

**WHY HAVE ONE
POLICY WHEN
TWENTY WILL DO?**

Pages 10 & 11



**NI COLLEGES
NEED BREXIT
CLARITY MOST**

Page 20



**PENNY DROPS:
NEW LEADER
AT Highbury**

Page 15



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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2019
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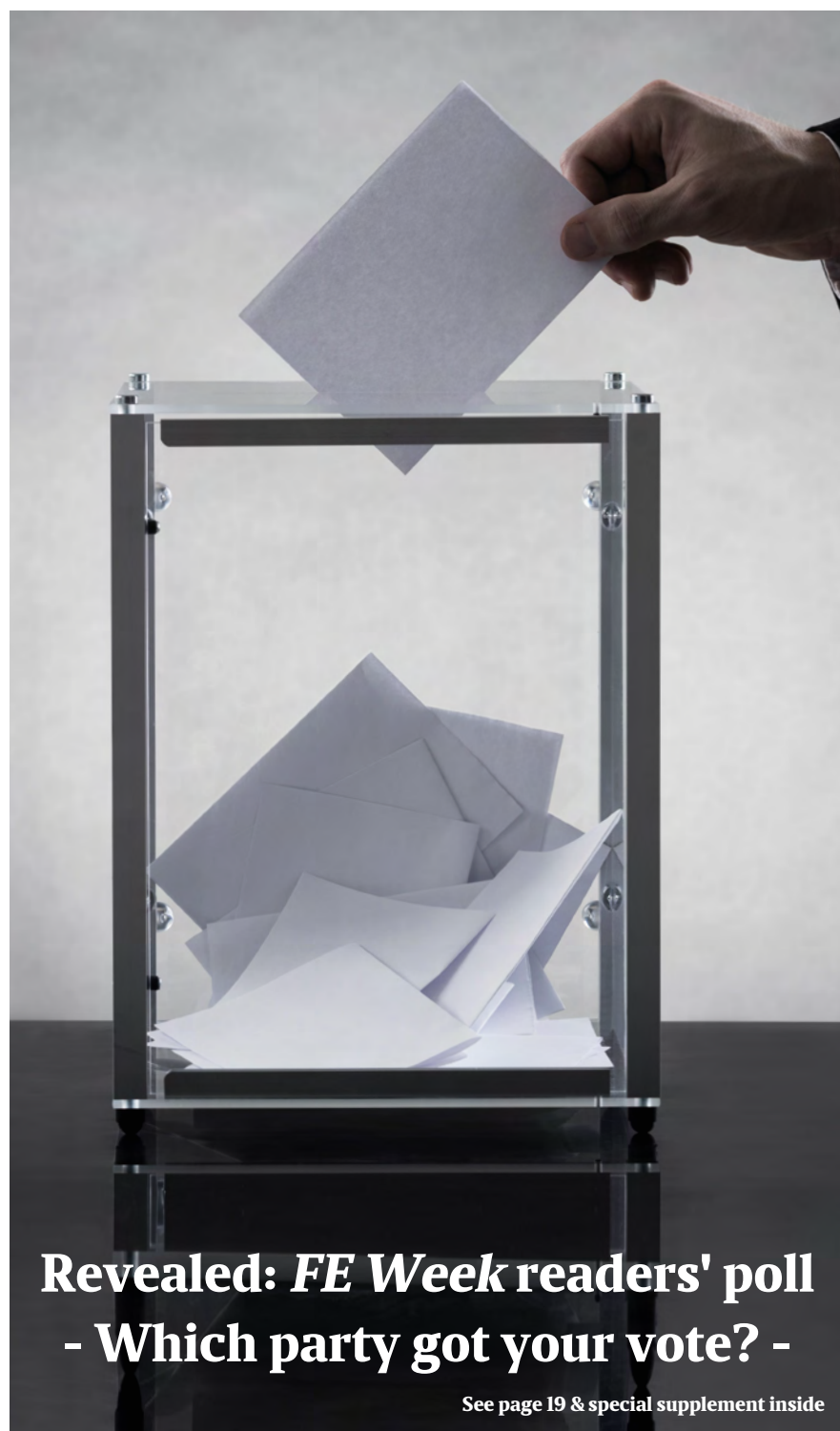
Edition 300

SILENCED: 'I WAS BACKED INTO A CORNER AT HULL'

- **Manager's £30k pay-out after raising bullying concerns**
- **£5k for 'swift conclusion' to pay-related sex-discrimination**
- **Redundancy costs soar to more than £6m in just eight months**
- **Investigators focus on non-disclosure deals and marketing**
- **HR director joins college chief executive on 'leave of absence'**

Exclusive NICK LINFORD NICK@FEWEEK.CO.UK

See pages 6 & 7



**Revealed: FE Week readers' poll
- Which party got your vote? -**

See page 19 & special supplement inside

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EDITION 300



ETF wants to tell the stories of disabled learners 'living their best lives'

Page 14



Funding pledges may lead to fraud and poor value for money
Page 4



T-levels aren't just about the economy. They are about social justice too
Page 20



Only research can reduce the number of product recalls in FE policy
Page 21

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Providers win CoF challenges every time

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU
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Exclusive

Every provider that challenged the government on English and maths condition of funding penalties over the past three years had its appeal accepted, new data has revealed.

A Freedom of Information request by *FE Week* shows that 135 eligible business cases which contested funding adjustments were submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) between 2017/18 and 2019/20. All of them were "supported".

Their successful appeals would have saved them tens of thousands of pounds, although it is not clear exactly how much as the agency did not provide costs in its response.

The ESFA explained that it considers "evidenced and credible business cases from institutions where there has been a significant error in the data returned by the institution".

The agency's data showed there were another 74 appeals which were not supported, but only because they "were below the business case threshold".

ESFA rules state that the "standard minimum thresholds" for condition of funding cases are "an overall impact of 5 per cent on total funding or £100,000, whichever is lower".

The Department for Education's condition of funding rule means all students in England aged 16 to 19 who have achieved a grade 3 in English or maths GCSEs are required to retake the subjects.

Providers with more than five per cent of eligible students failing to enrol on the qualifications have their funding adjusted by the ESFA.

FE Week analysis of 16-to-19 allocation data from the 2017/18 academic year found that 19 general FE colleges were deducted a total of £1,211,930 under the rules.

Annual eligible applications to appeal condition of funding penalties dropped significantly from that year, when there was 63, to 2018/19, when 36 were entered.

In 2018/19, this newspaper revealed 13 general FE colleges had lost slightly less than the year before – £1,137,091.

However, the number of colleges and amount of funding that was withdrawn this year rose again.

FE Week analysis found 23 colleges were stripped of £1,468,934 in total. For all provider types, including academies and private providers, £5,712,092 was taken back by the ESFA.

All 36 eligible business cases that were submitted in 2019/20 were granted.

Silverstone UTC's principal Neil Patterson criticised the criteria for the recovery of condition of funding last month after his appeal, which did not meet the required threshold, was rejected.

The university technical college's allocation data stated that 18 students did not meet the threshold, which resulted in a deduction of £10,406 in this year's adjustment.

Patterson told *FE Week* there had been an error in the UTC's management information system which led to those students being



incorrectly identified.

"All 18 students did in fact meet the condition of funding, so we submitted a business case to the ESFA to seek to recover the amount," he said.

"However, as the amount is smaller than the '5 per cent of revenue' threshold that the ESFA apply, our business case was, unfairly in our view, rejected by the ESFA."

Patterson added that the UTC felt that, with post-16 funding being "fairly

complex," the threshold rule is a "barrier" to receiving full funding.

Original ESFA condition of funding rules stated that any eligible student who failed to enrol would be removed in full from funding allocations for the next-but-one academic year.

The condition was relaxed from 2016/17, with the penalty halved and only applied to providers at which more than five per cent of students did not meet the standard.

Marsden in a fight to survive as an MP

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One of the most prominent and long-standing further education representatives in the House of Commons is battling to save his seat in next week's general election.

YouGov has predicted shadow further and higher education minister Gordon Marsden will be unseated in Blackpool South, a constituency he has represented for Labour since 1997.

The pollster's Multi-level Regression and Post-stratification model, which successfully predicted a hung parliament in the 2017 general election as well as 93 per cent of seats, believes

Marsden's area is leaning towards the Conservatives. The Tories lost this seat



Gordon Marsden

to Labour by 2,500 votes at the 2017 general election.

Marsden's first stint as a shadow minister for FE was from 2010 until 2013, before he moved to cover the transport brief for two years.

Then, in 2015, he returned to shadow the FE portfolio and has served Labour in that role for four years.

Prior to entering parliament, he was an Open University lecturer and editor of a history magazine and while Labour was in government, he served as parliamentary private secretary to a number of different secretaries of state.

During his time as shadow further and higher education minister, he has been a highly-visible presence on the Labour frontbench during education questions and backbench debates.

He has also been a regular speaker at sector conferences, including for the Association of Colleges, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, and *FE Week's* Annual Apprenticeship Conference.

And when Labour launched its adult education policy for this election, it did so in Marsden's constituency.

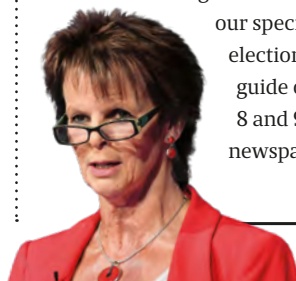
Another FE champion looking likely to lose her Commons seat is ex-minister Anne Milton.

She resigned from the apprenticeships and skills position ahead of Boris Johnson becoming prime minister in July.

Milton then lost the Conservative party whip – essentially her right to sit and stand as a Conservative MP – in September after abstaining on a Commons vote to stop Johnson from proroguing parliament.

Unbowed, Milton decided to stand in Guildford as an independent, but YouGov also predicts the seat is leaning towards electing her Conservative opponent.

To find out how vulnerable all the big FE MPs are, read our special general election 2019 guide on pages 8 and 9 of this newspaper.



Anne Milton

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News

SFC delays Diamond payout report till January

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A report into an influential college commission chair's controversial payout from an ex-employer will be released in the New Year.

The Scottish Funding Council, which oversees further and higher education funding north of the border, has been investigating £282,000 paid by the University of Aberdeen to its ex-principal Sir Ian Diamond during his notice period.

The Press and Journal reported in June that the investigation began because Diamond, who is leading the College of the Future commission, triggered his 12-month notice for his role as university principal in July 2018 – the same month he retired from the role.

He originally announced his plans to retire in August 2017.

A spokesperson for the council said the report is now at the draft stage, and it was "very unlikely" it would be published before the Christmas-New Year break, but they are intending to publish in early 2020.

They had intended to publish it in December, but January now seemed "more realistic".

The report will feature recommendations for the council on whether the university broke any rules and it could recommend Diamond pay back the money.

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator is also probing the pay-out as the university is a registered charity in Scotland.

But the regulator would not be drawn on when its inquiry would conclude "as this may prejudice the work of OSCR and the charity", according to a spokesperson.

Diamond, who became the UK's National Statistician in October, was unveiled as the chair of the College of the Future commission in May, along with commission members such as Confederation of British Industry's chief UK policy director Matthew Fell and the former National Union of Students president Shakira Martin.

The commission is looking to answer the question "what does the college of the future look like?" and is aiming to release a final report with recommendations next spring.



Sir Ian Diamond

It is being supported by nine organisations including the Association of Colleges, the chief executive of which, David Hughes, attacked university bosses for spending university cash on "wine and beer" at the Conservative party conference in October.

Hughes, who was referring to English universities, said vice-chancellors were whinging they

couldn't "possibly survive" if tuition fees were cut to £7,500 per year, in line with the Augar Review's recommendations.

The AoC published a senior staff pay code in 2018, which said bonuses and severance payments "must be reasonable and justifiable," senior staff should only get a pay rise if all staff do too, and no individual should be involved in deciding their own pay.

English further education leaders have come under pressure for their spending following the appointment of Lord Agnew as minister for the FE market.

Since coming to the job in September, when he took over responsibility for financial oversight of colleges and the FE Commissioner's office, he has publicly intervened in a furore over nepotism and inappropriate use of funds at Hull College.

Even before then though, the leaders of further education providers were under pressure for payments they received during their notice periods.

In May, the University and College Union criticised pay rises and 12-month notice period extensions for all the executives at Stephenson College, which came into force in 2015 ahead of a merger consultation.

The union described the move as "tone-deaf" and said it "flies in the face of widespread calls for senior pay restraint in colleges and shows that, when it comes to pay and conditions, it's one rule for those at the top and another for the rest of the staff".

And Mike Hopkins, the former principal of Sussex Downs College, was paid £80,000 by the college while on gardening leave for five months after his provider merged with Sussex Coast College Hastings last year.

This was despite the fact Sussex Downs was facing a deficit of £1.9 million and planning a wave of staff redundancies. He also received a final payout for leaving, but it is not known how much this was.

Funding pledges may lead to fraud and poor VFM

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU
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The "extremely large" rises in adult education spending proposed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats open up "genuine risks" to fraud and poor value for money, a think-tank has warned.

A new report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has analysed the FE pledges from the three main political parties ahead of next week's general election.

It found that the Conservatives' national skills fund proposal, which would be worth about £600 million extra per year by 2022, would reverse about one fifth of the cuts to total spending on adult education and apprenticeships since 2010.

In contrast, Labour's proposals would equate close to a 90 per cent real-terms rise in total spending on adult education.

These included the costed pledges for lifelong learning up to level 3, and

six years of free education at levels 4 to 6. Excluding the cost of abolishing tuition fees, the Labour manifesto costs this and other adult education commitments at £3.3 billion extra per year by 2023.

The Lib Dems' proposed "Skills Wallets", worth £10,000, that all adults could draw upon for lifelong learning, would represent about a 35 per cent real-terms rise in total spending on adult education, on the basis this would cost about £1.6 billion extra per year in cash-terms by 2024-25.

Luke Sibietta, report author and IFS research fellow, described the Conservative pledges as "modest" but said Labour and the Lib Dems' "big increases" in spending and eligibility come with "significant risk and uncertainty".

The 'Going further on further

education?' report outlines the possible consequences of these policies, stating that it is hard to predict how many people would take up the new offers and there would be a risk that spending could come significantly above or below what is expected.

The research warned "there is a risk of fraud with new providers and courses popping up to take advantage of the large subsidies, but ultimately providing poor education".

The IFS pointed out that a similar policy, Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs), was scrapped within a year due to widespread fraud in 2001.

ILAs, which subsidised the costs of courses aimed at widening participation

in learning and helping to overcome financial barriers faced by learners, had attracted much more interest than anticipated, according to the National Audit Office.

By 2002, the scheme was wound up amid a fraud scandal that left the public purse lighter by £268 million.

The IFS report noted that both Labour and the Lib Dems have "proposed tight regulation", but the "very sizeable subsidy will mean that fraud or poor value for money are both genuine risks".

Sue Pember, former director of FE at the department for education and now policy director of adult education network HOLEX, said that although there are risks to the proposals "these can be managed".

"Recent research shows that adults are not aware of what is already free and what their entitlements are, therefore we need to find ways to motivate adults and encourage them into learning," she told FE Week.

"The public seem to like the concept of an account or wallet as it puts them

in control of their learning, therefore we should be building on that connection and ensure these new ideas are delivered through robust management of the provider base."

Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Mark Dawe said: "We need to see investment restored in adult education via skills accounts used with fully regulated and quality approved providers and only with an approved catalogue of courses, as we now have for loans provision."

Angela Rayner, Labour's shadow education secretary, said her party is "committed to giving further and adult education the sustainable funding needed" following a decade of Conservative and Lib Dem "austerity that cut billions of pounds from these vital services".

And a Lib Dem spokesperson said they will expand the Office for Students to "monitor the programme and ensure courses are being delivered by verified, reputable providers".



Luke Sibietta



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News

Investigators probe dozens of gagging orders

NICK LINFORD
NICK@FEWEEK.CO.UK

From front

Exclusive

The HR director at Hull College Group has been placed on a leave of absence after an ongoing independent investigation found dozens of pay-offs and non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).

Former employees with gagging clauses in their settlement agreements came forward after the chief executive, Michelle Swithenbank, was placed on a "leave of absence" in early October.

They described how they were paid substantial sums to stop them pursuing bullying and pay-related sexual discrimination claims.

The college has refused to comment, but *FE Week* understands Julie Milad has been temporarily removed from post whilst the claims are investigated.

Milad was appointed director of HR in 2017, and according to her LinkedIn page was promoted to vice principal HR and corporate services in November 2018.

Documents seen by *FE Week* show that in just eight months, between March 2018 and October 2018, more than £6 million was spent on redundancy payments to over 200 staff.

The costs were covered by the government as part of a huge £42 million bailout as part of the national college Restructuring Fund.

The need to reduce the number of employees formed part of the conditions of the one-off funding and according to published college accounts, a staffing limit was set at 65 per cent of total expenditure.



One former senior employee, 'Anna' (see right), described how in the summer of 2018 she found she was not "being taken forward".

"I broke down and spent many days crying privately" says Anna, who was also made aware by an independent lawyer she had a case for pay-related sexual discrimination.

In email exchanges seen by *FE Week*, the college's in-house lawyer said a male member of staff had been overpaid in "error" so "would not look to compensate you for an error of payment made to another member of staff".

Anna was instead offered four months' pay as well as a £5,000 "enhancement" for a "swift conclusion and as a gesture of good will...on the proviso that your agreement [NDA] is signed and returned at the earliest opportunity".

"The solicitor told me to just enjoy some time out as at my age I had deserved it," says Anna who accepted the offer and signed the NDA.

The NDA, also seen by *FE Week*, said that "by signing this agreement you are waiving your rights to pursue a claim against your employer" and included gagging clauses such as: "You must not say anything derogatory about the college or do anything that would damage its reputation."

"The impact on my mental health has been significant," Anna said. "I was the main earner in our household and my family relied on me."

Another former senior employee, 'James' (see right), claims he was being bullied in late 2018, after the restructure, and raised the matter with the HR department.

"I was humiliated in college meetings for problems that were not even my responsibility," he said.

He was offered a £30,000 pay-off for his silence and "told if I made a complaint it would simply take three months of wasted time and then I would leave with nothing".

James said he "was backed into a corner with a choice of either sign the NDA or leave with nothing".

"It is clear now that the NDA was not to prevent information going to

TREATING SCHOOLING AND FE AS SEPARATE SILOS IS A PROBLEM

Page 16

JOINING AN FE-LED MAT WAS A WIN-WIN

Page 17

RENEWED FOCUS ON LEVEL 2 AND NEETS NEEDED

Page 18

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019 EDITION 293

WHY DID HULL COLLEGE HIRE AN ORCHESTRA?

How the 'games designer' husband to the college CEO spent the marketing budget



NICK LINFORD NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

See exclusive on pages 8 & 9

FE Week revealed the alleged misuse of the marketing budget in early October

competitors, but to cover up claims of bullying, constructive dismissal and mismanagement."

The independent investigation, being undertaken by a leading law firm, was launched by the college in September after a senior leader, turned whistleblower, reported evidence of nepotism and inappropriate use of funds.

At the time, education minister Lord

Agnew told *FE Week*: "Any financial wrongdoing, if it has occurred, is treated extremely seriously and we will be carefully monitoring events as the information becomes available."

FE Week then reported in October how Graham Raddings had used the college marketing budget between January and August 2018 to promote a several computer game related projects, including one he had co-



Michelle Swithenbank

... as former Hull College staff left 'devastated'

James' story



A former senior employee spoke to *FE Week* who we refer to as James, as he did not wish to be named.

James described how the bullying he experienced has had a serious impact on his mental health. After raising concerns he was persuaded by the director of HR he would have to leave with nothing unless he signed a deal that silenced him.

"I was humiliated in college meetings for problems that were not even my responsibility," he said.

"It was made clear to me that those at the top wanted me to leave.

"The long-term mental health issues this puts on me and my family is devastating, as I have to rebuild my life and career under the false impression that I was at fault."

James raised concerns through official channels but was persuaded he would get nothing unless he accepted a £30,000 payoff in return for not pursuing a claim of constructive dismissal and bullying by individuals in the senior

leadership team.

"I was told if made a complaint it would simply take three months of wasted time and then I would leave with nothing."

"It was made clear to me that those at the top wanted me to leave"

"It is clear now that the NDA was not to prevent information going to competitors, but to cover up claims of bullying, constructive dismissal and mismanagement."

"It is crippling for an employee who is forced into a situation where they have no choice, especially when the activity is coming from the very top and is not related to performance. Raising issues with the HR only meant that they used this information to further enforce my NDA."

"I was backed into a corner with a choice of either sign the NDA or leave with nothing."

Anna's story



A former senior employee spoke to *FE Week* who we refer to as Anna, as she did not wish to be named.

Anna had worked at the college for more than decade and was one of over 200 employees who, in her own words, were not 'being taken forward'.

"My world crumbled. I had already committed to seeing out my career at Hull College and was a dedicated, loyal and hardworking member of staff without a blemish on my record.

"I broke down and spent many days crying privately," she says.

In the course of the redundancy process, Anna discovered that a male employee doing the same job had been paid significantly more.

In correspondence seen by *FE Week*, Anna raised this with the college after an independent lawyer suggested there were grounds for a pay-related sexual discrimination grievance claim.

"The solicitor told me to just enjoy some time out"

The in-house lawyer for the college responded to Anna, claiming the male member of staff had been overpaid in "error" so "would not look to compensate you for an error of payment made to another member of staff".

Anna was instead offered a £5k "enhancement" for a "swift conclusion and as a gesture of good will".

The email from the in-house lawyer said this offer was made "on the proviso that your agreement [NDA] is signed and returned at the earliest opportunity."

"The solicitor told me to just enjoy

some time out as at my age I had deserved it," says Anna.

Anna subsequently signed the NDA, seen by *FE Week*, which included the line: "by signing this agreement you are waiving your rights to pursue a claim against your employer, in exchange for this you will receive the payments shown in the Termination Agreement".

"I broke down and spent many days crying privately"

Anna's NDA went on to say: "you cannot disclose any information that has come into your knowledge during the course of your employment to anyone outside the organisation" and "you must not say anything derogatory about the college or do anything that would damage its reputation".

Anna says: "The impact on my family has been huge. I often break down and even mourn the career/life/respect I had. My confidence has gone. My husband and I have had to rethink our retirement plans, and I wonder what the future holds.

"The impact on my mental health has been significant. I was the main earner in our household and my family relied on me."

"I was the main earner in our household"

"I was disappointed that no Senior Leader took the time to thank me or say goodbye during my last weeks for my service, and I was left on my last day walking to my car, looking up at the building and saying 'goodbye Hull College'."

founded.

Raddings, himself a computer game enthusiast, is also husband to the college's chief executive.

It is understood the investigation, in addition to looking at the NDAs, is also taking a closer look at the over £100,000 spent on a computer game app, computer game-style cinema advertising and a PR agency that promoted the music event and computer game.

A freedom of information request response shows the college group spent over £1 million on marketing in the past two years.

One of the last marketing budget commitments, before the investigation was launched, included a three year deal for naming rights at the Hull KR stadium, Craven Park.

The college has refused to answer questions concerning the costs or benefits of the deal, but Hull KR has confirmed "so far as we are concerned the situation has



not changed since August...this is a three-year deal that kicks in properly at the start of the 2020 season".

News

Who's vulnerable: will FE's past and

**YASEMIN CRAGGS
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As we enter the final stretch of the 2019 general election, FE Week has run through all the education and skills candidates to keep an eye on.

Given the constant changes in the polls and domination of Brexit, which is expected to lead to more tactical voting than ever before, no politician's seat is safe.

It means we could see a number of high-profile upsets for former and current FE members of parliament.

For example, the Conservative party is currently predicted to

unseat Labour's shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden, while former skills minister Anne Milton is expected to be unsuccessful in her bid to be the independent MP for Guildford after leaving the Conservatives.

FE Week has used YouGov's Multi-level Regression and Post-stratification model for seat predictions in this guide, which was based on interviews with approximately 100,000 people about their voting intentions at the end of November.

While the samples in each seat are too small to produce "reliable" constituency estimates, YouGov correctly predicted 93 per cent of seats and the overall hung parliament result in 2017.

Education Secretaries



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:00

Gavin Williamson

Education Secretary, 2019
Party: Conservative
Constituency: South Staffordshire
Majority in 2017: 22,733
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/200



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:30

Damian Hinds

Education Secretary, 2018-19
Party: Conservative
Constituency: East Hampshire
Majority in 2017: 25,852
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/100



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:30

Michael Gove

Education Secretary, 2010-14
Party: Conservative
Constituency: Surrey Heath
Majority in 2017: 24,943
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/14



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:00

Kemi Badenoch

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (DfE), Children's Minister (with Skills support), 2019
Party: Conservative
Constituency: Saffron Walden
Majority in 2017: 24,966
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/200



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

07:00

Michelle Donelan

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (DfE), Temporary Children's Minister (with Skills support), 2019
Party: Conservative
Constituency: Chippenham
Majority in 2017: 16,630
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/5



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

05:00

Anne Milton

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, 2017-19
Party: Independent (former Conservative)
Constituency: Guildford
Majority in 2017: 17,040
Seat prediction: Lean Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 10/1



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

03:30

Robert Halfon

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, 2016-17
Party: Conservative
Constituency: Harlow
Majority in 2017: 7,031
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/20



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:00

Matt Hancock

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, 2012
Minister for Skills and Enterprise, 2013-14
Party: Conservative
Constituency: West Suffolk
Majority in 2017: 17,063
Seat prediction: Safe Conservative
William Hill betting odds: 1/100

And present MPs survive the election?



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:30

Sir John Hayes

Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, 2010-12

Party: Conservative

Constituency: South Holland and The Deepings

Majority in 2017: 24,897

Seat prediction: Safe Conservative

William Hill betting odds: 1/200

Schools minister



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

05:00

Nick Gibb

Minister of State for Schools, 2010-12, 2015-16 and Minister for School Standards, 2014-19

Party: Conservative

Constituency: Bognor Regis and Littlehampton

Majority in 2017: 17,494

Seat prediction: Safe Conservative

William Hill betting odds: 1/500

GENERAL ELECTION 2019

Key education figures opt out of general election race

A number of key political figures in education have decided to step down at this election.

These include previous Conservative education secretaries Nicky Morgan, who held the post between 2014 and 2016, and Justine Greening, the secretary of state from 2016 to 2018.

Morgan said she is not standing to be re-elected as MP for Loughborough because it was time for her to "be at home far more". She also highlighted the sacrifices involved in, and abuse received for, being an MP.

In contrast, Greening, previously Putney's representative, blamed the "Brexit approach" taken by the government.

Additionally, former minister of state for skills Nick Boles (2014-2016), who resigned from the Conservative Party and crossed the floor after the Tories refused to "compromise" on Brexit, decided not to stand as an independent in his constituency of Grantham and Stamford.

Education and skills ministers have faced high-profile upsets in the past.

In 2015, Liberal Democrat Vince Cable, then secretary of state for business, innovation and skills, lost his parliamentary seat before

regaining it in 2017 and becoming the party's leader.

Conservative candidate Tania Mathias became the MP for Twickenham for the two-year interim period with a majority of 2,017.

Cable then regained the constituency he had previously held since 1997 with a 9,762 majority. He chose to step down ahead of this general election, having resigned as leader of the Liberal Democrats earlier this year.

Another Liberal Democrat cabinet minister, David Laws, the schools minister between 2012 and 2015, was also defeated in the 2015 general election after being part of the coalition government. He lost 22.6 per cent of the vote compared to the previous election in 2010, with his Conservative opponent Marcus Fysh winning with a 5,313 majority.

Moreover, Shirley Williams, who was Labour's secretary of state for education and science, failed to get re-elected in 1979. She had previously held the same title between 1967 and 1969. Baroness Williams of Crosby, as she is now known, later joined the House of Lords as a Liberal Democrat in 1993. She became party leader in the second chamber of the UK parliament between 2001 and 2004.

Shadow Ministers



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

07:00

Angela Rayner

Shadow Education Secretary, 2016-19

Party: Labour

Constituency: Ashton-under-Lyne

Majority in 2017: 11,295

Seat prediction: Likely Labour

William Hill betting odds: 1/7



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

04:30

Gordon Marsden

Shadow Minister for Further Education and Skills, 2015-19

Party: Labour

Constituency: Blackpool South

Majority in 2017: 2,523

Seat prediction: Lean Conservative

William Hill betting odds: 7/4



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

05:00

Layla Moran

Education Spokesperson, 2017-19

Party: Liberal Democrats

Constituency: Oxford West and Abingdon

Majority in 2017: 816

Seat prediction: Likely Liberal Democrats

William Hill betting odds: 1/6

FE sector



The time this seat was scheduled to be announced in 2017

03:00

Tom Bewick

Chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, 2018-19

Party: Brexit Party

Constituency: Dagenham and Rainham

Seat prediction: Lean Conservative

William Hill betting odds: 22/1

Profile

Introducing...

CORRINA HEMBURY

Managing Director, Access Training

JESS STAUFENBERG
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Corrina Hembury has seen it all: Jess Staufenberg meets the training provider managing director who started as an apprentice

Corrina Hembury “started everything young”. She began teaching at 19, got married the same year and was a qualified teacher by 21. Despite “loving school”, she only managed half a term of sixth form before switching to college and doing half a term there.

The managing director of apprenticeships provider Access Training decided what she “really needed was to be free and earn some money”. It was all looking rather spontaneous until she sat the old RSA (now OCR) word processing exam and got an office job at an Asian women’s training charity in her hometown of Derby. They encouraged her to do a business administration apprenticeship.

Two decades later she is the boss of 50 staff and working with about 200 employers. She’s seen all the fancy new ideas in further education and can cast a caustic eye over the policy changes with civil servant-like precision.

Her parents were warehouse managers, so a career in education wasn’t in the blood. However, Hembury had a deeply supportive granny who encouraged her to get qualifications.

“I find it hard to think it’s anything other than snobbery”

It was at Babington Business College in Derby, where she was getting her level 3 business administration apprenticeship, that lecturing caught her eye. She shadowed staff and began teaching her subject a couple of hours a

week, before doing her level 4 diploma in education. “I really, really enjoyed it. That’s where I got the bug. The passion for me has always been about the learners and the difference you begin to see in them.”

It’s at this point that Hembury remembers the FE structures in place many years ago. While she was at Babington, national “training and enterprise councils” were replaced by “learning and skills councils”, which were more local.

“We were working really well with employers in the local area and building up relationships. It was certainly a very different time. That’s sadly missing at the moment – these opportunities for support for the sector. In those days there were big organisations like LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service) who supported providers. They had a much bigger budget than nowadays and did a lot more, so there were good opportunities to meet other providers and get learning and training for yourself.” The LSIS she speaks so fondly of was scrapped and replaced in 2013 by the scaled-down Education and Training Foundation.

Hembury continued to gather various titles at the college, including “lead internal verifier”, and by 30 was the regional manager for the college overseeing six sites across Derby, Nottingham, Stoke, Lichfield, Dewsbury and Sheffield.



Corrina aged about 3 or 4 in 1981

Following a change of ownership, she became the college’s training director and saw staff numbers double to about 200. “It was a really exciting time for me. I also had my daughter!”

Having done almost everything else young, Hembury held off becoming a parent for 14 years. Now she was where she wanted to be. “I also got really interested in policy stuff at this time,” she recalls, harking back to the SFA, or Skills Funding Agency as it was called in 2010 before becoming the ESFA in 2017.

The SFA was trying out an “employer ownership pilot”, in which employers were being encouraged to get involved in designing training themselves. “It was almost a trial for the trailblazer apprenticeships we’ve got today, with this idea of the employers being ‘in the driving seat,’” she says.

However, the idea results in a raised eyebrow. “The reservation that I have around this employer-first’ rhetoric is that the learner or apprentice seems to

get a bit forgotten. For instance there are practical changes in funding rules, which is a real frustration.”

Hembury’s description of the problem points to an irritating flaw in the system. “The issue is when an apprentice has a break between moving employers – for example if they decide to take a week off between finishing one job and starting the next, they are then classed as a ‘new start’, meaning they have to complete the minimum duration of 12 months again, even if they only had six months left on programme.”

Doubly annoying, the provider doesn’t get all the funding again, only the remainder that has not been used up. “So I’m not sure why this can be resolved, but not the minimum duration?” You can imagine her silently



Corrina with her husband, Duncan, and daughter, Eva, last year on 20th wedding anniversary trip to Rome



“The passion for me has always been about the learners”

tearing her hair out.

Around this time Hembury was also on the SFA group for advanced learning loans, which she says gave her “the leadership bug” and “some strong ideas around how I think things should be done”. When the MD job came up at Access in 2015, she thought she’d “better put my money where my mouth is”.

One of her first moves was to give the eight-strong executive team more management development training such as she had benefited from at Babington. The organisation was graded level 2 during a short inspection in 2015 – and Hembury, as ever, has her eye on policy areas for improvement. She mentions three quirks which again strike me as significantly irritating.

First, the ESFA was late in sending over the college’s report on the number of learners it has been paid for this year, Hembury says. “As of last month, we hadn’t had the proper reports of

“You have a gut instinct when the latest change comes in”

what they were paying us for. It’s these kinds of frustrations that for providers are very real, and really impact your business and take up time.”

Second, she’s concerned about the lower funding bands for certain qualifications such as adult care. The

funding cap for an adult care level 2 and 3 taking about 15 to 18 months is £3,000, but the equivalent for customer service is £4,500 and for a property maintenance operative it’s £9,000. “It’s really difficult for me to understand why a programme that helps people do such an important role, that we all will probably need one day, has one of the lowest funding bands.”

Hembury also worries about the Institute of Apprenticeships’ refusal to approve a level 2 business administration apprenticeship when old-style apprenticeship frameworks are switched off next year. She suspects it’s yet another unvalued qualification. “I find it hard to think it’s anything other than snobbery. Speaking as someone

who started their career through the level 2 business administration route, I wholeheartedly disagree.”

She is clearly in love with her work. She talks glowingly of the “brilliant time” she’s had handing out certificates to learners nominated by staff. “What a nice job, to be able to turn up and help create happy people, who tell you how much this has helped their career.” She also has a sharp sense of humour and laughs that she’s being a “whinge”.

But she has a point. And since she’s been in the sector from the start of her working career, she probably knows what she’s talking about. She quips: “In FE, why have one policy when 20

will do?” It’s a joke, but she’s clear the complex and ever-changing rules governing the sector discourage new talent. “If you’ve been in it for two decades, then when the latest change comes in, you have a gut instinct about it. But new entrants into the market can find it really hard, even with the best will in the world.” Most people in FE think the many rules are “crazy”.

Hembury, 41, is at the top of her game, but, given her early start, she has been through more structures, systems and rules than many people her age in FE.

Her biggest wish? “Consistency.” Will the next government listen?



Corrina Hembury with the Access Training’s Award winners Jessica Hallas and Betty Ekberg

Advertorial

Pearson launches new Learning Hub

Pearson has launched its latest digital venture in the form of a brand-new Learning Hub.

Pearson Learning Hub, which launched last month, is currently in its pilot state. Initially offering 13 behaviour modules to improve learners' understanding and skills in areas such as decision-making and commercial awareness, the hub also offers a learning programme for providers and employers to support and develop any first line manager or team leader – including apprentices on the team leader/supervisor level 3 apprenticeship standard.

More content is being developed for the Learning Hub, which can be accessed via a desktop computer or smartphone.

Pearson has modelled its Learning Hub in response to what it has observed about the changing nature of learning across the globe.

In May, the education giant conducted a Global Learner Survey of 11,000 people across 19 countries aged between 16 and 70 and found learners believed the 40-year career previous generations had enjoyed had vanished and the emphasis now should be on preparing learners with the skills needs of the future (including soft skills), multiple careers and a journey of lifelong learning.

In the survey learners also said digital and virtual learning were the new norm and they expected to be able to access engaging learning content anytime, anywhere.

This Pearson initiative is being led by the education company's Director of Apprenticeships, Rohini Bhattacharya, who explained the idea for Learning Hub was prototyped and developed by a small, agile and highly skilled team within Pearson.

"Most of us have experience of Netflix and other successful high quality streaming services," she said.

"What we've developed brings similar technology to the world of learning and education. Our vision for the Learning Hub is for it to provide high quality, easily digestible and accessible content to learners of all ages, across all genres anywhere, anytime."

The Learning Hub is an ideal project for Bhattacharya and her team whose prior work experience came in handy for the hub, which involved working with external vendors and different parts of Pearson to bring together practices from technology, digital learning and education pedagogy.

Pearson said: "A key focus of ours for Pearson Learning Hub is to find ways of navigating today's disruptive technology arena to leverage its impact on education delivery, learning and the future of skills."

On who the hub is aimed at, Bhattacharya said: "It can be used by employers who are looking to provide

an online learning and development experience for employees. By educational institutions who are looking to operate a high-quality digital learning experience for learners who are located in different regions or geographies. By learners who are looking for short modular courses that provide them with bite-size easily accessible learning that is engaging and interactive. And of course, it can also be used by educators who are looking for a blended learning approach to deliver skills-based knowledge and training."

As well as improving learners understanding and skills, the hub can also be used to assess that understanding through digital assessments.

Currently, Learning Hub is for institutions and employers, with learners required to register on the platform using their email addresses. Once they are validated by their educational institution or employer, they can access the courses that have been assigned to them.

Pearson's ambition is that from the end of next year Learning Hub will be an experience used directly by learners wanting to develop and improve their knowledge and skills, manage their learning and progress in their careers and in their lives.

For more information on Pearson Learning Hub please visit: go.pearson.com/lhfew



Rohini Bhattacharya

Rohini Bhattacharya, Director of Apprenticeships, Pearson UK

Rohini is an education management professional with over 17 years' experience across private and public organisations. Her current role as director of apprenticeships at Pearson UK involves developing and delivering the product and service proposition for skills training at scale.

Rohini's experience ranges from working in education start-ups, skills training, higher education and public sector initiatives. She is passionate about education and learning and has driven change initiatives within the skills and training industry throughout her career.

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News

Foundation wants to tell the stories of disabled learners 'living their best lives'

FRASER WHIELDON
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The Education and Training Foundation is on the lookout for stories of learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) who are "doing something wonderful".

The foundation, which leads on professional development for the sector, wants to feature about 50 learners "living their best lives" by being politically active or doing something with work, in their community or as part of their studies.

Learners with LDD are "often overlooked because their successes may not be measured in the conventional way", says Simon Welch, the principal of National Star, a specialist college for young people with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Welch told FE Week he would welcome anything that celebrated

the success and positive outcomes of young people with more complex disabilities or medical issues, as "not everyone is able to do a full-time job, but that does not mean they cannot be active citizens and have active lives".

The ETF has put out a tender for a supplier to find these stories and create a publication, which will be downloadable from the foundation's website and possibly available in a physical format.

According to the tender, which is worth £20,000, the foundation "wants to shift the emphasis, so we see bright young people first and disability second."

"The publication will show how by embracing inclusion we enable our young people to be, and lead, the change they want to see in the world."

It will also celebrate the work of the FE sector to support learners with LDD. "While the focus of each learner profile is the young person, we feel it is also important to acknowledge the



organisation where they studied or trained."

The ETF says it is looking to hear "how the sector has been the springboard that enabled our young people to flourish".

Teresa Carroll, the foundation's head of wellbeing and social inclusion, said it wanted "to challenge outdated ideas of what young people with learning

difficulties and disabilities can do and achieve".

Di Roberts, the principal of Brockenhurst College in Hampshire and chair of the Association of Colleges' disabled learners' group, welcomed the plan. "FE colleges carry out valuable work with a range of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, which greatly enhances

their ability to participate in their communities.

"We look forward to seeing all the successes colleges and their students have achieved."

Inspired by the Shaw Trust's Disability Power 100 – an annual list of the UK's most influential disabled people – the stories will be published in the summer.

The tender is open until next month and can be found on the government's Contracts Finder website.

The foundation has also tried to push forward the interests of learners with LDD through its centres of excellence for special educational needs and disability (SEND).

In June, City College Norwich, Derby College and Weston College shared £1.2 million to each host a SEND strategic leadership hub and develop "effective practice" for colleges by creating pathways to employment, curriculum co-creation and promoting staff and learner wellbeing.



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Interim principal joins Highbury College following DfE intervention

BILLY CAMDEN

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A college entangled in an expenses scandal has appointed an experienced FE leader as its interim principal.

Penny Wycherley took over Stella Mbubaegbu's responsibilities as principal at Highbury College from Tuesday after Mbubaegbu's suspension last month.

It follows intervention from the FE Commissioner, who recently moved Highbury into "supervised college status".

Wycherley said: "It's an exciting time for the Highbury College Portsmouth with so many opportunities for us to serve and develop.

"Although there is much publicity about the



Stella Mbubaegbu

challenges facing staff in FE colleges like Highbury, those staff do amazing work in educating and training millions of young people and adults."

Wycherley was principal of Waltham Forest College, northeast London, until her retirement in March last year. In November she took over the top job at City College Plymouth when its leader stood down.

Since 2006 she has helped to turn around South Kent College and Great Yarmouth College – the latter moved from an Ofsted grade four to a grade two college.

She first retired in 2014, but continued as interim principal at Waltham Forest College. She moved the college's Ofsted grade up from a three to a two.

When Mbubaegbu was suspended, Highbury's chair

Tim Mason announced he would also step down to be replaced by a national leader of governance.

FE Week understands the college is still recruiting for this role.

The FE commissioner was sent into Highbury by education minister Lord Agnew, who said he was "deeply concerned" after FE Week revealed that Mbubaegbu had claimed expenses of £150,000 over four years.

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

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

Wycherley's appointment also comes

a month after FE Week revealed that the college applied to the Education and Skills Funding Agency for up to £5 million to replace "non-compliant" panelling which, according to the architects, "failed" a safety test.

The cladding at the halls of residence for students under 18 is the same as that used on Grenfell Tower in west London, which caught fire in June 2017. Seventy-two people died.

Highbury is also locked in a legal battle with a Nigerian state. FE Week recently revealed it has substantially lowered its expectations of recovering the £1.4 million it claims to be owed. Leaders believe they now have a "medium opportunity" of recouping £872,000.

The college recorded a £2.48 million deficit in 2017-18. Financial pressures forced it to axe its sixth form and to make staff redundant this year.

Highbury's Ofsted grade dropped from 'outstanding' to 'requires



Penny Wycherley

improvement' in June last year.

Wycherley said staff at Highbury College were "working hard" to ensure that the students "continue to have a positive experience and to lay the foundations for their future".

"Our staff are proud to make a difference to individuals and to the communities we serve," she said. "I welcome this opportunity to work with them doing just this."

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News



FE WEEK



EDITORIAL

Immensely proud to be reporting impartial news without fear or favour

In the nine years and 300 editions of *FE Week*, there is one story that best sums up our consistent and dogged determination to report the facts: Learndirect.

For the first and hopefully last time, a lawyer representing the country's largest training provider emailed me at 11pm on a Friday in the summer of last year to tell me I was in contempt of court and could go to jail.

They claimed I had broken criminal law (for which there is of course no insurance cover) for publishing a story about the first day of the judicial review.

Despite not naming Learndirect in the story, the lawyer told the judge that

our readers were so well informed they would identify the training provider as Learndirect.

We removed the story and the judge subsequently saw through the bullying tactics from Learndirect anyway.

The solution was to hire our own lawyers, at significant expense, to successfully challenge the gagging order.

A front page story in the FT followed (see right) along with a highly commended award for our investigative journalism from the Press Gazette (see below).

Many of our stories are sourced from insiders, but that does not always mean they go to plan. Somewhat embarrassingly,

our most read online story so far (see right) was about a government u-turn that never materialised – although we were subsequently told it was our story which triggered a change of heart.

More successfully, our two 'save our' campaigns successfully resulted in increased apprenticeship funding for the disadvantaged and 16 to 18 year-olds, as well as government support for adult learners tricked into taking loans.

And maybe most of all, I'm proud of the reputation for quality, award-winning journalism such that whilst FE ministers and their advisers come and go, they



all read *FE Week* (even if the civil servants wish they didn't).

So thank you to all our readers and contributors

and I look forward to the next 300 editions.

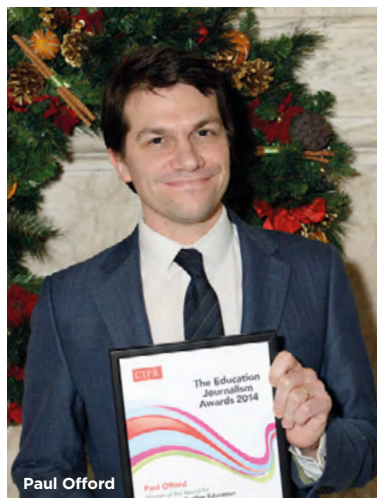
Nick Linford, Editor
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Winning ways of *FE Week* reporters

FRASER WHIELDON
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FE Week's work to uncover wrongdoing and promote the FE sector has not gone unnoticed over the past 300 editions.

Several of our journalists have picked up prestigious awards for their work



and yet more could be on the way as we hurtle towards edition 400.

Senior reporter Pippa Allen-Kinross was named most promising newcomer to education journalism for her work with *FE Week* and her now full-time posting at *Schools Week* at the 2018 Chartered Institute of Public Relations education journalism awards.

FE Week chief reporter Billy Camden came runner-up in the outstanding further and vocational education journalism category at those awards for his stories into the Learndirect saga.

In the same year, *FE Week* was highly commended in the British Journalism Awards for specialist media, run by the Press Gazette. This, too, was for our string of investigations into Learndirect.

Former deputy editor Paul Offord won the outstanding further and vocational education journalism award at the CIPR Education Journalism Awards in 2016 for exposing how brokers were charging millions for linking up subcontractors with prime

providers.

Senior reporter Alix Robertson took second-place for that award for her series of features into the Saudi Arabia colleges of excellence programme.

Freddie Whittaker, now chief reporter for *Schools Week*, brought back a runner-up position for that publication and *FE Week* for outstanding apprenticeship and skills journalism at the 2015 CIPR awards.

Paul Offord also proved victorious at the 2014 CIPR awards, where he won the prize for outstanding further education journalism thanks to his work on awarding organisations walking away from an independent training provider mired in malpractice concerns.

And yet more award success could be on the horizon, after Billy Camden was shortlisted for the specialist journalism commendation in the national British Journalism Awards 2019.

Billy is in the running thanks to his exclusive on Highbury College's £1.4

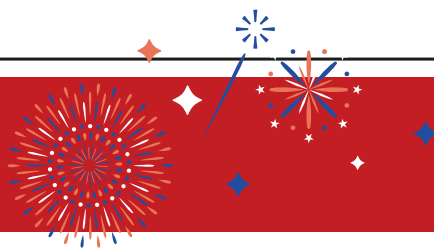


Senior reporter Pippa Allen-Kinross receiving her award in 2018

million legal battle with the Nigerian state, and for his dogged investigation into how the college's principal Stella Mbubaegbu, who has since announced her retirement and been suspended, claimed £150,000 on expenses over four years.

The third article Billy was shortlisted for was the inside scoop from last year on the investigation into 3aaa, a provider which has since had its funding contracts terminated by the government and is now subject to a police probe.

URNS 300



Our 10 most read stories

1 DfE will scrap forced GCSE resits English and maths



Hits: 35,105
Date: 28/03/2017

2 Apprenticeship giant 3aaa put into administration



Hits: 26,515
Date: 11/10/2018

3 GCSEs vs functional skills: which English and maths resits should your students take?



Hits: 24,965
Date: 01/09/2016

4 Full Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers finally published



Hits: 21,723
Date: 13/03/2017

5 Ofsted reveal new inspection reports - all 13 of them



Hits: 21,611
Date: 25/10/2019

6 Making sense of the 20% off-the-job apprenticeship funding rule



Hits: 21,322
Date: 20/03/2017

7 College branded 'unsafe' in damning Ofsted report



Hits: 20,501
Date: 14/03/2018

8 Special investigation: Over 1,600 jobs at risk after Learndirect fails bid to overturn Ofsted 'inadequate'



Hits: 18,613
Date: 14/08/2017

9 Terminated: Government bans major levy provider after FE Week exposé



Hits: 18,266
Date: 23/06/2017

10 Revealed: The truth behind the 3aaa investigations



Hits: 17,859
Date: 16/11/2018

Timeline of FE Week's design...



EDITION 1
September 12, 2011



EDITION 50
December 17, 2012



EDITION 100
April 28, 2014



EDITION 150
October 12, 2015



EDITION 200
February 27, 2017



EDITION 250
June 29, 2018



EDITION 300
December 6, 2019

News



Pledge to 'reverse privatisation' in FE clarified by shadow minister

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

Labour will not prevent independent providers from accessing public funding if the party wins next week's general election, even though its manifesto pledged to "reverse the privatisation" of FE.

And nor does it want to "dictate the management of colleges or bring them under new forms of control", the shadow skills minister insisted this week.

FE Week approached Gordon Marsden after reading a Labour pledge that said: "We will reverse the fragmentation and privatisation of further and adult education, incorporating it into a single national system of regulation that functions for education as our NHS does for healthcare provision."

He conceded that he would not have used "reverse privatisation", and said that in an attempt to mention "absolutely everything" in a manifesto, "the people writing it try to compress things and there is some degree of

ambiguity".

Marsden said that this pledge was "about ensuring that there is a common system of regulation across the sector".

This meant ensuring "all institutions, whether they are colleges or private training providers, follow the principles" of Labour's proposed national education service's (NES) charter.

"We want to ensure there is a common system of regulation"

"This is not about changing the management of colleges or bringing them under new control, and it is not about private training providers not being able to receive public money," he told FE Week.

"Sometimes there is a broader context in which you have to see these things. There is a big divide between us and the Tories. They believe everything can be done by the market.

"We believe that the market can operate within a set of principles that are common and to that extent give parity of esteem between higher education, skills and further education.

"At the heart of that will be the principle of the provision of universal learning, available as a right."

Marsden said a Labour government would act as an "enabler, not a top-down micromanager from Whitehall" and described its approach as "pluralistic".

"We have made it very clear that we are moving away from the market-driven, fragmented and siloed view of FE – the context of the words used in the manifesto under the Conservatives, which has led to the problems, disparities and in some cases scandals that have afflicted the senior management of a minority of colleges," he said.

"We are committed to promoting a more collaborative and strategic approach, as well as significant extra funding, between colleges and a range of providers.

"Whether people agree with it or not, the fundamental thing we are saying is that the marketised competitive approach this government

has used has not only failed in social justice, it has failed economically. You can see that in the apprenticeships area. We are charting a different route."

Marsden refuted the assumption that Labour was looking to take the profit motive out of FE, but did say every provider needed to be held to account.

"No one is saying an organisation shouldn't make a profit, but that profit and the way in which it makes it and the salaries it pays in terms of ratio between the people such as lecturers and senior management, needs to be accountable and realistic."

FE Week previously reported that colleges' status as independent corporations could be at risk under Labour's plan for free lifelong learning in 2017, after the party's leader Jeremy Corbyn hinted that he wanted to bring them back under local authority control.

Asked to clarify the party's position, Marsden said: "As we've said in the NES charter, colleges should operate with the maximum of democratic accountability at local and regional level.

"Some people tend to talk about FE



Gordon Marsden

as simply a product of government doling out money here, there and everywhere to providers and colleges. The reality of it is we are in a changing universe where you've got mayors and combined authorities and, for that matter, local enterprise partnerships.

"So the 2020s are not just going to be about what a minister of whatever party says in Whitehall about FE or skills or whatever. It will be a mixed universe of these various bodies."

Abingdon & Witney College



Principal and Chief Executive

We are a highly successful, inclusive and ambitious general college of further education with specialist land-based status, and we are proud winners of multiple recent national and local awards for our work. Our campuses are in Oxfordshire, with its vibrant communities, rural setting, and rapidly growing cutting edge technical and scientific economy. Could you be the leader to take this college on to even greater success?

After overseeing the delivery of consistently excellent student outcomes, steady growth,

and securing significant inward investment, the current postholder is retiring in the summer of 2020. We wish to appoint a Principal and Chief Executive who will quickly gain the confidence of our fantastic staff and students, and work credibly with our established partners and stakeholders, opening up new opportunities for development.

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Closing date:

16th January 2020 9am

Interview dates:

11th and 12th February 2020



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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.

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- 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

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- Teachers Pension scheme
- BCG Altitude Plus Membership scheme
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For more information or to apply for this role either visit our website www.buckscollegigroup.co.uk or email hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk.

Closing date - 16th December 2019

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To apply, please send a CV and cover note to ewen@futuretalentgroup.com

Applications close January 17th though please feel free to send in your application before this date.



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 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



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 alternatively email 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.

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Labour leads *FE Week* readers' poll

FRASER WHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

More FE professionals will be backing Labour than the Conservatives at next week's general election, exclusive *FE Week* polling can reveal.

When asked who they would be voting for, 37 per cent of the 542 respondents replied saying Labour; while 27 per cent said the Conservative Party.

Coming in third were the Liberal Democrats, on 17 per cent; ahead of 'don't know' with ten per cent and the Green Party, three per cent.

The Brexit Party has made little impact with sector workers, narrowly avoiding last place with one per cent, little more than the option for 'other'.

A majority (58 per cent) of respondents also did not believe a Conservative government would be good for the FE and skills sector.

And while only a plurality of

respondents (46 per cent) believed a Labour administration would be good for the sector, they were even less sure about the Liberal Democrats: 43 per cent said they did not know if they would be good for the sector.

The Conservative party were the least trusted of the three main parties to carry out their FE and Skills manifesto commitments for a £3 billion National Skills Fund and near £2 billion for capital estate upgrades.

They earned 53 per cent on the least trusted question, compared to Labour with a 26 per cent share.

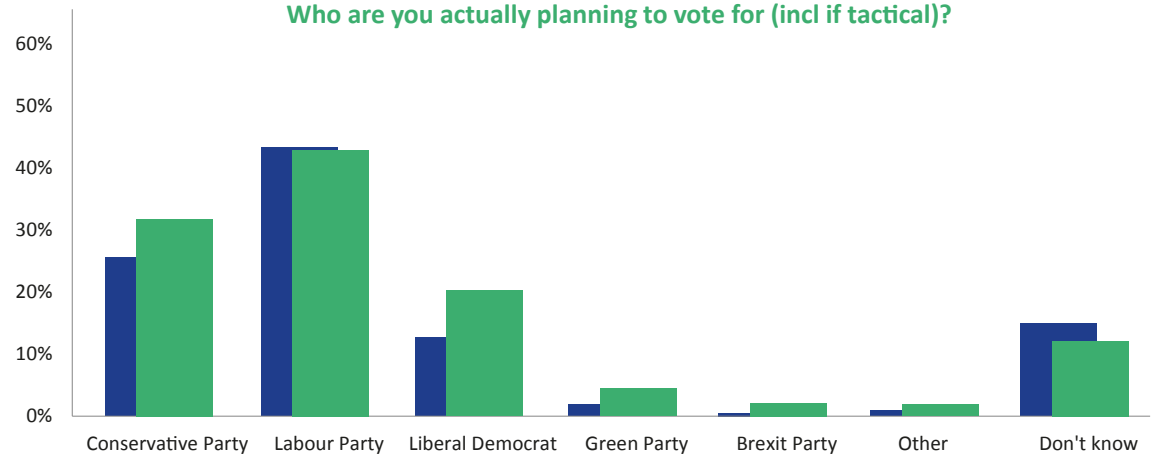
The Liberal Democrats should be happy with a nine per cent share, after coming behind 'don't know', which scored ten per cent.

Labour scored the most for 'Of the 3 largest parties, which do you most trust to carry out their FE and Skills manifesto commitments?' with 41 per cent.

Were survey respondents to vote on what they believed was best for the FE and skills sector, 43 per cent said they would put their cross in the box

On basis of what is best for FE and Skills sector, who would you vote for?

Who are you actually planning to vote for (incl if tactical)?



next to Labour candidates.

A quarter said they would back the Conservatives, 14 per cent did not know, 12 per cent opted for the Liberal Democrats, and one per cent said the Green party.

The one landslide from the questions was for remaining in the EU; which was voted in favour of by 63 per cent of people who answered what

they would like to happen with Brexit.

Boris Johnson may be slightly buoyed by the fact the option for 'leave the EU with the current Conservative deal' came in second... with 17 per cent. Respondents were drawn from across colleges and training providers, which had some very different views on the election.

Thirty five per cent of respondents

from FE colleges said they would vote for Labour, while 39 per cent of PTP voters told *FE Week* they will back the Conservatives.

For further analysis of our survey, read this week's general election 2019 supplement, which also features the full story on the various parties' election pledges for FE and skills sector.

Readers' reply



EMAIL



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CBI: Don't restrict how the apprenticeship levy is spent

Recruitment and Employment Confederation members are paying a tax every month that they can't access. And that's just one of the issues. Agree "no restrictions" is wrong, but we are two and a half years into a policy failure that needs to be addressed now.

Neil Carberry

Serious safeguarding failures at 'college'

Having worked as a lecturer in FE it has become abundantly clear that the priorities for educating young people have changed. My subject expertise has taken a back seat to accommodate safeguarding, a rise in

mental health issues, behaviour management and pastoral care. Preparing our young people for a successful future includes all the above.

Hilary Hicks

It seems to me that the big question for Nottingham College is why it took an Ofsted inspection to make it aware of these issues. What due diligence did it do before and after entering into such a huge subcontracting arrangement?

Dave Spart

Forces for good: ex-military impress as trainee lecturers

I've been on two operational tours, and found being a FE lecturer more stressful!

Sally Howson

Definitely could use their skills in the FE sector. Just not sure the pay will entice them in.

Jo Kitchen

Interim principal joins Highbury College following DfE intervention Great choice of interim lead!!

Donna Maria

Ofsted praises college therapy dogs as popularity on the rise

The double-page spread with all the dog photos was definitely the highlight of this week's edition.

Cath Murray

A dog is for life, not just Ofsted.

Rover

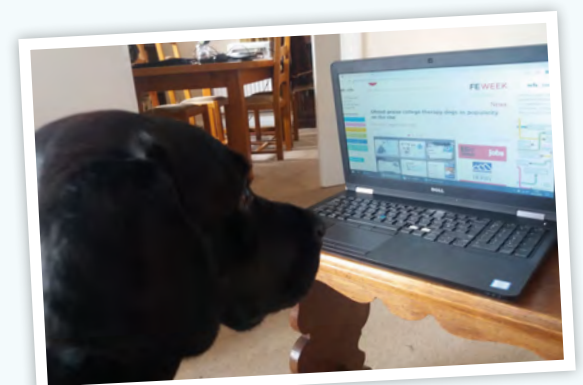
REPLY OF THE WEEK

Ofsted praises college therapy dogs as popularity on the rise



Ernie enjoying the article today about therapy dogs in @FEWeek and excited to see his name in print. He asked me about starting a Facebook group to share best practice. I told him to focus on the day job...

Luke Rake



Experts

ALFIE EARLAM

T-level student, New College Stamford and Quibble Content



T-levels aren't just about the economy. They are about social justice too

While T-levels have suffered criticism and setbacks, the UK government's plan to revolutionise vocational education can benefit employers and students alike. I should know, writes Alfie Earlam, I'm one of the few lucky students trialling them and I couldn't be happier

T-levels will be introduced in autumn 2020, replacing a wide range of qualifications. In the meantime, I am a student trying to open as many doors as possible in terms of my future career and further education, and T-levels are proving to be the perfect way to do this.

Like many of my peers, I'm not sure what I will do after my studies, or even what kind of studies I will continue to do. People who have that level of certainty are rare. But whether you want to go to university or straight into a job once you have finished post-16 options, T-levels prepare you for both.

The qualification works in a similar way to the current apprenticeship scheme. However, whereas apprenticeships require students to learn at a local college one day a week, with the rest of the week spent at work, T-levels include three days at college, with two days in a placement relevant to the course you are studying. Ultimately, 315 hours of work experience are required to gain the qualification.

As Julie Girling, T-level coordinator from New College Stamford, explains: "For students who are looking for a job at the end of the placement, T-levels improve their potential for employment. They provide real experience in the industry, which they can use on their CV."

"More colleges should prepare for T-levels, and it's imperative to get the word out to businesses"

But you don't have to be someone with a clear vision of your future career; the new scheme is a way of trialling what you think you would like to do in the future. For example, a student may want to work as a veterinary nurse, and T-levels provide the opportunity to do this part-time as an element of their qualification – as long as their course

relates to animal care. If, during their studies, they realise they don't like being a veterinary nurse, they can choose to change their course, or to change their placement.

"T-levels stand to make the job market fairer"

So, while more colleges should definitely prepare for this scheme, it's also imperative to get the word out to businesses. Their awareness of, and participation in, the scheme is what will provide willing students the opportunities they need.

Many industries, such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing and engineering, are currently lacking skilled young workers, and apprenticeships are not filling the gap. This might be due to employers favouring their existing employees, but the level of commitment employers require from young people is also too great for many of my peers.

Anna Morrish, owner of Quibble Content, where I'm doing my placement, says that "the T-level programme has brought fresh perspectives, insights and ideas to the business as well as providing additional support on the two days our intern is with us". She believes that supporting the younger generation with their studies is something that should be more common for the business community, especially in those dependent on skilled workers.

If employers are proactive and get involved, T-levels could create a whole new generation of workers who are more knowledgeable and experienced than ever before.

T-levels present another advantage for students who may have little or no work experience. It provides them with an understanding of how businesses work, how it feels to have a job and responsibilities. Quibble treats me as an employee, and that gives me real-life experience and the chance to feel part of the team and to prove myself in the adult world.

This is all to the benefit of industries while also creating the conditions for tackling youth unemployment. T-levels stand to make the job market fairer, allowing students who lack the connections that many entry-level jobs require – due to geography, demographics and culture – to shape a career based on their own merits.

MARIE-THÉRÈSE MCGIVERN

Principal and Chief Executive, Belfast Metropolitan College



Northern Ireland's colleges are more important than ever amid Brexit uncertainty

Amid Brexit chaos and the continued suspension of the Stormont assembly, what Northern Ireland's colleges need most from this election is certainty, writes Marie-Thérèse McGivern

Brexit has created huge tension across the whole of the UK, but probably nowhere more so than in Northern Ireland, a region that voted in its majority to remain in the European Union. The continuing uncertainty about what Brexit will mean practically and Northern Ireland's place in any settlement have created an environment which has had significant impacts already. Unpredictability has caused difficulties in maintaining and landing investment in the region, made businesses reluctant to invest until they have more clarity, and slowed down inward migration considerably, causing skills shortages.

For colleges here, as everywhere else across the UK, the need is to continue to deliver skills for the region that are aligned to business needs. While obvious skills shortages might be thought to at least make identification of those needs easier, decreasing funding presents a big challenge and uncertainty about the region's future economic direction has a paralysing effect.

As if this wasn't enough, Northern Ireland has had to contend with the absence of an Assembly now for over 1000 days, at a time when the region needs one most. There is now a significant backlog of reforms awaiting decision from local ministers in education, as well as health and the environment. The Northern Ireland civil service has tried valiantly to keep the region moving forward and to work for success, but it is a difficult job without a clear mandate or political direction.

The only certainty seems to be that Northern Ireland is facing increasing challenges. A lot of hope here hangs on the election providing the clarity and certainty the country desperately needs, and perhaps even nudging the Assembly towards reforming.

If so, then that resolution won't come a moment too soon for our skills sector. When it last met, the Assembly was moving strongly in the direction of seeing skills, and the delivery of a talent pipeline, as essential to the future prosperity of the region. There was growing consensus that the six Northern Ireland colleges have a central role in developing a new ecosystem for success.

The Department for the Economy have

continued to underline that work. They are currently building the evidence and analysis for a new Northern Ireland skills strategy for endorsement when the Assembly eventually returns, as surely it must.

While Brexit and Stormont divisions have put a lot on hold, the fundamentals haven't changed. Aligning to business needs requires flexible, responsive delivery that can adapt training to a rapidly innovating digital sector at one end and, at the other, a sustained supply of highly trained and motivated workers across more traditional sectors such as hospitality and social care.

Colleges in Northern Ireland have worked hard to increase collaboration to ensure excellent delivery across the region. A concrete example has been the development of specialist hubs whereby each college has become a 'Centre of Excellence' for the sector as a whole, in areas such as digital industry, life sciences and advanced manufacturing. This strategy has allowed us to maximise limited resources to create maximum impact.

"Resolution won't come a moment too soon for our skills sector"

Our colleges are ready to bring solutions to the challenges facing the region, both economic and social. Yes, we work directly with businesses to increase productivity and skills levels in all industry sectors.

But getting skills policy right is about more than that; it is a clear route to increased social mobility too. Colleges routinely intervene in communities with high levels of poverty, giving individuals the opportunity to embark on lifelong learning journeys that are transformative for them and their communities.

Regardless of who forms the next government come December 13, colleges are waiting to play their part in Northern Ireland's prosperity. What they require to do so above all else is political stability and a clear sense of direction.

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



The prominence of technical and vocational education in this electoral campaign is significant for the sector, writes Andrew Morris, but if reform isn't informed by research, history will repeat itself

"You're joking! Not another one?" Not the words of Brenda from Bristol, but those of Professor Gareth Parry as he opened the recent Learning and Skills Research Network (LSRN) workshop on technical and professional education. To see political parties vying for FE policy primacy added a sense of urgency to proceedings.

But a few weeks on, and only a week away from the election, technical and vocational education is out of the news cycle again despite its central importance to delivering the country's future prosperity. The incoming government will have carte blanche to deliver its manifesto.

Unfortunately, as Geoff Stanton, honorary fellow at the UCL Institute of Education, pointed out during the workshop, the track record is not promising. In fact, a recurring motif throughout the day was "echoes of the past", with many participants underlining how today's concerns mirror perennial questions dating back as far as the 1950s.

Historically, government technical education initiatives have tended to require "product recalls". Qualifications have been used to drive sector change rather than improved programmes of learning that directly shape learners' progress and outcomes.

In essence, the requirements of employers that often lead the reform conversation need to be complemented by those of effective teaching, learning and assessment. However, as former Association of Colleges CEO Martin Doel says, the collaboration needed to acquire that balance has

ANDREW MORRIS

Co-organiser, Learning and Skills Research Network



Only research can reduce the number of product recalls in FE policy

proved elusive in a marketised system.

The evidence is clear. The recurrent question of progression continues to blight the technical curriculum offer. Director of the Centre for Vocational Education Research, Professor Sandra McNally cited evidence that despite level 2 qualifications serving to facilitate progression, only about half of level 2 learners actually progress. By just missing a grade C in English, many drop out at 17+.

Designing clear transitions for young people with GCSE grades below C requires research, and so do incentivising local employers to engage, supporting student choices and narrowing the gap at 16+.

Making a difference in the classroom or workshop is also a hobbled process. Professor

Kevin Orr's research in STEM – supported by the Gatsby Foundation – is a shining example of what can be done, but research about effective teaching in specific vocational areas is generally underdeveloped.

Unfortunately, as Dr Sai Loo of University College London testified, the very concept of pedagogy is poorly developed in the UK compared to continental Europe. Where it exists, pedagogic discussion tends to be too locally based. CEO of education data intelligence consultancy RCU, Richard Boniface suggested lecturers could be organised at national level in specialist areas, but once again, that idea is not new. Former principal of City and Islington College, Anna Douglas pointed out that subject associations are important in promoting evidence-based approaches for school

subjects, and that vocational equivalents are long overdue.

And producing better research alone is not sufficient. Ashton Sixth Form College assistant principal, Jo Fletcher-Saxon rightly pointed out that it needs to be communicated effectively to teachers. Thankfully, good practice exists for the sector to draw on. Bryony Evett Hackfort of Coleg Sir Gar set out her organisation's work to build experimentation and enquiry into staff development activity, through teacher-training and whole-college professional development days.

"Research about effective teaching in specific vocational areas is underdeveloped"

Teachers can be encouraged to engage meaningfully with research evidence. The Education Endowment Foundation proves that in the schools sector. While some research conducted in school settings could be readily translated for use in the FE and skills sector, a dedicated and comparable organisation could be something truly new.

If we are ever to assert ourselves, and end the repeating cycle of poor policy and pressured performance, sound research on the specifics of vocational education, applied sensitively to practice and policy, will be central to the solution. Perhaps colleges could even hope for more sustained interest than the occasional policy one-upmanship of an election season.

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Bulletin



Emma Kirk

Director of curriculum,
North Lindsey College

Start date November 2019

Previous job

Curriculum leader, childcare and education, health and social care and foundation learning, North Lindsey College

Interesting fact

She has worked at North Lindsey College for 24 years



Steve Kelly

Principal,
Keighley College

Start date September 2019

Previous roles

Director of 14/19 and SEND, Leeds City College

Interesting Fact

He sits on the education committee at the Crucible and Sheffield Theatres



Danny Wild

Principal,
Harrogate College

Start date August 2019

Previous job

Curriculum area manager, Keighley College

Interesting fact

He sits on a number of professional boards and governing bodies, including the Harrogate District Public Services Leadership board



Matt Lambert

Chief executive, Federation
for Industry Sector Skills
& Standards

Start date December 2019

Previous job

Director of government and public affairs, Cuadrilla

Interesting fact

Having invested in his local gym to turn the business around, he now holds the Club Record for a 15-minute plank

Movers & Shakers

...

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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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

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Last Edition's winner: Paula Flaherty

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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