overall responsibility for the development and delivery of regulated & non-regulated learning. If you have an innovative approach and are passionate about driving quality and compliance to ensure the best possible learner experience, we want to speak to you!

We are also looking for experienced Tutors/Assessors to delivery our regulated and non-regulate training across London.

Lastly, we are looking for Recruitment Consultants who will be responsible for recruiting, providing advice, guidance and support, and work-placements for learner caseload of unemployed adults that need help to secure employment.

Your Next Step

Want to know more? In the first instance, please send your CV along with a paragraph explaining why you are the best candidate for this role to Christie Hoyte, Head of Training: christie@stepahead.co.uk

Closing Date: Friday 25th October



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EDITORIAL



Let's work together to agree where the inappropriate spending line is drawn

Since *FE Week* successfully fought to reveal the £150,000 expenses by the principal at Highbury College, the sector reaction has been split.

One college principal told me: "The alcohol, lobster, executive transport, any form of first class travel. The list goes on. It's inexcusable. It needed to be exposed.

"Signed off or not, it's an inappropriate use of public funds. Particularly when you think the college is in difficulty."

But they had been told: "Being vocal might be bad for my career."

Another principal took a very different view and in the *FE Week*

comments section wrote: "Very good journalism, factually accurate after dogged pursuit."

But, they also said I was wrong in this editorial column to call for the principal to consider resigning as there was "no breach of rules" and "no suggestion of impropriety/malpractice and the college has confirmed it was all properly authorised".

Highbury College governors did restrict the use of the corporate card and first class travel in May, but there remain other colleges that will, and have, defended a policy permitting the principal to travel first class at full price.

For a highly respected college principal to conclude "no breach of rules" and so defend the use of a college card on a cocktail fuelled lobster dinner and £434 headphones should concern everyone.

Why? Because the spending revelations, particularly the lobster, reached well beyond *FE Week* readership and made most of the national newspaper and has since been followed-up by *Private Eye*.

And if *FE Week* had not exposed the spending, the national media would have simply lifted it from the *Portsmouth News* website.

So, if college principals

cannot agree amongst themselves what is appropriate behaviour and expenditure, let's try and agree through self-regulation. And let's move quickly, before the new FE college oversight minister, Lord Agnew, rewrites the rules and or Conditions of Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and colleges.

College leaders from across England should work together to agree, for example, if full cost first class travel is appropriate and as a minimum whether there should be greater transparency of expenditure.

A code of ethics, or

ethics charter, could be drafted and then adopted.

This might include, for example, a commitment to publish the details of certain spending as a matter of course.

The media will always try to expose the inappropriate use of public funds – so let's work together to agree where the line is drawn.

Principals interested in joining a task and finish group to develop such an ethics code or charter can get in touch with me at nick.linford@lsect.com.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



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Apprentices' concerns are still not being heard, admits DfE

It's not just the apprentices that have concerns, many employers of these apprentices have nowhere to turn to either.

Andrew Roberts

#LoveOurColleges

I'm a proud product of FE. I returned to FE after years of illness. FE gave me a purpose, a reason for living. It provided me with a vocation 'education' something I never expected. FE enabled me to learn, teach and manage. I am indebted to FE & continue to serve #LoveOurColleges

Paul McKean #FE
[@EdtechMcKean](https://twitter.com/EdtechMcKean)

Despite the fact that my job requires me to read ESFA's 120 page 2019-20 funding agreement,

OFS regulatory advice notice 15 and 70 FE commissioner intervention reports, I still #LoveOurColleges

Julian Gravatt
[@JulianGravatt](https://twitter.com/JulianGravatt)

OFS urged to 'get a move on' and inspect apprenticeship quality

Only a government "got at" by self-serving interest could think having two different organisations inspect the same provider/college was a good idea!

If they finally get round to inspecting these providers, oh what fun for *FE Week* to comment upon a situation where say OfS view the leadership and management of the provider/college differently from Ofsted!

Neil Crawford

REPLY OF THE WEEK

'Significant concerns' over Hartlepool College's financial sustainability



I've said this before, if there were only a few FE colleges in financial dire straits it could be put down to a few bad apples. You could make a case that the failings were down to poor management, however at this stage financial failure is epidemic throughout the sector – you can only conclude that the problem is the funding mechanism itself.

Richard Atkins keeps going around telling off colleges, he must surely understand that it is government policy which is largely to blame for these problems. I think he should say this more clearly instead of laying the blame at the door of individual institutions. FE colleges

simply cannot function when they are impoverished to the extent they have been – no amount of 'intervention', accountability or 'challenge' will ever solve this problem.

There is a lot of talk about leadership, but who on earth would ever want to serve as a governor or senior leader in this climate. Anyone with any ambition or sense would flee very quickly. We could adapt Enoch Powell's famous dictum here, that all (senior) FE careers end in failure. Stories in *FE Week* demonstrate this on a weekly basis.

Paul Atkins

Experts

NIAMH MULHALL

Degree apprentice and co-founder,
The Apprentice Voice



Ministers should put down the high-vis and tackle apprentice stereotypes

If Gavin Williamson seriously wants the UK to match the technical and vocational education opportunities offered by Germany by 2029, he needs to address the persisting stigmatisation and stereotyping of apprentices, says Niamh Mulhall

As an apprentice I am all too aware of the perceptions and misconceptions surrounding apprenticeships. Young people are not just active consumers browsing the education and training supermarket and making choices based on price, quality and value; their decisions are influenced by a multitude of socio-structural constraints and, not least, by their family, friends and teachers.

Many professions could be almost exclusively apprenticeships if it weren't for the marketisation of higher education that has turned degrees into lucrative courses for universities to sell. The fact that Gavin Williamson, the education secretary, refers to the "forgotten 50 per cent" – the half of young people who don't go to university – reinforces a divide between academically-inclined students who go to university and the "others" who presumably will be trained to fill the jobs which his new skills and productivity board will tell him are needed for the modern economy.

"We must challenge the image of overalls and wrenches"

In his first appearance in the Commons as prime minister, Boris Johnson, replying to a question from the former skills minister, Anne Milton, said: "The other kids should acquire the skills they need which can be just as valuable, can lead to just as fantastic careers."

The other kids?

Last week, education minister Lord Agnew met engineering apprentices at Sunderland College. It says something about the lack of imagination of the government's communications department that these publicity stunts always call for a hi-vis jacket and goggles – a far remove from the uniform the minister

wore as a Rugby School pupil.

Research by the charity Education and Employers and others consistently find careers advice, information and guidance in schools is scarce when it comes to apprenticeships. Most teachers have limited knowledge of them and don't feel confident enough to suggest them to students. Factor in a school's interest in retaining students into sixth form, and the default position is bias towards A-levels and university, something that I felt pressured to do.

Nearly two years ago, the Baker clause attempted to reset the balance, but just two in five schools are compliant and many training providers say it has had no impact in getting them access to schools.

We need to ensure that young people are aware of all the options. Having quality engagement with a breadth of employers and professionals throughout school life not only expands horizons, but can help to challenge stereotypical images of overalls and wrenches. This is just as true about gender where received perceptions of boys as doctors and girls as nurses are formed before the age of five and become ingrained; the job choices of seven-year-olds mirror those of 17-year olds.

Our research at The Apprentice Voice recently revealed that two-thirds (67.5 per cent) of apprentices still face stigmatisation or stereotyping, with 58 per cent saying the stigma came from colleagues and peers.

Williamson went to university, perhaps itself a testimony to the socially transformative effect of higher education advocated by Michael Gove and others all the way back to Tony Blair's ambition for the 'first' 50 per cent. Sadly, the reality for many is a university degree that doesn't make them industry-ready, does not open the doors they hoped for and takes a long time to pay off.

Yes, we need quality apprenticeships above quantity and we need better careers education in schools so young people can make informed choices. But the fundamental difference between our vocational and technical education provision and Germany's is that choosing an apprenticeship there is seen as a positive, not the second-best option that it is often perceived to be in the UK.

Until our policymakers model that attitudinal shift, the "other kids" will remain our 'othered' young people, and the chance to beat Germany will be lost to an own goal.

FIONA ALDRIDGE

Director for policy and research,
Learning and Work Institute



It's time to give back to the 300,000 young adult carers in this country

Five per cent of young adults are carers who face barriers to access and success. What better time than Colleges Week to recommit ourselves to their cause? Asks Fiona Aldridge

Each year more than two million adults and young people at college develop the knowledge and skills they need for work and wider life. Among them are tens of thousands of young adult carers – young people who care and support loved ones, but who, as a result, face significant disadvantage in learning and in work.

There are about 300,000 young adult carers in England. They are aged 16-24 and regularly provide unpaid care, usually for a family member. This is equivalent to about one in 20 young people, so the odds are there is at least one carer in your average college class.

It is estimated that young adult carers provide £5.5 billion worth of unpaid care each year. To put it in context, this is nearly double the adult education budget. Yet, despite their immeasurable contribution to society, they often face significant challenges in pursuing their aspirations and achieving their potential.

On average young adult carers achieve the equivalent of nine lower GCSE grades than their peers. They are three times more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) and – despite the best efforts of teachers and support staff – are four times more likely to drop out of college.

Perhaps we should not be surprised. Young adult carers often miss days at college or have their study time disrupted as a result of caring, and 45 per cent say that their caring responsibilities negatively impact their mental health.

But if we are not surprised, we should still be outraged by their plight. All young adult carers deserve the chance to realise their dreams and should be given the very best support to help them to succeed.

That's why, building on our extensive track record of working with young adult carers, the Learning and Work Institute is delighted to be launching Driving Change, an ambitious new programme to narrow the gap in outcomes between young adult carers and their peers.

Supported by the National Lottery Community Fund, and working with the Carers Federation, the programme will offer free advice and intensive one-to-one support to colleges who

wish to improve their support for young adult carers.

Based on a new Quality Standard in the Carers Support framework, participating colleges will be supported to review their current provision for young adult carers, to collaboratively identify and implement improvements, and to evaluate the impact of these changes.

"We should be outraged by their plight"

We know the programme makes a difference. Colleges involved in the pilot reported a range of positive outcomes: from increased retention and attainment of young adult carers to stronger relationships with local carers' services, from increased staff confidence in supporting young adult carers to improved job satisfaction.

And all of this makes a profound difference to the educational outcomes and life chances of young adult carers, such as Emily. Emily left school with few GCSEs, having had to balance schoolwork with caring for her mother, who is bipolar, since she was 11. With support from York College, she went on to gain English, maths and childcare qualifications before progressing on to an access diploma in social care and guidance several years later. Emily now works with young carers to ensure they too have the support they need to succeed.

One of the most inspiring features of Colleges Week has been the use of #LoveOurColleges to recognise and celebrate the difference FE makes to individuals, employers and communities.

What better way to mark the celebration of the sector than to re-commit to some of its most vulnerable learners? We want to recruit 12 colleges from across England and Wales to join the programme. It is a fantastic opportunity to improve outcomes for young adult carers and ensure there are even more reasons to #LoveOurColleges!

Colleges interested in being part of the programme should contact Jackie. Woodhours@learningandwork.org.uk by November 12

Ofsted's new-style inspections have been much publicised, but some providers have been surprised by the new format. Simon Ashworth sets out what providers should expect and how to prepare.

AELP has been hearing from its members that inspections under Ofsted's new framework (EIF) was not what they expected and differed to what they had previously seen. Their comments echo those of Woodspeen Training in FE Week that the EIF represents "a pretty significant shift in focus". So what are the main changes and how can providers be ready for them?

First, far less of the inspection process will be channelled through the nominee. The inspection team will instead work with the key individuals responsible for "curriculum areas", which we believe is a really positive change.

Second, Ofsted will review the provider's curriculum – and that doesn't simply mean programme content or materials. Inspectors now want to look at the whole end-to-end process of the provider's programmes; hence the importance of having strong curriculum leads who are prepared for the new process.

Effective "curriculum sequencing" will be inspected to ensure that the provider's programme has been designed, structured and delivered coherently and logically. This becomes even more important for programmes where there is now more teaching and less assessment.

A good example to consider is how providers who deliver training to level 2 apprentices plan for and deliver not only the level 1 functional skills, but also the current requirement to work towards

SIMON ASHWORTH

Chief policy officer, Association of Employment and Learning Providers



What to expect under the new framework when the inspectors come calling

and at least take the level 2 functional skills test. The short answer is that it should not be an afterthought bolted on at the end.

"Deep dive" inspections have now been added to the sector's unrivalled liking for jargon. Much of the previous inspection activity was sometimes seen as operating in silos; for example inspectors would observe a class or hold a focus group with learners and report back on, say, teaching effectiveness. Under the deep dive regime, they may follow the journey of different learners all the way through their entire experience with the provider from recruitment to the preparation for end-point assessment.

Data is less important, but from our discussions with Ofsted, providers should still be able to explain the reasons for their performance.

With apprenticeships specifically, there is little comparable performance data for standards because of the move away from frameworks, so this is a sensible change.

Nevertheless, one area of focus is progression and destination data. A provider might have low achievement rates that look relatively poor on paper, but what is the story behind that? In the case of traineeships, qualification achievement rates might be low, because the learners left early as they got a job (one of the main aims of the programme)

and didn't have time to complete their maths and English qualifications as a result. Being able to articulate examples such as this is key to showing inspectors the whole picture.

"Curriculum doesn't simply mean programme content or materials"

On recognition of prior learning and off-the-job training, AELP is hearing reports of providers being misled and incorrectly advised to rip up their self-assessment reports (SARs) and quality improvement plans (QIPs) and rewrite these against the new EIF. Ofsted does not require this.

As providers move through their individual self-assessment cycle, they will naturally self-assess against the new framework. In the interim, it is worth considering the use of a positioning statement to sit alongside the SAR and QIP to help articulate to inspectors the transitional process and journey they are on.

Remember that the SAR and the QIP are for the benefit of the provider and not a paper exercise to simply provide to Ofsted for inspection. Commensurately, Ofsted will place less emphasis on the accuracy of a SAR, but more on how effectively the provider uses the SAR and QIP to drive improvements.

By understanding and preparing for these changes, a "deep dive" inspection should be limited to a few ripples rather than whipping up waves for providers.

AELP | 2019

National conferences

AUTUMN CONFERENCE

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SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

With just two weeks to go, the AELP Autumn Conference 2019 is taking place at a time of almost unprecedented political uncertainty. Whatever happens though over the next few weeks, the economy still needs young people to be trained and the skills of existing workforces to be improved.

The line-up so far includes expert speakers who will be delivering a series of 'on topic' plenary sessions covering Employer View on Apprenticeships, Devolution, Government updates and more.

Now due to be held at **The Midland, Manchester**



Price for AELP Members
First Delegate: £210.00 + VAT
Subsequent Delegate(s): £165.00 + VAT

Price for Non-Members
First Delegate: £410.00 + VAT
Subsequent Delegate(s): £365.00 + VAT

📍 The Midland, Manchester

AELP AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Tuesday, 29 October 2019 📅

Media Partner

FEWEEK

Bulletin

Movers & Shakers

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



Srikanth Iyengar

Director, QA

Start date November 2019

Previous job

Group CEO, Conduent

Interesting fact

He speaks four different Indian languages, each with a different script



Paul Geddes

Chief executive, QA

Start date September 2019

Previous job

Chief executive, Direct Line Group

Interesting fact

He is a violinist



Simon Parkinson

Chief executive and general secretary, WEA

Start date December 2019

Previous job

Principal, The Co-operative College

Interesting fact

He left school at 16 and has done all his further and higher education, up to Masters level, part-time while working

If you want to let us know of any new faces at the top of your college, training provider or awarding organisation please let us know by emailing news@feweek.co.uk

FEWEEK

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Brand new for 2019

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Creatives



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BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Production Arts Practice

They've been developed alongside experts from the creative industries to provide students with opportunities to enter a broader range of higher education, apprenticeships, or employment roles.

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2020 AWARDS



★ Nominations close 18:00 on Friday 1 November

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FE WEEK & AELP AAC APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS 2020

A celebration of excellence in apprenticeship delivery

FE Week & AELP are delighted to announce the launch of the 3rd AAC Apprenticeship Awards.

These awards are designed to celebrate the contribution made by apprenticeship employers and providers in delivering world class apprenticeships.

For more information visit aacapprenticeshipawards.com

FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



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



Last Edition's winner: Alyson Shields

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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