



**GOODBYE
GERRY.
HELLO
JENNIFER**

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**PROFILE: NUS
PRESIDENT
ZAMZAM IBRAHIM**

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**CHIEF REPORTER
SHORTLISTED FOR
PRESTIGIOUS AWARD**

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FEWEEK

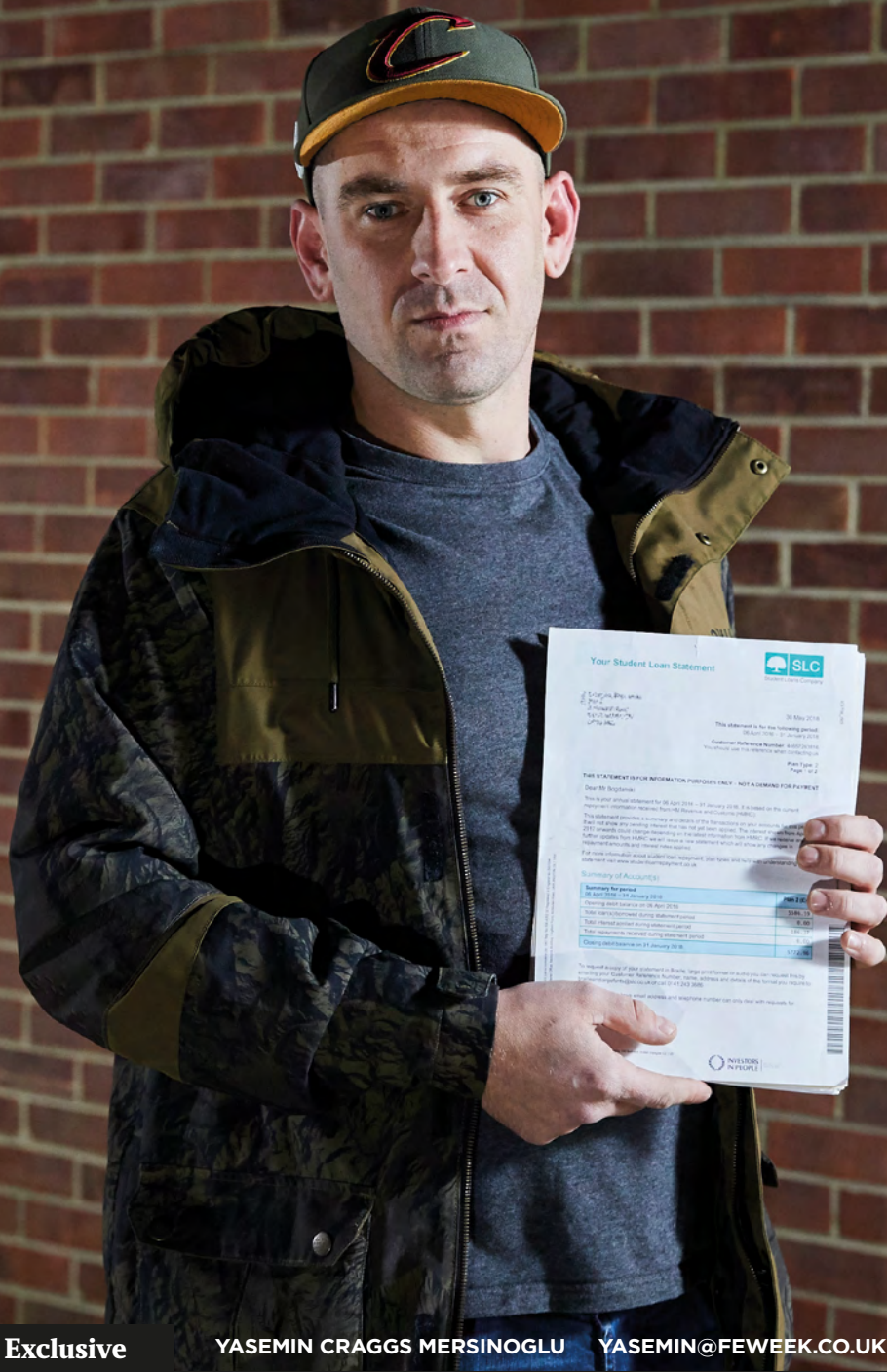
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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2019
EDITION 296

DUPED INTO £5K COURSE LOAN

Grzegorz Bogdanski received no training and did not realise he had registered for an FE loan

An *FE Week* investigation reveals Bogdanski is one of many being forced by the government to repay thousands for courses a college subcontracted to a firm that went bust



Exclusive

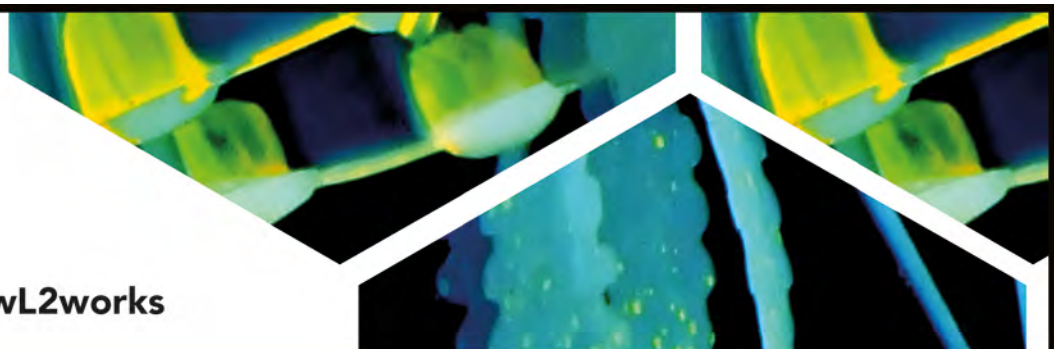
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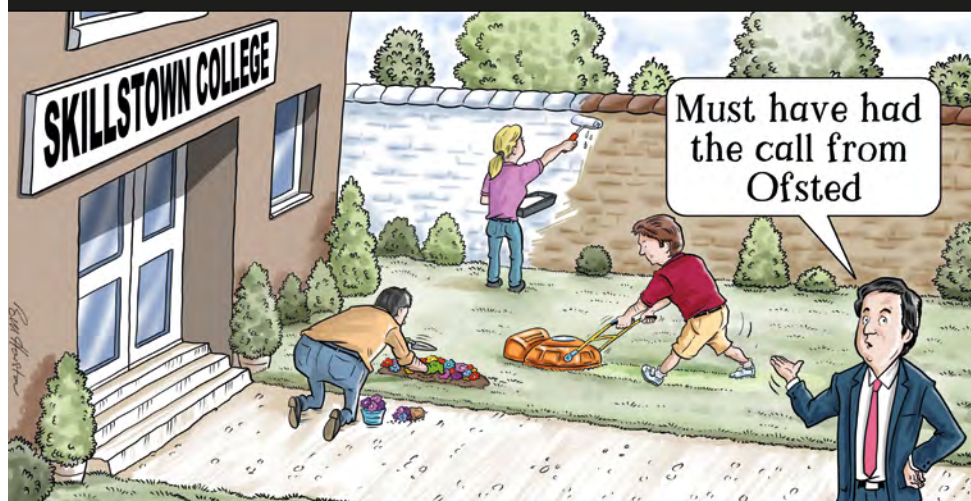
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Coupland to become IfATE chief next week

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Sir Gerry Berragan's reign at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (ifATE) will end next week as he makes way for civil service veteran Jennifer Coupland.

The incoming chief executive is a familiar face to the FE sector having worked in the Department for Education (DfE) for more than 20 years. Her application, on paper at least, to the apprenticeships quango was a no-brainer to accept.

Coupland's first big role in the DfE was as its deputy director responsible for the early stages of traineeships development as well as raising the participation age, careers and NEET (not in education, employment, or training) policy.

In 2012 she became the deputy director of the joint DfE and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills apprenticeships



Jennifer Coupland

unit. She held this role for three years, leading on apprenticeship reform including creating new apprenticeship trailblazers and degree apprenticeships.

She then took a break from post-16 education and stepped in as acting chief executive of the Standards and Testing Agency when its boss Claire Burton went on maternity leave from February to October 2016.

Coupland oversaw work on primary school assessment policy. The agency came under heavy scrutiny, however, after the government was forced to cancel the key stage 1 spelling, punctuation and grammar test for hundreds of thousands of pupils following the leak of the paper online.

Schools minister Nick Gibb subsequently ordered a "root-and-branch" investigation into the blunder.

After this turbulent stint Coupland became the DfE's director of professional and technical education, a post that she has

held since.

In this role she has led on the government's reforms on technical education, mainly the development and implementation of T-levels, which will be rolled out from September 2020, and of which the IfATE has now assumed control.

David Hughes, a former skills civil servant and now chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said his organisation has worked closely with Coupland at the DfE and knows that "she has a really good understanding of the sector".

He added: "She has shown great leadership on the T-level programme and I'm sure that she is looking forward to getting her teeth into the challenges and opportunities in the new role."

Mark Dawe, boss of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, is also optimistic about Coupland's appointment. "Her speech and



Sir Gerry Berragan

willingness to answer direct questions at the recent AELP autumn conference gave a strong indication that we can expect a positive step-change in the way that the institute conducts its business," he said.

"Not surprisingly with her distinguished background in the civil service, Jennifer's command of detail will be a major asset."

Coupland will replace Berragan, who was a soldier for 37 years, finishing as adjutant general. His controversial tenure at the IfATE has lasted two years.

Whether it was a lack of transparency around funding band decisions, external quality assurance charges, the speed of standard approvals or a shortage of end-point assessors, the former army man has constantly had to defend the institute's position.

One organisation with which he has been at constant loggerheads is the AELP. Dawe said: "There is no denying that things got off to a poor start

with Sir Gerry's tenure, especially with his tendency to dismiss anybody that disagreed with him as 'vested interests'.

"That said, his appointment of Robert Nitsch as his number two should be applauded because dialogue with the institute improved as a result. However, addressing the limited transparency around decision-making, particularly over funding bands, remains a major priority of Sir Gerry's successor."

John Cope, head of education and skills policy at the Confederation of British Industry, said Berragan had "shown real commitment" to implementing the apprenticeship reforms and T-levels, "so that they work for employers, students, and apprentices alike".

He added: "Under his leadership, the IfATE has been quick to take criticism on board – especially from employers struggling to access the apprenticeship standards they need."

Hughes and the Federation of Small Businesses declined to comment on Berragan's departure. Neither Berragan nor Coupland was available for interview due to purdah, the period before a political election.

ESFA announces 16-18 funding uplift for 'crucial' subjects

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The government has announced a further funding increase for 16 to 18 year-old students as part of the £400 million extra revealed in August, but only for specific subjects such as engineering.

In addition to the per student unweighted base rate rising 4.7 per cent from £4,000 to £4,188, the funding for some courses will rise by up to a further 10 per cent through changes to the "programme cost weightings" (PCW).

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has also introduced a £400 "high value courses premium" (HVCP), in an attempt to "support the sector to grow the number of students studying selected substantial level 3 study programmes".

Only substantial provision in the sectors of engineering, manufacturing technologies, transport operations and maintenance, building and construction and ICT for practitioners would be eligible for the HVCP.

The PCW are funding uplifts introduced in 2013 and assigned to student study programmes and based on the main course (known as the "core aim"). These uplifts, along with the HVCP, are then used as part of the formula to calculate annual allocations based on historical delivery.

The PCW for students studying courses in the sectors of transport operations and maintenance, building and construction and hospitality and catering will increase 8.3 per cent (PCW medium 1.2 to high 1.3).

The PCW for students studying courses in the sectors of engineering and manufacturing technologies will increase 7.7 per cent (PCW high 1.3 to very high 1.4).

And the PWC when there are at least two science A-levels or for science study programmes will increase 10 per cent from (PCW base 1 to low 1.1).

This announcement provides the detail following the Treasury statement in August. At the time the government said: "Colleges and school sixth forms will also get £120 million to help deliver expensive but crucial subjects such as engineering which

lead to higher wages and, ultimately, a more productive economy."

The ESFA also said the government was now reviewing PCWs for T-levels and "we are providing the details now to give providers time to plan".

James Kewin, deputy chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said: "When the £120 million increase for 'expensive but crucial subjects' was announced ahead of September's spending round, we were concerned that only the minority of students that pursue a technical course would be likely to benefit.

"Since then, we have been making the case for A-levels and Applied General Qualifications that meet the high cost/high value criteria to be eligible for this funding, so we are delighted by today's announcement.

"Although we remain convinced that the optimum way to increase investment in sixth-form education is by raising the national funding rate to the required level – at least £4,760 per student – ensuring that targeted interventions like this benefit students pursuing a mainstream sixth-form education is the next best policy."

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News

Time to celebrate the best in adult learning

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The 2020 Festival of Learning awards are open for nominations from colleges and training providers.

There are four categories to recognise the achievements of adult learners, tutors, employers and learning projects.

The annual awards, which began in 1992 and are run by the Learning and Work Institute, received more than 250 nominations last year.

Stephen Evans, chief executive at the Learning and Work Institute, said: "Adult learning makes a real difference to people, to our economy and to our society. It is important that we recognise that contribution.

"While lifelong learning has never been more important, participation has been falling. That's why we need to celebrate the transformative impact of adult learning and encourage more

adults to give learning a try."

He encouraged those inspired by an adult learner, tutor, learning project or an employer's workplace learning provision to share their story by nominating them for an award.

Winners will include individuals who have transformed their own lives and the lives of their families, friends, communities and the places they work.

Tutors who have contributed to adult learning and the impact they have had on their learners form another category.

Innovative and transformational learning projects or provision that could be replicated or adapted by other learning providers will also be recognised as well as employers that have invested in their workforce to improve productivity, staff retention and business performance.

David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: "The Festival of Learning awards are not only a brilliant way to celebrate

adult learners who have made great achievements but also an inspiration to others to think about and explore the opportunities learning can provide.

"Colleges and learning providers will want to nominate teachers and learners who make a special contribution to education because the personal stories really show the transformative impact of learning at all stages in life."

Data from the Learning and Work Institute's annual adult participation survey showed that participation in lifelong learning is at its lowest for more than 20 years.

The survey found that adults do not engage in learning due to a lack of time, feeling too old, a lack of confidence, caring responsibilities and having a disability.

In 2019 a man who left school without being able to read or write and a woman who went from staying in a care home to studying to become a paediatric surgeon were among 12



winners of the awards, who received their prize at a ceremony in London.

Marie Smith won the Learning for Health award. She is a survivor of sexual abuse, which caused her to leave school with no qualifications, but after a referral to Adult Education Wolverhampton's Like Minds pottery course, she started studying for a degree in glass and ceramics at

Wolverhampton University.

Stuart Ferriss, the 2019 Return to Learning award winner, never learned to read or write at school but enrolled on a dyslexia study skills class run by Oldham Lifelong Learning Service and on a functional skills English course with the support of his employer.

Nominations for next year's awards will close on 11 February 2020.

New deals for staff at two colleges

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Strikes were averted at two colleges this week after leaders offered staff new pay deals.

University and College Union (UCU) members at Bradford College ended their industrial action on Monday after reaching an agreement which included giving staff an extra five days of annual leave and a 14-day strike due to start on Tuesday at Nottingham College was suspended at the 11th hour after a new offer included reinstating pay for staff who previously signed up to "inferior" contracts.

The UCU said the improved offers were a "testament to members' determination to fight for a fairer deal".

Staff at Bradford College had taken 10 days of strike action between November 2018 and July 2019 in their campaign against the proposed axing of over 130 jobs.

The college has now agreed to rule out compulsory job losses and awarded all staff an extra five days' holiday per year.

A spokesperson told FE Week that this increases the average leave for full-time Bradford College support staff to 38 days plus eight bank holidays, while teaching staff will receive 52 days plus the eight bank holidays.

Staff on hourly-paid contracts will also be moved to permanent roles with better pay.

UCU regional official Julie Kelley said the deal "improves the job security, status and pay for staff" at Bradford College. She called insecure contracts "a



UCU Nottingham College staff on strike

blight on the sector and bad for both staff and students".

Members of the UCU at Nottingham College walked out for 15 days in September and October and passed votes of no confidence in their chief executive and chair of governors. They had been due to walk out for a further 14 days this month but have agreed to suspend the action for two weeks.

The union claims some staff were "bullied" into signing new contracts in the summer.

A spokesperson for UCU told FE Week that part of the new offer from Nottingham College includes a "guarantee" that they will re-instate the pay of any staff within the "UCU bargaining unit who suffered a loss as a result of the introduction of the new pay arrangements in July".

The college has also "promised" that there will be a maximum of 24 hours' teaching a week, after it originally offered no limit, until the end of the academic year with the option of a year extension.

The spokesperson said they hoped the college would send the final details of the offer by the end of this week. Members will then vote on whether or not to accept it and end the dispute.

Nottingham College chief executive John van de Laarschot said: "I am pleased to confirm that the industrial action at the college has been suspended for two weeks as both parties continue to work together to bring the dispute to an end."

Also on Tuesday, staff from 25 sixth-form colleges who are members of the National Education Union went on

strike for a second day against "savage" government cuts to 16 to 19 funding.

The action came a month after hundreds marched to Westminster to hand officials a £700 million invoice they say represented the funding shortfall for post-16 education.

Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: "Strike action is always a last option but our members believe that it is necessary in order to solve our dispute and help save the sector and ensure future generations have the choice and opportunity for study that our local sixth form provides.

"With a general election on 12 December we also want prospective parliamentary candidates to support our call for higher funding of our sixth-form colleges as a priority for their party."



Bradford College



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News

Ofsted to research subcontracting in FE

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Ofsted is launching research into FE subcontracting – off the back of government plans for a radical overhaul of these rules amid high-profile cases of “deliberate” fraud.

Inspectors will carry out pre-arranged visits this autumn to a variety of subcontractors working for providers who have been recently inspected.

At the same time, Ofsted will examine its previous inspection reports for references to subcontracting, and hold focus groups with inspectors about the “process of evaluating subcontracted learning”.

The aim is “to learn more about the subcontracting landscape and the impact that a contract between a main provider and subcontractor can have on the learning experience”.

An Ofsted spokesperson said: “The research will also inform how we inspect main providers that choose to use subcontracted provision.”

It is understood this work will look at whether management fees, which have controversially grown to as much

as 40 per cent on subcontract values, as revealed by *FE Week*, are having a detrimental impact on learners’ education.

The research visits are not inspections and will not result in a written report for the subcontractor.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: “It is fantastic news that Ofsted is looking at this – finally we can remove some of the myths and misguided beliefs that are thrown around by people who don’t understand the complexities of the issue.”

FE Week analysis of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) data shows that subcontracting accounted for £650 million in government funding for adults last year, and the practice fully or partially funded 25,230 students aged 16 to 19 at 587 subcontractors.

The figures come from the ESFA’s list of declared subcontractors, which has not been updated since September 2018. The agency has refused to explain why these lists are so overdue.

Ofsted claimed that, since February 2018, it has “increased our focus on the management and quality of subcontracted provision” but it still



Paul Joyce

places responsibility for learners’ experiences on the main provider and does not directly inspect standalone subcontractors.

Paul Joyce, Ofsted deputy director for FE and skills, said: “I hope this research will give us more insight into the experience learners get at a provider, which in turn will help us refine this part of our inspection work.

“We will work with subcontractors who take part in the research to make sure we do not place an additional burden on staff. All visits will be carried out purely for research purposes and will not double up as inspections.”

It comes after the ESFA “shocked”

hundreds of providers in July by demanding that all subcontracting contracts include for the first time details of “how each cost contributes to delivering high-quality training” and “how each specific cost is reasonable and proportionate to delivery of the subcontracted teaching or learning”.

Last month, Eileen Milner, chief executive of the ESFA, sent a sector-wide letter warning of rule changes to subcontracting and said that she would take strong action against any provider that abuses the system.

She said there are currently 11 live investigations into subcontracting, with issues ranging from “complacency

and mismanagement” through to “deliberate and systematic fraud”.

She revealed that the government would be reviewing its subcontracting rules. Areas under consideration include “placing limits on the permitted geographical distance between a directly funded institution and the location where subcontracted provision is delivered”.

Other areas being looked at include the “balance of oversight and accountability arrangements, and with which bodies they should rest; reasonable expectations of the external audit process; and reviewing the aggregate funding value of subcontracted provision held by subcontractors”.

There have been a number of high-profile subcontracting scandals, including the Luis Michael Training case where its owners, which included two former professional footballers, created “ghost learners” and were jailed for a combined total of over 25 years in 2018.

The most recent subcontracting scandal, exposed by *FE Week*, involved Brooklands College and resulted in the ESFA demanding a £20 million clawback.

Recruitment drive as Ofqual cracks down on non-compliance

BILLY CAMDEN

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Ofqual is beefing up its compliance teams as part of a crackdown on awarding bodies following high-profile mishaps and hefty fines.

The exams regulator is looking to fill three “exciting new roles” with candidates who are experienced auditors.

The “managers of compliance”, who will be paid up to £45,000 a year, will “plan, lead and deliver a range of regulatory activities to gather evidence and intelligence” on awarding organisations.

Successful candidates will lead teams of “auditors, investigators and technical specialists” to conduct “thematic” audits and reviews, incident management and investigations.

An Ofqual spokesperson said: “Our regulatory compliance team plays an

important role in delivering the goals set out in our corporate plan.

“We have taken the opportunity to reflect on the team’s composition and responsibilities presented by some natural turnover alongside the work we are currently conducting, and while headcount in the team is staying the same we have made some adjustments to the skills and knowledge that we are seeking – hence these new roles.”

The recruitment drive follows cases of non-compliance with Ofqual’s rules.

Last month, exam body AQA was fined £350,000, the largest sum ever handed out by Ofqual, and told to compensate schools and colleges by £740,000 after “serious breaches” of rules over re-marks. This week, OCR was told to pay schools and colleges nearly £15,000 in compensation after it also breached rules over exam re-marks – but the organisation avoided a fine.

The awarding body failed to ensure reviews of marking were conducted

by the original marker, or by someone without a personal interest in the outcome, across both 2017 and 2018.

The error, which occurred because of an “unanticipated shortfall in examiner capacity”, affected 126 reviews in 2017 and 160 in 2018.

In September, it was revealed that the number of complaints received by Ofqual about England’s largest exam boards nearly doubled over the past two years.

Back in April, Ofqual issued its first intention to fine an end-point assessment organisation after “technical issues” at the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) affected its delivery of apprenticeship assessments. In some cases, learners’ work was lost altogether.

The regulator had intended to fine the organisation £50,000, but this was reduced to £1,000 this week after CILEx implemented a series of recommendations. CILEx will, however,

also have to pay £7,595 in recovery costs to Ofqual.

The regulator, which is led by chief executive Sally Collier, launched a consultation last month to update its Taking Regulatory Action (TRA) policy, which was first published in 2011 and last revised in 2012. It proposed changes to how it punishes awarding organisations who are non-compliant with new “public rebukes” and fixed-penalty notices for those that flout regulations.

Alongside the responsibilities listed above, the “managers of compliance” being recruited by Ofqual will ensure that regulatory compliance activity is “conducted professionally, confidently and consistently with precision”.

They will also “develop and maintain appropriate relationships with senior and responsible persons at awarding organisations with regard to the activities of the regulatory compliance team to enable effective regulation”.



Sally Collier

Applicants must have a “proven ability to systematically and objectively collect and analyse evidence clearly and fairly to identify potential areas of non-compliance against conditions”.

The closing date for applicants is this Sunday, 10 November.

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Workers told to repay thousands for c

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From front

Exclusive

Grzegorz Bogdanski is being forced by the government to repay a £5,421 loan for an FE course he claimed he never started, or even realised that he had signed up for.

The 34-year-old construction worker said that all those involved have “washed their hands” of his case and described the Department for Education (DfE) as “the biggest disappointment” in the saga because of its lack of oversight over training providers.

Bogdanski is not alone. An investigation by FE Week has found that alleged victims of an advanced learner loans scandal are still being told that they must repay their debts, despite new regulations which give the education secretary power to clear them when their provider goes bust.

In June, in the wake of FE Week’s #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign, the DfE announced new legislation that would allow the government to cancel all or part of an advanced learner loan for those left in debt if their provider folded. This was to take effect from 1 July 2019.

However, the Student Loans Company (SLC) has confirmed that Bogdanski is still liable to pay his loan back as “records show that the learning provider confirmed his attendance on the course”.

FE Week has spoken to 12 other Southampton-based Polish building and construction workers who also

claim that they have loans due for courses they did not complete with Edudo Ltd, which later collapsed. They said they plan to hire a lawyer and go to court over the payments.

Edudo Ltd was paid as a subcontractor by West London College, which held the contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (see box-out).

Many of the victims claim that they had been sent “in circles” by authorities after receiving repeated requests to contact other institutions.

“There was something wrong... it doesn’t feel right”

Several also question how it was so easy for Edudo to receive funding and to claim to have delivered their courses.

Bogdanski attended an information session hosted by Edudo and a construction agency, named by other alleged victims as their employer AB South Construction Ltd, which is now also dissolved, in March 2015.

Some of the other members of the group, including Blazej Zielinski, 33, and Radoslaw Michalowski, 42, also claimed that they went to one or two initial meetings with the provider and later received letters notifying them of their obligation to repay loans.

They said they were told to sign multiple forms during the sessions but Bogdanski denies personally



Grzegorz Bogdanski

submitting them to the SLC or authorising Edudo to do so.

“After a while I said there was something wrong with it, it doesn’t feel right. I had my intuition but it was too late,” he added. “We were really tricked.”

Zielinski told FE Week that he was suffering from stress because he has to pay back almost £6,000 “for nothing” and Michalowski also confirmed that he never attended, or was offered, any training.

“I’ve got three kids and a wife and that money is a big problem for me. Everyone [is] just closing eyes and their ears,” he added.

Meanwhile Pawel Klak, 41, claims that he had received assurances from Edudo that they would cancel his loan application after he asked to pull out shortly after attending two meetings.

Klak, who said he has already paid back almost two-thirds of his loan, described the process of trying to contact Edudo, West London College and the SLC as being “like tennis... [sent from] one side to another”.

But Tomasz Lentkiewicz, 38, told FE Week that he had never attended any meetings or had any contact about the course with the provider or the employment agency with which he

was registered.

“I think that was some fraud. Probably they use[d] my details to get a loan in my name,” he said.

Bogdanski went on to criticise the government, West London College and the monitoring of subcontractors like Edudo.

“Everyone is just closing their eyes and their ears”

“I don’t understand why the government or the Student Loans Company didn’t check them correctly because this is some kind of scam,” he said.

“They grab the money... and just disappeared without supplying the service they were supposed to.”

The ESFA has now banned the subcontracting of advanced learner loans, but this came too late for the alleged victims of Eduado.

After Bogdanski attended a six-hour meeting in March 2015, during which he completed paperwork, he sent his passport to the SLC, under the

impression that he was just checking he would qualify for the loan.

Bogdanski then received a letter detailing the summary of his loan for an NVQ in Wood Occupations in April 2015; a total of £5,421, the maximum for the course as set by the government, had been requested.

It listed West London College (at the time called Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College) as the training organisation and stated that his course would start later that month and end in July, but Bogdanski claims that he did not attend it.

A spokesperson from the SLC said: “SLC processes applications for student loans in accordance with the DfE’s policy and on information provided by customers and verified by learning providers.

“In this case Mr Bogdanski applied for funding on 28 March 2015 and we received a signed declaration form from him on 31 March 2015.”

The SLC was not able to comment on all of the other learners at the time of going to press. However, a spokesperson said it was “satisfied” that some of the alleged victims’ attendance had previously been confirmed.

West London College confirmed that it “had a subcontracting relationship



Lukasz Pacuk holding up his Edudo case file from Edudo

construction course they 'did not take'

the ESFA many times over the past four years.

Bogdanski described being left without any help or alternatives to sort out the situation as "very shameful" and "frustrating".

"Life was good... and wasn't so good after"

He added: "It is just like banging your head against the wall to try to do something. Everybody just turns their backs and says sorry we can't help you."

Another alleged victim, Marcin Tryka, 38, claimed to have knowingly signed up for the loan after being offered a gold CSCS card (for which level 3 NVQs are required) through his employer AB South Construction, but Tryka alleged that contact from Edudo was cut off after one site visit.

He said it "looked dodgy" from the beginning after the representative of Edudo spoke to a group meeting through a translator and therefore must have known "even if [they] go through the whole process [most people] wouldn't get it [the gold card] if they can't speak two words of English".

Tryka said the ordeal put him "in a stupid loop where I couldn't get enough money to think about getting a card", impacting on his employment

opportunities.

"It has been four years..., I [still] can't believe it happened. Life was good and wasn't so good after."

Lukasz Pacuk, 36, echoed Tryka's claims but said an Edudo assessor told him that no more site visits were needed after the first and that he would receive his certificate.

He had originally been enrolled on the Level 2 NVQ in Wood Occupations (Site Carpentry Pathway) in 2014 before being changed to Level 3 NVQ in the same subject.

"Everything [was] very, very strange. They played a game with everyone."

FE Week has seen copies of correspondence from Edudo confirming Pacuk's enrolment on both courses from November 2014 and June 2016 respectively, as well as a partially filled-in Edudo course book and other paperwork.

After Edudo collapsed, Pacuk claimed that he called Learning Republic and the company sent him his portfolio in the post but told him that he would not be able to continue the course and would have to take out another loan.

FE Week was also contacted by six other people who also claim to have been "cheated" by Edudo: Rafal Wojcik, Hubert Kot, Dariusz Kowalczyk, Jacek Major, Roman Trela and Damian Nowak.

with Edudo for a short period of time between March and July 2015". The subcontract was "not renewed beyond that date".

Hampshire-based Edudo Ltd, which was allocated £500,500 in advanced learner loans, sold its "assets and business" to Learning Republic Group Ltd in November 2016 and entered voluntary liquidation.

Former Edudo boss Ronan Smith is currently the only director listed at Companies House for Learning Republic Group.

Bogdanski claims that he kept calling Edudo before it collapsed but the firm just "seem[ed] to just dodge" his attempts to talk to Smith.

Learning Republic Group has not responded to requests for comment from *FE Week*.

A spokesperson from the SLC said: "SLC has advised Mr Bogdanski that any dispute over his attendance should be raised with the learning provider and the ESFA, who regulate the education and training sector and are accountable for the funding paid to FE institutions."

Bogdanski and many of the other alleged victims claim to have contacted West London College and

College fails to say if subcontractor was monitored

West London College, previously known as Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, entered into a subcontracting relationship with Hampshire-based Edudo Ltd "for a short period of time between March and July 2015".

The college received the advanced learner funding directly from the Student Loans Company, before charging a management fee to Edudo, the subcontractor, and then paying them to deliver the course.

Many of the victims were not aware that West London College was their prime training provider.

The then Skills Funding Agency's Funding Rules 2014 to 2015 stated that "a regular and substantial programme of quality-assurance checks" must be carried out on subcontractors.

West London College did not comment on whether Edudo was monitored during the period of

training provision.

In 2016 the SFA announced that subcontracting within the advanced learner loans programme would be banned for all providers from the start of the 2017 to include the 2018 funding year.

Karen Redhead, who took over as principal at West London College in September 2018, said: "We welcome the *FE Week* campaign to highlight the plight of learners that have been left with debt but without qualifications, due to training providers going into liquidation."

After being provided with the details of several other victims who alleged they had contacted the college and were turned away, Redhead admitted she was aware of three former students who had contacted the college recently and that, due to the "wholesale and multiple turnover of managers at West London College since 2015",

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

March 2015: Grzegorz Bogdanski attended a meeting hosted by Edudo Ltd, after which he was signed up to an advanced learner loan allegedly without his consent.

January 2017: *FE Week* reported on 500 advance learner loans students being affected by John Frank Training going into liquidation in November 2016. The firm left no assets despite recording a profit of £1.3 million in the first half of 2016.

February 2017: *FE Week* launched the #SaveOurAdultEducation campaign in Parliament after speaking to many victims with thousands of pounds worth of debt but no qualifications after their training providers collapsed. *FE Week* also revealed Edudo Ltd went into voluntary liquidation this month.

April 2017: The Department for Education asked the SLC to defer loan repayments for affected learners during the April 2017 to March 2018 tax year.

April 2018: Repayments were deferred again for the 2018/2019 tax year.

July 2019: The DfE told *FE Week* that the government would be able to clear learners' advanced learner loan debt when their provider goes bust from 1 July 2019. Individuals are assessed on a case-by-case basis and past students should not be required to make repayments while their cases are being considered. Students who may be in scope of the new policy should be contacted by DfE or the SLC.

October 2019: Asim Shaheen, an ex-learner at John Frank Training who could not complete his training after the firm went into liquidation in 2016, told *FE Week* he had received no communication regarding the write-off, nor has Bogdanski.

November 2019: *FE Week* reveals how loans learners are still being told to repay their loans despite never completing the course or achieving their qualification.

Ltd, a firm later suspended from delivering new apprenticeship starts, in a deal worth £1.7 million in 2018/19.

At the time Redhead confirmed that the college did not subcontract to SCL Security for apprenticeships but had terminated the relationship as a result of *FE Week's* investigation.

This week Ofsted announced that it will launch research into FE subcontracting, after Eileen Milner, chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency, sent a sector-wide letter last month warning that the agency was still investigating cases where subcontracted provision was not "appropriately controlled, overseen or managed by the lead provider" (see page 6).

Changes to subcontracting contracts, to be phased in from 1 August and 1 December 2019, also for the first time require a "list of individually itemised, specific costs for managing the subcontractor".

staff are now "piecing together evidence".

She added: "We have been in touch with the Student Loans Company to obtain further information to help us understand the situation and to consider the best resolution for affected learners."

Redhead maintained that the college was "absolutely committed to working with relevant agencies and individuals to resolve all outstanding issues as swiftly as we can.

"I would therefore urge those affected to contact the principal's office directly so we can look into their specific circumstances and achieve satisfactory and timely resolution."

West London College previously also had a subcontracting arrangement for adult education budget funding with SCL Security

News

College lowers expectations over £1.4m legal battle with Nigeria

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

A college locked in a legal battle with a Nigerian state has substantially lowered its expectations about recovering the £1.4 million it claims to be owed.

Confidential board minutes for Highbury College in Portsmouth, Hampshire, have been obtained by FE Week and show that leaders believe they have a “medium opportunity” of recouping just £872,000.

The alleged debt is currently being held by the Cross River State Government (CRSG) – a coastal state in southern Nigeria – after a technical education project in the country failed.

Board minutes reveal that the state has admitted to owing Highbury £872,000 and the college is “optimistic” of recovering it, but court cases have been pushed back repeatedly throughout 2019.

Some of the income from the project, understood to be around £400,000, was paid in the Nigerian currency (Naira) and remains in a Nigerian bank account.

A spokesperson said that, due to the college’s “strong financial position”, there was no requirement to repatriate the funds at this time.

“The college will hold until we think we can secure the most favourable exchange rate,” they added.

The spokesperson declined to

comment on what the £400,000 was actually worth based on current exchange rates.

Highbury College recorded a £2.48 million deficit in its 2017/18 accounts, which also show a quick sale in August of their City of Portsmouth Centre for £4 million less than it had been valued at.

The college axed its sixth form two months ago owing to financial pressures.

It has pumped millions of pounds into a number of ventures in Nigeria since 2012.

In 2013, the college entered a partnership with the Cross River State to design a “demand-driven curriculum” and run a polytechnic training provider, called the Institute of Technology and Management.

But Highbury pulled out of the arrangement following a change in political parties in Nigeria in 2015, alongside a drop in oil prices which slowed down the economy.

Confidential minutes from March 2019 said that legal parties attended the Cross River State’s High Court on the 11 February but, “unfortunately, the court did not convene because the presiding judge was attending training on election petition adjudication”.

“The college’s motion for judgment in default of appearance prompted CRSG to file a defence which substantially reiterates the defence they presented at the mediation,” they added.

“Within that defence they do, however, admit to owing the college the

sum of £871,252.”

The court case was adjourned to 4 March.

Minutes for May 2019 state that, a week before this, the college had filed a motion for the CRSG to make the outstanding payment and that the group finance director was “optimistic about the college securing the money owed”.

The court session was meant to convene on 10 April but this was cancelled because of the “ongoing election petition proceedings” in Nigeria, and the next available date was understood to be in June.

The May minutes continued: “The college’s counsel were able to agree that between now and June the CRSG’s counsel will liaise with the ministry of justice, including the attorney general, to make a case for settlement to the governor for the admitted sum of £872,000.

“If those efforts are successful and a settlement agreement is signed, then we can proceed to request the court to enter a consent judgment based on the terms of the settlement agreement.”

Minutes from July 2019 then state that the college had “scheduled court action with the CRSG in Nigeria to recover £872,000 which, when recovered, will improve the cash position”.

Asked if there had been any update since then, a Highbury College spokesperson said they could not comment as legal proceedings were still underway.



Tories fingered for getting facts wrong

Exclusive

A leading fact-checking organisation has told politicians to “get your facts right” after the Conservatives were caught making two false claims about further education in the first week of the general election campaign.

A post called “share the facts” on the party’s website claimed “we have already opened 12 Institutes of Technology”. None have actually launched since being announced in April.

FE Week raised this with the party and a spokesperson admitted on Wednesday this was an “error” and said its website would be updated accordingly. The mistake had not been corrected at the time of going to press.

“Mistakes happen,” a spokesperson for fact-checking charity Full Fact said, “but campaigns should own up and correct the record when they do.”

“Voters will make an important choice about the future of this country in five weeks’ time. Everyone deserves clear and accurate information from campaigns so they can make their own minds up about who to vote for.”

They added: “Our ask of all candidates and parties is very simple: get your facts right and back up your claims with evidence.”

Education secretary Gavin Williamson has been caught up in a dodgy data controversy of his own for his article entitled Don’t let Labour take charge of our children’s schools, which was published in The Times on Tuesday.

He claimed to be “the first education secretary to have attended an FE college”, having completed A-levels at Scarborough Sixth Form College.

But this was incorrect: his Conservative predecessor Justine Greening studied A-levels at a sixth-form college, Thomas Rotherham College in south Yorkshire.

And former Labour education secretary David Blunkett attended both Shrewsbury Technical College and Sheffield Richmond College of Further Education.

The Conservatives have been approached for comment about Williamson’s false claim.

The use of data in politics has become increasingly contentious. Full Fact had

already described the Conservatives as “irresponsible” this week for a misleading edit of an interview from Good Morning Britain with Labour MP Keir Starmer, which was widely shared on social media.

And the Liberal Democrats have come under fire for a graph showing them neck and neck with the Conservatives in northeast Somerset, which the party’s education lead Layla Moran accepted was “not accurate”.

Evidence shows that nowhere is the use of data more contentious than in education: in its annual review of casework, the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) reported that the Department for Education made up the greatest proportion of its case work.

Just this week, Mike Jones, the DfE’s deputy head of profession for statistics, admitted at the UKSA’s annual conference: “We have said some things that we shouldn’t.”

This comes after the department was rapped by authority chair Sir David Norgrove last year over “significant concerns” that the authority had over the department’s use of statistics.

The department landed itself in hot water after claiming that the UK was the third-highest spender on education of all OECD countries and that there were 1.9 million more children in “good” and “outstanding” schools now than in 2010.

However, the OECD data had included private school and tuition fees, while the 1.9 million figure did not allow for factors such as population growth.

Norgrove has this week written to the leaders of the UK’s major political parties to ask for their help to “ensure that the use of statistics during this general election campaign serves the public good”.

He said: “Statistics can be a powerful support for an argument, but misuse damages their integrity, causes confusion and undermines trust.”

FE Week reporter Fraser Whieldon will be keeping an eye out for misleading and false FE facts from political parties during the election campaign. If you spot any, email them to fraser@feweek.co.uk or tweet them using the hashtag #FEFactFail.

Reporters shortlisted for award

FE Week chief reporter Billy Camden has been named as a finalist in the prestigious Press Gazette British Journalism Awards 2019.

Shortlisted in the specialist journalism category, his entry covers a series of investigations into disgraced apprenticeship giant 3aaa, Highbury College’s debt in Nigeria and its principal’s expenses.

Also nominated for an award was John Dickens, the editor of FE Week’s sister paper Schools Week, who investigated Department for Education minister Lord Agnew’s £35 million school waste claims.

Chair of the judges and Press Gazette editor-in-chief Dominic Ponsford said: “One quality shines through all the shortlists: bravery. Again and again journalists have pitted themselves against powerful vested interests to provide a voice for the voiceless and shine a light into the murkiest areas of

Britain and the wider world.”

Camden’s reports into 3aaa covered multiple government investigations into achievement rate inflation, which led to the resignations of the provider’s co-founders before their multi-million pound contracts were terminated.

This forced the firm to go bust, and the case was then referred to the police who are currently conducting a criminal investigation.

Then in January he revealed how Highbury College was legally trying to recover a £1.4 million debt held up in Nigeria (see story above). This investigation exposed the college’s deteriorating financial position, and saw the principal immediately block FE Week’s website – for one week – from the college’s servers in an attempt to conceal it from staff.

Meanwhile, he was in the midst of a Freedom of Information battle with the college after requesting the principal’s



expenses from her corporate card.

After a year-long battle, Camden finally obtained and analysed over 500 receipts which totalled £150,000 in four years, and included first class flights, five star hotels, a £434 pair of designer headphones, luxury chauffeurs and a boozy lobster dinner at a Michelin star restaurant.

The government immediately ordered the FE Commissioner to investigate the spending and the principal, Stella Mbubaegbu, has since announced her intention to retire from the college.

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Profile

Introducing...

ZAMZAM IBRAHIM

President, National Union of Students

JESS STAUFENBERG
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Zamzam Ibrahim took over at the National Union of Students in turbulent times. But the new president is far from a stereotypical drum-banging student leader

Zamzam Ibrahim is burning the candle at both ends and illness forces her to cancel our first interview. But she valiantly battles through by phone from a London café a few days later – with the background noise and a crackly phone line doing little to dim her character and conviction in an unforgettable 50-minute conversation.

It's been a turbulent time for the National Union of Students, which Ibrahim has led since April. Faced with the union's looming £3 million deficit, Shakira Martin, the former president, wrote a Facebook post saying she didn't give "two s**ts" about local unions critical of her cost-cutting decisions and they could "f**k off" (the post has since been deleted). Martin had taken over from Malia Bouattia,

who left after calling her university a "Zionist outpost". Both women were dogged by racist and sexist abuse on social media during their terms in office, Ibrahim watching it all during five years at the union, most recently as vice-president of society and citizenship.

Further education needs all the champions it can get, so have students chosen the right leader to navigate the choppy political waters?

"We need to do much more about access to courses"

It becomes evident as we move through my questions that they have. I start off lightly, asking what her priorities are.

"We need to re-think education – the way we talk about education and the ability of students to progress into different schemes, to train and re-train. The way we access further



education has been the same for a very long time. There aren't that many provisions available. So we need to do much more about access to courses."

For this reason she supports a national education service with its emphasis on lifelong learning. Her own experiences of post-16 education in Bolton have also made Ibrahim an advocate for parity of esteem of FE colleges with sixth forms. "Where I lived if you passed your GCSEs you went to the sixth-form college, like I did. If you failed your GCSEs, you went to Bolton College. They were next door to each other, but if you went to one it was like you'd failed. There's this cultural shame around some FE. That needs to change."

Ibrahim is also determined to take politicians to task over FE funding. "The budget has been hugely cut over years, but the expectation of a 'world-class service' hasn't gone away. They're on a shoestring budget. It's ridiculous." Also in her line of fire, as it was for her predecessor, is the removal of the education maintenance allowance by the coalition government in 2010. I ask

her if she had needed it. "Honestly, the difference EMA made to me when I was at college! It was £30 a week and it paid for my travel. But I would walk if the weather was all right, so then I could eat. To think that option isn't available anymore is terrifying."

It becomes clear that Ibrahim has identified her priorities as things she wants to improve, not lingering for a moment on what she hates or what she wants to do to the NUS. This, it turns out, is a deliberate strategy.

"The reason I ran for president is I was thinking, 'why aren't we campaigning for things like better education and more funding?' We were spending so much time saying, 'this shouldn't happen', we were fighting things all the time and not offering a vision."

She does not say that too much time was spent in-fighting, but she could. "We'd stopped being about what was important, and it was more what we were against."

Even when I ask her how she's going to campaign for all these changes with a much-reduced budget, she

manages to keep things positive and praise her membership. "It's going to be a balancing act. We might have to go back to being a grassroots organisation. But we have 550 student unions, so we can have huge impact without having to move too much money around. Yes, I'm the face of the organisation. But it's the unions doing the work. They're incredible."

This determined, upbeat approach is working. Ibrahim has been in No 10 and says conversations with Chris Skidmore, the higher education minister, have been particularly good. She says he supported her when she pulled out of the Conservative Party conference about a month ago. Reports had emerged that a panel debate hosted by Policy



Addressing Philip Augar at the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in London, May 2019



“The cultural shame around FE needs to change”



Speaking to students during the Global Climate Strikers 4 Action rally in London, Sept 2019

Exchange on September 29 called Challenging “Islamophobia” included jokes and a lack of proper engagement with the issue (as the title rather gives away). When she withdrew she says Skidmore said he “understood and respected” her decision. It’s all about carefully deciding where to draw a line, she tells me.

“I’m always willing to stand up and fight the case. But sometimes I think it comes down to the principles of the NUS and what we stand for. These people were making jokes at our very life experiences. For me, it was ‘what are the lines here?’ I got solidarity from all the students.”

Where has she learnt to balance passion with perspective? The answer becomes clear, and, at times, desperately moving.

“Coming from a working-class background, and my parents being migrants, they taught us education was everything.” Ibrahim was born in Sweden to a Somali family, with

“We were fighting all the time and not offering a vision”

four brothers and a sister; her parents moved to England when she was in year 5. “My mother taught me resilience. Whenever I came to her with a problem, she said, ‘what’s your solution?’ And my dad was the biggest advocate of education I’ve ever known

in my life. He said ‘your knowledge is the only thing they can’t take away from you. If you want to get anywhere in life, you have to educate yourself. If there are issues, you need to be in that room.’” Admiration creeps into Ibrahim’s voice. I tell her that it sounds like her dad is an important person to her. There is a long pause and it takes me a moment to realise she’s holding herself together.

“My dad passed away two months ago. He was such a champion for learning. When I was being taught English as a kid, there was a refugee family nearby, and he would make me go and teach them what I had learnt. What’s a noun, what’s an adjective,

what’s an adverb. His thing on education was, ‘pass it on’. I remember when I started college he’d say to me, ‘tell me what you’re learning in science’. When I was studying for my GCSEs, I bought revision CDs for all my subjects. My dad spent all night making copies of them and he gave them out free to all the people who couldn’t afford them. For him it was about, give back to the person who doesn’t have what you have. Even when we had so little, I was constantly reminded we had so much.

“He knew what I was doing with the NUS. The last time I saw him, I was running for president. He would

always call me and say, what part of the world are you in today? He would google me and send me anything with my name in case I hadn’t seen it.”

Ibrahim’s parents have nurtured in their daughter a passion for change that comes not from self-righteous indignation, but a powerful humility. It strikes me as the best recipe for leadership.

“After my dad passed away, it came back to me again and again about education.

“Yes I’ve had institutional barriers, but I have got here. Now I have a lot of work to do to help people who think they can’t.”

News



Ofsted praise environment in new inspection reports

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“Two acres of peaceful gardens create a calm environment and help them relax, enabling all to concentrate fully on their studies.”

That might sound like a line of prose or a review for a relaxing country retreat – but it is in fact an excerpt from an Ofsted report under the new inspection framework.

Language has been one of the most significant changes to reports since the framework was rolled out in September. Inspectors are more prominently noting the setting of the provider and what opportunities learners get outside the campus, alongside judgments on how well providers embed “knowledge” and set learners up for their next steps.

An Ofsted spokesperson explained that the new-style reports were intended to give a better “flavour” of what it was like for students at the

provider.

In addition to the above example from People Solutions Training, Bedford College’s report observes how “community learning centres provide adult learners with a calm and purposeful learning environment”. And the report for Walsall Studio School describes it as a “harmonious community”.

Similar language can also be seen in reports for schools, with one for Boldon School in the North East telling how “pupils get on well with one another and share a joke with their teachers”.

And in Lyme Community Primary School’s report, inspectors said: “One of the children gave me a ticket in the outdoor area used by nursery and reception children. The ticket allowed me to sit on a milk crate at the back of a makeshift bus. From this vantage point, I could see that the youngest children are happy at school.”

According to the new framework, lecturers “need to create an environment that allows the learner to

focus on learning”.

Consequently, inspectors are bringing up the learning environment recommendations for how providers can improve, with Coventry College’s report pushing staff to collaborate to “create a harmonious and calm working environment, inside and outside the college campuses”.

The National Union of Students welcomed Ofsted’s language changes.

“Student learning environments are changing spaces, gone are the four white walls and rows and rows of militantly-placed chairs,” said Juliana Mohammed Noor, the union’s vice president for FE.

“Enhancing learning environments can only bring a positive experience and colleges can be well placed to deliver provision innovatively.”

According to the new framework, inspectors will also be evaluating the extent to which the curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational.

Tyne Coast College was one provider

to be commended after inspectors noted how learners and apprentices on maritime programmes have a uniform they wear “proudly” and call their lecturers’ “captain” to simulate life aboard a ship.

And Coventry’s report logged how adults studying English as a second or foreign language had the chance to visit the local pantomime to become more confident in speaking and listening.

But its report added that apprentices “did not receive high-quality tutorial support to help them develop resilience, confidence and an in-depth understanding of how to prepare to be citizens of modern Britain”.

The new reports also reflect a greater emphasis on knowledge – a word used around 10 times in each report – and how learners use it to “succeed in life”, in line with the new inspection framework.

Inspection teams have written positively about two providers which run discussions on topics such as

female success in male-dominated industries, euthanasia and cannabis.

Meanwhile CQM Training was told that it needed to improve how apprentices “recall topics and improve the storage and retrieval of their new knowledge”.

Ofsted’s changes will help parents to choose a college when their children leave school, according to John Jolly, chief executive of parent-teacher organisation Parentkind, who said: “We believe that it will help parents to get a broader understanding of the ethos of the college and highlight the ways in which this attribute can be achieved.”

Commenting on the language changes, an Ofsted spokesperson said: “We’ve made our inspection reports shorter and clearer, so that they can be more easily accessed and understood by different groups of people.

“As well as giving an independent view of how well a provider is performing, the new-style reports give a better flavour of what it’s like for learners.”



Director of Management Information Systems

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Closing Date 4th December 2019

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Director of Facilities

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Region: Manchester

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CURRICULUM OPERATION LEADER CARE & EDUCATION

Salary: Competitive

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

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We are seeking to appoint a Curriculum Operation Leader who demonstrates outstanding educational leadership, inspiring and motivating staff to deliver the highest standard of learning experience, which impacts positively on the success of all our learners.

You will provide leadership, direction and motivation to a relatively new teaching team who deliver programmes from Entry level to Level 7.

The successful candidate will have relevant experience with the ability to inspire and challenge staff creating a dynamic culture of innovation with outstanding learning, teaching and student success throughout all aspects of provision.

To be successful you will have...

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- An innovative approach to developing curriculum and growing your area
- A drive to achieve the highest quality and the best learner experience
- High standards for performance management and good business skills

In return we offer the following range of benefits:

- 50 days' annual leave per annum
- 1-1 Mentor Support
- Comprehensive personal development opportunities
- The opportunity to shape your teaching commitment in a diverse and popular curriculum area

For further information and to apply, please visit www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/

Closing Date: Friday 22 November 2019 (12:00 noon)

Interview Date: Friday 6 December 2019 (Full Day)

For further information and/or informal discussions please contact Eliza Tremé-Swales - Director of Further and Higher Education on 01946 839300 ext 1109



**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



**LIVERPOOL
CITY REGION**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIP HUB MANAGER

Hours per week: 35 hours

Salary: £49,786 - £59,443

Location: Merseyside

Employment type: Full Time

Contract type: Fixed Term until

31 March 2022

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is growing a team of exceptional individuals to deliver our vision for an inclusive, globally competitive city region at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse. This is an exciting time for us, having successfully negotiated and secured a Devolution

Agreement with Government and elected the City Region's first ever Metro Mayor.

Devolution brings real, local policymaking and investment powers. This role will help set the agenda for the future of the City Region, working within the Employment and Skills policy team to translate evidence into policy and implementation.

This role will be required to provide effective management and leadership of the whole Skills and Apprenticeship Hub, including contractual relationships. You will have experience of managing large

scale funding programmes, ideally with ESF, and ensuring delivery of contractual outputs. The ability to balance oversight of detail with effective strategic relationship building and stakeholder management will be critical.

Team members should be self-starting, collaborative and ambitious, offer fresh ideas, and who demonstrate a commitment to evidence-based policymaking and investment, and a determination to deliver for the people of the Liverpool City Region.

Closing Date for Applications: 12 November 2019 @ 4pm

For further details and to apply please visit <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/governance/vacancies/>



LIVERPOOL CITY REGION
COMBINED AUTHORITY

METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT OFFICER

Hours per week: 35 hours

Salary: £28,977 - £34,918

Location: Merseyside

Employment type: Full Time

Contract type: Fixed Term until

31 March 2022

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is growing a team of exceptional individuals to deliver our vision for an inclusive, globally competitive city region at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse. This is an exciting time for us, having successfully

negotiated and implemented a Devolution Agreement with Government, including electing the City Region's first ever Metro Mayor.

Devolution brings real, local policymaking and investment powers. This role will help to deliver the agenda of the future for people and employers within the City Region.

The overall Hub includes funding to support employers in their specific skills needs, and this role will be key to ensuring that these payments

and approvals are made in line with compliance requirements, and ensuring that value for money is achieved. Experience in learning systems and compliance programmes will be welcomed alongside a keen eye for detail.

Team members should be self-starting, collaborative and ambitious, offer fresh ideas, and who demonstrate a commitment to evidence-based policymaking and investment, and a determination to deliver for the people of the Liverpool City Region.

Closing Date for Applications: 12 November 2019 @ 4pm

For further details and to apply please visit <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/governance/vacancies/>



TEACHER OF ENGINEERING

Commencing 1 January 2020
MPR/UPR (TLR*)
Full or Part Time
Fixed Term/ Permanent Contract

Due to the outstanding success and growth in numbers on the BTEC Level 3 in Engineering, we are seeking applications from qualified, experienced and effective teachers to join our amazing team who want to make a real difference to the aspirations and achievement of our young people.

This is an exciting opportunity to work within an outstanding, inclusive college where students are well motivated and enjoy their lessons. The postholder will become an integral member of the energetic and supportive Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Directorate.

You will be involved in the continual development and improvement of schemes of work and resources and will be focused on the learning, achievement, progression and well-being of our students. Experience of teaching Engineering Level 3 to 16 - 19 year olds is preferred but not essential, while engineering industrial experience is seen as an asset.

The desirable key subject areas within the Engineering teaching delivery include Mechanical and / or Electrical Principles and Applications, Microcontroller systems and Electronics, Basic Programming, CAD and Design.

This is an exciting and rewarding opportunity to work with young people who will value Engineering, enjoy learning about the subject and want to work hard to succeed.

If you wish to work part-time, please clearly state your preferred hours of work on your application.

* There is the opportunity for the successful candidate to hold a TLR (£1000 gross pa) for Subject Co-ordination of Engineering and/or take on the Lead IV responsibility.

One is the only outstanding Sixth Form College in Suffolk, offering an inclusive and fresh approach to learning. We provide an inspirational environment, dedicated to offering students first class teaching, resources and support whilst

they study with us. Indeed, students' success is our priority, as demonstrated by our 'Outstanding' Ofsted grading and our ranking of 1st in the Government's 2016 Performance Tables for progress or value added in all three categories (A Level, Academic and Vocational) across Suffolk and Norfolk.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please visit our website www.suffolkone.ac.uk for further application details. Alternatively, please contact Claire Kerridge, Assistant HR Manager, at hr@suffolkone.ac.uk or call (01473) 556600 for an application pack.

Closing date for applications is 9am on Monday 11th November 2019. Interviews are expected to be held shortly thereafter.

One is committed to Safeguarding. We aim to create the safest environment within which every student has the opportunity to achieve and progress.

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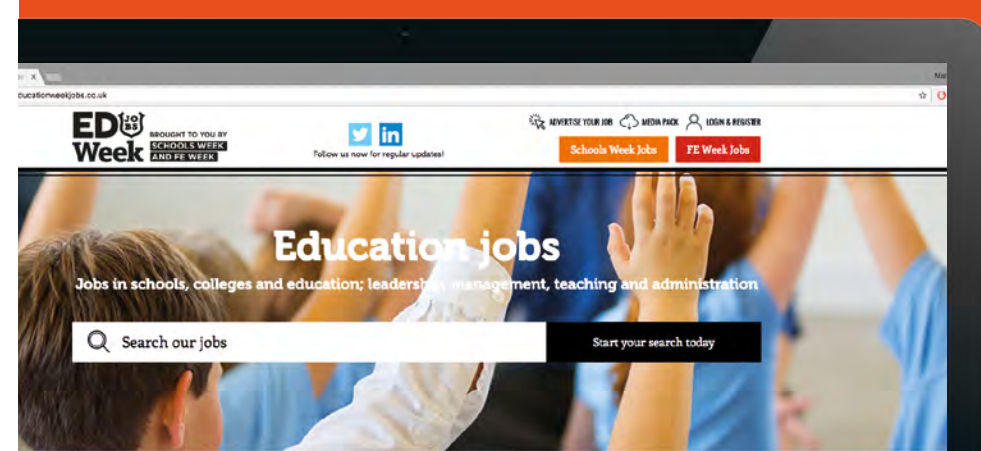
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Locations: South East
Company: Harris Primary Academy...
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Locations: East Midlands, North We...
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FE Week Featured Jobs

- Head of Quality and Curriculum**
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EDITORIAL



Revealing the human cost of a disastrous FE policy

This week we report the case of Grzegorz Bogdanski, who was duped into a taking a £5,000 FE loan by a Southampton based training firm.

The firm, Edudo, had persuaded West London College (WLC) they could be trusted to be a subcontractor for this new source of funding.

So technically, Grzegorz Bogdanski and others like him, were WLC students although solely for government contracting purposes.

Here's where things get complicated.

WLC is regulated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), an executive

agency sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE), who manage the loan facility allocation to WLC and write the advanced learner loan funding rules and oversee compliance.

But the Student Loans Company (SLC), an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the DfE, actually pay WLC £5,000 for the loans funded courses.

WLC then passes around £4,000 of the £5,000 to Edudo, keeping the rest as a management fee.

Bogdanski, when SLC came knocking for the £5,000, tried many times to explain he has been

duped by Edudo (now in liquidation).

But the DfE, ESFA and SLC point fingers at WLC as the loan funding contract holder, and until FE Week made enquires WLC were ignoring Bogdanski.

The ESFA subsequently banned all loans funded subcontracting for all providers, but it was too late for Bogdanski.

After a campaign by FE Week, the government even introduced a law this summer to write off advanced learner loans when a provider goes bust and courses cannot be completed.

But Bogdanski's loan was technically administered by

WLC, which was paid the £5,000 and has not gone bust.

So Bogdanski is left with nowhere left to go and a government agency demanding he pay back £5,000 for a product he did not receive.

It is a shocking story of FE policy failure – shining a light on the direct impact it can have on individuals.

But it is not too late to put it right.

WLC should pay-off the loan for Bogdanski and others like him – and had Edudo not gone bust WLC should have taken them to court.

An independent investigation should review whether SLC knows

enough about who they are really handing public funding over to and whether it is being used as intended.

The ESFA, as part of their current subcontracting review, should seriously consider extending the ban to other funding streams.

And the DfE?

The DfE signed-off on the disastrous ESFA subcontracting policy so the permanent secretary should take it on the chin and apologise to Bogdanski.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



EMAIL



TWITTER



FACEBOOK



WEBSITE

Rate discrimination? Dawe questions potential sex bias

Although I agree that £3,000 does not seem very much to train and assess an adult care worker, the cost of workshop facilities and tooling needed to train a specialist tyre operative needs also to be taken into account.

Rob Hall

Mark Dawe has put his finger on some of the fundamental issues here. 'Women's work' is undervalued and this shows even more strongly in apprenticeships. A previous commentator explains that the reason is, of course, the cost of equipment. Clearly, they have not visited colleges that provide training for care because they too have to have a lot of specialist equipment, as

well as highly-trained staff and the facilities/resources to provide work-like experiences for trainees. Somehow the UK has to do something about the misvaluing and, at the same time, the genderisation of work. Perhaps this is the start of this conversation?

Sarah Peers

Colleges may need to ignore DfE bribes to avoid unethical T-level enrolments

You are right. I don't want to be negative here, but this is simply not going to work. There are not enough work placements for students. I really don't think the DfE properly understands the challenges of getting level 3 students into placements – it's sometimes tough at HE level. Times are tough, hosting work-experience placements is a massive

burden on employers, the idea that employers are going to line up to do this is a fantasy. The obvious solution all along was to make vocational qualifications more genuinely vocational. The last few years have seen BTECs and other similar qualifications morph into poor relations of A-levels.

Paul

3aaa investigation stutters on as police confirm no contact has been made with top bosses

Radical changes needed to the way funding is provided. How about a deposit scheme (similar to landlords) where the money is held in trust until the contract between learner and provider is complete?

Julie Woolley

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Rate discrimination? Dawe questions potential sex bias

Finally, and thank you. We are classed as a low-skilled workforce! Who would you want sat with your parent when taking their final breath? Or with your autistic child in the community and all its challenges? Low-skilled my eyes! Unfortunately, you fund for what you get and there are certain industries feeling like they are forgotten. By the way, funding for working with yoghurt and milk was £20,000+. Scary in comparison. I genuinely hope that, when our loved ones and ourselves get to the point of needing help, things will have changed.

This is utterly shameful. It is a high-level female-dominated industry, but this does not make it any less important. It is a reflection of society unfortunately where money talks and there is seldom profit in supporting the living to live, or the dying to do so with dignity. The honest truth is that the end comes to us all, no matter who you are, and we all deserve the correct and regulated amount of care. But who will be left, trained and competent, to support this? I am not surprised but very, very disappointed that this is the case.

Kirsty Simmonds

Experts

CERIAN AYERS

Head of technical education,
Education and Training Foundation



We are all responsible for establishing new ways of thinking about sustainability

Colleges must put sustainability at the heart of their teaching – and that means far more than tweaking the curriculum, says Cerian Ayers

Recent protests around the world demonstrate that communities are unifying on the need for sustainability in how we interact with our environment. But how should education respond, and what does this mean for technical and vocational education?

Sustainability is more than just the latest hot topic and far more than a simple question of tweaking curriculum. It needs to be considered holistically, societally and educationally. This is the lesson of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), an increasingly important domain of educational thinking and practice.

The term brings an immediate response relating to environmental challenges and concerns, particularly human-induced climate change.

This response is often directed by emotions, from well-intentioned knee-jerk reaction to fear-induced paralysis.

This is one area where we all probably agree we have achieved a reasonable degree of scientific literacy, so it is ironic that it has so far failed to galvanise any sustained action. The headlines in the media probably don't help. Graphic imagery and frightful statistics from worst-case scenarios communicate unavoidable facts and press the idea of an environmental emergency. This may be necessary, but it can be dangerous.

“We must believe we can make a difference”

We need to be made aware of key issues without feeling fearful and anxious. If the desired outcome is action, then we must be respectful of the wellbeing of potential actors to empower them. Where better to demonstrate this kind of knowledge-sharing and knowledge-creation than where it is already modelled daily? In our colleges.

It is becoming a cliché to say our students will be addressing UK and global sustainability challenges in the workplace. The trades and crafts they are learning will indeed be reshaped

by that necessity. In fact, they will be reshaping them. But if we are to overcome this tendency to defer action, and to put the responsibility on young people themselves, we must ask ourselves: Who is responsible for civic leadership and the prioritisation of education for sustainable development?

The answer is both simple and complex: It is each and every one of us in the sector – lecturers, students, learning support assistants, college leaders, providers, apprentices, site staff and kitchen staff.

Education is a prime ingredient in sustainability; in challenging what is happening now and in establishing new ways of thinking and behaving that will stem from that. Central to Education for Sustainable Development are the principles of engagement, empowerment and ownership. We must accept the challenge, believe we can make a difference, and take action.

Progress is already being made within further education provider organisations through joint practice development and collaborative partnerships. Educators are working with employers to understand current industry practices. Staff and learners are working with a sense of agency. Leaders and managers are clearly sharing their vision, empowering others to act, and taking ownership of experimental initiatives. But this action is disjointed and piecemeal. “Think local, act global” is a recurring theme of ESD, but there is a difference between planned localism and fragmentation. Some guiding principles emerge in every college that begins on this journey, a sign that a common framework is already emerging.

That framework revolves around four Cs. Most colleges start with a curricular response, but quickly find that they cannot change curriculum in isolation. Quickly, it becomes evident that they must also reconsider campus, community and culture. What we learn can't be separated from where, who with and how.

A fundamental attribute to each of these is respect. The new Ofsted framework leads us to consider curriculum. That is a fantastic opportunity for colleges to put sustainability at the heart of their teaching. The same framework highlights the importance of developing learners who have respectful behaviours. What better way to do that than to model that respect, by responding to their call for better care of our planet?

DAVID ROBINSON

Director of Post-16 and Skills,
Education Policy Institute (EPI)



Vocational progression must be treated like more academic options

Prospects and public perception would be improved by reducing the gap between funding rates for young people in higher education and those on more academic pathways

It may come as a surprise, but UK adults are among the most positive in Europe about vocational education. Of 28 European countries, the UK ranks third for its views on vocational qualifications.

Sadly, our favourable views end there. When it comes to recommending this education route to a young person considering their post-16 options, the UK sits near the bottom of the table. This huge divergence makes us an outlier and captures the often-quoted perception that these pathways are for the children of “other people”.

One factor that may influence this perception is the difference in outcomes between young people following further educational pathways and those on more academic routes. Young people taking vocational or qualifications lower than A-Levels can, on average, expect to earn significantly less than those achieving a degree, and are likely to have worse health prospects and a lower life expectancy.

Of course, the pathways themselves are not entirely responsible for these differences, as there are significant variations in the backgrounds of those following further education pathways and those continuing to university. But this does not mean we should overlook the outcomes of these students.

New research from the Education Policy Institute (EPI), commissioned by the Health Foundation, examines the life outcomes of this student group and considers what can be done to improve them.

One priority is to increase progression to higher levels. Currently, 79 per cent of 18-year-olds achieving A levels move onto a higher-level qualification by the age of 25, whereas only 42 per cent of students taking vocational or lower-level qualifications do so. Indeed, England is unusual in having such a tiny proportion of young people with an intermediate, level 4 or 5 qualification, despite high demand from employers and substantial salary returns.

The government plans to introduce a quality benchmark and HE-style maintenance loans for level 4/5 qualifications to increase progression levels, but it is questionable whether this goes far enough.

The independent review led by Philip Augar of post-18 education and funding (to which the

government is yet to respond) proposed that FE funding levels should match those in HE, and the introduction of a lifelong learning loan allowance for level 4-6 qualifications. But, without greater support for the most disadvantaged, the introduction of more high-quality progression options risks greater socio-economic segregation in our education system.

“Disadvantaged young people will need to be supported”

Those taking level 4/5 qualifications are more similar socio-economically to those taking a bachelor's degree at a non-Russell Group university than they are to level 3 students. So increased access could leave the most disadvantaged level 3 learners stranded at that level, while their better-off peers progress.

What is more, those qualified to degree level are 40 per cent more likely to undertake further training than those educated to A level or the equivalent, so the benefits of a lifetime loan allowance could mainly accrue to those already holding a degree.

Of course, this is not to say that there should not be increased progression to higher qualifications, but just that disadvantaged young people will need to be supported to make this progress.

This looks exceedingly difficult within the sector's financial constraints. Deficits have doubled over the past six years and, while the spending review committed an extra £400 million to further education, this one-year settlement only repairs around a third of the decline in per student funding since 2010-11.

This means that there is still a significant gap with funding rates in higher education, leaving investment some way behind those on more academic pathways.

Further education routes have the potential to boost a young person's life chances by expanding the opportunities available, but without a long-term vision and more sustainable funding commitment, young people's prospects may remain more limited, and public perceptions of their value are likely to persist.

If we are to embed the increasing digital skills that industry demands in our teaching staff, colleges and businesses need to collaborate with a much more flexible and supportive approach

I see first-hand, day-to-day how the world of work is changing. As executive chair at Weber Shandwick, I advise organisations from large international FTSE100s to small regional start-ups – and the vast majority are transforming, with increased automation and greater use of digital technology.

To embrace the opportunities and overcome the challenges these changes present, we need to overhaul our education system, embedding digital into tertiary education so we can train people with the skills that industry demands.

To do this, of course, we need students to gain digital skills, but if teaching staff cannot identify or do not have the right knowledge to impart, it is difficult to see how anyone will progress.

According to a survey of more than 6,500 of its teacher members, published this week by Jisc (a not-for-profit organisation for digital services and solutions in the education sector), fewer than 15 per cent get time to innovate or are recognised for developing digital skills. Worse, just 14 per cent of those in further education agree that they receive reward or recognition when they develop digital aspects of their role.

This is a problem, not least because an equivalent Jisc survey exploring the digital experiences of students tells us that those in tertiary education look first to their teachers. Of the 13,389 FE students that responded, 48

NORA SENIOR CBE

College of the Future commissioner and former businesswoman of the year



Businesses can't stand on sidelines in quest to improve digital skills

per cent said their most likely source of digital support was the teachers on their course – much higher than fellow students, friends and family or online resources. How can staff meet that need if they are not given time, support and recognition for developing their own digital capabilities?

I have long been in favour of closer collaboration between teaching staff and industry to ensure that what is being taught is relevant and up to date. Part of the challenge is that, by the time students get into work, the knowledge they have gained at college is redundant because technology has moved on.

Work-based learning has to be embedded into the curriculum. That goes for teaching staff as well as students. But that change is perpetual, and we need to look further ahead. Compared with successful OECD countries, UK investment in training is poor. We consistently underinvest in upskilling our workforce, which has led to a significant drop in productivity.

At Weber Shandwick, we tracked our investment in training over five years. It was no surprise to see that profitability and productivity increased in line with spend.

UK businesses cannot stand on the sidelines. They have to engage with the skills system to

ensure that we embed digital within colleges and the workplace. If we want students to transition to employment “fully formed”, and workforces that keep up with developments, teaching staff must have up-to-date knowledge.

“Those in tertiary education look first to their teachers”

That is why the Independent Commission on the College of the Future is asking what we want and need from our colleges in ten years' time. It is about ensuring we have the expertise across the college workforce and a comprehensive system of continuing professional development.

Introducing a greater focus on work-based learning models for students and teachers is a priority, and it requires industry to step up to the challenge. Systems-change, leadership and collaboration have been key themes identified across all of our investigations, and nowhere more so than in respect of digital.

Our whole education system has to change. What was right a decade ago is not right today, and what is right today won't work ten years from now.

That is why we want to hear about what is, and isn't, working. We need to think long-term and about sustainability. Ultimately, that means colleges and businesses adopting a much more flexible and supportive approach to teaching staff.

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11 DECEMBER

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Andy Forbes

Principal,
City of Bristol College

Start date November 2019

Previous job

Principal, City & Islington College

Interesting fact

He worked for two years as a psychiatric nursing assistant before deciding to go into teaching



Barbara Van der Eecken

Vice chair of the Society
for Education and Training
management board

Start date October 2019

Concurrent job

Director of quality and service standards, Babington

Interesting fact

French is her mother tongue but she is also fluent in English, Italian and Spanish and has studied Dutch and Portuguese



Jim Crompton

Chair of the Society
for Education and Training
management board

Start date October 2019

Concurrent job

Second-in-command at the British Army's Staff
Leadership School

Interesting fact

He is a judo black belt and is the Secretary of Army Judo

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FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

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: Ken Fisher

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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