

# FEWEEK

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2019  
EDITION 299

## WILLIAMSON QUIZZED ON MANIFESTO



Exclusive

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See exclusive on pages 8 & 9

## OFSTED IMPRESSED - SO SHOULD YOU HIRE A THERAPY DOG?



Investigation

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## SERIOUS SAFEGUARDING FAILURES AT 'COLLEGE'

- > Privately-owned City College Nottingham to receive grade four report
- > Inspectors sent in after whistleblower warned learners were at risk
- > Staff made redundant as Nottingham College pulls £1m subcontract

Exclusive

BILLY CAMDEN

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# 'Inadequate' provider hands £2m training contract back

BILLY CAMDEN

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Exclusive

A training provider has handed back an adult education budget (AEB) contract of almost £2 million after Ofsted criticised it for the second time this year.

Total Training Company (UK) Limited was declared "inadequate" in its first full inspection last week. It was found to be making "insufficient progress" in an early monitoring report in February.

The family-owned provider delivers training in the construction industry and won £1.8 million from the West Midlands Combined Authority's devolved AEB in May following a competitive tender.

According to last week's Ofsted report, Total Training has 166 adult learners on its books. The programmes on offer support unemployed people who want to gain qualifications in the

construction and logistics industry.

But, following the education's watchdog latest verdict, the combined authority said the provider asked for its AEB contract to be taken off its hands.

"We received a request from Total Training to withdraw from our AEB contract as a training provider, following their recent Ofsted inspection where they were graded 'inadequate,'" a spokesperson told FE Week.

"We have agreed to this request. The withdrawal notice was received on 18 November and took place with immediate effect."

Total Training will complete the training for learners already enrolled under the contract. No new learners have been enrolled since 13 November.

The West Midlands (WMCA) spokesperson said it would be reviewing the performance of all its providers "over the coming months" and would redistribute the available funding.

The combined authority is not, however, cutting all ties with Total



Training. It will "continue to deliver services to the WMCA under the Construction Gateway contract," the spokesperson said.

"This contract includes delivery of short, two to four-week, job-focused training for Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards and progression into jobs."

Total Training, which had direct contracts with the Education and Skills Funding Agency totalling £1.3 million last year, told FE Week that government skills funding contracts make up "just one stream of revenue for our company".

A spokesperson added: "We are fortunate to have a very successful commercial construction training division which will enable us to continue trading and provide a stable backdrop for us to implement the required actions for improvement as highlighted in the findings from the Ofsted report."

They added that Total Training does not currently hold any other contracts with the ESFA.

Under government rules, any provider rated "inadequate" by Ofsted is removed from the register of apprenticeship training providers

and banned from delivering the programmes.

The ESFA will usually also terminate a provider's skills funding contracts within three months of a grade-four Ofsted report being published, unless there are extenuating circumstances. But as the West Midlands Combined Authority has its AEB devolved, it does not have to abide by this rule.

A spokesperson for the combined authority said it has a "contractual clause" that enables it to terminate a contract where a provider receives a grade four from Ofsted.

Total Training was rated "inadequate" in every assessed area of its Ofsted full inspection except behaviour and attitudes, which "requires improvement".

At the time of the inspection there were 166 adult learners and 25 apprentices across the North-East and the West Midlands.

The report stated that learners and apprentices "do not experience a well-planned programme of study" and they are "not supported to develop their talents or interests".

Ofsted also found that only a "low" proportion of adult learners successfully gain employment or move onto further learning while "too many apprentices leave their programme early".

Safeguarding arrangements were considered "effective", however.

## Troubled college group appoints new chief – for one month

NICK LINFORD

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Exclusive

Hull College Group has appointed a short-term interim chief executive, as investigations into nepotism and financial wrongdoing continue, FE Week can reveal.

Staff were told on Wednesday that Derek O'Toole was to take up the position initially for just one month.

As reported in early October, the group's chief executive and principal Michelle Swithenbank started a "leave of absence" following a visit from the FE commissioner Richard Atkins.

Until this week, Darryn Hedges, vice-principal for finance, who joined the college this year, had been placed in charge.

O'Toole was formerly deputy principal of Hull College, before taking on the role of principal at Hopwood Hall College in 2004, where he stayed for 15 years until retiring a few months ago.

FE Week understands that the FE commissioner's team has been

onsite at the college this week and the investigation led by a legal firm is ongoing.

In an email to staff, seen by this newspaper, Dafydd Williams, chair of Hull College Group, said: "As you know, Darryn has been acting chief executive while Michelle is on leave of absence. Darryn has done a great job of acting up to the principal and chief executive role for the past two months and has our thanks.

"However, while the Eversheds [law firm] review continues, we need to build the capacity of the leadership team, affording it the time and opportunity to focus on its core responsibilities. With that in mind, the board has decided to appoint a short-term, interim chief executive, initially for one month.

"I am delighted to confirm that this role will be fulfilled by Derek O'Toole, who has just stepped down after 15 years as principal at Hopwood Hall College.

"Hopwood Hall College is a high-performing and highly regarded college in Greater Manchester. It is an Ofsted 'good' college and has been assessed as 'outstanding' for financial



Derek O'Toole

health for the past eight years."

He continued: "Derek is well acquainted with Hull College, having been our deputy principal between 2001 and 2004. During his time here, he played a pivotal role working with the then principal laying the foundations for the 'outstanding' Ofsted grade that was secured in April 2005.

"We look forward to welcoming Derek today and supporting him in his time in the role. Once again, thank you for your continued support and professionalism. It is much appreciated."



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## News

# UTCs back in the market - but there's a catch

FRASER WHIELDON  
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Exclusive

The first applications in five years have been lodged for new university technical colleges, *FE Week* can reveal - but there is a catch.

Three new UTCs are in the pipeline but, like a traditional school, students will join aged 11, rather than at 14.

The Baker Dearing Trust, which owns the licence to the UTC brand, has welcomed the proposals but one union has warned that moving students into technical colleges at 11 will be "as unpopular with parents as moving young people in at 14".

Ofsted grade-one Energy Coast UTC is hoping to open two colleges, in Salford and Carlisle, while WMG Academy Trust, which operates two grade-two UTCs, has applied for one in Birmingham.

A WMG spokesperson said that this would build on the trust's existing education model, which offers "an innovative approach to students wishing to study science, technology, engineering and maths", and they will continue to place an emphasis on STEM subjects "by providing a technical

pathway for its learners".

Energy Coast UTC principal Cherry Tingle said the decision was based on "where there is a need for good or outstanding education or where there is a skills shortage where we have expertise".

Salford was picked for its cyber and data skills gap while Carlisle has a gap in logistics and aviation, she told *FE Week*.

Explaining the 11 to 18 age range, Tingle said that students have come to them at year 10 "having made little or no progress in their last three years of secondary education", but also admitted it was "absolutely true" that there were challenges in recruiting students at 14, especially when the UTC is competing with schools.

A spokesperson for the Baker Dearing Trust said that extending the age range at UTCs was the "right approach" in "certain circumstances".

The Leigh UTC in Kent was first to open an 11 to 14 feeder school in 2017 and UTCs in Plymouth and Wolverhampton will open to 11-year-olds next September.

"The overwhelming majority of UTCs recruit pupils in to Key Stage 4 [between 14 and 16], however if one wishes to extend their age range and it fits with the local education landscape, Baker Dearing is supportive," a Baker Dearing

spokesperson said.

They added that the last application for a new UTC, in Doncaster, was made in 2014. It will open in September 2020 after being approved in June 2018.

Trust chief executive Simon Connell told *FE Week* in September that he was "open" to UTCs changing their age range as a pragmatic solution for student recruitment problems.

He also claimed at the time that he wanted Baker Dearing to move from "quantity to quality" with no more of the 14 to 19 providers opening anytime soon. Instead, he said, it would "consolidate" after nearly ten years of "high growth".

Low student numbers have been just one of a range of issues with the programme, exposed by *FE Week* over the years, which also include 11 closures and poor Ofsted results.

Former schools minister David Laws, who called for the 14 to 19 UTC model to be scrapped last year, said it was "encouraging" to see some UTCs are looking at provision for an age-range better fitted with the education system.

Now the executive chair of the Education Policy Institute, Laws warned that a UTC operating a wider age-range "would still need to reassure parents they can provide high-quality academic and vocational education".

The new applications have stoked the



Simon Connell

UTC programme's critics, with Andrew Morris, the National Education Union's assistant general secretary, saying that the scheme has already cost taxpayers millions of pounds which should have gone to the wider schools system.

A National Audit Office report into the UTC programme calculated that the Department for Education has spent £792 million on the programme since it started in 2010.

But Morris was not in favour of the change in intake age, saying that children develop at different stages at school and it was "simply wrong" to think pupils and their parents will be "happy to make a hard and fast decision about the future focus of education for their children at the end of primary school".

The UTC applicants will discover if they have been successful next summer.

# Don't restrict how apprenticeship levy is spent, says CBI

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The Confederation of British Industry has urged the government not to restrict how the apprenticeship levy is spent in the face of opposition from nearly eight in ten businesses.

Limits on age, income or level of training would make 78 per cent of 208 businesses and trade associations surveyed for the 2019 CBI and Pearson Education and Skills Annual Report either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".

"Restrictions on how levy funds can be used could be counter-productive to addressing some of the biggest skills challenges employers face," the report said.

"These include new technology, such as automation and AI in the workplace, which means that retraining and upskilling is more important than ever."

Such restrictions have been mooted after projections from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical

Education showed the levy could be overspent by up to £1.5 billion in 2021/22.

This has been blamed by the CBI on a growth in higher-level programmes, which are longer and more costly to deliver, and on the levy having to cover the cost of non-levy payers' provision.

Even the fund for non-levy provision is running dry, according to the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), which has found providers were having to turn apprentices away as a result.

The CBI suggests that, instead of restrictions, the government should "deliver a sustainable financial plan for the apprenticeship budget that allows firms to continue to invest in apprentices of all ages and levels".

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said his organisation "strongly supports" the CBI's suggestion as a new plan "will remove the fear of further restrictions on employers' use of the funding".

The AELP proposed its own solution to the overspend this year,

which would remove level six and seven apprenticeships from the scope for levy funding.

Former skills minister Anne Milton said in June that a pre-apprenticeship salary limit was "one of the most palatable" options for restricting how businesses can use the levy.

But Department for Education permanent secretary Jonathan Slater admitted to the Education Select Committee that "hard choices" had to be made about the apprenticeship budget.

This was after the National Audit Office reported the long-term financial sustainability of the apprenticeship programme was "at risk" because the average cost of training an apprentice soared to double what the government predicted.

In addition to concerns about restrictions in how they can spend money, 59 per cent of businesses cited a lack of funding as a barrier to training.

However, more than four in five businesses polled (86 per

cent) said they now offer apprenticeship programmes and 63 per cent said they planned to expand their apprenticeship training in the future.

But sparing time for employees to train was cited as a problem by 52 per cent of respondents, amid a crackdown by the government and Ofsted on off-the-job training.

The CBI believes there ought to be a consultation on turning the levy into a flexible skills levy, which Dawe welcomed, as the argument for more flexibility under the levy

"needs to be taken far more seriously".

He proposed that this flexibility should be introduced through the apprenticeship standards "ensuring that they have the correct blend of on and off-the-job training appropriate to level, sector and setting".



## Education and learning for the modern world:

CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey report 2019

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Speaking to *FE Week* this week (see page 8), education secretary Gavin Williamson said making sure that the levy is "properly funded" and satisfies the needs of industry was "critical" and "it will be part of the discussion on the spending review".



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## News

# National Apprenticeship Award winners of 2019

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The “outstanding” work of apprentices, government officials and employers was recognised at the National Apprenticeship Awards for 2019 on Wednesday.

The great and the good of the FE sector turned out for the glittering awards ceremony in London, which was hosted by TV presenter and actor Reggie Yates.

These awards followed on from this year’s regional prizes, which all the national finalists had won.

Media outlets including FE Week were unable to attend the awards following the general election announcement and the onset of the pre-election embargo period, otherwise known as purdah. FE Week nevertheless used its sources to get the inside scoop on proceedings.

Speaking at the ceremony, the 2017 winner of higher or degree apprentice

of the year Charlotte Hughes said: “Everyone in this room knows it’s really easy to say ‘that’s just my day job, that’s what I’m meant to be doing’”

But Hughes, who is chair of the East of England Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, said “everyone here is doing outstanding work to such an amazing standard and that’s what we’re here to celebrate”.

It was a good night for the young apprenticeship ambassador network: North West Young Apprentice Ambassador Emilia Hoyle from Heat Trace Ltd picked up the award for rising star of the year.

At just 23, Hoyle has been promoted to be marketing manager for Heat Trace and completed a higher business administration apprenticeship and is now studying for a chartered manager apprenticeship.

The Hertfordshire chair of the network’s East of England branch, Tatiana Peters from arms manufacturer MBDA, won the award for the level-



Winners from the National Apprenticeship Awards 2019

three apprentice of the year.

Dominique Unsworth from Resource Productions, who was named as a government SME ambassador in 2017, won this year’s apprenticeship champion of the year.

She won the South East apprentice champion of the year in September for her work with six local authority officers and adult learning providers to raise awareness and engagement with apprenticeships.

Louise Meredith from JC Bamford Excavators Ltd (more popularly known as JCB) was recognised as the level-four

and above apprentice of the year and the level-two award was won by Julie Mills from Northumberland Community Bank.

Mills began a customer services apprenticeship with Northumberland County Council’s learning and skills service while at the bank after working in a factory for 20 years.

After winning the North East intermediate apprentice of the year award, Mills said she had “never even done any office work before and didn’t realise that older people could do an apprenticeship.”

The audience saved their most rapturous reaction for Sue Husband, director of employer and employee engagement for the Education and Skills Funding Agency: she received a standing ovation when she went to pick up her special recognition award.

Several employers received awards as well: IT company Invotra won small-to-medium enterprise employer of the year; large employer of the year was won by housing association Home Group; and macro employer of the year was won by restaurant, pub and bar operator Mitchells & Butlers.

## The full list of winners:

SME employer of the year – Invotra  
Large employer of the year – Home Group

Macro employer of the year – Mitchells & Butlers

Special recognition award – Sue Husband, director of employer and employee engagement, ESFA

Intermediate apprentice of the year – Julie Mills

Advanced apprentice of the year – Tatiana Peters

Higher or degree apprentice of the year – Louise Meredith

Apprenticeship champion of the year – Dominique Unsworth

Rising star – Emilia Hoyle

# Ofsted blasts ‘unreliable’ off-the-job training records for apprentices

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A new provider with more than 300 apprentices on its books has been criticised by Ofsted for “unreliable” recording of off-the-job training.

Rapid Improvement Limited, which was founded in 2007 but gained a direct apprenticeships contract in December 2017, was found to be making “insufficient progress” in two areas after its first monitoring visit from the education watchdog.

The report, published on Tuesday, listed a catalogue of issues, including that leaders and managers had failed to “ensure that apprentices receive frequent, high-quality, off-the-job training”.

Planning was said to be “disorganised” and causing “miscommunication” between coaches and apprentices about when and where training was due to take place.

The key criticism, which will be of concern to many other providers,

was that apprentices’ records of the off-the-job hours they completed were “unreliable” and “consequently, it cannot be shown that they receive their full entitlement”.

Recording off-the-job training hours has become a big issue for the government following high-profile concern from the National Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee about non-compliance, with the unpopular rule going unchallenged.

In response, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) announced in May that from the 2019/20 academic year, a new mandatory field in individual learner records (ILR) would be added that required providers to record “planned” off-the-job hours.

Then, in September, the ESFA said that a mandatory “off-the-job training – actual hours” data field would be added to the ILR from 2020/21.

Aside from off-the-job issues, Rapid Improvement was criticised for not providing “clear information” about how apprenticeships were organised to apprentices and employers when they

sign up.

The first cohort of adult care apprentices, for example, were “unaware of the requirements of the end-point assessment and have decided not to complete this element”, Ofsted found.

“To date, none of those who have completed the training phase meet the requirements to go forward to the assessment. They are not receiving the support they need to complete.”

Aside from care apprentices, the provider has learners studying for business administration standards and early years frameworks.

Inspectors said many of the business administration apprentices were “demotivated as a result of discovering that they need to undertake additional work on their portfolios” to complete the end-point assessment.

Programmes at Rapid Improvement also focused “too much on achieving qualification units rather than developing apprentices’ skills, knowledge and behaviours”, according to Ofsted.



In a few cases, apprentices were “on a level that is too low”.

The inspectors added: “Those who self-assess as being confident in the required competencies at the start of their programme are right to feel that they unnecessarily repeat tasks in which they are competent.”

The provider was, however, praised for making “good use” of consultants to provide external oversight.

“They have recently strengthened the management team by appointing experienced staff who bring about

improvements, particularly in the early years apprenticeships,” Ofsted said.

Rapid Improvement was also found making “reasonable progress” in safeguarding.

Following this poor performance, the provider can expect to be suspended from recruiting new apprentices under ESFA rules. It will only have this ban lifted if it improves to at least a grade three in a full inspection.

The provider did not respond to requests for comment.



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## Interview

# Williamson taken to task

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
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From front

Exclusive

While the Conservatives' manifesto published on Sunday had some eye-catching FE pledges, including a new £3 billion national skills fund and £1.8 billion for college capital (see page 18), there were some notable omissions. FE Week chief reporter Billy Camden has taken education secretary Gavin Williamson to task on the areas his party appeared to dodge.

### Apprenticeships

The Conservatives' 2015 manifesto had a target for apprenticeships of three million starts. Why isn't there a numerical target this time round?

"It is one of my key missions to get more young people and people of all ages looking at the options of what apprenticeships really are able to offer.

"Over the last few years you have seen a complete change in terms of our approach to apprenticeships. It is about trying to ensure everyone has the real quality that needs to flow through every single one of them and that is where our focus will continue.

"I want to see an awful lot more of them as well. I think the opportunity for young people to earn and learn at the same time is one of the best opportunities that you can possibly get.

"Do I want to see the quality improve? Yes. Do I want to see the number of people taking them increase? Yes I do."

I understand that you want more apprenticeships, but why no target in this manifesto? Are there lessons learnt

from the failure to achieve the three-million target?

"The focus is driving quality and opportunities. We can all bandy around numbers but it [the manifesto] is focusing on delivering on quality apprenticeships that lead to long careers and that is where the focus has got to be. But we do want to see a substantial increase in the number of people taking apprenticeships."

It has been widely reported – and the government itself has recognised – that the apprenticeships budget is not sustainable in its current form. The Conservative manifesto offered no solutions to alleviate funding pressure, other than promising to "look at how we can improve the working of the apprenticeship levy". Why were no solutions put forward in the manifesto?

"These discussions will happen around the spending review. If you look at the way we're doing the national skills fund, investing £3 billion over a five-year period, you can see how seriously we're taking the issue of skills and training.

## "We can all bandy around numbers"

"In terms of apprenticeships, they are an absolutely critical part of this. In the manifesto we have outlined the direction of travel in terms of the value we are putting on apprenticeships, the fact we are going to be making more apprenticeships, the levy is an absolute vital part of that.

"Making sure that the levy is properly funded and that it is able to satisfy the needs of industry is critical – and we

recognise that. It will be part of the discussion on the spending review."

### T-levels

There wasn't a single mention of T-levels in the manifesto. Is this a sign that the government is softening its commitment to them?

"No, not at all. It's like all manifestos, it can only have so many pages and it is almost impossible to mention absolutely everything.

"It is not because they're not important, it is just an absolute given that T-levels are there.

"T-levels are absolutely the centre point of what we are doing in technical education. I have talked extensively about it as education secretary and it is something we are backing up with cold, hard cash as well.

"I think you'll struggle to recall when you've had a secretary of state for education where they've addressed their party conference and spent so long talking about the importance of further and technical education. It's at the heart of what we're going to do."

### 16-18 funding

Moving on to funding for 16 to 18-year-olds, the manifesto has no promise to further increase the base rate beyond the modest increase announced in August – why? Can you give any guarantee to the sector that this funding will be addressed? If so, by when?

"That extra £400 million [announced in August] was something that was needed and was welcomed in the sector. I think £400 million is a lot of money – if that is not your view I'd love to see your house.

"It is a great investment in terms of what we are trying to do and a real sense of intent.

## "I think £400m is a lot of money – if that is not your view I'd love to see your house"

"You know, a manifesto isn't a spending review and both I and the chancellor have been clear that we are going to set things up for the future and want a skills revolution. I recognise there are costs in doing that and that's what we'll be having as part of our spending review discussions.

"We'll be asking more for it [the 16-18 base rate] and we'll be always asking more of everything, whether that is FE colleges or schools."

What do you make of the criticism that the 16 to 18 rate rise (from £4,000 to £4,188 per student) announced in August isn't nearly enough?

"What I feel is we've put £400 million towards FE. I think the fact that we've also targeted a chunk of that funding to the most high-cost courses is a quite logical thing to do.

"We don't want to lose those areas of skills, so that was a choice that I had to make and I thought that we don't want colleges to be getting rid of higher-cost courses and also courses that really add to the productivity of the country.

"I think that's a much more logical approach because otherwise the things you would be saying to me would be

'what are you going to do about high-cost courses'? Maybe that's me being a bit cynical and people might disagree with it, but I think it was the right decision."

### National Skills Fund

Announced as the "centrepiece" of the Conservatives' skills plan, a new national skills fund has been backed with £600 million a year. The proposal is to offer matched funding for learners and small employers for high-quality education and training,



# on Conservative manifesto



**“Further education is at the heart of what we’re going to do”**

but what does it actually mean and how will it work?

“What we’ll be doing is going out to consultation very, very rapidly. We’re putting forward a system, we’ve got the commitment in terms of £3 billion over a parliament in terms of delivering that, but we’re going to be coming forward with more details of how that looks and how that is going to be in the not-too-distant future.

“I think the best approach to doing this is working with those people who are going to be delivering it, it is also going to be working with those people

who are going to be using it for their businesses.

**“It is just an absolute given that T-levels are there”**

“We want to have the opportunity to do a proper consultation, to implement it and they get it out there as rapidly as possible so it starts having a real

improvement in terms of people’s lives – but also businesses as well.”

There seems to be a bit of overlap with the national retaining scheme in terms of its aims – is the national skills fund going to replace the NRS?

“They are both going to sit side by side.”

#### College capital funding

The promised £1.8 billion won’t come in until April 2021 – why the delay?

“We’re making sure this is a commitment over the parliament, so

it is over a five-year period. I will be working very closely with colleges to ensure that they have got the right types of plans and I’m not sure if you recall but Labour got themselves into a bit of a mess on this, didn’t they?

“There has been a frightful history on capital projects with some colleges that have not always delivered. [The Labour government shelved a major FE college capital programme in 2009. 79 capital project applications had been approved in principle but only 22 subsequently received final approval.]

“What we want to do is make sure

the plans coming forward are right – we want to make sure the colleges that are applying to this capital fund are in a position to be able to manage it properly and they’re in a position to be able to deliver the very best for their students. That is what this is aimed at.

“The ability to switch on a capital project literally overnight is not really that viable. We’re going to be expecting real thought going into these plans because it’s not an infinite amount of money, it’s a substantial amount of money and we want to make sure it is well spent.”

## News

# Police and schools top list of those missing apprenticeship targets

**YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU**  
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The police and schools are the public-sector bodies with most to do to meet the government's apprenticeship recruitment target, according to new data from the Department for Education.

Apprentices made up an average of only 0.5 per cent of the workforce in police forces across England in 2018-19, followed by an average of 0.9 per cent at schools.

This is significantly below the 2.3 per cent target required for most public bodies with more than 250 employees.

In a document published alongside the figures the Department for Education added: "The police have the lowest rate of apprenticeship recruitment averaging at 0.4 per cent since April 2017."

The bodies have not officially missed the target as they must meet the 2.3 per cent threshold over a period of four

years, from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. However, the requirement only came into force for schools last year.

The average percentage of apprenticeship starts among public-sector bodies since the target was launched in 2017 stands at 1.6 per cent.

The public-sector bodies performing best are the armed forces, which had 7.5 per cent of the workforce starting as apprentices in 2018-19, followed by the fire service with 2.1 per cent, then the NHS at 1.7 per cent.

Two police forces topped the list of bodies with the most employees without any apprentices in 2018/19. Kent Police had 5,988 employees but no apprentices.

Chief superintendent Mat Newton, head of learning and development at Kent Police, said his force was "currently developing new programmes that will offer apprenticeships in digital design, information technology, and business and administration".

He added that the force was also "just about to launch" a programme

in vehicle maintenance, a number of staff members are studying for an apprenticeship master's degree in applied criminology and leadership, and future apprenticeship programmes for new student police officers will be launched in 2021.

Close behind in second was Essex Police, which had 5,314 staff members and zero apprentices last year. A spokesperson for was unable to provide a statement at the time of going to press.

The police forces both moved up one place from 2017/18, when they were placed second and third on the list.

Lead Employer Trust, which is commissioned by Health Education England in the North East and North Cumbria to employ all junior doctors across the region during their training, had the third-most employees and zero apprentices in 2018/19. It had 2,129 employees at the time, according to the statistics published by the DfE.

Three school trusts also made the top ten with no apprentices last year: Saffron Academy Trust, Brampton

Manor Trust and Compass Education Trust were eighth, ninth and tenth respectively.

FE colleges are excluded from the target as they are technically classed as private organisations.

In 2017/18, Imperial College Health Care NHS Trust came top of the list with 10,662 staff members but zero apprenticeships. A spokesperson said the actual number of staff during that period was 11,789 and confirmed that there were no apprentices.

The trust supplied figures for 2018/19, which were also higher than those listed in official DfE data, which showed that it had 12,179 employees and 87 undertaking apprenticeships for management roles.

A spokesperson for Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust said: "In 2017/18 new apprentice standards were



introduced and the procurement of training providers and completion of setting up the programme took several months.

"Although we did not directly employ apprentices during 2017/18, we continued to work with an apprentice training agency delivering the previous apprenticeship programme."

There were 56,980 new apprenticeship starts across the whole of the public sector during the financial year, rising from 45,410 the year before.

## Gov to miss apprenticeship target by 800k and starts for young people drops again

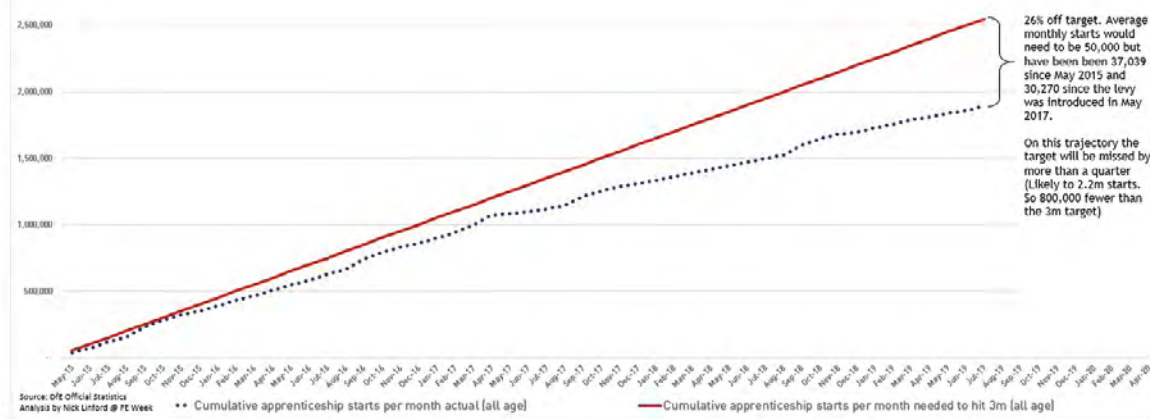
**YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU**  
**NICK LINFORD**  
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The government is set to miss its apprenticeships manifesto commitment by a huge 800,000 starts, while the number of young people beginning programmes has continued to fall, new data has revealed.

In its 2015 manifesto, the Conservative party said it had "already delivered 2.2 million new apprenticeships over the last five years" and set an ambitious target of three million. The target was also in the 2017 manifesto.

But, with just a few months remaining, government figures released on Thursday show a trajectory towards achieving 2.2 million starts again. So, potentially, no growth at all.

Meanwhile, the number of apprenticeships started by young people has fallen by a further 8 per cent, the third year in a row and now 22 per cent lower than five years ago.



Figures for the last academic year reveal a continued decline for those under the age of 19, which contrasts sharply with a 16 per cent rise in starts for those aged 25 and over.

When counting all apprenticeship starts for those under 25, there has been a decline of 25 per cent in the past five years, and a 3 per cent decline last year.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said: "It really is a shocking indictment of how a well-

intentioned idea has gone wrong.

"The three main parties have promised reform in their election manifestos and it is clear from these statistics where their priorities must lie."

Further data published by the Department for Education (DfE) yesterday revealed that the number of adults studying English and maths dropped sharply last year, with achievements in the core subjects also decreasing significantly.

Only 573,500 adult learners participated in government-funded English and maths courses in 2018/19, a 13.7 per cent fall from 664,200 in 2017/18.

Last year 360,300 of the students over 19 studied an English course, 364,000 took a maths course and 120,500 were on an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course.

Achievements in English and maths fell by 13.1 per cent to 363,800 in

2018/19 from 418,500 in 2017/18.

Steven Evans, chief executive of the Learning and Work Institute, called the figures "terrible" on Twitter.

"We should be increasing participation given our analysis shows we'll fall even further behind other countries by 2030," he said.

A report by the Learning and Work Institute released in September found that adult participation in education had fallen to a record low, with just 35 per cent of adults saying they had participated in learning during the previous three years.

National statistics for further education and skills released yesterday showed the overall number of adult learners in FE further decreased last year. There was a fall of just over 5 per cent (2,068,200) in adult learners participating in government-funded further education in 2018/19, compared with 2,179,100 the year before.

The number taking part in education and training programmes also dropped by more than 4 per cent, from 1,131,700 in 2017/18 to 1,083,700 in 2018/19.

A smaller decrease of just under 3 per cent participating in a community learning course was reported, from 504,500 the year before last to 490,300 last year.

The DfE could not comment due to purdah.



# Top marks for Scottish colleges in UK finals

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Scottish colleges were victorious at WorldSkills UK LIVE last week, taking first and second places in the medals table.

New College Lanarkshire, based in Motherwell, secured the top spot after its 26 competitors won four gold, four silver and four bronze medals. Three more were highly commended – gaining the college 39 medal points.

City of Glasgow College came second, ahead of Northern Ireland's Southern Regional College.

A total of 519 competitors from

174 organisations took part in the national finals, the highest level of skills competition within the UK. They competed for gold, silver and bronze medals in 70 trades, ranging from aircraft maintenance to robotics, and floristry to visual merchandising.

Having won their regional competitions, and with a chance of being picked for the international competition squad if they win, the finals are a "life-changing moment" for the young competitors, according to Ben Blackledge, deputy chief executive of WorldSkills UK.

"They are the new generation of high flyers that will give UK employers a competitive edge," he said.

The three colleges that secured the top places this year had also topped the table in 2018, although City of Glasgow moved from first to second.

New College Lanarkshire principal Christopher Moore said the feat was a "fantastic accolade" and indicative of both the breadth and depth of talent at the college, and of the "supportive and nurturing approach adopted by our staff".

Matthew Smith, the college's WorldSkills lead, added: "The opportunities WorldSkills competitions can bring are endless and I am so proud of all 26 students who competed and stepped out of their comfort zones and trained hard to be up there with the best."

City College Glasgow had 21 competitors and narrowly missed out on first place with 38 medal points. They secured five golds, two silvers, five bronze medals and two highly commended awards.

Principal Paul Little was happy with the "fantastic" result, saying learners ought to be "very proud indeed".

He added: "I am delighted that all their tremendous hard work and that of their

lecturers and coaches has paid off. Such a significant number of medals is to their credit.

"These skills competitions play a vital role in raising industry standards and to be in the top two shows just how well our college is doing in preparing our students to be the best in their chosen career."

Southern Regional College's 18 competitors came top in Northern Ireland and third in the UK, giving chief executive Brian Doran "every reason to celebrate". His students secured two golds, three silvers and two bronzes to gain 21 medal points overall.

"This elite skills competition is tough and the hard work that goes into a winning performance alike this is a real triumph for everyone, and I'm grateful to everyone who took part," Doran said. "Our top-three ranking is still unchallenged and we are the only Northern Ireland college inside the top 20."

An added bonus for Southern Regional College was its head of marketing Michael Purcell winning media/social-media campaign of the year at the Diversity and Inclusion








Heroes Awards at LIVE.

According to the college, this was for "a social-media campaign to promote women in the STEM and construction sectors with the ultimate aim of reaching out to and engaging with this under-represented group".

FE Week is media partner of WorldSkills UK and has produced a special supplement on this year's LIVE event, which is free with this edition.






HIGHLIGHTS FROM

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## News

# Ofsted praise college therapy

**YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU**  
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A dog that helps students struggling with mental-health issues has won praise from Ofsted inspectors.

Bexhill College in East Sussex was commended in a short inspection report published on Monday because students “benefit from the calming influence” of Harry the therapy dog.

The inspectors said: “Because of his presence students are less anxious before examinations and, for some, they gain confidence by walking him around the campus.”

## “Students are less anxious before exams because of his presence”

The use of therapy dogs is a growing trend in further education colleges. FE Week has found at least 28 that have recruited their own dog and many spend thousands of pounds on the therapeutic service. Some animal charities have warned against the practice, however, claiming it can be “extremely stressful” for most dogs.

While there is a lack of research in the UK, studies in the US claim to have shown that the dogs can reduce stress and increase energy levels for students.

One college that this newspaper spoke to bought a puppy for £1,600 and pays for its annual costs, but most use

staff or student volunteers who bring in their own pets. Others receive visits from external organisations, such as Therapy Dogs Nationwide.

FE Week spoke to five of the colleges to find out more.

Shooters Hill Sixth-Form College, based in Greenwich, south-east London, improved from a grade three to a two in a full inspection published on 13 November, in which inspectors said students “really value the comfort they gain from a therapy dog [Findlay] when they are worried or anxious”.

Findlay the labradoodle meets reluctant students at the college gates, goes on timetabled walks for those struggling with anxiety issues and even acts as a “life model” in art classes.

The college’s principal, Jan Atkinson, said Ofsted was “very complimentary” about Findlay, who comes in four days a week.

The college learns “a lot” about students with anxiety who “tell us what they may not [otherwise]” during their time with the labradoodle.

Atkinson said other students ask to see Findlay if they are upset. “It is all about personal development and wellbeing of the staff and students,” she added.

The college used Pets As Therapy (PAT), a national charity which organises volunteers, to get Findlay accreditation as an official therapy dog. His owner is Atkinson’s personal assistant and offers his services for free “because she sees the benefit”.

Atkinson’s tips for introducing a pet include bringing in a “really placid dog” who is “very socialised” although she acknowledged that some students have a phobia of dogs.



Leeds City College spent around £1,600 on Jeffrey, a cockapoo, who will be two next week. He is cared for outside of opening hours by Emma Langford, the college’s deputy head of childcare and public services, who estimates that his annual costs, including insurance, vet bills and food, total around £1,000. These are covered by the college.

## “I think every school and every college should have one”

Jeffrey is awaiting an assessment with PAT to become a registered therapy dog. The college then hopes to use him to make links with other institutions, such as Leeds Beckett University.

Langford explained that the cockapoo has some timetabled sessions where he sits next to certain students if they lack focus.

A group studying maths, for example, who “lacked confidence”, requested his presence. The students are “all



attending [more regularly] now” and said “he makes us stay calm and listen”.

Langford said the dog also “brightens the day up” for staff and, if they are having a challenging day, Jeffrey can help by visiting the staffroom.

Jeffrey has his own Instagram account which is used to deliver messages, such as revision reminders,

to his 1,100 followers. A photo of Jeffrey with Gavin Williamson was posted on 6 September when the education secretary visited the college’s Quarry Hill campus.

Langford said: “The first year was very demanding, with challenges in making sure he went outside every hour.” She recommends having “a rota and maybe

**Carole Kitching**  
@cjk100

@FEWeek @NickLinford Here’s Mr Mutley from @NewCollSwindon, employed since 2016 supporting our pre-16s. Available for walks and especially popular at exam time. Has harness and staff lanyard but with festive season approaching prefers his Christmas jumper



New College Swindon’s principal tweet about Mr Mutley



# dogs as popularity on the rise



Jeffrey of Leeds City College

completely different” and praise the practice in course reviews and self-assessments.

Hector, a border collie, is the college's only registered therapy dog. He is owned by the library support assistant, who has never asked for a contribution for the costs, although Porter said it was “definitely something we would do”.

The assistant principal recommended the adoption of therapy dogs by other colleges “especially with the rise in concern in mental-health issues for students. [Therapy dogs] are almost another side to your student's welfare team.”

Dotty, a seven-month-old labradoodle spends every day at Bath College's special educational needs and disability centre. Students with social, emotional and learning difficulties “need to think about her needs as well as their own, the importance of listening to each other and sequencing instructions”, according to Caroline Pack, Dotty's owner and a college lecturer.

However, the college has to be careful with one student who gets “very nervous” in the labradoodle's presence.

Pack said: “The main benefit of taking her in is getting the students interacting with her and each other. I think every school and every college should have one.”

At Barton Peveril sixth-form college in Hampshire, Barney, an eight-year-old chocolate Labrador, has been going in once a fortnight since May. Her owner, Shelley Hughes, is the college's nurse.

Barney has acted as an “ice-breaker” for students who need additional support but might not usually come forward.

Matthew Robinson, National Volunteer and Events Manager at Pets As Therapy, which has 6,000 volunteers who use their own pets to visit locations including hospitals, said there was “an incredible amount of demand for the service which we just can't meet at the moment”.

PAT volunteers must pay an annual subscription fee of £19, which covers them under the charity's insurance. The



Findlay of Shooters Hill Sixth Form College

registration process involves submitting proof of vaccinations, two independent referees and an assessment of the owner and dog together as a team by a trained assessor – who checks that the pet is happy being cuddled.

## “Main benefit is getting the students interacting with her and each other”

“Dogs generally enjoy the interactions,” Robinson said. “Animal welfare has to be taken into account.”

But animal charities are not so keen. The RSPCA discourages education establishments from keeping and looking after animals, adding: “Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for pets intended to live at a school to require rehoming.”

The Dog's Trust “strongly advises against” introducing a dog to an education environment as it can be “extremely stressful” for most of them.

While Robinson said he had not heard any “horror stories”, if there are reports of a dog snapping or getting worked up, their visits stop and a reassessment is arranged.

Therapy dogs have become increasingly popular in the US over the past decade, according to a 2017 study by Troy University, based in Alabama.

And research in 2018 by the



Findlay noticeboard, Shooters Hill Sixth Form College

University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada found “remarkable” results as participants reported significant reductions in stress as well as increased happiness and energy immediately following a drop-in therapy dog session.

Stanley Coren, study co-author and professor emeritus of psychology at UBC, said: “We found that, even 10 hours later, students still reported slightly less negative emotion, feeling more supported, and feeling less stressed.”

Former education secretary Damian Hinds has previously admitted that he “had not realised the incidence” of wellbeing dogs in education providers until he visited classrooms. He said it was a “great thing” for learners and “can

be really uplifting”.

The idea is not just restricted to domestic pets. In Florida, Bubba, a therapy alligator weighing almost 14 stone, visited a school for children with autism.

Liz Maudslay, policy manager for learners with learning difficulties at the Association of Colleges, acknowledged that some institutions were introducing dog therapy with “successful outcomes, particularly for those who experience anxiety and depression”.

She added: “It is completely up to individuals if they want to take part in this kind of therapy and colleges always prioritise the health and safety of their staff and students.”

a base where it is accessible to go outside”.

Kingston Maurward College may have been one of the colleges to start the practice. Nicky Porter, the assistant principal, told FE Week that she started bringing in her own dog, Fred, when she began work at the college in Dorset around 20 years ago.

The land-based college now has a “dogs on campus” policy, with staff allowed to bring their pets into work once checks have been made.

“We are always very clear with students, if they are not comfortable, to tell us,” Porter said. She estimated that about ten dogs regularly visit the college.

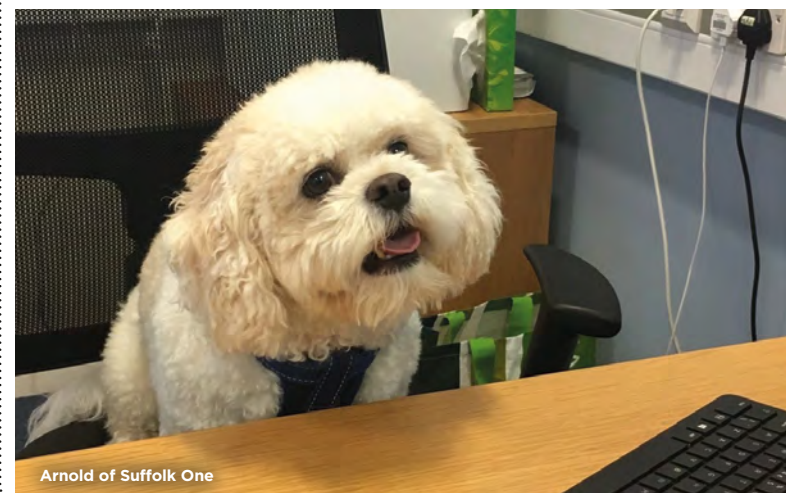
## “Animal welfare has to be taken into account”

Students in Kingston Maurward's animal science building may be given a time-out card if they are feeling anxious, stressed or worried. They then spend five minutes with Ernie, the principal's black labrador.

When students return “they are



Hector from Kingston Maurward College



Arnold of Suffolk One



## News

# Serious safeguarding failures at 'college' set for grade 4

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
**BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

From front

Exclusive

Serious safeguarding failures at a multi-site "college" are to be exposed in an imminent Ofsted report, *FE Week* can reveal.

City College Nottingham, a private training provider with campuses across the Midlands, is bracing itself for the publication of a grade-four report. It has already laid off staff and stopped taking on new enrolments.

Inspectors found no restrictions on the internet for material such as pornography and radicalisation, as well as a complete lack of security over who was coming and going to the provider's campus.

In addition to hundreds of their own learners, City College Nottingham teaches around 300 young people and adults on courses in construction, beauty, care, IT and business courses

under a subcontracting agreement with Nottingham College, worth more than £1 million.

After Ofsted alerted Nottingham College to its findings it terminated the contract with City College Nottingham.

When approached by *FE Week*, a spokesperson for Nottingham College said it took quick and decisive action after being made aware of the safeguarding situation, including "immediately" providing reception and security staff at the Carlton Road campus.

This was to "ensure secure access and strictly enforcing the use of lanyards for staff and students to ensure only people with a legitimate reason to be in the building are in the building".

It also "suspended IT access to control safeguarding risk online until such time as adequate software monitoring can be introduced".

City College Nottingham has since taken to Twitter to advertise that "all our places are now full for the academic year 2019/20".



Ofsted was drafted in after a whistleblower brought concerns to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

It is understood that the ESFA is likely to exercise its power to terminate City College Nottingham's direct contracts, once Ofsted's report is published.

The provider has refused to comment despite numerous requests, so it is not clear what other direct contracts it holds with the government. In 2018/19, its direct ESFA contracts totalled £1.8 million, including £650,000 for advance learner loans.

The agency was unable to comment on the safeguarding issues owing to purdah, the period before a political election.

City College Nottingham was given a grade three by Ofsted in January 2018, and was found to be making "reasonable progress" in a follow-up monitoring report published in January 2019.

The provider also runs a nursery, called Learning Angels, which has received two Ofsted grade-four reports this year, in February and August. Two unannounced follow-up visits found further concerns.

The watchdog's early years framework states that any nursery that has been given two previous "inadequate" judgments is "likely

to have its registration cancelled if there's no improvement at the next inspection". However, "we can take steps to cancel a provider's registration at any point if we find that they are no longer meeting requirements".

City College Nottingham was founded and run by its "principal" Hassan Ahmed, a former councillor with a controversial history. He was elected to Nottingham City Council in 2007 and became its portfolio holder for employment and skills in 2009.

He announced in March 2011 that he would not be seeking re-election, citing "family commitments and health concerns", according to the Nottingham Post.

But shortly after he stood down a report by the district auditor of the Audit Commission found that Ahmed had been involved with a number of firms and charities which were awarded contracts from a £10 million Future Jobs Fund, which was part of his portfolio.

It said rules were not followed which resulted in "unsafe decision-making".

City College Nottingham has since worked with Nottingham City Council under Ahmed's leadership. Its latest contract was to deliver Step into Work training for adults under the European Social Fund programme. This ceased in August 2018 when the contract

came to an end.

The provider also had a subcontract with Burton and South Derbyshire College last year worth £220,000. The college said this came to an end in 2018/19 and it has not entered into any new contracts in 2019/20.

A Nottingham College spokesperson said they have worked with City College Nottingham since merger in June 2017. Prior to merger, both Central Nottingham College and New College Nottingham had "longstanding" contractual relationships with City College Nottingham.

He explained that the "serious safeguarding concerns" raised with the ESFA centred on "site security, online e-safety and learner safety, eg use of lanyards to identify legitimate learners at the college.

"As a result of an extensive series of visits, the college has concluded that the performance, safety and security of our learners is best served by relocating them to the college's own campuses.

"It is a difficult decision to disrupt students' studies but we feel this is the only way we can keep them safe."

He added that Nottingham College's "immediate priority was to safeguard our 16 to 18 students and vulnerable adults" and it will "do everything we can to ensure that students can still achieve their qualification".

City College Nottingham  
 @ccn\_college

We've stopped #enrolling for this academic year!

For any enquiries to #study with us next year, call us on 0115 951 1111, direct message us, or visit our website

[citycollegenottingham.com](http://citycollegenottingham.com)



**WE'VE STOPPED ENROLLING**

ALL OUR PLACES ARE NOW FULL FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020

City College Nottingham advertising they are 'full'

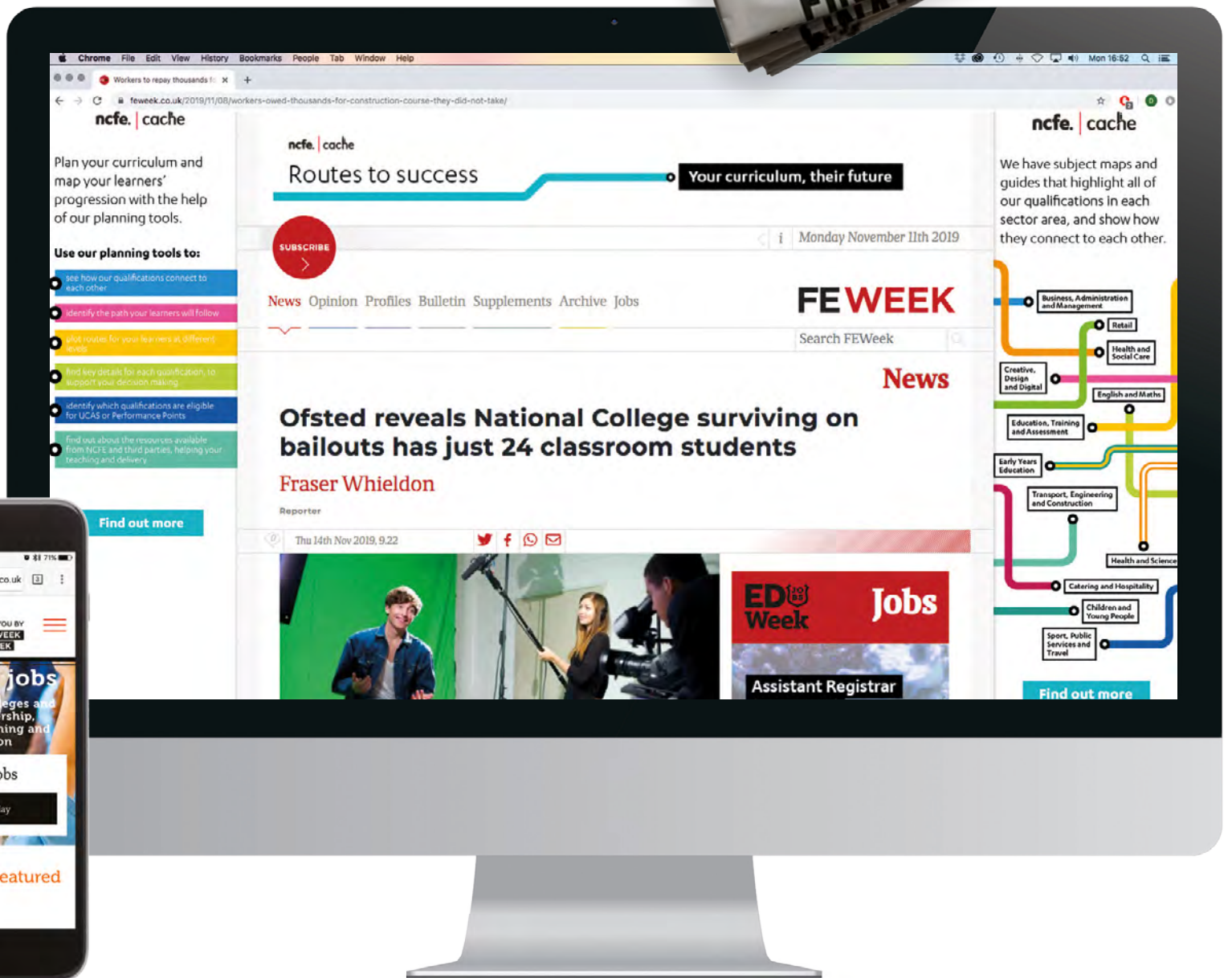


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## News

# Forces for good: ex-military

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Successive governments are not giving up on the idea of getting former military personnel into classrooms.

Facing a retention crisis and wringing their hands about behaviour standards, education secretaries still find the idea of a sergeant-major whipping students into shape just too tempting. Now the first cohort of ex-military staff on a programme called Further Forces – which we bet you have never heard of – will qualify this year.

## “FE and military have similar mentality: discipline and high expectations”

Launched for the FE sector in 2017, the scheme “retrains and supports service leavers into teaching in subjects including science, engineering and technology” in the face of a “recognised shortage” of such staff, according to the Department

for Education (DfE). Can this initiative succeed where others have failed?

There are promising signs, but the programme is under pressure. Funding is only guaranteed until March, at which point 210 former forces personnel should be on the programme.

Only 83 are so far signed up, meaning the organisers must more than double the figures achieved over the past two years in the next four months. It’s a horribly steep target for the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), which has been commissioned by the DfE to deliver the programme.

It also sounds worryingly familiar. Our sister paper *Schools Week* has reported extensively on *Troops to Teachers* (also optimistically alliterative), which was introduced in 2012 and expected to recruit hundreds of veterans into classrooms. But the scheme, which had a £10.7 million budget, recruited only 106 qualified teachers over five years.

*Troops to Teachers* has not been abandoned, but education secretary Gavin Williamson, a former defence secretary, has changed it to a training bursaries model for ex-military personnel.

Yet schools are not the same as the further education sector – far from it – and it is worth noting that the ETF has managed to recruit about 80 people in two years, a far better rate than 100 in five.



906 Expeditionary Air Wing based in the Middle East

There are two national hubs, one in the north of England managed by the Association of Colleges, and one in the south managed by the University of Portsmouth, with mentoring support from Brighton University.

In targeting ex-forces professionals to deliver vocational qualifications to young adults, the DfE, with funding partners the Ministry of Defence and Gatsby Foundation, might have hit on a formula that works.

## “It wasn’t like taking on a general member of the public.”

Nigel Evans, principal of Weymouth College in Dorset, is clear that his recruit is “multi-talented” in a way that graduates straight out of university often are not. Since 2018 he has employed Nick Harper, a former lieutenant with the Royal Navy.

“We have massive difficulties in recruitment as a college on the coast because it’s rural,” Evans says. “Nick easily got the job.



Ben Smith, who is on the Further Forces programme, and is a public services lecturer at Kingston Maurward College

“He’s the package – comfortable public speaker, confident. It wasn’t like taking on a general member of the public.”

Harper, who is studying for a level 5 certificate in education and training with Portsmouth University, was in the navy for 27 years, working as a ship’s diver, commando and parachutist. He now runs 12-week programmes with disaffected young people.

For Harper, the appeal of FE lies partly in the clear career structure. “People ask me, why didn’t you go into

industry? But my medals always meant more to me than any financial bonus, and it’s the same in teaching.

“I want to get my certificates in education. I’d prefer to be achieving. Medals and qualifications make me feel good.

“There’s also a similar mentality in FE to the military. It’s discipline and high expectations.”

It would seem that the moral purpose and chain of command in colleges might be better suited to some former servicemen and women than a



Hannah Payne in a military exercise holding a rifle



# impress as trainee lecturers



© Crown copyright 2019

yet," Ronald explains. "But this is a free qualification, so it's a huge financial benefit for the college."

At a time when FE colleges have suffered years of funding cutbacks, it is a significant subsidy.

Ronald also echoes Evans in praising the personal manner of her recruit. "Her background brings real resilience as a member of staff. Her discipline, organisation and resilience is first-class."

But Ronald feels the programme has been seriously under-marketed. She had not heard of it until Payne approached them.

"I also haven't been asked since if we could take any more recruits on," Ronald says. "I'd love to."

She is echoed by June Murray, principal at the Royal National Institute of the Blind College in Loughborough, who says that until her employee Andy Marsh, a former staff sergeant in the Royal Veterinary Corps, explained that he was on the Further Forces programme, she had not known about it.

"I had no idea. I'd like to say, we're here, if you've got more people please let us know."

She particularly values Marsh as a male role model for learners in a predominantly female specialist sector. "Males are so important and we barely get them applying. Lots of specialist colleges would be interested in this."

According to the ETC, there are 188 colleges "engaged" with the programme, which means they share their technical teaching vacancies. These colleges also receive fortnightly newsletters that include anonymised service leaver profiles, so they know who to invite to interview.

So who is to blame? Colleges which are not signing up and checking the newsletter - or the programme?

Cerian Ayres, head of technical education at the ETF, says "we need more vacancies from colleges". Yet it would seem that many colleges, for whatever reason, do not know what they should be doing.

And the benefits they are missing out on are evidently huge. Ben Smith, who was in the Royal Engineers for 24 years, says his experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and flood relief allow him to "bring alive" a career in the military. He is now a lecturer in uniformed public services, which includes the forces.

Meanwhile Karen Barnaby, formerly in the Royal Air Force police, says military staff are particularly suited to the diversity of students in



Nick Harper riding a quad bike in a Forward Operating Base during operations in the Middle East in 2006

FE. "Because I moved around so much with the RAF, I've got no prejudice," she says.

"I've dealt with so many different people already - ex-offenders, people from different cultures in the Middle East. I'm really used to managing people."

## "Lots of specialist colleges would be interested in this"

She is now a trainee lecturer in uniformed public services at Highbury College in Portsmouth and praises the high-quality mentoring. But she has one criticism - that she would have benefited from a longer lead-in time before teaching.

Recruits complete just six modules online before going into classrooms. "I'm from the military so I like to be properly prepared. I would say it needs an integrated start in the college of at least two weeks before you teach."

Another point is that all recruits FE Week spoke to were lecturers either in sport or public services, with none in "technical" roles such as engineering

or technology - the supposed focus of the programme. Are there enough technical experts leaving the military to fill gaps in FE?

But the impressive skills of these recruits are undoubted. Harper already has a level 7 certificate in strategic leadership and management from the Navy. I ask if he might become a

principal? "Who knows? Perhaps," he grins.

There appears to be a much more natural affinity between the forces and FE than with schools. The Further Forces programme is definitely on to something. Let's make sure this programme does not go the way of Troops to Teachers.

plush City office.

Harper comes with another unusual benefit. Ex-military staff can receive their full pension after 22 years, so many choose to leave at this point. As a result, they have an income that allows them to take the hit to their salaries when they move to teaching.

"My armed forces pension allows me to live the lifestyle I want in this job," Harper says.

## "This is a free qualification, a huge financial benefit for the college"

Jo Ronald, director of sport and A-levels at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire, makes another financial benefit clear. The teacher training costs of her employee, Hannah Payne, a former combat medical technician in the Army, are covered by the Gatsby Foundation.

"We would normally fund any brand-new teacher who isn't qualified



RAF Regiment personnel stationed at RAF Honington

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## News

# Tories pledge £600m a year to get more people working

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The Conservatives have pledged a £600 million a year “new national skills fund” if they form a government after the general election on 12 December.

The prime minister, Boris Johnson, launched the party’s manifesto – entitled *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain’s Potential* – in the West Midlands on Sunday.

It said the new fund would be the “centrepiece” of its plans for skills, total £3 billion over five years and be “the first steps towards a Right to Retrain”.

The Conservatives insisted this was “new funding on top of existing skills funding”, and they expect this would be for a “range courses, including apprenticeships”.

A proportion of the fund will

be “reserved for further strategic investment in skills”.

“This fund will provide matching funding for individuals and SMEs for high-quality education and training,” the manifesto explained.

“The national skills fund will help to transform the lives of people who have not got onto the work ladder and lack qualifications, as well as people who are keen to return to work from, say, raising a family, or switch from one career to another.”

The Conservatives said they would consult widely on the design of the fund, including with the Treasury to “ensure that the money is invested wisely and delivers the best possible outcomes for individuals and businesses”.

The full details will be set out in the first spending review of a Conservative majority government, and the fund will have “strong quality assurance mechanisms in place”.

In addition to the £3 billion over five years, and as reported by *FE Week* last week, there is close to £2 billion available over the same period for capital “estate upgrade” funding. But the manifesto costings document shows this additional investment would not start until April 2021.

What the Conservatives missed out, however, was a solution to the apprenticeship levy, any mention of T-levels or an increase to 16 to 18 funding (see page 8 for our interview with Gavin Williamson on this).

Association of Colleges chief executive David Hughes welcomed the Conservatives’ capital funding pledge, but said he was “worried that there is no commitment to raise the funding for 16 to 18-year-olds beyond the very modest increase announced in September”.

“Neither is there mention of the sustainable investment needed across all of post-16 education and skills,

including apprenticeships,” he added.

“The national skills fund has real potential but will not be enough on its own given the severe cuts to adult learning budgets and the pressures on funding for apprenticeships for SMEs and young people.”

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said he was “surprised” that the manifesto had not earmarked any capital funding to deal with the sharp “demographic increase in sixth-form students”.

“We estimate that an additional 260,000 16 to 18-year-olds will be participating in education by 2028, so a capital expansion fund should be a major priority for the party that wins the election,” he added.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said his organisation “warmly welcomes the additional funding promised for skills” and the Conservatives are “right to aim



Boris Johnson

to ‘level-up’ opportunities for small businesses”.

## CLARE HOWARD

Chief executive,  
Natspec



## Manifestos give little hope SEND reform will deliver

**As the December election looms, Natspec’s Clare Howard assesses the three main parties’ promises**

The education select committee’s October report scrutinising the 2014 reforms to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) referred to “a treacle of bureaucracy... conflict... and despair”. So will the next government finally address the failures in provision?

Natspec’s manifesto published last week furthers our lobbying in the interests of FE students aged 16-25 with SEND. It focuses on three key areas: high-quality education and training, a system that works for young people, and brighter futures.

But how do the parties’ manifesto promises compare with our recommendations?

First, Natspec’s recommendations for high-quality education and training include investment in the workforce to extend specialism and expertise, and better strategic planning across local

authority (LA) borders for specialist services.

All three parties have recognised the importance of colleges within a quality education system. The Liberal Democrats promise to “end the neglect” and invest an extra £1 billion; Labour “will ensure fairness and sustainability in FE”; the Conservatives will invest almost £2 billion to upgrade the entire FE estate.

But none considers the contribution of specialist or general FE colleges in improving outcomes for young people with SEND. No manifesto specifically mentions FE training.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats do promise to increase the base rate for 16 to 19-year-olds, an important first step to plug a big funding gap, and support students with SEND who are not high-needs funded.

But none addresses the need for LA co-operation and cross-border strategic planning. The Liberal Democrats want authorities “to act as strategic education

authorities for their area”, but they already have this role for SEND.

Second, Natspec’s recommendations for a system that works for young people call for increased funding for SEND in FE, a simplified funding system, better accountability and reduced bureaucracy.

**“No manifesto specifically mentions FE training”**

Importantly, we also want a renewed focus on hearing the voices of young people.

All three parties mention SEND funding. Labour promises “the necessary funding” for SEND and regulation of education provision to improve the life chances for “the most vulnerable”. The Liberal Democrats will “end the crisis in SEND funding by allocating

additional cash to local authorities”. The Conservative manifesto simply refers to the additional £780 million for SEND already announced in September.

Third, Natspec’s recommendations for a brighter future include new national transition standards, training for careers advisers, and investment in housing, social care and employment options for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The Labour manifesto addresses most of these recommendations, particularly around disability employment. There is a welcome amount of detail, including training for employers, specialist employment advisers, disability pay-gap reporting, and new specific duties for disability leave separated from sick leave, but no mention of learning disabilities where employment figures are shockingly low.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats promise to give British Sign Language full legal recognition, a move long awaited by charities for the deaf.

The Conservatives promise a new national strategy for disabled people covering benefits, housing, transport and jobs. They will commit £74 million over three years for additional capacity in community care settings.

Labour does promise community-based, person-centred support as part of a national care service for England, but it mainly covers older people.

The Lib Dems pick up on improved careers advice. They also promise to address fair access to health and care services and “the scandal of women with learning disabilities dying an average 20 years younger” than their non-disabled peers.

Whatever the result of the election, Natspec hopes that the ambitious plans for transformational change set out by the 2014 legislation finally become a reality for the young people it was designed to help. No single party is getting everything right, but they are beginning to listen, so it isn’t beyond them to deliver that promise.





# Chief Executive Officer, Springboard Sunderland Trust

## £50,898 - £58,790 per annum

Springboard Sunderland Trust is an independent training provider, community development organisation and registered charity which aims to support the development of sustainable communities where people have the skills they need for work and life. With over 40 years of leadership in the sector the organisation provides a wide range of training and community development programmes across the North East of England. Our mainstream programmes include the Study Programme, Apprenticeships and Adult Education. Springboard is an Investor in People, holds the Matrix Award for IAG and is a Disability Confident Employer.

### Purpose of the Role

Reporting to the Trustees, the Chief Executive will have responsibility for the overall leadership, management and strategic development of the organisation, including all personnel issues, financial planning and control, development and growth initiatives, working policies and procedures, leading the organisation into the future to deliver its core activities, operating in a demanding and often changing environment. The CEO will act as

designated safeguarding officer and encourage innovation and creative thinking amongst the staff group.

### Our ideal candidate will have

- the ability to function well with and manage uncertainty, to make sensible, well-grounded judgements across the range of key management tasks
- a track record of successfully deciding on and managing new opportunities, managing loose (creativity, deciding on new opportunities) and tight (policies, procedures and finance administration) aspects of an organisation like Springboard
- passion, skills, experience and knowledge, who can think creatively and take the team with them

We need someone who is flexible and open minded, used to constant change, not too concerned with their individual support systems, willing to take and act on personal responsibility and adopt flexible working methods to meet the changing needs of the organisation.

### Application Process

Please email [gsinclair@springboard-ne.org](mailto:gsinclair@springboard-ne.org) for an application pack. The closing date is 11th December 2019. Initial interviews will take place on the 17th December 2019, you will need to be available for the whole day. Second interviews if required will be on the following day.

### Please Note

The post is subject to DBS check. A copy of our ex offender recruitment policy and equal opportunities policy will be included in the recruitment pack.

For more information about Springboard please visit [www.springboard-ne.org.uk](http://www.springboard-ne.org.uk)

## DIRECTOR OF APPRENTICESHIPS



**SALARY: COMPETITIVE**  
**CLOSING DATE 8TH DECEMBER -**  
**SELECTION DATE 18TH DECEMBER**

**The Role:** The College is recruiting for a new and important management role in the Training at Hopwood Department. The post holder will lead on the expansion and delivery of the College's apprenticeship & workplace learning contracts, maintaining full contractual compliance.

### What we can offer you:

A positive, inclusive and dynamic working environment within an aspirational college that has a proven track record of career development and a dedication to continuous professional development. You will be given the opportunity to demonstrate your leadership and will be supported by three Programme Managers to assist you in driving forward the college's vision.

For further information about the role and how to apply please visit: [www.hopwood.ac.uk](http://www.hopwood.ac.uk)

To apply please send a CV and supporting letter to [hr@hopwood.ac.uk](mailto:hr@hopwood.ac.uk)

## CENTRE DIRECTOR FOR TECHNOLOGY



**SALARY: £46,827**  
**CLOSING DATE: 8TH DECEMBER 2019**  
**SELECTION DATE: 17TH DECEMBER 2019**

**The Role:** As the Centre Director for Technology you will be responsible for a diverse range of vocational areas including electrical installation, electronic engineering, fire, emergency, security, mechanical engineering, brickwork, plastering, motor vehicle, joinery, plumbing and manufacturing/mechanical engineering. The role will involve managing the study programme, adult and apprenticeship provisions.

You will ensure the development and diversification of the curriculum within the Technology Centre and will have responsibility for key leadership management functions within the department, including teaching and learning, quality and developing external links with employers. It is also essential that you have experience of successful apprenticeship management.

### What we can offer you:

A positive, inclusive and dynamic working environment within an aspirational college that has a proven track record of career development and a dedication to continuous professional development.

For further information about the role and how to apply please visit: [www.hopwood.ac.uk](http://www.hopwood.ac.uk)

To apply please send a CV and supporting letter to [hr@hopwood.ac.uk](mailto:hr@hopwood.ac.uk)





## Executive Director – Student Services and Support

£45,400 - £54,256 per annum

An exciting opportunity has arisen at Buckinghamshire College Group for an enthusiastic and motivated Executive Director – Student Services and Support. We are looking for a candidate with proven experience within Safeguarding, Prevent and SEND, and Foundation Learning & ESOL curriculums, who can improve and deliver the student services provision across our three sites.

The Executive Director – Student Services and Support will promote the vision and values of Buckinghamshire College Group, driving admissions and promoting the college as a nurturing, innovative, open and inspiring place to learn. While working alongside the Executive Leadership Team to deliver the

Strategic Plan and Business Objectives. Our staff are the most important resource that the College has in securing this success. We therefore value our staff highly and offer a competitive reward and benefits package, which includes TPS / LGPS, CPD, discounts across Buckinghamshire College Group Services and Shopping and Free on-site Parking.

We hope you will want to be part of Buckinghamshire College Group and we very much look forward to welcoming you.

**For more information visit –**  
**[www.buckscollegigroup.ac.uk](http://www.buckscollegigroup.ac.uk),**  
**email [hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk](mailto:hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk)**  
**or call 01296 588604**

**Closing Date: Monday 2nd December 2019**



## Curriculum Manager – Maths

Salary - £34,824 - £39,195

Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge and expertise, have a desire to make a difference and want to be involved in educating young people?

We are seeking to recruit a highly motivated, forward thinking individual as our Curriculum Manager for maths, to join our dedicated English and Maths team at our Aylesbury campus.

By joining our College your expertise will play a real part in shaping young people's development and transforming their lives. We believe that education should inspire and develop our future generations.

What you need to be successful in this role:

- To have drive, determination and a clear focus on high quality teaching and learning that will lead to high levels of achievement for learners
- To provide leadership and direction, giving team members clear responsibilities and accountabilities that align to college strategies and values

- To maximise staff utilisation and resources through astute financial management in order to provide a distinctive high quality student experience
- Although this is a management role you will be expected to lead by example and teach your students to a high calibre

Benefits include:

- Competitive holiday entitlement
- Teachers Pension scheme
- BCG Altitude Plus Membership scheme
- CPD to develop new skills and expand your opportunities
- Plus many more....

Our staff are the most important resource that the College has in securing this success, and look forward to welcoming you to the team.

**For more information or to apply for this role either visit our website [www.buckscollegigroup.co.uk](http://www.buckscollegigroup.co.uk) or email [hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk](mailto:hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk).**

**Closing date – 16th December 2019**



## Head of Maths (Lead Practitioner)

**External Vacancy**  
**Post Ref: 6177. Full Time. 37 hours per week.**  
**Permanent. £39,529.56 per annum\*.**

\*A market supplement may be offered to the right candidate. Attractive benefits for this post include 35 days' annual leave per year plus bank holidays and the opportunity to join the Teacher Pensions/Local Government Pension Scheme.

Due to the nature of this post you will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure Check.

Sunderland College is seeking an inspirational leader who is passionate about Maths. Moving all of our Maths delivery to excellent is a priority for the College and we require a talented individual who is seeking the next challenge in their career to lead this. You will lead the substantial delivery of the GCSE Maths curriculum and you will play a key role in developing and leading staff CPD across all of our Maths provision, including Functional Skills Maths, A Level Maths and Further Maths.

You will have a successful track record of leadership in driving improvements and achievement in Maths, and thorough knowledge of, and confidence in applying innovative approaches in teaching, learning and assessment.

Your focused and resilient leadership and ability to motivate will drive colleagues to aim for

excellence in all aspects of their professional practice. You must be adept at building and maintaining excellent working relationships across teams, based on sound professional values. A desire to provide the very best for our students will be clear and demonstrable.

Candidates must have a degree in Maths or a closely related subject and be a fully qualified teacher or lecturer. A leadership qualification would be desirable.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate in their personal statement, practical examples of how they fulfil the person specification.

To find out more about this great opportunity visit **[www.sunderlandcollege.ac.uk/vacancies](http://www.sunderlandcollege.ac.uk/vacancies)** alternatively email **[vacancies@sunderlandcollege.ac.uk](mailto:vacancies@sunderlandcollege.ac.uk)** or call **0191 511 6046** to request an application pack. Please note we will only accept Sunderland College application forms.



**All applications must be received by 5pm on Thursday 12 December 2019.**

**It is anticipated that interviews will take place week commencing 6th January 2020.**

We are working towards equal opportunities and welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are committed to PREVENT and safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.





## 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
- On-site catering facilities
- 25 days holiday plus 8 bank holidays
- Discounted gym membership at the on-site gym
- Membership to the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Strong College Values such as Striving for Excellence and 'Can do' Attitude

To apply please visit our website: [www.bishopburton.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies/current-vacancies](http://www.bishopburton.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies/current-vacancies) and download the application form and job description with the person specification. E-mail your completed application form to the HR Team, by the closing date to [human.resources@bishopburton.ac.uk](mailto:human.resources@bishopburton.ac.uk) If you have any queries please contact the HR Team at the above email address or telephone **01964 504190**.

**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.**



## Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator

**Salary: Competitive**

**Are you motivated and dedicated SEND professional? Do you have specialist qualifications such as a Dyslexia qualifications? Do you want a job in a college dedicated to inclusion where you can have a positive impact in the lives of young people with additional needs? If so we would like to hear from you!**

You will lead the Additional Learning Support Team to ensure that students with SEND receive outstanding support that promotes independence and achievement.

Your experience will contribute to the provision of key ALS processes such as transition, initial and specialist assessment,

the production of individualised Support Plans and EHCP annual reviews that show progress towards outcomes.

Your will ensure the ALS service is fully compliant with the SEND Code of Practice and Equality Duty as applied to post 16 learners.

You will be educated to degree level or equivalent with a specialist qualification related to SEND. We are particularly interested in candidates who are qualified to test for exam access arrangements [EAA] under JCQ, for which an enhancement will be offered.

**Closing Date: Friday 6 December 2019**

**Interview Date: w/c 16 December 2019**

For further information and to apply, please visit [www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/](http://www.lcwc.ac.uk/job-type/college/)

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## EDITORIAL

# 50,000 more nurses? 3m target a lesson in how Conservative manifestos do not add up



The Conservative Party manifesto has pledged “50,000 more nurses” as the first of six “guarantees”, signed on page two by the prime minister, Boris Johnson.

And, according to his Twitter feed, Matthew Hancock, the health secretary and former apprenticeships minister, is particularly grateful to the Daily Express.

In a triple-digit font size the newspaper has written “BORIS PLEDGES 50,000 EXTRA NURSES” on its front page.

But we now know, after it was pointed out that the budget was significantly short of the cost for 50,000 nurses, that in fact around 20,000 (40 per cent) already are nurses.

I listened to Nicky Morgan doing the media rounds on Monday morning, floundering on the BBC Today radio programme

and on ITV’s Good Morning Britain, where the interviewers were not convinced by the “we will improve retention” spin.

And it reminded me of something Nick Boles said about the method of arriving at another previous manifesto recruitment target: “To create three million apprenticeships for young people by 2020.”

Boles, who took over from Hancock as apprenticeships minister in the summer of 2014, was interviewed by the Institute for Government in late 2017 and said: “Well, we had delivered 2 million apprenticeships in the 2010-15 parliament. So in the manifesto process, there was a classic exercise in ‘Well, OK, what are we going to promise for the next parliament?’”

“There was this feeling that you can’t say 2.5 million, that sounds a bit tame, nobody would be

excited by that, so we’re going to say 3 million. Then three million is really a lot of apprenticeships, it is big growth.

“Where’s the money going to come from? In advance of the election, we were lost in the noise and fury, as it were. I hadn’t expected or wanted to be reappointed, but when I was reappointed I was quite aware that we had a bit of a challenge here.”

It would appear that the priority when it comes to manifestos is that a target must sound exciting and be a lot higher than that which came before – worry about money and a plan latter.

Basically, round it up to 50,000 or 3 million – seems to be the methodology within the Conservative party.

But, to give the Conservatives the benefit of the doubt, maybe they subsequently put in place a

plan to achieve the 3 million target?

If they did have a plan, then it has spectacularly failed. The number of apprenticeships in recent years has not risen and nor has the pass rate.

By May 2020 there will have been around 2.2 million starts, the same as the period prior to the setting of the target and around 800,000 (a quarter) short of 3 million.

And, far from supporting “young people” as the manifesto promised, last year apprenticeship starts for those under the age of 19 fell by 9 per cent while for those aged 25 and over, starts grew by 14 per cent.

The government has since excused the sluggish numbers on the grounds that quality is more important than quantity. So, does the data show quality has risen?

The official figures actually

show a 4.4 percentage point fall in the apprenticeship pass rate and Ofsted has expressed concern about the influx of inexperienced training providers.

Based on the most recent figures, for 2017/18, just over 30 per cent of apprentices at all ages are not finishing the course and for the growth area – adults – it is over 35 per cent.

History, and specifically the apprenticeship manifesto target, demonstrates that the Conservatives likes a big number and don’t seem to care if it does not stack up. But maybe this time, when it comes to nurses, there will actually be a rise in recruitment levels, even if it isn’t as many as 50,000.

**Nick Linford, Editor**  
news@feweek.co.uk



## Experts

## KAREN REDHEAD

Principal and chief executive, West London College



## Apprenticeships suffer too many 'unintended consequences'

**It seems the three main political parties have fallen out of love with apprenticeships, writes Karen Redhead, and the unintended consequences of reform may not be helping**

Four years and two general election campaigns ago, Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats competed to outdo each other on apprenticeships. While the debate has moved to a much wider recognition of the investment further education sorely needs, apprenticeships are no longer centre-stage and the silence is deafening

In 2015, David Cameron pledged to fund three million new apprenticeships to end youth unemployment. Liberal Democrats also pledged to expand apprenticeships, doubling the two million that had been created during the coalition. Labour focused on quality and pledged to create an extra 80,000 apprenticeships a year with a focus on school leavers with higher grades, as an alternative to university or unskilled jobs.

Given the clear intention that young people would be the main beneficiaries of apprenticeship growth, it is hard to fathom how the national reform could have taken such a different turn. Not only did we see contraction instead of growth, but we are also left with significant system issues and soaring costs that are about to exceed available funding.

The reform also missed the opportunity to support social mobility and has been disastrous for young people and smaller employers. We have already seen stark societal and political effects. People in our communities feel they have been left behind.

There have been some benefits. The government had been constrained for decades by a deregulated labour market, and the levy could provide an effective mechanism to encourage more employers to train. There has also been greater employer and industry input into the design of standards.

However, the market-led approach to

reform has resulted in too much training that is too job-specific, with insufficient consideration of the country's longer-term skills needs. While reform claimed to put employers in the driving seat, this has been far from successful as many employers are already writing off levy costs rather than engaging with a

**"People in our communities feel they have been left behind"**

resource-intensive system that does not give them what they need.

Whether or not apprenticeship reform makes a late entry to this campaign, the next government will have to deal with these problems. Here are four recommendations that would vastly improve the situation.

First, as trusted partners and long-

standing experts in education and training, it is imperative to work with colleges to smooth out the unintended consequences and refocus on what will be urgently needed in a post-Brexit economy. A more inclusive reform process would lead to better solutions and a greater level of ownership and commitment from all participants.

Second, there must be enough funding in place to support the reform, and it should prioritise places for 16-to-19-year-olds and apprentices of all ages without a level 5 qualification. Arrangements for non-levy funding are unreliable and leading to a start-stop approach, unhelpful to colleges and employers alike, and rates in important sectors like health and social care need review to ensure these pathways are viable.

Third, employers are put off by the burden of bureaucracy. Pre-reform, many colleges offered successful turnkey solutions for employers. If colleges are to reclaim this through "trusted status", this requires resources, particularly for SMEs,

who tend to have smaller numbers of apprentices. Penalising colleges for minor data mismatches between employer and college records is also unhelpful.

Lastly, definitions of quality need review, and a distinction needs to be made between quality and compliance, informed by everything we know about high-quality teaching and learning. Apprenticeships have been running for hundreds of years in some sectors without compliance audits and artificial distinctions of on- and off-the-job elements.

Teaching, learning and assessment are the core business of colleges, which brings us back to the need for a collaborative approach. After all, no policy can be delivered without us.

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



## RHYS MORGAN

Director of engineering and education, The Royal Academy of Engineering



## Perceptions of engineering hold the sector back

**To highlight the diversity of engineering careers that shape the world around us, the Royal Academy of Engineering recently celebrated This Is Engineering Day. But we have a problem, writes Rhys Morgan. There just aren't enough young people joining the industry**

According to the latest data from EngineeringUK, we need up to 59,000 additional people in the engineering workforce every year to 2024. Despite all the educational reform and the hard work of the FE sector, there is no sign that we are going to meet that need.

To make matters worse, only 12 per cent of the UK's engineering workforce are women, while only 9 per cent are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. We urgently need to tackle this skills and diversity shortfall if we are to have an engineering workforce that can serve society effectively.

Back in January 2018, the Royal Academy of Engineering launched This is Engineering, a digital campaign that tells inspiring stories of real young engineers through short films on social media. Working with partners across the profession, the campaign highlights the different levels of jobs available, with apprentice and technician levels alongside professional occupations.

The films include people like Bethan Murray who became a degree apprentice with Rolls-Royce in Derby and Alan Proud from Newcastle who struggled at school because of his dyslexia but found a highly rewarding career as an orthotics technician, making custom braces and splints for patients with disabilities.

To date, our This is Engineering films have been viewed over 37 million times. When we started, our research showed that only 39 per cent of teens considered a career in engineering. After a year, that figure

was 72% among those who had seen the campaign. Crucially, the change in consideration had been greater among under-represented groups.

This week, we took the campaign to a new level, working with major brands and leading businesses

**"AI revealed that the 'typical' engineer is a white man in a hard hat"**

to showcase what engineers and technicians really look like to a broader audience, with a new book list of great engineering reads on Amazon and by showing our films in stations and on trains across the country.

Promotion aside, we found that a bigger problem was limiting our reach

of young people. When we employed an AI algorithm to "learn" what an engineer looks like based on online image search results, what it revealed, perhaps unsurprisingly, was a white man wearing a hard hat.

This is an incredibly outdated and narrow stereotype of an engineer that persists in the online world, and we are working with over 100 organisations to tackle it. We've launched a new library of free-to-use images of engineers that better reflect the sector in its full diversity.

But we know the campaign on its own isn't enough. Many of the challenges that hamper young people's progress to engineering and technician careers are down to education policies. The problems include: the English Baccalaureate's focus on a narrow set of academic subjects at the expense of creative and technical subjects; the continued disparity between academic and technical pathways; the seemingly

continuous changes to apprenticeship standards; shortages of teaching staff in the FE sector and the need for subject-specific CPD for teachers and lecturers to make sure they are continually updating their knowledge of these fast-paced sectors.

There is so much still to be done, and as the UK continues on its path to leaving the EU, we need to ensure we have home-grown talent for the future. The stakes couldn't be higher.

Most people never consider that prosthetic limbs, the internet, electric guitars and mobile phones have all been designed and built by engineers and technicians. They will play a key role in addressing many of the challenges that face humanity in the 21st century too, from a sustainable supply of clean energy to healthcare.

As we work to re-engineer AI learning to reflect the diverse sector we want and need to build, it's time we also re-engineered our education system to meet these challenges.



# TRISTRAM HOOLEY

Chief research officer, Institute of Student Employers



## Employers must be at the heart of the vocational education system

Over the past few years there has been a lot of experimentation with England's much-maligned vocational education system. If these innovations are to be successful they need to involve employers to a much greater extent than is currently the case, says Tristram Hooley

The clue is in the name: "vocational education" is only useful if it prepares you for work, and employers are best placed to define what individuals need.

As an employer-led membership body focused on bringing entry-level talent into the workforce, the Institute of Student Employers (ISE) has released a manifesto to help politicians to focus on the key issues for employers and young people.

### A programme for the next government

We want the new government to:

- 1 Place greater emphasis on employer and university collaboration in

- 2 higher education;
- 2 Maintain and streamline the apprenticeship system in consultation with employers;
- 3 Facilitate better employment outcomes for disadvantaged students;
- 4 Renew the Careers Strategy and extend careers hubs across the country;
- 5 Invest in vocational education and engage employers in its design and implementation; and
- 6 Design migration policies that enable businesses to access high-quality global talent.

At the heart of all of these policies is the argument that the workplace is a key destination for the skills and knowledge that are acquired in education. A successful transition to employment is critical to allow young people to access the good life and make a positive contribution to society and the economy. To make all this happen

there needs to be a clear dialogue between education and employment, and a commitment to directly involving employers.

**"We need supportive 'careers hubs' in each locality"**

### Towards a new vocational education system

The developing system of apprenticeships and T-levels has much to recommend it, but it has been underfunded, inconsistently implemented and has often played second fiddle to the academic system.

We need to place career guidance at the heart of the new vocational education system to ensure that

young people have the information they need about all possibilities. The new government needs to commit to implementing good career guidance (as defined by the Gatsby Benchmarks) in schools and colleges.

Resources need to be put in place to support the appointment of a careers leader in each school and to set up supportive "careers hubs" in each locality.

We are optimistic about the opportunity T-levels offer to reboot vocational education and would like to see all parties committing to the idea that they will be here for at least a generation. The new government will then need to invest in building the system and in a substantial information and engagement campaign aimed at young people, their parents and employers. It will also have to tackle the concerns employers have by bringing them into the governance of the new qualifications and providing support and incentives for the substantial new

work-experience commitments.

Finally, it is important that a new government offers continuity on the apprenticeships system. Employers have been on the sharp end of all of the changes, including cost and bureaucracy increases, and have now started to get the system working.

A new government needs to put employers at the centre of the apprenticeship system, allowing them to increase its flexibility. It should also commit to the principle that the apprenticeship levy should not be a payroll tax, that the funding system should be more transparent and that good employers should get out more than they put in.

The time is ripe for England to build a better vocational education system. We have many of the pieces already, but it is up to the next government to put them together in a lasting way.

Employers stand ready to help with this for any government that is serious about making it work.

NOT TO BE MISSED

## UPCOMING EVENTS

APPRENTICESHIP  
AUDIT UPDATE -  
LESSONS FROM 2019

**LONDON**  
9 DECEMBER

**YORK**  
11 DECEMBER

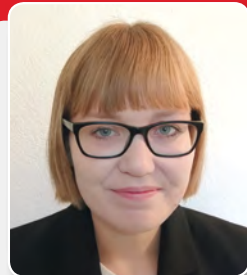
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# Bulletin



**Rebecca Conway**

Head of policy and strategy,  
Federation of Awarding Bodies

Start date November 2019

**Previous job**

Product manager, Assessment projects group, Cambridge Assessment International Education

**Interesting fact**

Her first job was in a bingo hall, checking claims when people shouted 'HOUSE!'



**Mick Lochran**

Deputy chief executive,  
DN Colleges Group

Start date September 2019

**Concurrent job**

Principal, North Lindsey College

**Interesting fact**

He studied engineering at North Lindsey College after leaving school



**Jennifer Coupland**

Chief executive, Institute  
for Apprenticeships and  
Technical Education

Start date November 2019

**Previous job**

Director of professional and technical education, ESFA

**Interesting fact**

She launched the first ever apprenticeship trailblazer groups in October 2013 when she was deputy director of the DfE/BIS Apprenticeships Unit



**Kathryn Brentnall**

Principal, Doncaster College  
and University Centre

Start date September 2019

**Previous role**

Interim principal, Doncaster College and University Centre

**Interesting fact**

Her dad was fingerprinted as part of the Great Train Robbery investigation

# Movers & Shakers

...

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

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

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

Difficulty:  
Easy

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

Difficulty:  
Medium

Solutions: See right

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Last Edition's winner: Ian Taylor

**Solutions**

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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