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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2019
EDITION 297

'IT IS BRILLIANT. I'M STILL BUZZING'

West London College to spend £250k paying off learner loans after subcontracting scandal

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COLLEGES CHOOSING GCSE RESITS OVER ALTERNATIVES

- › THOUSANDS MORE 16-18 RESIT ENGLISH AND MATHS THAN DFE REQUIRES
- › ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES SAYS 'JURY IS OUT' ON NEW FUNCTIONAL SKILLS



Investigation

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OFSTED: CAMPUS GRADES ON THE CARDS FOR 2020

- › Concern as quality unclear for individual colleges in group structures
- › Inspectorate already consulting sector leaders about potential changes

Exclusive

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First 'outstanding' college under new Ofsted framework

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The first college to receive a grade one rating under Ofsted's new inspection framework is Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group.

Inspectors judged the group "outstanding" across the board, in a glowing report published on Thursday.

Principal Karen Dobson said the inspection was "intense", and getting the top grade was "absolutely brilliant" and a testament to the "hard work, talent and total commitment of our staff team".

She paid tribute to the students, apprentices, governors and employer partners, without whom "we wouldn't have been able to achieve this result".

This was the first full inspection of the group since it was



The report itself
Karen Dobson

formed from a merger of Newcastle-under-Lyme College and Stafford College in 2016. The latter was rated "inadequate" at its previous inspection in February 2016.

Dobson said that at the point of merger, the ambition was to make NSCG "one of the top colleges in the country and ultimately a great place to study and work". She looks to have succeeded after Ofsted found leaders and managers have integrated the campuses "rapidly" and set high expectations for both staff and learners.

Plaudits came in from sector leaders. Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said: "To secure this judgment under an exacting new framework, and only three years on from a merger, makes its success even more remarkable."

records that NSCG's 6,808 learners "thrive in a positive, stimulating and safe learning environment", and notes that they enjoy their time at college very much.

Inspectors were particularly impressed by the clear, supportive and challenging direction from senior leaders at NSCG, which meant staff felt highly motivated and able to deliver an outstanding learning experience.

Teachers and trainers design a curriculum so that learners and apprentices develop the specific knowledge and skills employers demand. "For example, during a real-life project, care learners gained a deep empathy and appreciation for their clients' needs when trying on a body suit to replicate the experience of a pregnant woman and an elderly person," the report said.

Through close scrutiny of the college's work and the provision by 11 subcontractors, governors "have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and provide very effective support to leaders".

There is "high-quality" and "unbiased" careers information, advice



Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group

and guidance on offer to learners and apprentices throughout their time at college. This allows them to make informed choices about their course and career options.

Ofsted also found there was a strong culture of safeguarding at the college, where vulnerable learners are identified quickly and supported so they can continue their studies.

NSCG is the first general FE college to receive a grade one in two years. The last was Fareham College in November

2017.

This latest positive result for the college sector comes after FE Week analysis, published last month, revealed that 78 per cent of general FE colleges were rated either "good" or "outstanding" – a record high.

While this is the first grade one under the new framework, several colleges including Tyne Coast and Bedford have earned a grade two since the inspectorate changed its reports in September.

City & Guilds Group buys railway training company

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Education giant City & Guilds has acquired its second training provider in two years.

Intertrain, a large provider for the railway industry, is the latest acquisition after Gen2, which claims to be the largest training provider to the UK civil nuclear industry, joined in May 2017.

City & Guilds Group declined to disclose how much the deals were worth due to commercial sensitivity.

Chief executive Chris Jones said the group, which is best known as an awarding organisation, has moved into offering its own training after reflecting "on our purpose – to help people into jobs, develop on the job and progress into the next job".

"We continue to adapt and evolve with our markets to deliver on that purpose at a dynamic time for individuals, businesses and economies," he added.

Intertrain, which was established in 1997, offers over 300 training courses and assessments, including level 2 and 3 apprenticeships in engineering. It trains more than 22,000 learners and apprentices each year and has centres in Enfield, Crayford, Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Derby, Warrington, Doncaster, Gateshead, Glasgow and Portsmouth.

The independent learning provider received its first visit from Ofsted this year, and was found to be making "reasonable" progress across all three assessed themes in an early monitoring report published in September.

Intertrain director Alex Pond said: "The acquisition provides Intertrain, its employees, customers and learners with significant investment and opportunities in digital learner platforms and blended learning that will meet with the demands of the STEM markets, particularly within rail."

City & Guilds Group said it expects there to be a substantial increase in learners at Intertrain given a number of significant infrastructure projects



Alex Pond

planned for the next decade, including HS2 and Crossrail 2.

Cumbrian-based training provider Gen2 was established in 2000 and works with more than 250 employers, including British Steel, Sellafield Ltd and Iggesund, across six sites. At the time of acquisition in July 2017 it had more than 1,300 apprentices.

It received an "outstanding" grade in its last Ofsted inspection in 2011.

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Investigates

Why colleges make more students

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Exclusive

Colleges across the country have been entering more students for GCSE maths and English re-sits than government policy requires.

The Department for Education's condition of funding rule means all students in England aged 16 to 19 who have achieved a grade 3 in English or maths are required to retake the subject while those with a grade 2 or lower have the option of taking Functional Skills qualifications instead.

These "forced re-sits" have been controversial in the sector, so FE Week investigated the reasons behind colleges' decisions to go above and beyond the regulation.

Analysis by this newspaper showed 18 colleges entered more than 1,000 students for GCSE maths re-sits and 26 colleges did so for GCSE English in 2017/18, when the DfE's latest national achievement rates tables were available.

Colleges claimed they did not want to "to limit our learners' progress" and highlighted "the strong emphasis that employers and education establishments put on GCSEs" as part of their reasoning.

Criticism was also directed towards the alternative Functional Skills qualification for its "cliff-edge pass or fail".

Even the Association of Colleges conceded that the "jury is out" on the appropriateness of the new Functional Skills qualifications.

Leeds City College entered the most students for re-sits in both subjects in 2017/18. Bill Jones, the college principal, said: "Although Functional Skills is a viable option for many of our students, we recognise the strong emphasis that employers and education establishments put on GCSEs.

"With this in mind, it's in our students' interest that we provide as many of them as possible the opportunity to re-sit English and maths GCSE to increase successful destinations upon completion of their courses."

According to the government's tables, only 8 per cent of the 2,560 students at Leeds City College who re-sat GCSE maths and 15.3 per cent of the 2,320 students who took GCSE English gained an A*-C (grades 9-4).

The general FE college is now part of the Luminate Education Group.

Jeanne Rogers, vice-principal for quality teaching and learning, tweeted photos of the college's preparation for GCSE English exams this summer and said there were "3,332 students sitting

English today. Attendance has been high, stress levels low; as a result of a college 'I'm In' approach".

Under Education and Skills Funding Agency rules, any student aged 16 to 18 who has a grade 3 as their highest level of achievement, one grade off a 4 (C) in their English and maths GCSEs, must retake the subjects.

Colleges who fail to enrol 95 per cent of eligible students have funding withdrawn from a future allocation.

South and City College Birmingham entered the second-most students for re-sits in maths and English in 2017/18.

Principal Mike Hopkins said the college put "nearly all" its students aged 16 to 18 and young adults who are hoping to go to university into GCSE re-sits rather than Functional Skills because it recognised this was "an examination and course that students are already familiar with (in the main) and we are looking for progression over time for those students with grade 1 upwards".

However, just 7.7 per cent of the 2,340 South and City College Birmingham students who re-sat GCSE maths were awarded an A*-C grade and 15.1 per cent of the 2,200 who re-sat GCSE English received an A*-C grade.

Hopkins said the college planned to review this policy "in light of the introduction of technical courses" to determine whether studying Functional Skills English and maths would better serve students in those areas.

Students who join Activate Learning without a grade 4 "normally" re-sit the core subjects because the general FE college based in Oxford does not "wish to limit our learners' progress".

A total of 1,940 students re-sat GCSE maths and 1,670 students re-sat GCSE English in 2017/18.

Francis Lawson, Activate Learning's director of English, told FE Week: "The rationale for the strong focus on GCSE is that our data shows learners from modest starting points often make greater progress on a GCSE than a Functional Skills pathway.

"Some learners improve several



grades to achieve GCSE grade 4 within a year.

"We do not wish to limit our learners' progress because of modest prior achievement, which might not fairly reflect their capabilities."

However, only 12.6 per cent of maths entrants and 21.4 per cent of English entrants achieved an A*-C grade after their re-sits.

Lawson added that Functional Skills was available to learners "for whom it is most appropriate," highlighting learners on apprenticeship programmes and in supported learning environments.

Data provided by Activate Learning showed 314 16-18-year-old students, excluding apprentices, took Functional Skills English in 2017/18 and 483 were entered into Functional Skills maths in the same year. The figures supplied by the college include Bracknell and Wokingham College, which merged with the Activate Learning in January 2019.

Capital City College Group entered the fifth-highest number of students to re-sit both GCSE maths and English respectively in 2017/18, with 14.1 per cent of 1,810 students achieving an A*-C in the former and 27.4 per cent out of 1,750 doing so in the latter.

A spokesperson for the group said:

"What the data doesn't show is that, in addition, we enrolled just over 2,000 16 to 18-year-olds on a Functional Skills course that year.

"We would generally put a student in for whichever level qualification they are most suited to. For us it's about what level the student can best work at, rather than the qualification per se."

The South Essex College entered the sixth and seventh largest number of students to re-sit GCSE maths and English in 2017/18.

Around 8 per cent out of 1,500 South Essex College students achieved an A*-C in GCSE maths while 17.1 per cent of the 1,460 entered into GCSE English received an A*-C.

A spokesperson told FE Week: "The majority of students who gain a grade 3 or below in GCSE English and or maths are entered for English and maths qualifications at the college.

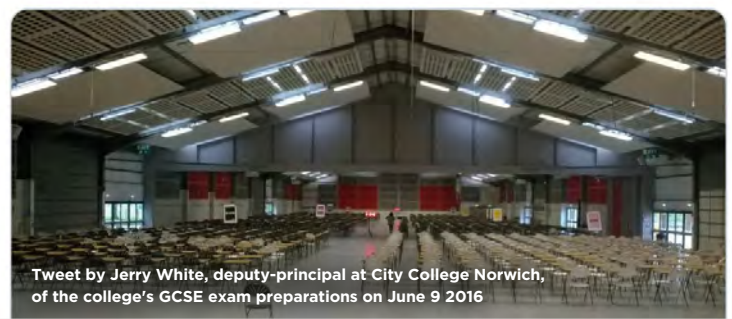
"Some students do gain a grade 4 or higher in GCSE English literature, but not in English language.

"In this case, the students are offered the opportunity to take English language even though they are not eligible for government funding.

"We do this because of the fact that English literature is not as widely

Jerry White
 @JerryWhiteCCN

Thank you @theshowground for providing us with venue again for @norwichcollege @CCNGEMSchool GCSE Exams.



Tweet by Jerry White, deputy-principal at City College Norwich, of the college's GCSE exam preparations on June 9 2016

Institution Name	Hybrid End Year	GCSE Type	Overall Cohort	Aims Achieved Grades A* to C	Achievement Rate % Grades A* to C	Aims Achieved Grades D to G	Achievement Rate % Grades D to G	Total Aims Achieved	Total Achievement Rate %
LEEDS CITY COLLEGE	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	2,560	210	8.0	1,890	73.8	2,090	81.8
SOUTH & CITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	2,340	180	7.7	1,450	62.0	1,630	69.7
ACTIVATE LEARNING	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,940	250	12.6	1,410	72.4	1,650	85.1
NCG	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,910	270	14.0	1,260	65.9	1,530	79.9
THE WKCIC GROUP	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,810	260	14.1	1,230	67.8	1,480	81.8
SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,500	120	8.1	1,060	70.4	1,180	78.5
BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN COLLEGE	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,460	230	15.4	1,050	72.3	1,280	87.7
HCUC	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,440	360	25.2	940	65.0	1,300	90.2
COLCHESTER INSTITUTE	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,310	100	7.5	1,000	76.0	1,100	83.5
CHESHIRE COLLEGE SOUTH AND WEST	2017/18	GCSE Mathematics	1,240	140	11.0	830	66.8	970	77.8

Students retake GCSE maths and English

Source: The Department for Education's National Achievement Rates Tables: 2017/18

Institution Name	Hybrid End Year	GCSE Type	Overall Cohort	Aims Achieved Grades A* to C	Achievement Rate % Grades A* to C	Aims Achieved Grades D to G	Achievement Rate % Grades D to G	Total Aims Achieved	Total Achievement Rate %
LEEDS CITY COLLEGE	2017/18	GCSE English	2,320	350	15.3	1,620	70.1	1,980	85.4
SOUTH & CITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM	2017/18	GCSE English	2,200	330	15.1	1,380	63.0	1,710	78.1
NCG	2017/18	GCSE English	2,150	480	22.1	1,180	55.1	1,660	77.2
HCUC	2017/18	GCSE English	1,830	550	29.8	1,100	59.8	1,640	89.6
THE WKCIC GROUP	2017/18	GCSE English	1,750	480	27.4	960	54.9	1,440	82.2
ACTIVATE LEARNING	2017/18	GCSE English	1,670	360	21.4	1,080	64.5	1,430	85.9
SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	2017/18	GCSE English	1,460	250	17.1	890	60.5	1,140	77.6
BIRMINGHAM METROPOLITAN COLLEGE	2017/18	GCSE English	1,350	420	31.3	740	55.1	1,170	86.4
NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE	2017/18	GCSE English	1,350	320	23.6	770	57.2	1,090	80.8
COLCHESTER INSTITUTE	2017/18	GCSE English	1,300	180	13.4	880	67.4	1,050	80.9

recognised for university entry compared to English language and it offers our students better progression opportunities.

"We have made this decision to benefit our students and give them the best opportunity to progress on to their chosen careers or higher education study programmes."

A spokesperson from the Colchester Institute said the reason behind its decision to enter more pupils into the two GCSEs was that the college found "the cliff-edge pass/fail in Functional Skills did not recognise progress, and was demotivating for those who did not

pass".

In 2017/18, 1,310 students re-sat GCSE maths with a 7.5 per cent A* - C success rate and 1,300 re-sat GCSE English with 13.4 per cent achieving grades A* - C.

"While the GCSE grading system has imperfections, it does at least allow us to demonstrate and recognise incremental improvement," the spokesperson added.

HCUC, a merger between Uxbridge College and Harrow College, entered the fourth and eighth-most students to re-sit GCSE English and maths respectively in 2017/18.

A spokesperson said: "Our intention is that students will be appropriately

stretched to support their progress, progression and aspirations through GCSE and Functional Skill pathways."

Moreover, a spokesperson from NCG, which has seven colleges across the country, told FE Week that the curriculum at each was "designed to respond to the needs of the students at each individual college".

"In some cases this does include entering students with a grade 2 for GCSE exams if their progression route requires them to have GCSE."

A spokesperson for BMet in the West Midlands added: "Like other colleges we believe it's important that all of our

students have access to GCSE maths and English and have the opportunity to re-sit their exams, which is why we have adopted this approach."

Figures for City College Norwich reveal that 1,200 studied GCSE Maths and 1,150 took English. When asked why more were re-sitting the exam than the government policy required, a spokesperson said: "In many cases, GCSE English and maths are the correct qualifications for their intended destination as they are widely recognised and understood by employers and often a formal entry requirement of Higher Education

providers."

The Association of College's senior policy manager, Catherine Sezen, said the reasons for entering students into the exams varied according to individual profiles: "For some, re-taking GCSE and improving your grade, even from a grade 2 to a grade 3, can be seen as a positive step in the right direction.

"For others, re-taking GCSE several times is regarded as a negative, demotivating experience."

She said "the jury is out" on how appropriate Functional Skills specifications are in meeting students' needs.



The fourth annual college league table

Which college has happiest learners and employers?

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Positive destinations for 16 to 18-year-olds?



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News

College to pay off loans debt for workers in subcontracting scandal

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Exclusive

A college will pay off almost £250,000 in loans debt for 59 victims of a subcontracting scandal.

FE Week revealed last week that the learners were being forced to repay thousands of pounds each for courses they did not complete.

Hours after the publication of the investigation, which found that many workers did not know they had signed up to an advanced learner loan or had never received any training, West London College agreed to pay the cost of the debts in full.

The courses were subcontracted to a private provider called Edudo, which collapsed in 2015.

The victims told FE Week how they had suffered from stress and depression over the past four years and said that all those involved had “washed their hands” of their cases.

Karen Redhead, who took over as principal of West London College in September 2018, said it was an “easy decision to agree to repay the income to the Student Loans Company (SLC)”.

“It is the right thing to do and the only thing to do under the circumstances,” she added.

“The people affected are hard-working construction workers trying to improve their skills and prospects. My mission now is to achieve this as quickly as possible so everyone can get on with their lives.”

FE Week put the learners and college in direct contact and has passed on 16

more names, in addition to the 13 this newspaper reported on last week.

At the time of publication Redhead said: “So far we have managed to make contact with 24 individuals and are in the process of having the loans cancelled.

“The amount being repaid so far is just over £100,000 and the total amount could reach just under £244,000.”

According to the principal, West London College’s records show that there were 59 learners registered on a short construction programme with Edudo, but none of the students had achieved the qualification.

Due to the high turnover of managers at the college, Redhead said “there is nobody remaining that could help me fully understand what happened in 2015”. She was “wholly reliant on the data and on the personal testimonies featured in FE Week”.

Redhead added that she believed the victims, concluded that they did not know what they were signing up for and listened to how the situation had prevented them from enrolling on other education and training programmes. It also caused problems for those wishing to take out other loans with their banks.

Marcin Tryka, 38, who claimed that contact from Edudo was cut off after one site visit, said the confirmation of the loan write-off was still sinking in. “I can’t believe it happened really... [after] four years.

“That was the biggest worry I had. This was the ultimate problem for me. The loan [was] just getting bigger and bigger.”

Tryka plans to start college again as soon as he has received documentation from the SLC confirming the debt has



been repaid. “I can finally get my NVQ somewhere,” he said.

Members of the group planned to meet up and have been trying to reach as many of the other victims as possible.

“I am blessed right now, thanks to [FE Week]. I would like everyone to [be the] same,” Tryka added.

A training provider can ask the loans company to cancel a borrower’s loan, provided it returns the funds it has received under that loan to the SLC and the learner has provided their consent.

An SLC spokesperson said: “Following communications from the college we can confirm that we have been asked to cancel the customer liability for these loans.

“The precise method of how this is done is being considered and the customers will be contacted in due course.”

Grzegorz Bogdanski, 34, who was being forced to repay a £5,421 loan, was the first to receive a call from Redhead last Friday notifying him that she had told the SLC that the college would repay the loans of the learners.

He said he was “so overjoyed it’s hard to describe its sensational feeling”.

Another victim, Roman Trela, 62,

said that “a heavy burden” had been lifted and Radoslaw Michalowski, 42, said: “Everything is sorted now. [FE Week] really helped us.

“All my family is happy. Everyone is happy.”

Many of the victims claimed they had been previously sent “in circles” by authorities.

Juliana Mohamad Noor, NUS vice-president (Further Education), said: “NUS is pleased the fees students have incurred have finally been refunded, however four years is too long to resolve these situations and can hinder other channels of education in the wake.

“It is critical providers have back-up plans when they decide to subcontract courses, to ensure students are protected in this instance, and for regulators and providers to work together so students have clarity on how they are protected in the event of

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provider failure.”

Redhead said that West London College’s arrangements for the management of subcontracting were “now robust, and have been for the last 16 months or so, following a change of senior leadership and management in that area”.

“We are otherwise making really good progress on financial recovery and I do not anticipate this repayment impacting on this progress,” she added.



Karen Redhead

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News

Campus-level Ofsted gradin

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

A move to campus-level Ofsted grades for college groups is back on the cards and they could be introduced as soon as next September, *FE Week* can reveal.

The education watchdog will shortly meet with college leaders to discuss the move and a consultation will be run early in the new year. If support for it is there, Ofsted will not wait for a new inspection framework to launch the change.

Campus-level grading was first mooted in 2017 but chief inspector Amanda Spielman ruled it out last year as the inspectorate needed "more granulated performance data".

Paul Joyce, Ofsted's director for FE and skills, has now acknowledged that data should no longer be a barrier, but affordability and resource might be.

Big college groups, including

the likes of NCG and Luminare Education (formerly known as Leeds City College Group), said they would support the move, stating that it would be more useful for students, parents and employers "to see separate reports for their colleges".

"College voices may not get fair representation in a single report"

Joyce revealed the plans during an *FE Week* event last week after he was challenged on the set-up of current inspection reports and the issues they hold for college groups.

Tresham College in Northamptonshire, for example, was awarded a grade four based on

an inspection in June 2016. On 1 August 2017 it merged with Bedford College Group and had its Ofsted rating wiped.

It still exists with its own website and Tresham College branding with its main "iconic campus on Windmill Avenue" in Kettering and a "modern £36 million Corby campus".

Tresham College campuses are 25 and 35 miles from Bedford College. Bedford College Group, including Tresham College, was inspected in September 2019 and received a grade two for overall effectiveness.

But the now very short report, which only has three pages of feedback, tells the reader nothing about Tresham's previous grade four, nor does it say anything that identifies provision at the college's two sites.

Just this week Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group was given the first grade one for a college under the new inspection framework. It was the first full inspection of the group since it was formed from a merger of Newcastle-under-Lyme College and Stafford College in 2016.

The latter was rated as "inadequate" at its previous inspection in February 2016, but the new report said nothing about the previous grade or about the



specific provision at the Stafford site.

A similar situation will occur for NCG. Among the seven individual colleges in its group are Lewisham and Southwark, which are London-based

and located 300 miles away from NCG's headquarters in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Asked what a resident in south London would find out about the quality of the learning experience at Lewisham



Paul Joyce

LTE Group

Despite being the college group with the largest income, the LTE Group only has one college: The Manchester College.

The group is a not-for-profit social enterprise that also encompasses two independent training providers – UCEN Manchester and Total People – as well as a commercial provider called MOL, and a prison education provider, Novus.

John Evans, vice principal at The Manchester College, said Ofsted should "distinguish between multi-site colleges like ours and groups which include several distinct colleges, often geographically dispersed and previously separate institutions".

"Common sense suggests inspecting the latter separately would lead to more useful reports when identifying the individual and relative strengths and weaknesses of each constituent college," he told *FE Week*.

"They probably serve different localities; therefore their responsiveness to different local economic priorities should be evaluated in inspection."

He added that a single inspection of

Number of individual colleges: 1
 Overall staff numbers: 3,227*
 Total income: £183,877,000*
 Current Ofsted grade: 2

a whole group of colleges, particularly given the "narrower range of judgments contained in much shorter reports", does not make differences in areas such as safeguarding and curriculum "clear enough to a reader looking for help in deciding whether or not to enrol at one of the colleges".

Evans said the LTE Group, on the other hand, comprises a number of "complementary" providers including just one college, which currently has nine sites or campuses. They all "share a curriculum responsive to the same local employment priorities, the same localised governance arrangements and broadly the same safeguarding challenges".

He added: "Our biggest challenge is ensuring provision is consistently high quality across every site, so inspection of the whole college makes much more sense."

NCG

NCG, formerly known as the Newcastle Colleges Group, is the largest group in terms of the number of individual colleges.

Its divisions include Carlisle College, Kidderminster College, Lewisham College, Newcastle College, Newcastle Sixth Form College, Southwark College and Lewisham College.

Liz Bromley, chief executive of the group, said her group would "fully support campus-based inspections" as they "will give our local learners, partners, stakeholders and employers important information about our colleges".

"We have been monitoring the early inspection reports with interest, particularly in relation to the changes in format, content and intended audience," she told *FE Week*.

"The curriculum-based focus is welcome, and appropriate, even though it presents a challenge to a college group such as ours. We are concerned that our college voices - with their variation in

Number of individual colleges: 7
 Overall staff numbers: 2,399*
 Total income: £158,234,000*
 Current Ofsted grade: 3

scale and size - may not get fair representation in a single, brief, group-level report.

"We are delighted to have the opportunity to give our feedback directly to Ofsted through an AoC working group, where we will show both our support for the campus-level inspections and raise our concerns about the complexity of group-level reports."



Liz Bromley

Capital City



Roy O'Shaughnessy

The group is run by chief executive Roy O'Shaughnessy and encompasses three colleges – City and Islington College, Westminster Kingsway College and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London – spread across 11 sites in London.

It also runs an independent provider called Capital City College Training.

On the prospect of campus-level inspections, a Capital City College Group spokesperson said: "We have 11 main sites across five London

g on the cards for Sept 2020



Amanda Spielman

College in NCG's report under the new inspection framework, Joyce admitted that it would be "next to nothing".

Liz Bromley, chief executive of NCG, said her group was "concerned that

our college voices – with their variation in scale and size – may not get fair representation in a single, brief, group-level report".

Bedford College Group declined to comment on the potential move to campus-level Ofsted grading, other than to say it was "delighted to gain a group-wide 'good' status in our latest inspection".

"The problem is getting greater as more colleges merge"

David Corke, director of education and skills policy at the Association of Colleges, said his organisation was in favour of campus grades as they are "important for large college groups and multi-site colleges to be inspected fairly".

He added that Ofsted was now engaging with the sector through pilot inspections to "make sure that the model used to inspect and/or grade colleges is fair, proportionate and avoids

the prospect of limiting grades".

The idea of campus-level grades was brought to the table two years ago, and the prospect was heightened in August 2018 after the Department for Education (DfE) confirmed that it would introduce campus-level performance reporting from the 2018/19 academic year.

Government data now identifies a "campus within a college group" that is "no longer a separate legal entity".

While official achievement rate data is no longer a barrier to include campus grading under the new Ofsted framework, which was rolled out in September, the watchdog will probably have to gain extra funding from the DfE to make it happen.

A similar deal was struck in September 2018 for Ofsted to visit all new providers entering the apprenticeships market. The DfE handed over £5.4 million, which is being used until March 2020 to carry out as many as 1,200 two-day monitoring visits.

Joyce acknowledged that the problem of overall college group grades is getting greater as more and more colleges merge.

The DfE launched post-16 area

Number of college mergers, demergers and transfers in the period from 1993 to 2019

Source: Association of Colleges



reviews in September 2015, which have led to the number of general FE colleges in England shrinking from 241 to 193 as of April 2019, according to an "end of programme report" published by the government.

And data produced by the Association of Colleges states that there are currently 248 further education and sixth-form colleges in England, compared with almost 450 when colleges were incorporated in 1993.

College Group

Number of individual colleges: 3
Overall staff numbers: 1,474*
Total income: £111,987,000*
Current Ofsted grade: 2

boroughs that between them teach a wide range of courses and levels from culinary arts to construction, animal management to rail engineering, to over 24,000 students aged from 14 to 89.

"As such a complex organisation with so many students and subject areas, we feel that it's important that inspections can provide as complete a picture of college life – as well as adequately assessing the quality of teaching and learning – as possible.

"So we would welcome a consultation by Ofsted that looks into expanding their inspection regime so that it can provide much richer information to current and potential students, their families and all our stakeholders."

Luminate Education Group

Leeds City College Group changed its name to the Luminate Education Group this year.

Its divisions now include Leeds City College, Keighley College, Harrogate College, and Leeds College of Music. It also runs the White Rose Academies Trust.

Colin Booth, the group's chief executive, said campus-level inspections would be "helpful".

"Luminate Education Group would welcome campus-based inspections. Ofsted inspections provide feedback and help us to focus so that we can ensure that all our colleges and schools continue to improve," he told FE Week.

"We think that it would be more helpful for Leeds City College, Keighley College and Harrogate College if we were to receive separate Ofsted reports for each college. We also think that it would be more useful for students, parents and employers in Leeds, Keighley and Harrogate to see separate reports for their colleges.

"For education (or college) groups long term, we also think

Number of individual colleges: 4
Overall staff numbers: 1,265*
Total income: £98,588,000*
Current Ofsted grade:
Not inspected as a group yet

that it would be a good idea to receive short reports on how well the group is performing as a whole. This shouldn't be difficult – it could easily be based around how well we are supporting each college and school to improve."



Colin Booth

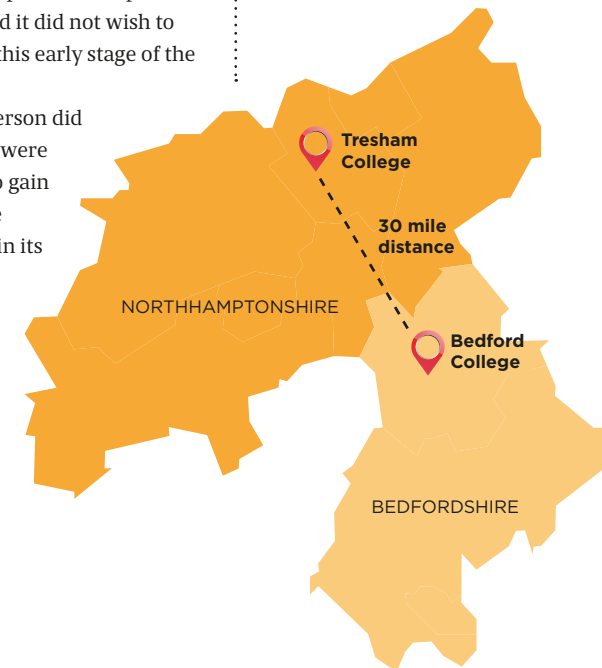
Bedford College Group

The Bedford College Group encompasses Bedford College, Shuttleworth College, The Bedford Sixth Form, and Tresham College. It also runs the National College for Motorsport.

When asked if they would welcome campus-level inspections, the group said it did not wish to comment at this early stage of the process.

A spokesperson did say that they were "delighted" to gain a group-wide 'good' status in its latest Ofsted inspection.

Number of individual colleges: 5
Overall staff numbers: 812*
Total income: £82,375,000*
Current Ofsted grade: 2



News

Highbury principal suspended and chair quits 'for the good of college, staff and students'

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

The principal at the centre of a college expenses scandal has been suspended.

Stella Mbubaegbu is no longer running Highbury College in Portsmouth following intervention from the FE commissioner, who has moved the college into "supervised college status" this week.

Tim Mason, the college's chair, is to step down and be replaced by a national leader of governance, while finance director Jonathan Cox is also understood to have left.

FE Week understands that an acting principal, chair and finance director will be appointed next week.

The FE commissioner was sent into Highbury by Department for Education minister Lord Agnew, who was "deeply concerned" after FE Week revealed that the principal had claimed expenses of



Tim Mason

£150,000 over four years, following a year-long freedom of information battle.

Included in the spending were numerous first-class flights, stays in five-star hotels, travel in luxury cars, a £350 bill – including a £45 lobster and nearly £100 on cocktails – at a Michelin-starred restaurant and a £434 pair of designer



Stella Mbubaegbu

headphones.

Last month Mbubaegbu, who was awarded a CBE in the 2008 New Year honours for services to further education, announced her intention to retire from Highbury in the summer next year.

A spokesperson was keen to stress

that Mbubaegbu officially "remains chief executive and principal of Highbury College" but said it would be "inappropriate to comment on an individual's status" when asked about her suspension.

In a separate statement, Mason said the commissioner had "indicated" that he will support the college to "strengthen our leadership and governance". He will be arranging for a national governance leader to chair the board "during this period of supervision".

"I have agreed to step aside and I welcome this intervention for the good of the college, staff and students," Mason added.

"I would like to reassure all staff that the FE commissioner, the board and the college leadership team are committed to providing a stable environment for our students and staff. I would also like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for your continued support."

The action comes a month after FE Week revealed that Highbury applied to the Education and Skills Funding Agency

for up to £5 million to replace "non-compliant" panelling which, according to the architects, "failed" a safety test.

The cladding at the halls of residence for students under the age of 18 is the same type as that used on Grenfell Tower in west London which caught fire in June 2017.

Highbury is also locked in a legal battle with a state in Nigeria and this newspaper last week revealed it has substantially lowered its expectations of recovering the £1.4 million it claims to be owed. Leaders believe they now have a "medium opportunity" of recouping just £872,000.

The 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 a previous valuation.

Leaders axed its sixth form and had to make staff redundant two months ago owing to financial pressures.

Highbury's Ofsted grade dropped from "outstanding" to "requires improvement" in June 2018.

Lecturer warned students of 'terror' attack in latest college hack

FRASER WHIELDON
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A Manchester sixth-form college has become the sector's latest cyber-attack victim after criminals hacked a teacher's email and used it to claim that the college would be attacked by Israel.

Learners at Loreto College received a series of messages late on Wednesday night and early yesterday morning, according to the Manchester Evening News.

The hackers wrote that the college would be closed today due to a gas leak and followed that up with an email claiming Adolf Hitler would be visiting.

The email read: "Hi students, in the upcoming week we will be receiving a visit from the man himself, Hitler.

"This is why we emailed as a gas leak, as we are unsure of his mental status, as a precaution. Please bring a gas mask in, just in case he tried

anything dodgy, thank you. Sincerely, Blue Power Ranger."

Another message said that, because of a visit to the college from Palestinian representatives, Israel had designated the Roman Catholic institution "part of a terrorist premises" and said "an attack is imminent".

"We are working with the police and college network team"

The college has since released a statement saying: "The college is aware that, overnight, emails have been sent to students from a currently unknown source.

"We are working with the police and college network team to identify the source and address the situation.

"We apologise for any distress or upset this may have caused. Please be reassured that we are taking this situation very seriously. College is open as normal."

Greater Manchester Police was contacted for comment.

This is the latest in a string of cyber-crimes committed against colleges. In September, criminals accessed the details of students and staff at Swindon College, which led to the college's website and phone going offline.

The same month, South Staffordshire College's IT system was successfully targeted by an "ethical hacker" who sent out internal emails which had allegedly been doctored to include a racist word.

Fraudsters hacked into the email of Chris Nattress, principal of Lakes College in Cumbria, to try and trick people into transferring money in a phishing scam.

The ESFA put out cybercrime advice in August telling providers



to employ firewalls, data back-ups and to train staff in verifying email senders to protect themselves against cyber-attacks.

A member of the National Cyber Security Centre wrote in FE Week

that "devastating" cybercrimes could be rendered less likely to succeed if providers led from the top, supported technical teams and tested their preparedness for a cyber incident.

'Derisory' 1% offer prompts threat of more staff strikes

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The University and College Union has threatened more strike action in the new year after the Association of Colleges recommended that its members offer staff a 1 per cent pay rise this year.

After meeting on Monday, the union said the "derisory" offer was tantamount to a "breach of faith" as the AoC previously acknowledged that staff deserved more and campaigned alongside them in calling for additional funding.

Andrew Harden, the UCU's head of further education, said the offer was



David Hughes

"simply inexcusable" and would "rightly anger staff", especially after the chancellor Sajid Javid announced that colleges would benefit from a £400 million boost for learners aged 16 to 19.

He added: "It sends a clear signal to staff that they are not being prioritised, which threatens key relationships at precisely the time when the sector needs to work together."

AoC chief executive David Hughes called the chancellor's boost a "welcome start to redress the decade of cuts", but the AoC had calculated that a little less than half of the money will end up with colleges next academic year.

The association expects

colleges to have funding allocations for 2020/21 by the end of March 2020 and it has promised to accelerate a pay recommendation for the following academic year.

"We agree that college staff deserve better"

But "to do so any sooner would be reckless given the financial stress colleges find themselves facing".

Hughes said that decisions regarding pay "never come easily" and described staff as the "backbone of our institutions – transforming the lives of millions each year".

He added: "We have been

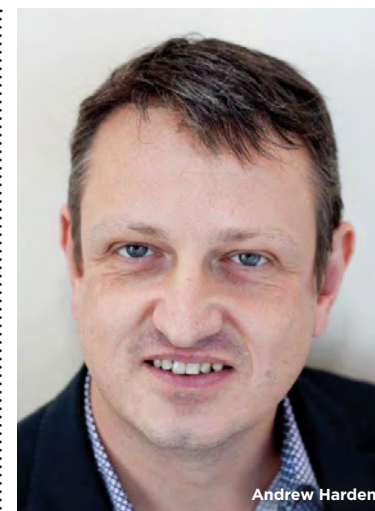
consistently clear that colleges want to do much better on pay but have been stymied as the cuts of over 30 per cent have put colleges under severe financial stress.

"We agree that college staff deserve better and will continue to campaign with trade unions, students and stakeholders to push the government for additional investment so that they can be properly rewarded."

Harden believes that closing the £7,000 pay gap between school and college teachers must be a priority. The union said staff were already struggling to pay rent and had been forced to use food banks.

A 1 per cent offer, the union added, would only widen that pay gap after school teachers were awarded a 3.5 per cent pay rise in 2018.

Strike action has proven an effective strategy for UCU members looking for a pay rise: Capital City College Group



Andrew Harden

agreed to a 5 per cent increase for staff this month, despite the fact that it would plunge the provider into its third consecutive annual operating deficit.

In March, a strike at New College Swindon was called off after it agreed a 2 per cent pay increase.

Lambeth College agreed a 3 per cent rise with staff in May, plus additional leave and a reduction in teaching hours, following ten days of strike action.

And a deal at Hugh Baird College in Bootle earlier in the year saw staff receive a pay rise of up to 6 per cent plus five extra days of annual leave.

Advertorial

A new chapter for NCFE – promoting and advancing learning



By David Gallagher

The world doesn't stand still – this, we know. With advances in technology, the human race now has more information readily available at its fingertips than ever before and the digital revolution shows no signs of slowing down. Add to this, a political climate of unrest where the Brexit impasse continues and now a general election planned in before Christmas, 2019 has been far from dull!

For the past 170 years, NCFE has thrived as a not-for-profit organisation, helping to promote opportunity and social mobility through learning, ensuring that people from all walks of life have the means to achieve their goals. In this time, we've seen a lot of changes, in the education sector and the world at large, but also from within our own four walls.

In 2019 alone, we worked with over 3,000 organisations, issued almost half a million certificates to learners, provided more than 8,000 learners with the opportunity to progress to higher education, launched 50 new qualifications to market, achieved a 99% pass rate for the 1,100 apprentices who completed End Point Assessment with us and much more. That's not to mention being selected by the government as the

delivery partner for the Digital Business Services, Digital Support Services, Health, Healthcare Science and Science T Levels, supporting the FE sector to deliver these new pathways from 2021.

It's of huge importance to us that we continue to expand our reach into new and growing market sectors in order to make a difference to more lives and to ensure we have a positive impact on life chances. Creating these life chances is our reason for being and it's why we all come to work every day – driven by our core purpose to 'Promote and Advance Learning'.

Our history is something that we're proud of and we're keen to use our 170 years of experience to the benefit of the education sector and our learners. But we're also delighted to stand at the forefront of technical education (hopefully for the next 170 years!), ready to support the sector in a time of great change.

It's with this in mind that earlier this year we launched our #FullyFunctional campaign. The campaign is designed to encourage the government to fund alternative qualifications to GCSEs for those learners who achieve grade 3 (equivalent to grade D). We believe that changing the current ruling would increase the proportion of learners who improve their attainment by the end of their 16-18 studies. It's an ask that has been widely applauded by the sector so far, as well as the general public, with 70% of those surveyed agreeing that young people should be given the chance to learn in a style which suits them.

NCFE has always championed the importance of rigorous technical alternatives, based upon the principle that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to learning. As one of the UK's largest awarding organisations, you may already be aware that we design, develop and accredit a wide range of qualifications.

What you might not know is that within our remit, we're also proud to house a number of other services to support the sector. Skills Forward is now part of the NCFE family – one of the UK's leading assessment and diagnostic software solutions for the successful delivery of Functional Skills and GCSEs, as well as the development of employability skills. We are also a successful End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), guiding training providers and employers through the full apprenticeship journey to ensure that their candidates are ready to successfully complete and achieve their apprenticeship.

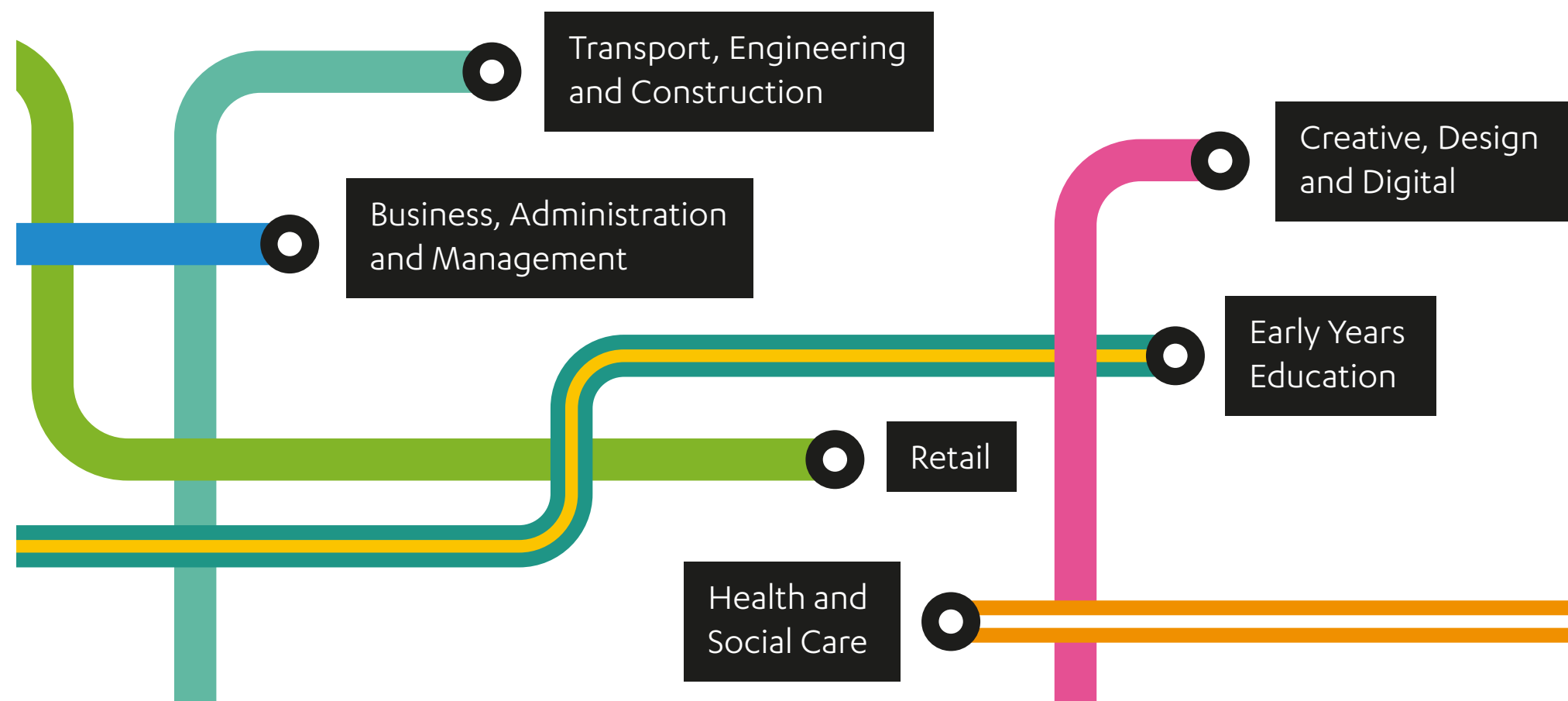
It's undoubtedly an exciting time to be leading NCFE. I'm inspired by our core purpose which will see us constantly reinvest into the development of high quality educational solutions, supported by innovative resources to expand our product portfolio and create a wider range of choice for learners, in line with the changing requirements of the economy and society. As we head towards 2020, we look forward to supporting more people onto the next step of the ladder in their own personal learning journeys, no matter what their goals or aspirations.

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We're as committed to your learners' success as you are, which is why we've designed subject maps and guides. They support your curriculum planning by helping you to plot the best routes to success for your learners.

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- plot routes for your learners at different levels
- find key details for each qualification, to support your decision making
- identify which qualifications are eligible for UCAS or Performance Points
- find out about the resources available from NCFE and third parties, helping your teaching and delivery

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News

Small business fury over Hadlow administration

FRASER WHIELDON
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Exclusive

“The b***ards” was the reaction of one of many small businesses owed thousands of pounds by the first college to go into education administration.

Albion Fencing and Construction is one of 300 creditors awaiting a total of £40 million by Hadlow College, according to administrators BDO’s statement of proposals.

“It could not come at a worse time for us”

Albion in particular is owed £12,000 for decking and outdoor furniture at Betteshanger Visitor Centre near Deal in Kent, part of the Betteshanger Sustainable Parks project that Hadlow is selling after going into administration in May.

Manager Vicky Harris said she “did not expect in a million years it would go into administration and we would not get paid for the work we have done, especially when the project was almost finished”.

She says she feels “very let down” by the “b***ards” as it is “an awful lot of money to us”.

Albion has only just recovered from when the Kent amusement park Dreamland went into administration in 2016 and Harris predicts that it will take a year for the company to recover if Hadlow does not pay up.

“It could not come at a worse time for us,” she said, as business has slowed down in the county.

The government is another target of business anger. Adrian Cross, managing director of electrical contracting firm Gilbert and Stamper, said Whitehall ought to be “doing more”. It seemed strange to him that “the college can continue to run and dump all its debt”, including the £22,000 that he is expecting.

Steve Finch, finance director for Cambridge HOK, which constructed a £1.5 million glasshouse for Hadlow and is owed over £145,000, said he feels let down. “Our frustration comes from the fact legislation [meaning colleges could become insolvent] changed between us signing the contract and completing it,” he said.

Finch believes his prospects of being paid depend on whether whichever college takes over Hadlow wants to use the glasshouse for provision.

The Department for Education is the largest creditor. It is owed £10.8 million by the college, which will also have to fork out over £2 million for the costs of the administration process.

BDO has billed the DfE for £627,407 for a total of 3,208 hours’ work. This is an average of £196 per



hour, although BDO partners charge £320 per hour.

The accountancy firm estimates that this will rise to £1.1 million by 24 April 2020, plus a further £1 million for four property agents, three law firms and a specialist insurer.

The college even owes Ofsted £1,561 for an annual routine fee for the inspection of the college’s residential provision.

Beforehand though, there is the small matter of a £5 million secured loan from Barclays Bank which the college needs to pay back.

Were this a normal administration, property could be sold to pay back creditors; however, education administration carries a “learner projection objective”.

This means that BDO believes it is “uncertain” whether creditors will be paid back, as “the majority of the assets of the college are designated to be for educational purposes”.

One debt which is not affected by education administration is the £9 million debt to the pension scheme, the second largest creditor on the books.

BDO has said that it has been “advised that staff accrued pension rights will be unaffected” by the administration process and any subsequent sale.

A spokesperson for BDO declined

to comment on the specific claims of creditors but said it was working with the college’s interim principal Graham Morley and his team to “ensure the college continues to operate as normal”.

Morley was brought in to run both Hadlow and sister college West Kent and Ashford College, which is also in administration, after principal Paul Hannan and deputy principal Mark Lumsdon-Taylor resigned.

“Legislation changed between us signing the contract and completing it”

The Insolvency Service confirmed this week that it was investigating the “conduct of relevant personnel in the period leading up to the onset of insolvency”. This would probably include Hannan, Lumsdon-Taylor and former chair Theresa Bruton, who left around the same time.

The FE Commissioner report published in May said that Hannan and Lumsdon-Taylor “regularly made

decisions themselves outside of executive and any open discussion – and reacted strongly to questioning or challenge”.

Among a number of concerns with data and land transactions, it has also been alleged that Lumsdon-Taylor doctored emails from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to prove that he was entitled to claim extra funding, which he said had been agreed when Hadlow College adopted West Kent and Ashford College from K College.



Mark Lumsdon-Taylor (left) and Paul Hannan

been adjudicated upon.

The JEAs request that any creditors, who believe that they may have a claim, proceed with submitting a proof of debt form (as attached at Appendix 9) providing a detailed account of the sum owing to them as at the date of the Order together with details of any security held.

Distribution prospects for unsecured creditors are uncertain at this stage due to the following factors:

1. The majority of the assets of the College are designated to be for educational purposes and, as such, have a complex relationship with the statutory objective and open market value.
2. The majority of the College’s asset portfolio is likely to be necessary for the future educational provision delivered by the College to its learners.
3. Asset realisations are subject to both costs of realisation and what prospective buyers of the education provision offer to pay.
4. The costs of the Education Administration are payable in priority to the claims of creditors.
5. The costs of the Education Administration are addressed from the Grant funding that has been agreed to be made available to the JEAs by the Secretary of State for Education. The Grant funding has priority for repayment ahead of any distributions to unsecured creditors.

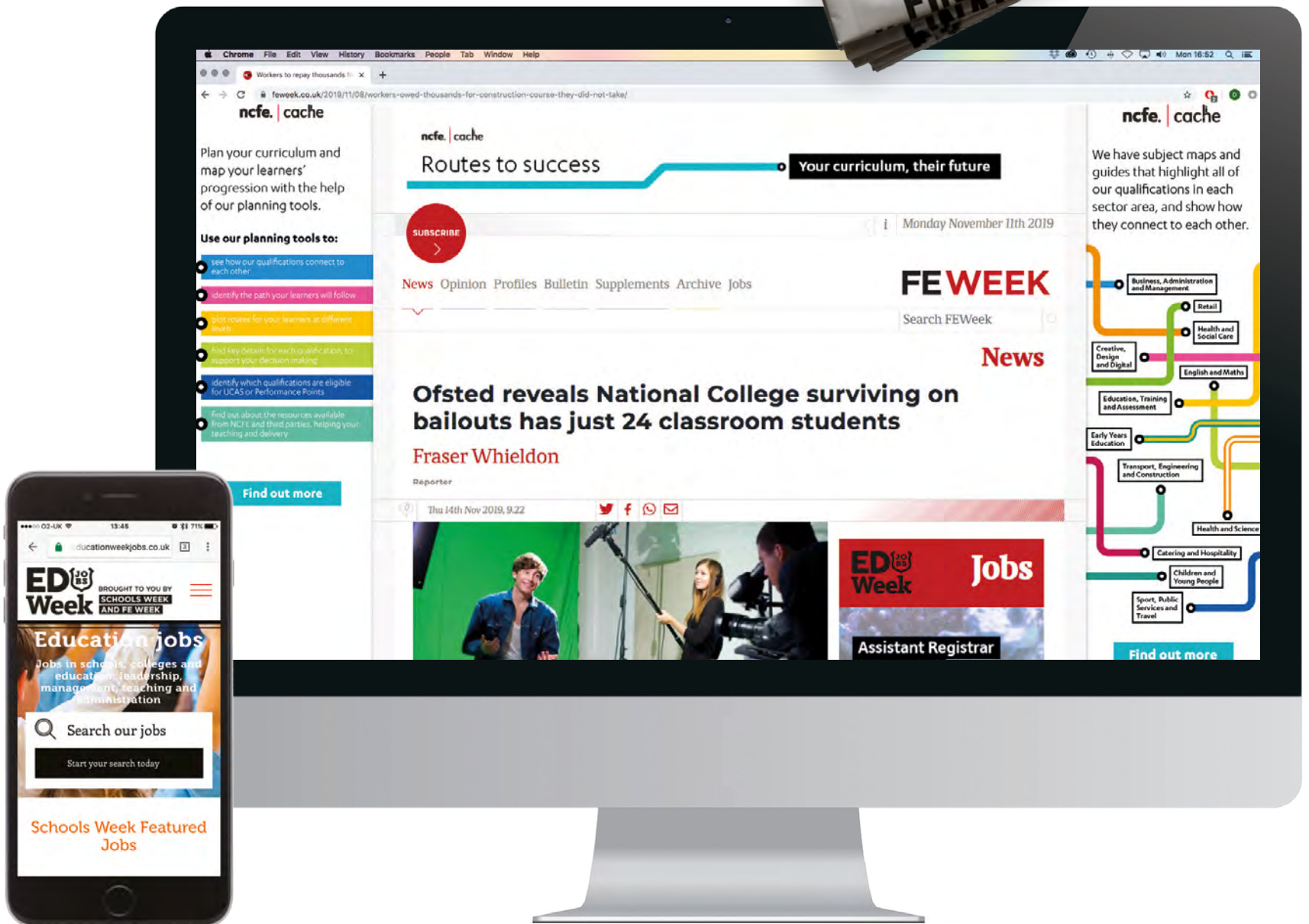
Disputed Debt

BDO has assessed the likelihood of creditors being paid back as “uncertain” because of these reasons

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Feature

The future of colleges: can

JL DUTAUT

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Technology has transformed further education. But at what cost, asks JL Dutaut. The history of edtech is after all a story of failures

Paul Feldman, chief executive of Jisc, further education's main technology body, wrote last month of the sector's role in addressing the demands of a changing world of work and the importance of technology in meeting the challenges (*FE Week*, 25/10/19). But neither Jisc nor the Independent Commission on the College of the Future (ICCF) that it supports are the first to consider them.

“Failure to grasp the systemic nature of technological progress was endemic”

In November 1982 Margaret Thatcher announced the creation of a technical and vocational education initiative (TVEI), the first major intervention in curriculum by a British government.

Its drive? Amid high youth unemployment and a changing world of work, “to improve our performance in the development of new skills and technology”.

TVEI was in effect for 14 years. It was

responsible for pushing forward the success of the BBC Micro computer; some credit it for the development of the UK's thriving animation industry. More than that, it is cited as an example of positive change management.

TVEI was implemented regionally. Local authorities were responsible for developing curricula that were tailored to local employment sectors, and they did this in partnership with educators and industry. It was a curriculum-led model focused on innovation, rather than an assessment-led model like the GNVQ policy that grew to replace it. It saw the advent of computer rooms in schools and staff training to make effective use of them.

Command and control

When I began my teaching career in an FE college in 2004, the media department was a far cry from one in which students worked on “industry-standard” technologies. Wrong hardware and software were just the start.

The popularity of the media courses secured us some investment, and before long we had two bespoke specialist computer suites. The impact on the quality of the learners' experience and the work they produced was immediate, but it wasn't sustained.

The reason? Redundancy.

Given the option of an ongoing investment – an operational expenditure – in the form of a favourable lease agreement (much like a mobile phone contract, and even including set-up and servicing), the college chose a one-off purchase instead.

Whether colleges buy or lease their technology is specific to each college



and each investment. No specific regulation prescribes how they spend their core funding in this respect.

Technically then, this was a leadership decision. It meant that the college could catch up with industry in costly lurches and spurts, but could never keep up at a steady pace. The assets depreciated at an alarming rate the moment they were purchased. Worse, rather than support learning, they quickly began to hinder it.

A catch-22 arose. Dependent upon their attractiveness to prospective students, the courses couldn't run without repeated injections of large capital expenditures. No capital, no students. No students, no capital. The victim, either way, was curriculum.

But it isn't quite right to place this at the door of college leaders alone. The Sixth Form Colleges Association's James Kewin notes: “As capital funding from government is limited to bricks and mortar, colleges have been forced to use their dwindling core funding to invest in technology.”

That core funding is based on lagged numbers, and consistently fluctuating per-student rates and programme

costs. If equipment is non-specialist, or a course is perennially popular, it's easier to make sustainable investment decisions, but this is much harder for specialist equipment and courses where student demand might fluctuate. Kewin states: “The uncertainty of year-on-year funding coupled with how low it is means it is very hard to be strategic about any of this.”

“There is an often unseen investment of time and energy by lecturers”

It is also an approach to technological investment modelled by politicians. The year we got our Mac suites, Charles Clarke, then education and skills secretary, demonstrated exactly what not to do when he announced a now broadly derided £25 million “investment” in

interactive whiteboards (IWBs) for schools. Gone was any pretence of change management. Failure to grasp the systemic nature of technological progress was endemic.

All the while, technology had nonetheless transformed leadership in other ways. Since 1997, the policy paradigm of Tony Blair's government had been reducible to one word: deliverology. Technology had empowered the collection of data for assessment and monitoring purposes on a previously unimaginable scale.

Today, it is dwarfed by the potential of big data, but by 2004 new practices had already emerged that still shape the sector. The summary judgment of classroom practice using tick-box proformas, for example, was already routine.

The monitoring of every aspect of lecturers' practices is one effect of technology that has been sustained. By 2016, among the top 20 contributory factors to teachers' workload in a major University and College Union (UCU) survey, five could directly be put down to the impact of technology, including the top-ranking, “increased

The
College
of the
Future

Edtech deliver its utopia?



looking for problems as much as the other way around – that Damian Hinds wrote in *The Daily Telegraph* last year: “With around a thousand tech companies selling to schools, it’s by no means easy to separate the genuinely useful products from the fads and the gimmicks.”

A year after Clarke’s announcement, a DfES paper entitled *Harnessing technology – transforming learning and children’s services* encouraged the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs). Moodle, an early platform, and still the one with the largest market share in the UK, grew exponentially in England’s FE sector.

Ofsted’s 2009 review of VLEs concluded that “there was no consistency”. In the colleges surveyed, Ofsted found “substantial duplication of effort”, a “waste of the potential of VLEs”.

Worse was the waste of teachers’ potential. Ofsted found no provider with a quality assurance system for its VLE; such arrangements were left to tutors and heads of department. The common factor in effective VLEs was “the enthusiasm of the subject teacher”.

Today, the VLE market is more diverse and the infrastructure and functionality greatly improved. But the same problems persist, and they do so across a much bigger field than simply VLEs.

The second edtech wave introduced a plethora of other start-ups and apps to simplify and gamify almost all aspects of teaching and learning. Each adoption represents a much greater investment than subscription costs – an often unseen and under-appreciated investment of time and energy by lecturers.

Meanwhile, with all the support and investment of leadership teams, the second wave also brought management information systems such as Capita’s UNIT-e. While technology to support teaching and learning has splintered into a baffling array of consumables of varying quality, tools to monitor every aspect of educational institutions have concentrated and sharpened.

The third wave

Before ICT was cool, the initials didn’t stand for information and communications technology but for information and control technology – the DES referred to it as such in its 1981 pamphlet, *The School Curriculum*. That pamphlet would ultimately

shape Thatcher’s 1982 announcement.

In a sign that the shift hasn’t quite happened, the pamphlet uses the same language of curriculum as Ofsted’s newest framework, some 38 years apart – fundamental values, intent, implementation and impact (or synonyms thereof).

By and large, since 2010, governments have stopped the centralised control of edtech. It may be a welcome respite for the sector, but a lack of leadership can be just as problematic and the market pressures on the profession have continued.

Only a year ago, Hinds published a workload review that, while admonishing leaders to “ditch email culture”, also urged technology companies with a £10 million bait to innovate ways to reduce teacher workload.

“The third wave is already barrelling over the education sector”

As politicians still play in the receding waters of the first wave, with the crash of the second wave still in the distance, the third is already barrelling over the education sector.

With big data and algorithms, eye-tracking goggles and attention-monitoring headsets, facial recognition and body cameras, and exponentially more powerful tools to “personalise learning”, deep ethical concerns should give pause.

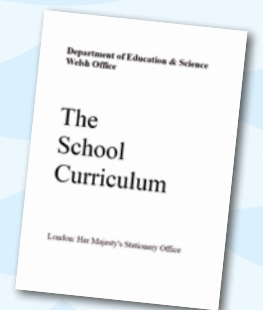
Published today, the ICCF’s progress report states that edtech “will require a radical shift for colleges away from course delivery towards a more personalised service”. If it is to avoid the crystal-ball gazing and Silicon-Valley utopianism that have become clichés of policymaking in this area, it must consider these successive waves and the emerging patterns in the sand as they recede.

Dystopias are just as likely as their idealistic opposites, and the unsustainable toll that the first two waves have wrought on the profession suggests they may be even more likely. The human-centred education that Paul Feldman is calling for may just have to start with teachers, and rebuild an ethos of change management.

EDTECH TIMELINE

1981

The school curriculum report



1982

Margaret Thatcher, BBC micro



2004

Charles Clarke, interactive whiteboards



2005

Harnessing technology report



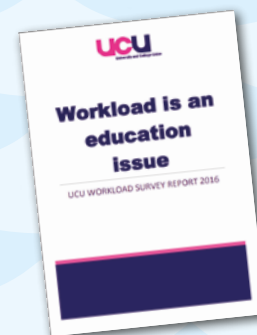
2009

Ofsted on VLEs



2016

UCU workload survey



2018

Damian Hinds “ditch e-mail culture” and “£10m for EdTech to solve workload”



administrative work”.

The major selling point of the first wave of technological ingress into education had been the streamlining of workflows. Instead, where any time was saved, new tasks had filled the gaps, made possible by a technologically empowered managerialism and evidenced by swelling email inboxes. The second-most cited cause of workload in UCU’s 2016 survey: “Widening of duties considered within my remit.”

There’s an app for that

If the first wave of edtech was characterised by placing terminals in front of teachers and plugging them into the zeitgeist of an industrial revolution that required the sector’s response, the second wave can best be understood as an era of loosely supervised free play. It is a shift with which policymakers are only just getting to grips.

It was at the BETT show in 2004 that Clarke announced his IWB policy. It was with reference to the same event – a buzzing marketplace of solutions

News

High-profile college leader to retire

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The veteran leader of a high-profile college has announced his intention to retire after more than 11 years at the helm.

Lowell Williams, one of the government's national leaders of further education, will step down from his role as chief executive of Dudley College of Technology in January to "follow new opportunities".

He will be replaced by the college's current principal, Neil Thomas.

Dudley College was graded 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2007 but achieved an "outstanding" rating in March 2017 under Williams' leadership. It also secured government backing to create one of the first 12 institutes of technology this year.

He will be retained as a strategic advisor to the college's corporation until Easter 2020, to help oversee the transition.

Williams said it had been "such a privilege to work here" and "I will never forget my time at the college".

The 57-year-old has worked in the FE sector for nearly 35 years. Prior to joining Dudley, he was curriculum manager at Northampton College before becoming deputy principal of Stephenson College in Coalville, Leicestershire, and then principal of South Leicestershire College.

He joined Dudley as its leader in 2008. His only notable hiccup came this year when he apologised after an audit exposed data errors that resulted in more than £500,000 being paid back to the government.

He later called for all colleges to receive greater support in navigating the government's increasingly complex and high-stake audit system.

Williams told FE Week: "When I first became a principal nearly 20 years ago there was the opportunity to learn on the job, but you were not in nearly as heightened and pressurised an environment as we're in now.

"You had less complexity in an environment of more support. When things didn't go right immediately, you had a chance to develop into the role. The role for new principals now, particularly if they are not experienced

or don't have support networks around them, is really quite difficult and dangerous.

"You now answer to so many people on so many fronts that it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to get everything right all the time."

Asked what advice he would give to new college principals, Williams said: "My one overriding advice is, don't think you've got all the answers. Reach out to every single network you can for support.

"Don't put yourself in isolation – it is fine to talk to the college down the road, it's fine to share your anxieties and problems."

Following Williams' departure, Dudley College said it will be appointing a chief operating officer to work alongside and deputise for Thomas, as well as a new vice-principal.

"The further education sector continues to be an extremely challenging arena in which to work, but Neil has proven over the years that he has the resilience, skills and ability to deliver successful outcomes



Lowell Williams

for our learners," Williams said.

"It's great that a local Dudley boy gets the chance to run this amazing college and to serve his local community."

Thomas said he was delighted to be taking up the reins at a college he has worked at for over 10 years and "which I love and feel so passionate about".

Williams told FE Week that he was

"not one for the golf course as such" and will continue his roles as chair of trustees of Dudley Academies Trust and chair of the Black Country Living Museum in retirement.

He will also be taking up a position as non-executive director of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, and may "continue doing collaborative work with the West Midlands colleges".

College surviving on bailouts has just 24 classroom students, Ofsted reveals

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A national college due to dissolve in the new year has just 24 classroom students, its first Ofsted report has revealed.

National College Creative Industries (NCCI) had told FE Week it was confident that it could attract 450 learners this year, before having to take a £600,000 bailout from the Department for Education to stay afloat last year.

Now inspectors have rated the once-vaunted flagship institution based in Thurrock, Essex, as grade three for its provision to the 24 learners and 81 apprentices.

A college spokesperson claimed that "many more" apprentices were due to start in the coming weeks, while an intake of level 4 classroom-based learners is planned for later in the year. They did not say how large these intakes would be.

Ofsted's report criticises NCCI's leaders for "not ensuring all learning

coaches have the skills and knowledge to coach apprentices to develop the skills they need".

In fact, a significant minority of coaches "do not provide good quality learning": they do not ensure apprentices know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, or that employers know how to help their employees link theory with workplace learning.

Leaders have not ensured that learners and apprentices can move on up to higher levels to further their career; so, learners on a level 4 professional diploma have no direct route to a relevant level 5 programme.

And, while the report commends governors for their relevant expertise and for challenging the leadership well, inspectors wrote: "They do not always ensure the actions undertaken improve the quality of apprenticeship provision quickly enough."

However, Ofsted rated some areas of the college as "good", including the quality of education, where leaders and managers make sure apprentices and learners "significantly improve" their

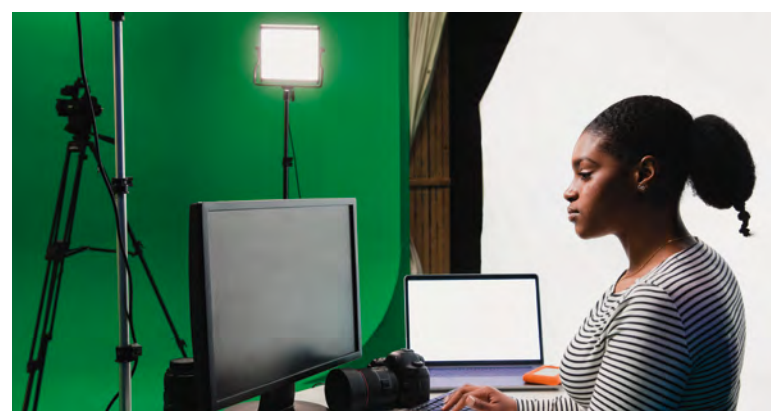
technical skills and develop a good knowledge of health and safety in their workplaces.

Learners came in for particular praise, with inspectors noting they were "keen to learn and have a desire to produce work to their very best ability".

NCCI interim principal Sue Dare said she was "pleased" that Ofsted highlighted those areas NCCI "does really well: the development of good technical skills and knowledge for careers in the creative industries; excellent industry links and networking opportunities; and a strong focus on career progression in to the creative sector".

But she recognised the inconsistencies identified by inspectors and said the college had established "more robust processes" to ensure these were addressed in the future.

The report is NCCI's first and is likely to be its last, as it is planning to move away from teaching by dissolving in January and setting up as a limited company to license apprenticeship provision to Access Creative College and both classroom learning and the



running of its production and rehearsal venue to South Essex College.

A final decision on the proposal is due to be taken by the college's board next month with the decision being made public soon afterwards.

On top of the £600,000 bailout, NCCI has also benefited from a £1.25 million working capital loan from the DfE, £745,000 of which was paid out during 2017-18. The remaining £505,000 was drawn down in 2018-19.

NCCI had an overall income of £1.3 million in 2017/18.

Only one other national college

has had an Ofsted report published: Ada National College for Digital Skills scored a grade two.

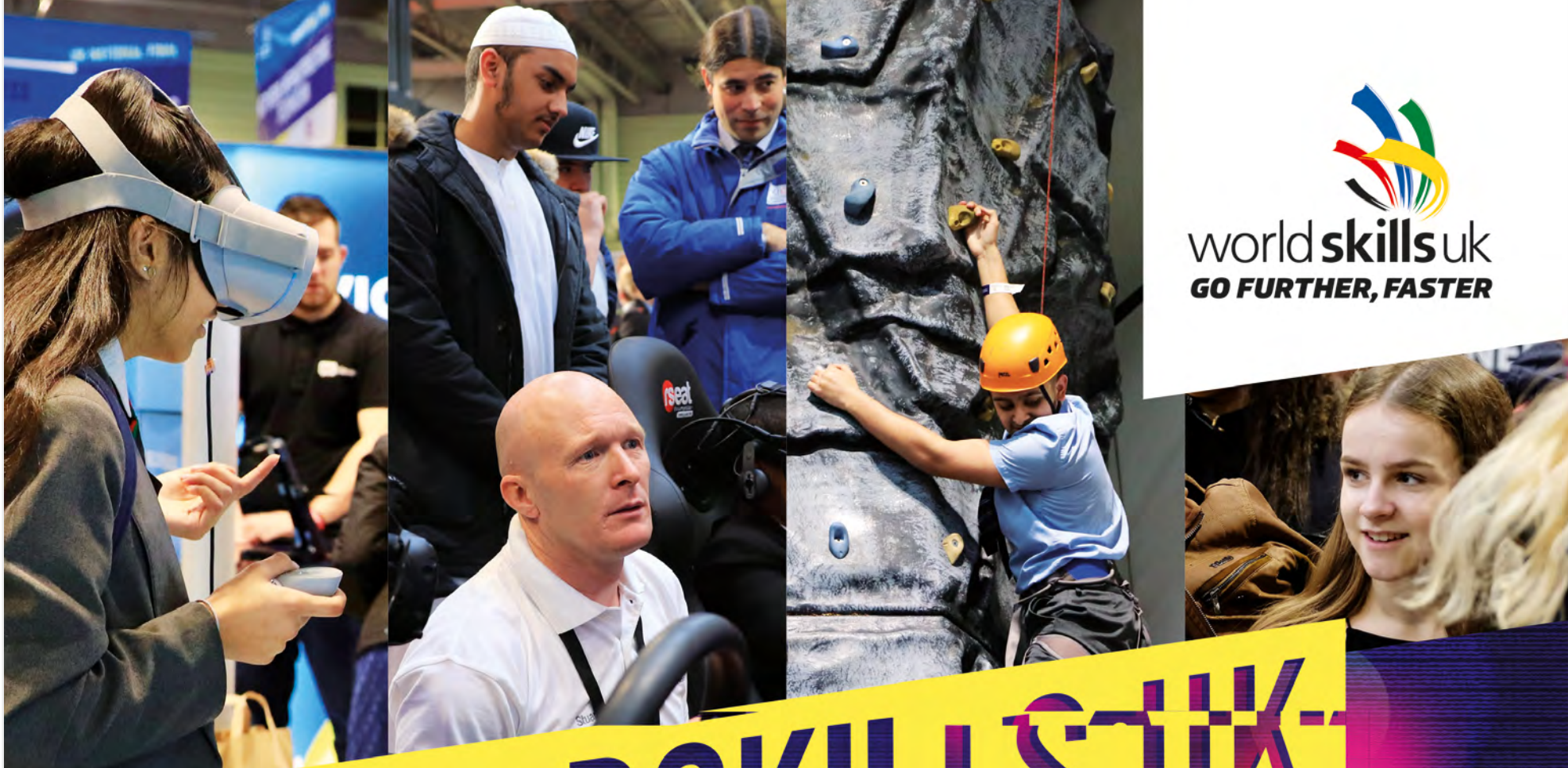
The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure is listed on the website but has not had a report published.

The college is currently undergoing a rebrand from the National College for High Speed Rail, after it needed a £4.55 million bailout from the DfE to sign off its 2017/18 accounts.

The DfE, which has sunk £80 million into the colleges, launched an evaluation of the scheme late last year.



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Profile

Introducing...

ALI HADAWI

Principal, Central Bedfordshire College

JESS STAUFENBERG
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK**Ali Hadawi left FE for business. But as the principal of Central Bedfordshire College tells Jess Staufenberg, something just didn't feel right**

Ali Hadawi tried to leave teaching once. It didn't go well.

He was in his third job in FE after starting off as a lecturer at Sheffield Polytechnic (as it was then) during his PhD before moving to Peter Symonds College in Winchester as a computing lecturer. At 30 he became head of computing at Barton Peveril College in Hampshire. "That was my first go at management. But after a few years, I had at the back of my mind that education wasn't really my destiny. I wanted to be out there in industry as a computing engineer. So I went to see the principal..."

And therein lies a story.

Things were going well for Hadawi, who had left Iraq to study briefly in the UK, but were already far from the original plan. Arriving in England at 18

and unable to understand English well, he had been expected home by his father within a few years. In his new language he gained A-levels at what is now South Gloucestershire and Stroud College in pure maths, further maths, statistics and physics. Then he won funding for a doctorate at Sheffield Polytechnic, now Sheffield Hallam University, in artificial intelligence neural networks.

"I missed the bit with students where their eyes light up"

"That was the point when my dad wanted me to go back. My argument was I've got this fantastic scholarship, can I finish that? And he thought, yes, why not." But circumstances again forced Hadawi's hand as, back at home, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, triggering the start of the Gulf War in 1991. Despite a "magical" childhood,

Hadawi says, "it wasn't wise to go back. It wasn't safe."

So there he was, 30 and a head of department in FE in England, and wondering if he'd made a mistake. Colleges had never been the plan. "Education wasn't on my radar as my career growing up. My father is a businessman. My two older brothers are engineers." He has four sisters, one of them a senior banker. Teaching was not in the blood. So he quit.

After all these years, Hadawi says he's never forgotten the conversation with his principal, Godfrey Glynn. "I went in to see him and explained that my aspiration in life was not to be in education, but in industry. And he said, 'that's a big jump, why don't you go away for a month and think about it'. So I did, and I came back and said 'no, I'm determined'. He said he'd give me a year's leave without replacing me, and after that I could write to him to say if I wanted to stay in industry. He removed all the risk for me. He was a great man. I've never forgotten it."

Hadawi wrote to Glynn after a year to say he wanted to continue as a computer engineer. But slowly, despite the better pay, something didn't feel right.

"By 2002, it just dawned on me that I wasn't really enjoying what I was doing. I was working across London, Dubai and Oman, and the technical



Studio photo with my big sister (now senior banker in Iraq) in 1966

aspect was interesting, but at the end of a project, I just didn't have that 'yes' moment. I missed the bit with students where their eyes light up."

Had Glynn anticipated this? Hadawi considers this. "Yes, indeed. Perhaps."

He began searching for jobs in FE. Why FE over schools? There is no hesitation. "There's something about FE. In FE you've got a lot of students who might not have the self-esteem or the right level of challenge and support at home. It's the age group I want to work with." He's also clear about the special expertise of staff in FE. "There's the aspect of dual professionalism. If you're teaching mechanics, you're a motor mechanic and a teacher. So that helped me a great deal, because I'd worked in industry and respected that."

In his next role at Greenwich Community College he improved the Ofsted grade for the maths, science

and technology department from 'inadequate' to high progress. By 37 he was vice-principal. He then spent five years as principal at Southend Adult Community College, galvanising a "demoralised" staff. "It got me really interested in the whole notion of people motivation and leadership."

In 2011, he became principal of Central Bedfordshire College. The same year, he received a CBE for his services to FE and for the successful partnership work he had done with FE colleges in Iraq. He was here to stay.

Hadawi is one of the calmest, most concise interviewees I've met. When we reach the point in his story where the college, having been graded 'good' twice, dropped to 'requires



Near the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon, (about 5 miles from modern day town), 1983

“Education wasn’t on my radar as my career”

improvement’ in 2018, I have rarely heard such a sanguine, scientific response from an education leader.

“I thought I’d be safe to experiment, and naturally with an experiment things don’t always work.” What was he trying to do? “We had built a system in the college in which everyone had to conform, with 100 per cent compliance. So if you’re a poor quality teacher, it raises you up to good. But if you’re a brilliant teacher, it dumbs your work because you can’t be creative.”

Hadawi wanted to give all teachers more autonomy, so he reduced the requirements for lesson plans and student reviews. “It was right to loosen out these requirements. The mistake was to treat everyone with the same level of autonomy. We were still

convinced about what we were doing and hadn’t picked up the signals in some areas it wasn’t working so well.”

Like any good scientist, Hadawi has turned to research to get the college

“We don’t tap into research to inform our practice”

back on track. His main blueprint is *The role of leadership in prioritising and improving the quality of teaching and learning in further education*, a report by Professor Matt O’Leary at Birmingham City University. It discusses “structured autonomy” – exactly the tricky balance

Hadawi wants for his college, and, indeed, FE as a whole.

As well as an ability to focus on small areas for improvement in telescopic detail, Hadawi can step back and look at the stars. I ask what FE needs. “Two things. The first is a properly formed sector voice – it doesn’t exist. It means that while we usually agree with policymakers’ intentions, the sector voice isn’t there helping decide how to do it.”

Isn’t that the Association of Colleges? “They are a voice in the sector. They’ve done particularly well on funding. But when we had T-levels, institutes of technology, university technical colleges, where was the

sector voice in actually creating that policy? The sector never really said, that’s how it should be done. We react once the policy is decided.”

But Hadawi doesn’t think any idea from the sector is de facto good.

“The second thing is research evidence. The issue is not just with policymakers, it’s with FE itself. Though there is this big body of research out there, we don’t tap into it to inform our practice. It’s not because we’re too busy, it’s because we’re not used to it. So we need to have a proper sector voice,

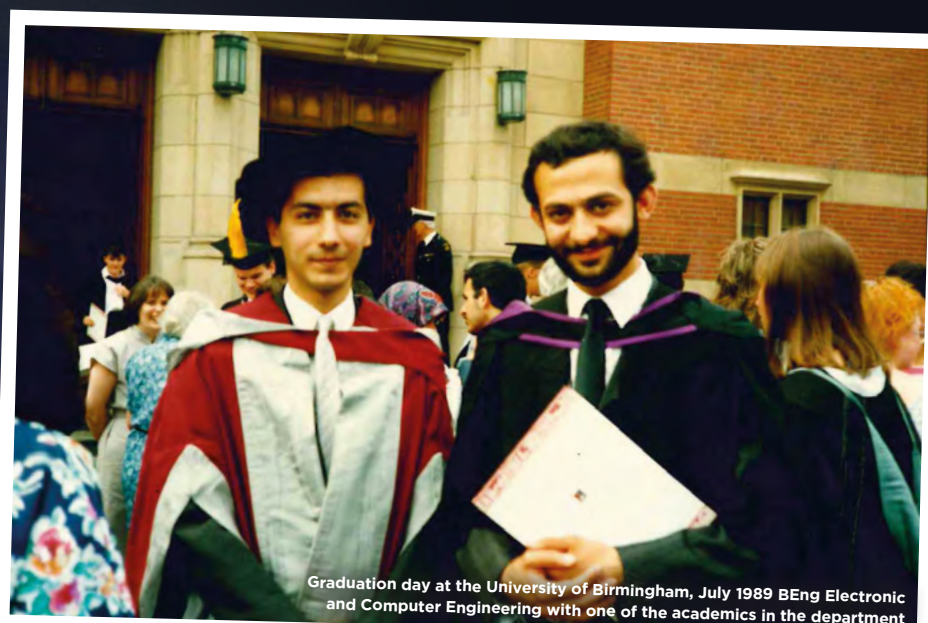
backed by research evidence, to take to policymakers.”

He points me to four places with a “great repository” of evidence on FE: the Association for Research in Post Compulsory Education, the British Educational Research Association, the Education and Training Foundation and the Learning and Skills Research Network.

You should set something up! I say.

Hadawi laughs. “When I retire.”

For now, this scientist and leader has work to do. Thank goodness he stayed in the sector.



News

Spend, spend, spend: parties prom

Tories pledge £1.8bn capital funding to colleges

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The Conservatives have announced plans to put £1.8 billion into capital investment for further education colleges.

In a speech in Coventry on Wednesday, party leader Boris Johnson said the rebuild programme would be part of a "skills revolution" and be introduced over five years.

"Colleges are a vital part of our education system, it's not just about university, it's about giving kids across our country the skills they need," he added.

A spokesperson for the Conservative Party said the "huge investment programme will make sure the entire further education college estate is at least category B ('good') condition".

They added that colleges will have to match the funding with 21 per cent – so, for every £1 invested by the government, "we are expecting an

average 21p college contribution".

The spokesperson confirmed that the £1.8 billion would be the government spend alone, and colleges "will have to work up robust plans to make sure the money is spent wisely".

The commitment comes after Philip Augar recommended in his post-18 education review that colleges should be given a £1 billion capital investment over the coming spending review period.

During his campaign for the Conservative leadership, Johnson promised to "do more to fund our amazing FE colleges". And, once he became prime minister, he said it was "vital" the government invested "now" in further education and skills. He promised to make this a "priority".

David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: "He was clear on his first day in office as prime minister that colleges are vital to our nation, and today he has backed that with a pledge to offer long overdue investment in their buildings and

facilities."

He said this would come as "great news" for the 2.2 million people who study and train in colleges each year and "who deserve the best facilities".

Ian Pryce, chief executive of the Bedford Colleges Group, tweeted to say this was a "good announcement, like many from the other main parties" but questioned why colleges should "be asked to contribute 21 per cent when schools contribute 0 per cent on same revenue funding".

"Can't help thinking we should have an election every year too as it's the only time we get promised more money," he added.

Neil Carberry, chief executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, tweeted to say colleges had a "capital splurge under Labour – it's the resources budget that needs addressing".

Johnson also pledged this week to ensure that a new shared prosperity fund would start in time to replace European social funding in April 2021,



Boris Johnson

to "help the most vulnerable people in our society".

"This will be our replacement for the bureaucratic EU system – it will ensure this funding continues to be spent on skills, but will be simpler to access and targeted at those who need it most to ensure that it works for this country," he said.

Hughes said he was pleased about this as the "EU funds have been effective in helping adults access the skills training they need to find work, and colleges have been central to delivering that".

He added: "A simpler, easy to access fund would be good news for colleges and for the adults they serve."

Does Corbyn's 'education escalator' still include adult ed?

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Labour's commitment to fully funding beginner and "second-chance" short adult education courses has been questioned, after the party left it out of their lifelong learning announcements.

In a speech in Blackpool on Tuesday, shadow education secretary Angela Rayner committed to enabling any adult without an A-level or equivalent level 3 qualification to attend college and study for them for free.

She also announced that a Labour government would scrap university tuition fees and give every adult a free entitlement to six years of study for qualifications at level 4 to 6, a return of maintenance grants for low-income adults, and a right to paid time off for education and training.

The plans, which would cost an estimated £3.17 billion annually by 2023, are based on the headline recommendations from the final report of the party's independent Lifelong Learning Commission.

A key recommendation in the report, but absent from this week's



Angela Rayner and Jeremy Corbyn

announcement, was that adults should have a "right upon enrolment to lifetime access to beginner and taster content, free of charge, whether at institution or system level".

Labour told *FE Week* that this recommendation, along with all others in the report, had not been dropped. A spokesperson insisted the party was continuing to work on incorporating them into its National Education Service, which will provide "cradle-to-grave learning that is free at the point of use".

But they could not say whether the proposal would be a manifesto commitment in this year's general election.

Rayner did, however, briefly mention the lower levels in her speech: "We will ensure every adult is supported to re-enter education, and we will give them the chance to gain the basic qualifications they need, whether that's at level 1, GCSE or through functional skills, so that nobody is locked out of work or other opportunities because they did not

succeed in education the first time."

Labour did not respond when *FE Week* asked if this meant the party has committed to offering all of these qualifications free of charge to adults.

Sue Pember, former director of FE at the Department for Education and now director of policy at adult education network HOLEX, said she has since been told that Labour's strategies were "for all, and 'we haven't forgotten those who need pre-entry and basic skills', but I would still like to see that written into a manifesto or two".

And David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, tweeted to say that Labour had confirmed to his organisation "that their proposals encompass more funding at all levels".

Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said that, given the scale of what Labour was proposing, it is "unlikely that it would be able to achieve all these objectives immediately, and it needs to be clear about its priorities".

Currently, only those aged 19 to 23 have their first full level 2 and 3 qualification fully funded. Labour would bring back full funding, at all ages, for both levels, as was recommended

by Philip Augar's review of post-18 education and funding.

As previously announced, Labour would also bring back the education maintenance allowance for sixth-form students.

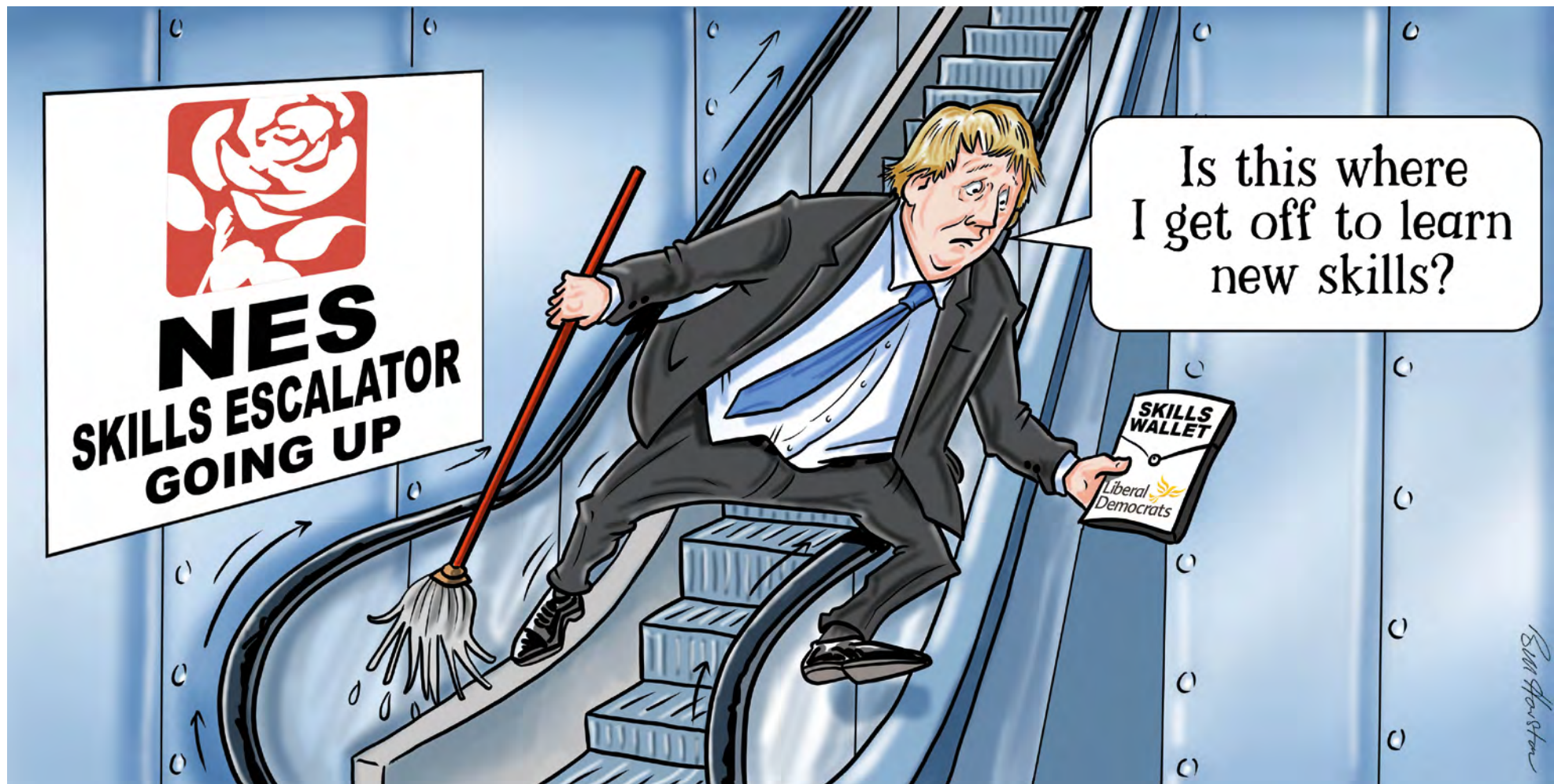
Taking inspiration from Robert Halfon's "ladder of opportunity" phrase, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said that he saw education "like an escalator running alongside you throughout life, that you can get on and off whenever you want".

He added: "That's what Labour's National Education Service will offer people – free education, as a right for all.

"I'd rather give a break to the worker who wants to learn than a tax break to the billionaire who wants for nothing. That's the difference between Labour and the Conservatives."

Labour has not said how it will fund these proposals, but the lifelong learning commission recommended that the party should "review the effectiveness of the current corporation tax relief in leveraging skills investment, and consider how tax relief might be extended to smaller employers – for example through research and development tax credits".

ise billions in bid to impress voters



Lib Dems pledge £10k skills wallets for adults

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Every adult in England should be given £10,000 to put towards education and training, the Liberal Democrats have pledged.

In what the party called a “new era of learning throughout life”, the cash would be placed into a “skills wallet” over a 30-year period. They would put £4,000 in there by the age of 25, another £3,000 at 40 and £3,000 at 55.

Under the plans, the Lib Dems said individuals would be able to choose how and when to spend this money on a “range of approved education and training courses” – but only those from regulated providers and monitored by the Office for Students.

The OfS currently only regulates higher education providers, and the Lib Dems’ announcement mentioned nothing about apprenticeships or other skills programmes.

Ian Pretty, chief executive of the Collab Group, expressed concern about this. “The reference to the OfS

here seems to imply that the focus of the allowances will be towards higher education courses,” he said.

“The fact remains however that, to really get to grips with our national productivity and social mobility challenges, we need to be doing a lot more to help individuals progress from levels 2 to 3, or from levels 3 to 4.

“It is unclear at this stage whether this policy will truly provide a mechanism for doing this.”

However, a Lib Dem spokesperson told *FE Week* that the party’s plans would include providing appropriate resource to expand the remit of the OfS to monitor a “range of providers and course types”, which are at all levels and not just in the higher education market.

This would “not mean that these providers would be subject to the same regulatory regime as universities – just that the regulator would be the same”. The Lib Dems have previously committed to abolishing Ofsted.

The party said the skills wallets policy would come in by 2021-22 and

would cost £1.9 billion a year in total by 2024-25.

It would be paid for by “reversing the Conservatives’ unnecessary and expensive cuts to corporation tax and return the rate to 20 per cent, where it stood in 2016”.

Individuals, their employers and local government would be able to make additional payments into the wallets. Access to free careers guidance would also be provided, according to the party.

The Lib Dems had planned to fund adults’ skills wallets with £9,000, as reported by the *Daily Mirror* in September. A spokesperson for the party would not say why the amount has now been upped to £10,000.

Sam Gyimah, the party’s business, energy and industrial strategy spokesman, said: “Working hard should mean secure work and a decent income, but for too many people that’s not the case. In an ever changing workplace people often need to develop new skills, but the cost of courses and qualifications shuts too many people out.

“Neither the Conservatives nor



Sam Gyimah

Labour have the answers to these challenges. They are stuck pursuing 20th-century policies that simply won’t work in our 21st-century economy.

“Only the Liberal Democrats have a real plan to build a fairer economy

and a brighter future. We will create a new era of learning throughout adult life with skills wallets for every individual, providing them with £10,000 to spend on education and training at various stages of their lives.”

News

ESFA bans 8 more providers from recruiting apprenticeship starts

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Another eight apprenticeship providers have been stopped from doing new business after being rapped by Ofsted.

The penalties were revealed in the latest update to the register of apprenticeship training providers, released today by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In accordance with ESFA rules, any new provider found to be making 'insufficient progress' in at least one area of an early monitoring visit from the inspectorate will be suspended from recruiting unless there are "extenuating circumstances".

The eight to receive bans after poor Ofsted performances are: Azesta Limited, Care-Ex Services Limited, Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust, E G S Nationwide Limited, Gower College Swansea, Kingswood Learning And Leisure Group Limited, New Model Business Academy Limited and South East Coast Ambulance Service

The full list of the 48 apprenticeship providers which have recruitment suspensions (as of 14 November):		
2 Sisters Food Group Limited	E.Q.V. (UK) Limited	Prospects Training International Limited
AAA Training Solutions Limited	Fresh Training Services (UK) Limited	Right Track Social Enterprise Limited
Agincare Group Limited	Gloucestershire Enterprise Limited	Rita's Training Services
Amdas Consultancy Ltd	Goodman Masson Limited	Securitas Security Services (UK) Limited
Arriva London North Limited	Gower College Swansea	SHL Training Solutions Ltd
Ashley Community & Housing Ltd	Havilah Prospects Limited	South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
Ashley Hunter Ltd	Hertfordshire Catering Limited	SSG Services (Est 2003) Limited
Azesta Limited	Home Group Limited	The Development Fund Limited
Azilo Training Limited	Kingswood Learning and Leisure Group Limited	The Sandwell Community Caring Trust
Biffa Waste Services Limited	Manatec Limited	The Teaching & Learning Group Limited
Bior Business School Limited	Matrix Solutions International Limited	Took Us A Long Time Limited
Care-Ex Services Limited	Mears Learning Limited	Total Training Company (UK) Limited
Catalyst Learning and Development Limited	New Model Business Academy Limited	University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust	Piper Training Limited	WDR Limited
Cogent Skills Training Limited	Premier Nursing Agency Limited	Wiser Academy Limited
E G S Nationwide Limited	Prospect Training (Yorkshire) Limited	YMCA George Williams Company

NHS Foundation Trust.

They are among a list of 48 providers that are currently suspended from taking on new apprentices, which is a reduction on the 56 bans reported by the ESFA in September.

Since then, 10 of the 56 have left the apprenticeships register altogether and

can no longer deliver the programmes in any capacity.

These are: Apprentice Assessments Limited, Care Training Solutions Ltd, JT Development Solutions Limited, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Moor Training Limited, Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, SCL Security

Ltd, The Academy Hub Ltd, The Business Portfolio (UK) Limited and Vortex Training Solutions Ltd.

And five of the 56 have had their suspensions lifted after achieving at least a grade three in a full Ofsted inspection, or found to be making 'reasonable progress' in safeguarding if

that was the only area that failed during their first monitoring visit.

These are: Contracting Services (education and skills) Limited, EMA Training Limited, JM Recruitment Education & Training Ltd, Medivet Group Limited and The Education and Skills Partnership Ltd.

Readers' reply



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GE2019: A chance to transform colleges

Do not, repeat do not, be taken in by competitive statements about enhanced funding. These are as "snow on a wall" and will disappear in the heat of competitive public spending demands, as previously.

However, look out for, or demand, structural review and shift producing permanent entitlement to funding equity, policy esteem, ie the creation of an effective, coherent dual system and incorporating progressive and enhanced vocational education.

But, good luck with that. What you are

getting are "noises off" rather than "change within".

Bill Wardle

Workers told to repay thousands for construction course they 'did not take'

On the face of it, this looks like an appalling case. The college and government need to act quickly to help those affected. And we need to ensure situations like this don't arise again. Well done @FEWeek for highlighting.

Stephen Evans

Conservatives pledge £1.8bn capital investment for FE colleges

I hope someone will explain how cash-starved colleges will find the 21

per cent investment they will need to make. Schools make 0 per cent contribution, so why are FE colleges being treated differently?

Ian Pretty

How will capital investment resolve the problems which lie at the route of the introduction of T-levels? Are we kidding ourselves that the answer lies in bricks and mortar?

Carol Stanfield

College WILL pay the cost of FE loans for victims of subcontracting scandal

Good news, common sense at last.

Angela Baskerville

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ofsted reveals national college surviving on bailouts has just 24 classroom students



When politicians talk about the importance of higher technical education and specialist institutions, we should all remember that we're not very good at either.

Andy Westwood



Perhaps rather than centrally planning such new institutions, which does seem to have a high rate of failure, government could recognise where specialist technical education providers already exist and design policies to support their expansion.

Alex Proudfoot



Yes, that might be a better option. Many (perhaps even majority) of existing higher education institutions and further education colleges have started as more specialist and have become less so over time. If governments want specialisation, then incentives need to be strong and sustained over time.

Andy Westwood

PRINCIPAL

TRURO & PENWITH COLLEGE



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The growth and success of our College since 1993 and our merger with Penwith College in April 2008 has been remarkable. Our inspection in February 2016 confirmed our Outstanding status as one of the leading FE colleges in the country. Our reputation is excellent.

Due to the retirement of our current Principal, David Walrond, after 17 years outstanding service including 10 years as Principal, we are seeking an exceptional candidate with significant senior management experience to lead Truro and Penwith College.

Our new Principal will lead a committed group of staff in ensuring we maintain our Outstanding status and ensures the College continues to provide the best environment for students to achieve their potential. If you have vision, energy, determination and commitment to achieve excellence at one of the most successful College's in the country we would like to hear from you.

Closing date: 12 noon Friday, 29 November 2019

Interviews: Week commencing Monday, 13 January 2020

Visit truro-penwith.ac.uk/work-for-us for an application pack and further details or contact us on 01872 267000

We offer a generous package with benefits including 37 days annual leave plus bank holidays and College closure days, teacher pension scheme, relocation package, free on-site parking and a variety of on-site benefits and discounts.

Truro and Penwith College is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people, and applicants will be subject to full employment checks including enhanced DBS disclosure.



POSITION: HEAD OF APPRENTICESHIPS

REFERENCE: D-60957419-02

CLOSING DATE: 24 NOVEMBER 2019

Contract Type:

Permanent,
Full-time

Salary:

To be set by Vice Chancellor in accordance with Senior staff pay, this will be dependent upon skills and experience (£66,186 – £81,399)

De Montfort University (DMU) is an ambitious, globally-minded institution with a relentless focus on delivering quality teaching and learning, and providing a sector-leading student experience.

A culturally rich university with a keen commitment to public good, we work hard to maintain a stimulating and inclusive environment where staff and students are able to thrive. The university is a multicultural hub of learning, creativity and innovation that never surrenders to convention. Our success is built on offering a fantastic students experience, award winning teaching and world class facilities that help students develop the skills and attitudes that employers demand.

This role will lead our Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HADA) team, which sits within the Enterprise and Business Services directorate. The team works closely with faculties, academics, students, external funding agencies, businesses and local authorities to generate demand for apprenticeships.

We are looking for an enthusiastic and innovative individual with a proven record in Ofsted and Apprenticeship regulations. You will be able to develop excellent and effective working relationships with colleagues across the university, as well as external stakeholders. You will lead the HADA team and develop systems, processes and a creative strategy in order to deliver on the university's apprenticeship ambitions.

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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...

- A passion and vision for the area you will lead
- High expectations and standards for learners and staff
- 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



Director of Management Information Systems

Competitive Salary dependent on experience Full-Time

Bishop Burton College is looking to recruit a new Director of MIS, the college offers provision from Foundation level to Masters. In addition to further education the college has a large higher education provision and successful Services to Business division which includes apprenticeships.

The role requires someone who has previous experience of working in further education, work based learning or higher education sectors. The ideal person will be highly numerate, have advanced IT, analytical and communication skills, is confident using a range of IT tools and will work closely with the senior management group to facilitate effective corporate decision making.

The role will require leadership of the Management Information Team, which includes admissions. There is an expectation that the post holder will work with the Director of Information Technology and the Director of Quality and Standards to ensure data is used effectively across the institution in a timely way.

Bishop Burton College includes the Bishop Burton campus in East Yorkshire, the Riseholme College campus in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire Showground campus and the post holder may be required to carry out duties at all campuses.

Benefits

- Excellent rural work environment
- Free car parking
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Closing Date 4th December 2019

No Agencies

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check will be carried out on the successful candidate. Bishop Burton College is committed to Equal Opportunities for all.



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 18th November. Interviews are expected to be held shortly thereafter.

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ANNA ROUND

Senior research fellow, Institute for Public Policy Research (North)



We should all back local control of skills, provision and funding

With manifestos being furiously written and further and adult education in the spotlight, national policymakers could be missing an important factor in getting sector policy right, says Anna Round

Manifesto authors seeking recommendations for post-compulsory education are not short of material. They might even be forgiven some weariness on hearing about yet another blueprint for reforming the skills system. But they would do well to put the interim report of the Future Ready Skills Commission, published last week, near the top of their reading list.

While many of its themes echo the existing literature – employer engagement, careers guidance, and the need for simplification of the vocational education landscape – these are set alongside some important fresh perspectives.

The most prominent of these is the second call within a week for greater local control of skills provision and funding. The Northern Powerhouse

Local Enterprise Partnerships grouping (NP11) also lists this among its “game-changers” in its Manifesto for the North.

In both cases, the vision for localisation goes beyond the relatively limited reach of the adult education budget to encompass “technical education” across the board. Economic development has long been a central rationale for devolution in England, and the stubborn centralisation of one of its essential inputs, human capital formation, looks increasingly odd.

The mayors of metro areas have made extensive use of their “soft” powers to drive developments, building on the effective partnerships formed under city and growth deals. The commission proposes a place-based logic to bring much-needed coherence to skills policy and provision. Labour market trends and opportunities vary considerably between and within regions: greater local control can facilitate agile responses, as well as linking communities and individuals to learning and work.

A localised approach also has the

potential to transform employer engagement, effectively positioning businesses as stakeholders in their local economies alongside learners and local government. Effectively managed, it can also resolve the issues that limit engagement by hard-pressed SMEs, and by potential competitors within key sectors.

“Devolution has the capacity to break down policy silos”

The report’s broad framing of “employer engagement” encompasses not only input into the design and delivery of provision, but factors such as collaboration to encourage good practice in building learning cultures and improving skills utilisation. This latter has long been neglected in English skills policy.

A major strength of devolution is

its capacity to break down policy silos, and this is especially important for skills. The report identifies crucial ways in which skills can be fully integrated with policy on housing, transport and the environment, as well as health, employment and work progression. And it touches on the need for a strong local dimension in the skills element of emerging local industrial strategies.

The interim report is clear that government and employers (with appropriate incentives) must invest in skills to a “sustainable” level and across the workforce. Alongside this, “affordability” for learners is highlighted; the cost of vocational learning should not be a barrier to entry. For people making the “leap of faith” to invest time and resource in vocational training, a localised skills offer and better affordability will help to make it a more attractive and realistic prospect.

Another key theme is the need for an excellent skills infrastructure, including strong institutions, a skilled and secure workforce, and appropriate facilities

for learning, especially advanced and specialised technical provision. Some of the proposed innovations will require new kinds of support; for example, local leadership will need powerful systems of data gathering and skills forecasting on which to base credible decisions about what does and doesn’t get funded.

Other intriguing directions include a boost for “fusion skills”, including “creative thinking, social skills” and entrepreneurship, as well as openness to lifelong learning. The report is explicit that these must be nurtured throughout the skills system, including academic and technical provision, and opportunities for learners with disabilities and others in danger of missing out.

The report is well-timed to influence national policy. Developed through a partnership of stakeholders, including local government, business and civil society, it exemplifies the local collaboration and capacity that will transform effective skills devolution from aspiration to reality.

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SHELAGH
LEGRAVEChief executive officer,
Chichester College GroupSimplify FE and put colleges at
the heart of their communities

What would you tell the leaders of the major political parties about needed policy changes in further education? The Collab Group has a few answers, says Shelagh Legrave

Recent government industrial strategies have identified skills as a key driver to improve productivity in the UK. Low-skilled workers, according to the OECD, place the country in the third quartile of nations, well behind major industrial nations.

FE colleges are central to the development of technical, professional and academic skills. More than 70 per cent of young people study at a college before progressing into apprenticeships, university or employment.

Yet, according to the Association of Colleges, there has been a 30 per cent real-terms cut in the funding for post-16 education since 2010. The number of adults taking training has dropped from 46 per cent in 2001 to

37 per cent in 2019. At the same time there are significant skills shortages in key industries, particularly related to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Dr Philip Augar, commissioned by the government last year to look at post-18 education, identified that £8 billion was spent on 1.2 million undergraduates each year while only £2.2 billion was set aside to fund 2.2 million adults to upskill and retrain.

Any future government should invest significantly in post-16 education. It would see a return in terms of productivity through allowing anyone, whatever age, to achieve their first level 3 qualification free. It should also incentivise those who want to achieve a level 4 and 5 higher national diploma or certificate, and start addressing the skills gap that is limiting business growth.

The FE funding system is incredibly complicated and expensive to oversee. A future government should simplify

the system, releasing more funding for frontline educational delivery.

Skills in literacy and numeracy are clearly vital for all employees. In many areas of the country fewer than 50 per cent of children achieve English and maths at grade 4 (previously grade C) at GCSE. Since 2015 FE colleges have been

“Investment in skills can be a gamechanger for the economy”

required to ensure all young people without these qualifications retake them until they get the right grade. Huge numbers are now being retaught English and maths, but with no additional funding to cover the cost. A future government should both review the policy on retaking these GCSEs and fund the cost of delivery.

As Collab Group has said in its statement this week on apprenticeships, the apprentice system is over-complicated and challenging for employers and providers. The apprentice levy has encouraged some businesses to take on apprentices, but more should be encouraged to use their levy rather than treat it as a tax. There are so many opportunities for apprentices to progress through to a higher apprenticeship and then a degree. However, there needs to be better initial advice and guidance in schools to encourage young people to pursue this route into employment.

The investment in skills can be a gamechanger for the economy if properly funded. Colleges are at the heart of their local communities, delivering high-quality professional, technical and academic qualifications for young people and adults – although Brexit threatens staff numbers at all levels.

Our new government should

recognise what we have created in colleges and unleash the sector's power. Doing more with less has perhaps driven rationalisation, but if the age of austerity is truly over, as both of the main parties seem to be saying, then new spending in further education will be crucial to improve social mobility and close the opportunity gap.

But money alone will not be enough. The sector needs a strong vision to tie together all the disparate threads of policy, to simplify funding and regulation, and to bring all stakeholders together with a common purpose. We need to articulate a vision of further education that places colleges at the heart of communities, our economy and society—to do so will require a unified response.

This piece is part of a series of Collab Group election 2019 opinion pieces

SARAH
WAITEFounder,
Get FurtherGood intentions are not enough
to help FE out of the quagmire

A looming Brexit makes it easy to see why adult education is at the centre of the election policy battleground, writes Sarah Waite, but a comprehensive vision for this vital sector is yet to be articulated

I can't remember when adult education last featured so prominently in the election pledges of two major parties. While discourse in education policy has increasingly moved towards "the-earlier-the-better", adult education has long been forgotten as a key route to social mobility.

This doesn't impact adults only. Don't forget: about a third of the attainment gap for a child aged 3 is linked to their parents' level of education and the environment for learning created in the home. Failure to reach adults – parents – through education perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage that keeps pressure on early intervention.

This week, the Liberal Democrats

announced plans for "skills wallets", a £10,000 grant for every adult in England to draw on to pay for higher education courses throughout their working life.

Labour then laid out its stall, announcing that it would extend the free entitlement to study A-levels while offering up to six years of free adult education for higher-level courses. It also promised to give workers the right to paid time off for education and training.

It's refreshing and encouraging to see two major parties not only with policies on adult education, but framing them as a key plank of their education plans. Any of these policies would help some learners.

Access to level 3 qualifications is key to progressing into higher-level qualifications, which will then address key skills shortages. A lack of paid time off is also a substantial barrier to working adults being able to enrol in education or training.

However, both parties have sadly missed the opportunity to tackle the biggest challenge.

Our education system almost completely divides at 16 between those who achieve five "good" GCSEs and those who do not. Of those who do, 88

“The sector has been cut by 45 per cent in real terms since 2010”

per cent go on to achieve A-levels or other level 3 qualifications by the age of 25. More than half have degrees by this age.

For the young people who miss out on five "good" GCSEs, only three in ten achieve A levels or other level 3 qualifications by the age of 25. Just

6 per cent have a degree. For young people who do not already hold level 3 qualifications, it is already free for them to study these until the age of 23. Despite this, more than two-thirds never do.

Why not? Because a substantial proportion – one in three – don't get beyond level 1 qualifications (education below GCSE level). For these young people, the cost of level 3 courses isn't the real barrier. Lacking the GCSE gateway qualification to meet entry requirements or the literacy and numeracy skills required to keep up with many of the courses pose far more of a barrier.

This matters because people in this group are disproportionately disadvantaged. Every year, half the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve the GCSE benchmark compared with those from wealthier backgrounds. These young people then enrol in further and adult education on lower-

level courses. As good as these new policies are, they simply won't reach this group. Instead, the majority who will benefit, yet again, are those going into higher education and studying higher-level qualifications.

With the looming impact of Brexit on skills, I am not surprised that adult education features more prominently in politics. But the sector has been cut by 45 per cent in real terms since 2010, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, hampering its efforts to provide the support that young people and adults with low-level skills need to progress.

What the sector needs is a wide-reaching vision that tackles the root of the problem. And it deserves the same quality policy development and scrutiny that schools receive. Good intentions sit at the heart of these announcements, but without serious plans to tackle this issue, the political parties will not achieve what they hope.

Movers & Shakers

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



Hetan Shah

Chief executive,
The British Academy

Start date February 2020

Previous job

Executive director, Royal Statistical Society

Interesting fact

He sits on a charity board which meets on the grounds of Windsor Castle



Daniel Fenwick

Assistant principal,
DN College Group

Start date September 2019

Previous job

Associate director, North Lindsey College

Interesting fact

He used to work as a builders' labourer



Neil Thomas

Chief executive and principal,
Dudley College of Technology

Start date January 2020

Previous job

Principal, Dudley College of Technology

Interesting fact

He pursues extreme challenges to raise money for charity i.e. abseiling down the college's tallest building and walking the country from coast to coast

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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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

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Last Edition's winner: Jo North

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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