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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2019
EDITION 301

COLLEGE DELIVERS TV CHRISTMAS TO LONELY PENSIONER



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SURPRISE £10M DEFICIT FAULT OF 'INEPT' STAFF, SAYS COLLEGE BOSS

- Capital City College Group called in forensic accountants in September after concern from new finance director
- Chief executive Roy O'Shaughnessy claims: 'In some cases I think I was misled' and 'my belief is it is still too cosy in FE'

Exclusive BILLY CAMDEN BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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Conservative Party return with huge majority

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FE WEEK IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF



College delivers surprise TV Christmas to local pensioner

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From front

Oldham College learners have teamed up with BBC Breakfast to deliver a Christmas tree and a carol concert to a lonely local pensioner.

After Terrance went on the show to talk about how he had spent every Christmas alone since his mother died 20 years ago, college leaders put their heads together and agreed they had to do something for him.

They got on the phone to BBC

Breakfast to organise Terrance's festive surprise and to find out his favourite carol – *Silent Night* – so they could set the choir to work rehearsing it while

“We were so proud and privileged to be able to help Terrance”

they carried out some emergency Christmas shopping.

A caravan of gifts, singers and a Christmas tree then rolled up with Breakfast presenter Dan Walker around the corner from Terrance's house on Wednesday night.

After Walker went to speak to Terrance, he let in learners from the nearby college to erect and decorate a Christmas tree in his front room.

They then helped the emotional Terrance, who volunteers with Age UK, to go outside and hear the choir deliver their rendition of *Silent Night*.

Terrance also received a specially-made Oldham College Christmas card signed by staff and students, a luxury hamper, wine and gift vouchers.

“This is what Christmas spirit is truly about,” said Oldham principal Alun Francis.

“We were so proud and privileged to be able to help Terrance. His volunteering for Age UK is a real asset to the community – two students were so touched by their visit that they immediately signed up as volunteers themselves.

“We are delighted to have been able to help warm the hearts of the nation ahead of the festive season. This is a story about what represents the very best of us all and showcases the amazing work that all FE



Terrance listening to the Oldham College choir

colleges – not just ours – do with our communities.”

“This is a story about what represents the very best of us all”

Terrance will not spend this Christmas alone: he is seeing his 90-year-old friend Nancy, whom he

met through Age UK.

And as an added bonus, actor and singer John Barrowman has offered Terrance VIP tickets to his *Fabulous Christmas Tour* in Sheffield.

Oldham's musical endeavours do not stop there, however: the college is also in the running to be Christmas number one with its single *Christmas with You*, and all its proceeds will go to Stop the Traffik, a charity that fights human trafficking.

At the time of writing the record has been played almost 4,000 times on Spotify and had more than 4,500 views on YouTube.



Terrance (centre front) receiving his visit from Oldham College students and BBC presenter Dan Walker (far right)

UK WorldSkills competitor to join Champions Trust

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A Team UK competitor has been appointed to the international WorldSkills Champions Trust, making him its sole representative from the country and one of just 11 from around the globe.

Dan McCabe, who competed at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 in 3D Digital Game Art, is also the first person from that skill competition to join the trust, which is part of the international WorldSkills movement, separate from the UK operation.

WorldSkills UK chief executive Neil Bentley-Gockmann has congratulated Dan, calling him a “brilliant member of the Team UK alumni” who will “help champion mental strength in young

people as part of his work”.

McCabe himself has said: “So excited to have been appointed as a European representative for the WorldSkills Champions Trust.

“As many of you know WorldSkills UK is a huge part of my life and who I am. So, this is an incredible honour to go global, becoming one of three European representatives and one of 11 representatives in the world.”

The other representatives are all former competitors and the trust was established as an advisory group to work closely with the main WorldSkills organisation.

The trust works to raise engagement among former WorldSkills competitors, who are known as champions, and promote involvement in WorldSkills projects, initiatives and activities.

McCabe will now have to go through “an intensive training camp” in early 2020.

It comes at a time of increasing demand for the trust's help. WorldSkills said: “Increased requests for former and current Champions Trust representatives to speak at technical and vocational education and training events around the world demonstrates that WorldSkills Champions serve as an authentic voice of youth in the global skills debate”.

The current representatives will hold their posts for two years, when a new group will be selected.

It is the latest international win for Team UK after they picked up two gold medals, one silver, one bronze and 15 medallions for excellence at WorldSkills Kazan 2019, in Russia, earlier this year.



Dan McCabe

News

Loan scandal victims still waiting for debts to be cancelled

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU
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Exclusive

The government has admitted to not contacting any of the hundreds of FE loan scandal victims despite having the power to cancel their debts.

The education secretary has been able to cancel advanced learner loans for learners left in debt when their provider goes bust since July 1, 2019, following a change in legislation.

But in response to a Freedom of Information request, the Department for Education (DfE) said “268 students have been identified as in scope and are to receive a letter to that effect” but “none” of them have had their loans partially or fully cancelled.

It is understood that as many as a further 423 students could be in scope for a debt write-off.

The admission has prompted criticism from the National Union of Students, who said “too often” learners “don’t receive clear and timely communication, and too often they are not given the level of priority they deserve”.

The FOI response said those in scope were previously made aware that they

are “not in repayment in 2019-20 and they will be contacted in the next steps.

“The department is, with the Student Loans Company (SLC) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), currently assessing each case in which a student is in repayment deferment. Students will be notified in the coming few months.”

The DfE would not be drawn on why those in scope had not yet been written to.

The government first asked the SLC to defer loan repayments for affected learners during the April 2017 to March 2018 tax year, and extended deferrals in subsequent tax years.

While individual learners are assessed on a case-by-case basis, former students from John Frank Training, which went into liquidation on November 30, 2016, were expected to be in scope of the new legislation.

Mussarrat Bashir, 55, was undertaking a level 3 BTEC certificate in hospitality at the provider when “a few months in, everything just fell apart” and she was left with an £8,000 debt.

She was later offered a place on a course in Chester, but this was “not viable” as she worked full-time in Stoke-on-Trent, where she had previously been studying on the same site.

Bashir, who now works as a tutor



Mussarrat Bashir (left) with Asim Shaheen, both former learners with collapsed training provider John Frank Training

assessor, said: “Any loan on you is always a restriction. It affects your credit history.

“It is stressful when you’ve got other pressures like family. I’m a single parent, I’ve got my own burdens.”

Bashir alleges she has never received any communication regarding loan repayment deferral and has had to make repayments over the last three years, although these claims could not be verified at the time of going to press.

The SLC and DfE were approached for comment about the accusations but, at the time of publication, the SLC could only confirm that Bashir’s loan is now in deferment and she will be contacted shortly about her eligibility for loan cancellation.

“You just want it off your [mind]. It’s

been dragging on for a very long time now. We should have the assurance it is done and dusted,” Bashir added.

In the response to the FOI request, the DfE said a greater number of 691 students are “currently not required to make repayments on their advanced learner loan as these loans have been identified as possibly being in scope of the regulation.

“If these students have other loans, which are not potentially in scope of the regulation, they will be required to make repayments on those if they have reached their statutory repayment due date and meet the current repayment threshold.”

According to the DfE, those that are determined to be eligible will

be required to reply to the SLC for cancellation to proceed.

Juliana Mohamad Noor, NUS vice president for further education, said: “The Department for Education and the Student Loans Company must work together to ensure that those learners whose provider went bust before they completed their course have their loans cancelled as soon as possible.

“These figures continue to highlight the need for the Department, the SLC and providers to work together so students have clarity on how they are protected in the event of provider failure, including the treatment of their student loans.”

An SLC spokesperson said they and the DfE have “continuously worked closely together to bring a resolution for these customers.

“We have written to them ahead of each new tax year to make sure that they are aware that their loan repayments continue to be deferred, and to ensure that no customer is financially disadvantaged while they await a decision.

“The legislation that allows the cancellation of these loans was enacted in summer and we will be writing to customers in the coming weeks to make them aware of their eligibility to have their loan cancelled and to outline the next steps of the process.”

Top journalism award for *Schools Week* editor

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The editor of *FE Week*’s sister paper *Schools Week* scooped a top gong this week at the prestigious British Journalism Awards.

John Dickens won the specialist journalism category for his exposé of Department for Education minister Lord Agnew’s claims that schools were wasting £35 million.

Judges said the piece was “journalism which had a strong narrative and a significant impact on the political agenda”.

His story revealed how Agnew’s cost-cutting advisers had told one school to reduce its lunch portions and another to keep money it had raised for charity.

The then-prime minister Theresa May was questioned on the findings in parliament amid claims that the advice “belonged to the days of the workhouse”.

Meanwhile, Billy Camden, chief reporter at *FE Week*, was also shortlisted for the award.

His stories focused on the collapse of training provider giant 3aaa, Highbury College’s attempts to reclaim money spent on a failed project in Nigeria, and its principal’s corporate credit-card spend.

Camden’s reports into 3aaa covered multiple government investigations into alleged achievement rate inflation, which led to their multi-million pound contracts being terminated.

The firm subsequently went bust and the case was then referred to the police, who are conducting a criminal investigation.

In January, he revealed how Highbury College was legally trying to recover a £1.4 million debt held up in Nigeria.

This investigation exposed the college’s deteriorating financial position, and saw the principal

immediately block *FE Week*’s website – for one week – from the college’s servers in an attempt to conceal it from staff.

At the time, Camden was in the midst of a Freedom of Information battle with the college after requesting the principal’s expenses from her corporate card.

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

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

Dickens said: “To have two journalists shortlisted in such a well-contested category is a huge achievement and



John Dickens receiving his award

testament to the strength of our investigative journalism.”

Shane Mann, managing director of *FE Week* and *Schools Week* publisher Lsect, called Dickens’ win “an amazing achievement” and added “having both our newspapers shortlisted at these awards was a huge achievement for all of the team. We are passionate

about providing in-depth, investigative education journalism, determined to get past the bluster and explain the facts to our readers. These awards recognised the very best of journalism in the UK and I am very proud that we were part that.”

The ceremony was held at the Hilton Bankside Hotel in central London on Tuesday night.

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News

Shock £10m deficit at CCCG pu

BILLY CAMDEN

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Exclusive

"Genuine ineptness" has led to a surprise £10 million deficit at a large London college group, its chief executive has told *FE Week*.

Capital City College Group (CCCG) had budgeted for a £750,000 surplus for 2018/19, which was revised downwards by July to a deficit of £5.1 million and following an independent investigation in September now sits at an eye-watering £9.7 million.

This latest revelation comes after an already rocky few years for CCCG, in which unplanned multi-million-pound deficits of £5 million in 2016/17 and £6 million in 2017/18 have already led to job cuts.

And its boss, Roy O'Shaughnessy, said he is expecting Ofsted to come knocking for the group's first ever inspection between January and July 2020, and he's trying to "dim the expectations" by self-grading at 'requires improvement'.

He joined the college group as chief executive from the charity sector in September 2018 and, despite the historic deficits, persuaded the board in November to end pay disputes by agreeing that staff on the lowest wages would receive a rise of up to five per cent.

In what the University and College Union described at the time as a "landmark pay increase" the college chair, Alastair da Costa, boasted that "we are fortunate that as a group with some financial strength, we are in a

position to do so".

And at a board meeting the following month the governors were told "there was nothing to indicate that the budget breakeven position prior to taking into account the impact of the recent pay award, should not be achieved".

O'Shaughnessy says he was alerted to concerns by a new finance director and immediately called in the accounting firm Ernst & Young to conduct a forensic two-week audit in September.

They found that the previous finance team were not matching the right costs into the correct financial year and around half of invoices had no purchase order, leading to final costs coming in much higher than was planned for.

"It honestly felt like a punch to the head"

According to O'Shaughnessy, Ernst & Young also discovered that short term agency staff costs had ballooned, the group was over optimistic on some of its income streams, and there were unforeseen additional redundancy costs.

CCCG's board of governors met to discuss the final financial statements on Thursday and agreed to sign off on the accounts.

In a sit-down interview with *FE Week*, O'Shaughnessy says the news hit him like a "punch to the head" when he found out, and said he felt misled by former staff in some cases.

He added that there were no signs



Roy O'Shaughnessy

of fraud, but described the issues as "genuine ineptness". Five top management posts in the group's finance team have been replaced over the course of this year.

Speaking candidly, he said the "single biggest learning" for others across the sector is that "if you are going to create these mega groups, you can't just take the personnel who have been running something one third of the size, move them up, not have the software systems and infrastructure in place and expect those people to do it.

"In any commercial activity where you've got a £130 million organisation you've got to be pretty certain that your four to six key people are really up to the task and [our] finance was incredibly under-experienced for that."

CCCG's total operating deficit for 2018/19 actually reached £16.5 million after its pension adjustment was added.

O'Shaughnessy said he has been in communication with the Education and Skills Funding Agency over the shock deficit and they are happy with the actions CCCG has since taken. The group will not be put into formal intervention, but "light touch" monitoring will be in place.

No bailout funding has had to be requested as the group has "no borrowings, a strong balance sheet and

a strong asset base".

He said the board has taken the financial situation "very personally" but questioned how it wasn't spotted by the group's own auditors "much earlier".

"I'm not sure that if your auditors do not give you a good heads up and your executive team is not on the ball that the governors could know about it."

He added, however, that from an executive staff point of view, he has been "absolutely amazed" by the "complete lack of anyone who is willing to say that they are in any way responsible for this from the day this group was put together".

CCCG's landmark five per cent pay rise costs the group over £2 million per year. Knowing what he does now, does O'Shaughnessy regret the substantial award?

"The fact that we were operating in the blind was a very serious warning to any group, but I don't think that the pay award has in any way contributed to

How CCCG's 2018/19 deficit grew by £4m between July and September

Commercial income: Down £400k

Additional Pay Costs:

Additional agency costs incurred: £600k

Additional hourly paid lecturer costs in year: £500k

Additional redundancy costs in year: £500k

Additional Non Pay Costs:

Depreciation: £400k

Bad debt provision: £500k

Other non-pay costs: £1.1m



FE Week edition 262 reporting on CCCG's 5% pay rise

this massive problem," he said.

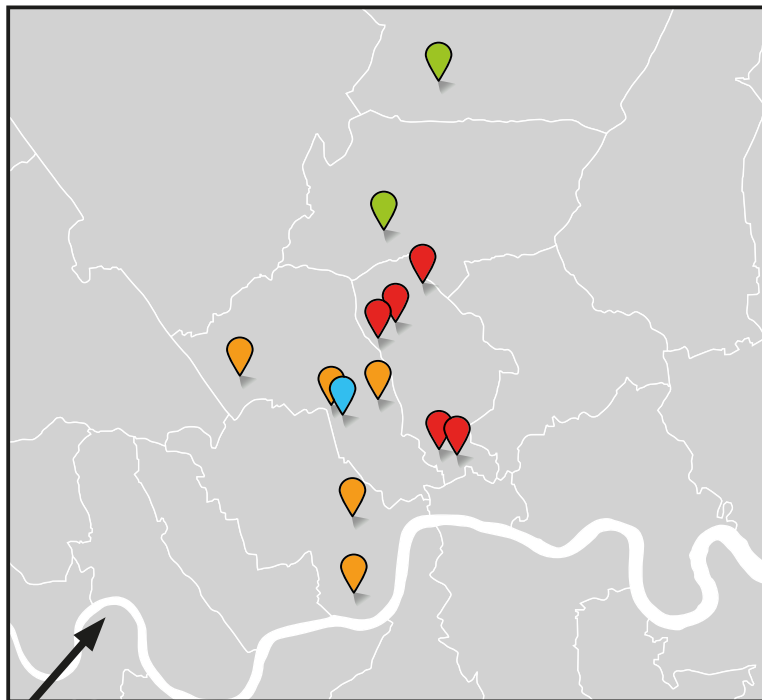
"I believe the FE sector is deceiving itself if it believes it can go year in, year out without balanced, sustainable budgets that include pay awards. I think for us it was right."





Asked if his board agrees, O'Shaughnessy said: "The chair does. I would say the rest of the board haven't expressed strongly that it was a big mistake, but I would completely understand half of them maybe even from the beginning wondering whether it was the right thing to do."

Staff were not given another pay

It's all down to 'genuine ineptness'

Capital City College Group sites



-  City and Islington College
-  The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London
-  Westminster Kingsway College
-  Capital City College Training

award this year.

Breaking down how last year's deficit suddenly grew by £4 million over the summer, CCCG's new finance director, Rachael White, said around £500,000 was redundancies "where we'd been through some restructuring and had additional costs over and above what we originally forecast".

In addition, £1.1 million was for agency costs where a short term or casual worker filled a post. Westminster Kingsway was the main culprit for this and spent £8 million plus VAT on agency staff in 2018/19. O'Shaughnessy said "someone probably dropped the ball" on this spending and White added that oversight of those costs during the financial year was lacking.

The "single biggest failure", which cost the group an extra couple of million pounds, was that around 52 per cent of invoices had no purchase order record.

"I think that's where there was, maybe not a culture of deceit, but a culture of just not being aware of the consequences of not putting on the

table the honest truth and figuring out how the group sits around and solves it," O'Shaughnessy said.

"In some cases I think I was misled but that is probably the case in any organisation where you don't have good leadership management structures."

Lastly, commercial income was down by around £400,000.

White said internal controls were missing, which she put down to the three individual colleges coming together – City and Islington College and Westminster Kingsway College merged in August 2016, with The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London joining them the following year.

"I think a lot of it has been where colleges have merged and there's probably been no re-alignment or reassessment of what is an efficient or controlled environment to work within."

After discovering the issues, White and O'Shaughnessy put in "really quick controls" to "drive our costs down".

"Roy and I have since physically signed every single purchase order,"

White said.

"We've had to put a freeze on recruitment of non-teaching roles. We've been stripping back non-pay expenditure that is non-essential and doesn't affect the student experience. We've been moving agency staff over to substantive posts, so a lot of good stuff."

For 2019/20 CCCG had originally planned for a breakeven position, but following recent months they've revised this figure to a £2.5 million deficit, excluding pension adjustments.

"Around half of invoices had no purchase order"

This would be some achievement considering last year's £9.7 million deficit, but O'Shaughnessy has a plan in place to reach it.

Firstly, CCCG has a house near Arsenal football stadium on its books which it rents out. It has taken the

O'Shaughnessy warns of 'too cosy' FE sector

Roy O'Shaughnessy joined CCCG in September 2018 following a 20-year career in the charity sector.

He spent the previous 10 years at Shaw Trust, which helps disabled and disadvantaged people into employment and independent living.

Speaking as an "outsider", he said he has found the level of staff commitment to be "absolutely incredible" but warned the FE sector is "too cosy".

During his interview with FE Week, he offered the following advice for improving the sector.

"I'm really glad I took the opportunity [to join CCCG], I haven't doubted it except for a brief moment when Rachael told me about the new deficit in September.

"The power of FE to transform lives is incredible – as strong as anything I've seen in the charity sector.

"The challenge we face – and it cannot be impossible to solve – is to balance our budgets whilst providing appropriate pay awards and ensuring effective wraparound services for our most complex (roughly 25 per cent) learners, to ensure all of our learners are given the high quality education and support they need to succeed and to transform their lives.

"My sense is this problem of chronic underfunding has been building for ten years and so anyone thinking that there can be an instant answer has got their head in the sand.

"At the same time, if we are able to come up with fit-for-purpose models going forward, there is no

reason why FE shouldn't lead all of the private training. I think the fixed costs that we have, which constrain how agile and flexible we can be, are a much bigger challenge.

"FE still feels quite a lot like a traditional charity sector model whereby you are paid by inputs or processes. In Shaw Trust, we made the shift to an outcomes-based funding model in 2009 with the Work Programme, and I think it will be important to do the same in FE now.

"People are very afraid of losing the heart of FE. My belief is it is still too cosy in FE, people don't realise the world is changing around them and if we don't adapt others are going to take our space. We need to lead the way rather than saying 'why we can't lead the way?'

"I am a fan of being held accountable for what you're paid and what the results are. I think there should be a very strong correlation between what it costs and what the outcomes are.

"This is a hard thing to say, but I don't think people in jobs in FE actually have had to deal with as much change as the private sector and charities and all those who were dependent on their performance judging what they were going to get next.

"It can sometimes feel like there is a 'them and us' culture in the sector between managers and teaching staff. To win the day we will need to work as one and trust each other that we are trying to achieve the same thing. We will only do this by being open, transparent and honest with each other."

decision to sell it this year, but only if it goes for £1 million.

The group is also planning to consult on a restructure which will mostly impact management, corporate services and back office staff.

"We are now going systematically through our back office services and bringing them down to really benchmark standards rather than what has probably grown with the three groups just throwing people together," O'Shaughnessy said.

"We don't want to be using taxpayer money for any role that is not actually contributing to the student experience."

He added: "We're taking this very

burdensome senior structure that starts with the group and goes down to deputy principal level, really fine tuning that and making it lower cost."

Andy Forbes, who was principal of City and Islington College, left in November and his position hasn't been replaced. Meanwhile Kim Caplin, the principal of Westminster Kingsway College, is retiring in April.

An advert for a new "executive" principal will go out in January but CCCG's new "best" structure, the model of which is still to be decided on, could involve having two principals leading the three individual colleges, with O'Shaughnessy leading the group.

News

The future of colleges: Are we re



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The big news story as this, the 301st edition of *FE Week* and the last of 2019 goes to print is the impending election result. It is an election in which environmentalism may have come of age politically, but also one in which climate change has played little part relative to other issues, Brexit above all.

The political agenda reflects the public's attitudes, and although the environment is strikingly more important to voters today than just two years ago, according to a November 7 YouGov poll, still only 25 per cent place it in their top three electoral issues.

In a recent series of *FE Week* opinion pieces penned by college leaders across the British Isles about what they wanted from politicians' election pledges and beyond, not one mentioned environmental issues.

Yet 2019 is also the year that in less than one week – on April 28 and 29, and

then on May 1 respectively – the Scottish and Welsh assemblies and the House of Commons became the first nations in the world to officially declare a state of climate emergency, only a few months behind Bristol, the first city in Europe to pass such a declaration.

The declaration does not compel the government to act, and therein lies a problem, but this hasn't stopped others from taking their cue, without waiting to be coerced or cajoled.

Among them are the higher and further education sectors. A month ago this week, the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), in partnership with the Association of Colleges, GuildHE and Universities UK, launched a climate commission.

Applications to take part close on the day this article goes to print, and its deliverables won't be clear until January, but it already has some discernible aims. According to commission steering group member Ian Munro, the outputs have to "support institutions to adopt and put

into place actions that will effect rapid change ahead of COP 26 [the UN climate change summit] to be held in Glasgow 2020".

And the launch event has already made clear the need "to develop a framework that will enable institutions to develop long-term plans for significant positive impact on the environment; not only reducing their own carbon footprint but also delivering on ambitious direct and indirect emissions-reduction targets for 2030."

Actionable plans within a year, and substantial impact within the following decade.

Too ambitious?

Meanwhile, the Independent Commission for the College of the Future, which launched a month before an emergency was declared, to this day makes no mention of climate change among the "seismic shifts happening across the UK" on its website's "about" page.

In its November report, the environmental emergency is not one of its five key strands. Nevertheless, the language in which the strands are expressed is clearly influenced by this pressing new discourse. There is a call for a "sustainable funding and regulatory framework", and another for "a coherent skills ecosystem".

"Just a quarter of voters consider the environment a top three issue"

According to College of the Future director Lewis Cooper: "The climate crisis has come up frequently in conversations we have been having with college leaders, staff and students. There is clear recognition that colleges have

a big role to play in mitigating future climate change whilst also adapting to the extremely significant pressures on our communities over the next decade and beyond."

Thankfully, the sector isn't without help. The Society for Education and Training's annual conference in November included sessions on education for sustainable development, which is already impacting teacher and college leaders' reflective practice at all levels nationally.

But writing in these pages, the organisation's Cerian Ayres warned that while most colleges start with a curricular response, they "quickly find that they cannot change curriculum in isolation".

Privately, schemes like EcoCampus have arisen to provide consultancy, training and resources to support colleges to become more environmentally friendly. EcoCampus also provides the kind of framework the EAUC commission is hoping to develop, with bronze, silver, gold and platinum

Ready for the climate emergency?

to push the idea of sustainability on to and up the agenda at NCG long before Bromley joined. Group energy and sustainability officer, Matthew Ward adds that a lot of it is about “policy and procedures, recognising and formalising what we’re already doing”

Any challenge can seem too ambitious if the first step isn’t clear, but as all good teachers and leaders know, good guidance and celebrating successes along the way can achieve the impossible.

The art of the possible

To Bromley, like Cooper, the college sector is central to transitioning to a sustainable, low-carbon economy. The students they serve are a cross-section of those best placed to make that change happen.

“Our campus students tend to be younger, and to them climate change really matters as an issue,” says Bromley. This is the generation of Greta Thunberg and climate strikes. If NCG weren’t acting, it’s probable its students would be making them. But that isn’t a problem for the group, whose ecological credentials predate Extinction Rebellion and the youth climate movement by three years.

“Only four of 40 bronze campus awards went to the FE sector”

awards.

Unfortunately, according to its latest register, of the 40 campuses that have been awarded at least at bronze level, only four are in the FE sector. The rest are universities.

Dig a little deeper, and it turns out all four of those are part of the Newcastle College Group. Deeper still, and it transpires that the online register isn’t totally up to date because, according to NCG’s new chief executive, Liz Bromley, all seven of its campuses are now part of the scheme, and “most are now working towards gold or platinum awards”.

The colleges are operating at different levels within a clear framework for progress. This echoes the importance of local action on this global issue, as demonstrated by Bristol and the slew of town and city councils following in its wake. It also clearly chimes with Bromley’s model of leadership. “It’s about local impact that’s appropriate for each one, while having a consistency across the colleges,” she says.

The scheme’s accessibility helped

“And our older students are working or preparing for industries where sustainability is really important – developing and making electric cars and designing and constructing environmentally friendly buildings.”

Bromley, who has been in post only four months, is clearly passionate. She tells me with pride about Carlisle’s plastic eradication programme, that started with cutting plastic bottles, and is now reaching for a net-positive status through staff and student engagement in community clean-ups.

NCG are also investing in a “fleet of electric vehicles”. For a college group whose campuses cover the length of England, that is no mean feat. Why do it? “Because of the on-the-job training element of apprenticeships, a lot of our carbon emissions come from students’ transport between campus and workplace.”

Yet, if only because of its training divisions that cover almost all of the parts of England and Wales that its



At the lectern is EAUC CEO, Iain Patton, and then sitting down, L-R, is Lizzy Houghton, Students’ Union Activities and Development Officer at University of Manchester, Amy Brazier, Student at Portsmouth College and Lord Deben, Chair of the Committee on Climate Change

colleges don’t reach, there is little chance that NCG can really go carbon-neutral alone. Again, Bromley is ahead of the question. “All our courses are co-created, and our challenge is to make sure that employer engagement is tied into our vision. Our educational mission doesn’t stop with our students.”

Much of the discourse around the climate and environment emergency is alarmist, and often focused on what isn’t being done. The fear alone can make rabbits in the climate crisis headlights of many of those who could act with great impact, including many young people, whose protests perhaps also speak of a level of disempowerment.

That’s why, to Bromley, it’s about “changing learners’ mindsets as well as employers’ practices to ensure the skills sector is responding to the climate crisis.”

At NCG, as well as a group energy and sustainability officer to focus minds, the environment is a standing point of agenda for the principals’ curriculum advisory group to ensure that all areas build sustainability into all aspects of teaching and learning.

“It’s a question of civic commitment,” says Bromley. “Higher education has sustainability targets, but colleges do a lot without recognition. Further education funding is too low compared to HE, and our sustainability targets should be funded in the same way.”

Given the skills sector’s vital position

at the intersection between education and industry, there is a lot of sense in this comment. With college leaders like Bromley and her team, as well as many others already transforming their colleges and communities; with sector leaders such as Ian Munro and Steve Frampton from AoC on the climate change commission, and Lewis Cooper and the Independent Commission for

the College of the Future; education could very well be the new “art of the possible”. And particularly further education.

Beyond Brexit and weeks of electoral promises, this could yet be the issue that truly puts the sector at the centre of the political map. It’s certain to feature increasingly in the next centenary of FE Week editions.



Liz Bromley and Matt Ward

FEWEEK & AELP AAC APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS

AAC Awards 2020 finalists revealed

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The national finalists of the 2020 AAC Apprenticeship Awards have been announced.

Forty-four organisations and individuals have been shortlisted in 22 categories after more than 350 entries were submitted by colleges, training providers and employers.

The awards were first launched in 2017 by FE Week and the Association of Education and Learning Providers (AELP).

Managing director of FE Week publisher Lsect Shane Mann said: "Nominations were up by 20 per cent this year, which is great and shows there is a real appreciation across the sector for celebrating individuals and organisations.

"This particular Apprenticeship Awards looks at employers and providers offering outstanding world-class apprenticeships."

He said the judging panel, which included representatives such as Coca-Cola's Sharon Blyfield and chair of the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network Jason Holt, found it "incredibly tough" to decide the finalists.

"What is great to see is just how much amazing stuff is taking place,

which is a real privilege," Mann added.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony during the Annual Apprenticeship Conference gala dinner on March 3 at the ICC in Birmingham.

Those shortlisted will also be invited to attend a special celebratory reception at the Houses of Parliament, hosted by education select committee chair Robert Halfon, on February 5.

Former apprenticeships and skills minister Halfon received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the first ever AAC awards.

"It was 'incredibly tough' to choose the finalists"

On this year's awards, AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said: "Not only has the quantity of entries increased but there has been a step change in quality of the submissions.

"More importantly I was bowled over by the inspiring work performed across the sector every day.

"It was a lovely reminder of why I do what I do and the impact our sector



AAC Apprenticeship Awards 2019 ceremony

has in communities and businesses across the country, across every sector at all levels of learning."

The deadline for applications for the 2020 awards was extended last month due to demand.

There are two types of awards: Route Apprenticeship Provider of the Year and National Awards.

The former will celebrate excellence in 15 individual apprenticeship routes, and winners will be named "apprenticeship provider of the year". For these awards, judges were looking for high levels of engagement with employers and apprentices, sustained commitment to working with employers in the sector, how provision adapts to meet employer requirements and evidence of high levels of learner retention, progression, positive outcomes, high-quality teaching and tutoring.

Entries were accepted from employers, providers and individuals involved in the development or delivery of recognised apprenticeships in the UK, including both frameworks and standards.

Last year, in the second edition of the event, several new categories were introduced and have been maintained this year, including an award to recognise employers and providers' work with SEND apprentices and to increase diversity.

More than 500 people attended the



2019 award winners CILEx Law School



2019 lifetime achievement award recipient Martin Dunford OBE



event in 2019 and the winners included the Royal Air Force, which took home apprentice employer of the year, In-Comm Training, which was awarded apprentice provider of the year, and AELP chair Martin Dunford, who won the lifetime achievement prize.

The awards are part of the sixth Annual Apprenticeship Conference, which is held in partnership with the

Department for Education, on March 2 and 3.

Across the two days, more than 1,250 delegates will be in attendance, with over 60 workshops, plus keynote speeches from Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman, chief regulator of Ofqual Sally Collier, conference chair and broadcaster Kirsty Wark and much more.



2019 award winners Lifetime Training



2019 award winners Thatchers Cider

FEWEEK & AELP AAC APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS

Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care Apprenticeship provider of the year

British Racing School
Haddon Training

Business & Administration Apprenticeship provider of the year

Abingdon and Witney College
Derby Business College Limited

Care Services Apprenticeship provider of the year

Educ8 Group
Lifetime Training

Catering & Hospitality Apprenticeship provider of the year

Lifetime Training
Remit Group

Construction Apprenticeship provider of the year

Bournemouth and Poole College
Electrical Department
Skills Group

Digital Apprenticeship provider of the year

Sponsored by



Manchester Metropolitan University
Weston College

Education & Childcare Apprenticeship provider of the year

Aspiration Training Ltd
Educ8 Group

Engineering & Manufacturing Apprenticeship provider of the year

Abingdon and Witney College
Uniper Engineering Academy

Hair & Beauty Apprenticeship provider of the year

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ISA Training
Truro and Penwith College

Health & Science Apprenticeship provider of the year

Performance Through People
West Suffolk Hospital

Legal, Finance & Accounting Apprenticeship provider of the year

Loughborough College
Paragon Skills

Sales, Marketing, Procurement Apprenticeship provider of the year

Encompass Consultancy Ltd
Remit Group

Transport & Logistics Apprenticeship provider of the year

Performance Through People
Seetec Outsource Training and Skills

Promoting Apprenticeships campaign of the year

Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group
Weston College

SEND Apprenticeship Champion Award

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Eastleigh College
West London College

Apprenticeship Diversity Award

Arvato CRM Solutions UK
WhiteHat

Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships

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Employer	Provider	Individual
Little Inspirations Ltd	Coventry University	Jane Hadfield, Health Education England
TUI Travel Group Plc	Interserve Learning & Employment	Nicola Drury, Amazon
Government Communication Service (HM Gov)	South Devon College	Sharon Blyfield, Coca-Cola European Partners

Apprentice employer of the year

Amazon
Bentley Motors
Coca-Cola European Partners
Defence Munitions (MoD)
Hays Travel

Apprenticeship provider of the year

Sponsored by



Abingdon and Witney College
Gen2 Training
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Group Training Association
Leeds College of Building
Weston College



The winners will be announced at the AAC 2020 gala dinner 3rd March 2020

News



FE Week's end

January

FE Week began the year with a preview of what was to come in 2019: apprenticeship policy tweaks, the Augar Review and the spending review. Little did we know it would actually involve potentially two new governments; a general election; and a bidding war over cash for the sector.

There were inklings of some of the big events that were to happen, though: we found that Highbury College was locked in a £1.4 million legal battle with Nigeria and we had to report the college to the Information Commissioner for refusing to reveal the expenses of its principal. Also that month, new Association of Colleges chair Julie Nerney wrote for us about harnessing the AoC to help learners, and EMPRA boss Ruth Sparkes advised colleges on how to handle bad news: tell the truth, essentially.



February

Another story that would define the year for further education was Hadlow College, and we reported exclusively in the second month on how the FE Commissioner was investigating the Kent provider after a request for restructuring funds was made. The ESFA also started making headlines this month when it had to delay issuing European Social Fund contracts due to alleged breach of tender rules, while the University and College Union began what would turn out to be a busy year for industrial action, as 13 colleges went on strike over pay. Meanwhile, then-Institute for Apprenticeships boss Sir Gerry Berragan wrote about how the organisation recognised that it can improve how it works with employers. We also revealed the impact of the apprenticeship levy drying up and found that providers were turning apprentices from small businesses away.



March

There was outrage in the sector in after the ESFA began conducting short-notice audits of providers in the wake of the 3aaa scandal, a now defunct apprenticeship provider into which the police launched a formal criminal investigation that month. The DfE itself came under the spotlight when the National Audit Office published a report that warned the apprenticeship budget was set to run out after government got its forecasting wrong. Data troubles bedeviled Dudley College, which had to hand over more than £500,000 to the ESFA for “numerous” late withdrawals of apprentices and work-placed learners. Meanwhile, our former commissioning editor, Cath Murray, visited two specialist colleges in Leicestershire to see how they are getting more adults with learning disabilities into paid employment.



December

FE Week reached a milestone 300th edition this month and marked the occasion with a spread on its best-read stories and a retrospective on its awards success. The paper also produced a front-page story on whistleblowers stating that Hull College had paid them substantial sums to stop pursuing bullying and pay-related sexual discrimination claims. We also put together a general election supplement with our sister title Schools Week, and took each party to task on their promises for education. This month also had a feature on the use of therapy dogs in colleges; with Ofsted reporting the canines have a “calming influence” on learners. We finished it off with an interview with Capital City College Group’s chief executive who explained how its deficit unexpectedly rose to £16.5 million in total in 2018/19.



November

Our biggest win of the year for FE Week was this month when we revealed adult learners were being forced to pay back loans for courses with collapsed provider Edudo which they had not started or were even aware they had signed up to. One such learner, Grzegorz Bogdanski, said all the authorities involved had “washed their hands” of the problem. However, in our next edition we were able to report that Edudo’s prime contractor, West London College, had promised to pay off the loan debt for the 59 victims. Yet more good news came when Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group received a grade one from Ofsted. Principal Karen Dobson said the good result came about because the amount of time inspectors speaking to people on campus “played to our strengths”.



October

Colleges received a welcome boost when analysis revealed 78 per cent of them had received the top two Ofsted grades – “outstanding” or “good”. Following his FE Week debut last month, Gavin Williamson defended his old sixth form after it dropped out of offering digital T-levels, while NCFE and City & Guilds won contracts to deliver the second wave of T-levels. The Association of Employment and Learning Providers held its autumn conference, where chief executive Mark Dawe alleged that sex discrimination lay behind decisions on funding rates. Association of Colleges boss David Hughes also made a headline after he was critical of vice-chancellors spending university cash on “wine and beer”. Hannah H from National Cyber Security Centre also told us why it’s vital that everyone in the FE sector understands their own role in protecting their networks, following a string of cyber hacks.



of year review

FRASER WHIELDON FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

April

Embarrassment for the Department for Education after FE Week exposed cold spots in the country where there was not a single one of the government's flagship institutes of technology. The department promised a review, and education secretary Gavin Williamson has promised eight more of the institutes. In April, we also brought readers a supplement on the Annual Apprenticeship Conference and awards. The two-day event featured speeches from Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman and Sir Gerry Berragan: the AAC awards included wins for apprentice employer of the year, the Royal Air Force, and lifetime achievement award winner AELP chair Martin Dunford. FE Week also brought all the information about the "strengthened" intervention regime – which included placing colleges with "serious" cash flow pressures into formal intervention.



May

Crisis gripped the sector in May when Hadlow College became the first college to be put into administration. An FE Week spread on the scandal told how FE Commissioner Richard Atkins had been "genuinely shocked" by what his team found on site, and how the college's problems could have been uncovered sooner if the ESFA had checked Hadlow's self-assessed financial health score of "good" against its accounts, which told a very different story. It was also revealed that the National College for High-Speed Rail, which is now consulting on broadening its offering and changing its name, needed a £4.55 million DfE bailout to sign off its accounts. FE Week also went behind bars to get a look at prison education: much calmer than an FE college, is what we found.



June

Bradford College skirted insolvency when the DfE threatened to put them under the regime unless Lloyds Bank halved an unsecured £40 million loan. The college did have to cut 130 jobs to find £3.5 million in savings, and the ESFA shared the costs of writing off loans with the bank. That month, FE Week also got to visit Luminate Education Group ahead of the opening of a £60 million campus and after it took on Harrogate College. As Ofsted's new inspection framework hove into view, the watchdog's specialist apprenticeships provider Dr Chris Jones wrote in FE Week that they were looking to focus on "the substance of the curriculum and supporting leaders and teachers who act with integrity".



September

It was scoops galore for FE Week, featuring our front page about Highbury College principal Stella Mbubaegbu's £150,000 expenses, which prompted government intervention. The story, which was picked up by a number of Fleet Street newspapers, reported how she had spent college money on first-class flights, five-star hotels, and lobsters and cocktails. We also revealed how Brooklands College's future was in the balance following a £20m apprenticeship subcontracting scandal, and that the DfE was "carefully monitoring" an investigation into Hull College Group following allegations of nepotism and inappropriate use of funds. The new education secretary Gavin Williamson wrote for us that month, saying that he was "determined to put FE centre stage", and Lord Agnew warned that he would not hesitate to step in on college spending. The first provider to be inspected under Ofsted's new inspection framework also spilled the beans the "very different" regime.



August

No print edition this month, but that didn't mean any let-up for FE Week. Chancellor Sajid Javid announced a £400 million boost for 16- to 19-year-old learners, which he called "the biggest increase for a decade". It included £190 million to increase the base rate of funding for that age group, to £4,188. There was also £120 million to help deliver "expensive but crucial" subjects, such as engineering, in the funding package. Also that month, we jetted off with Team UK to Russia for WorldSkills Kazan 2019. Four days of skills competitions took place at the event, where the UK won two golds, one silver, one bronze and 15 medallions of excellence. The medal winners got their moment of glory at the dazzling closing ceremony, which was attended by Russian president Vladimir Putin.

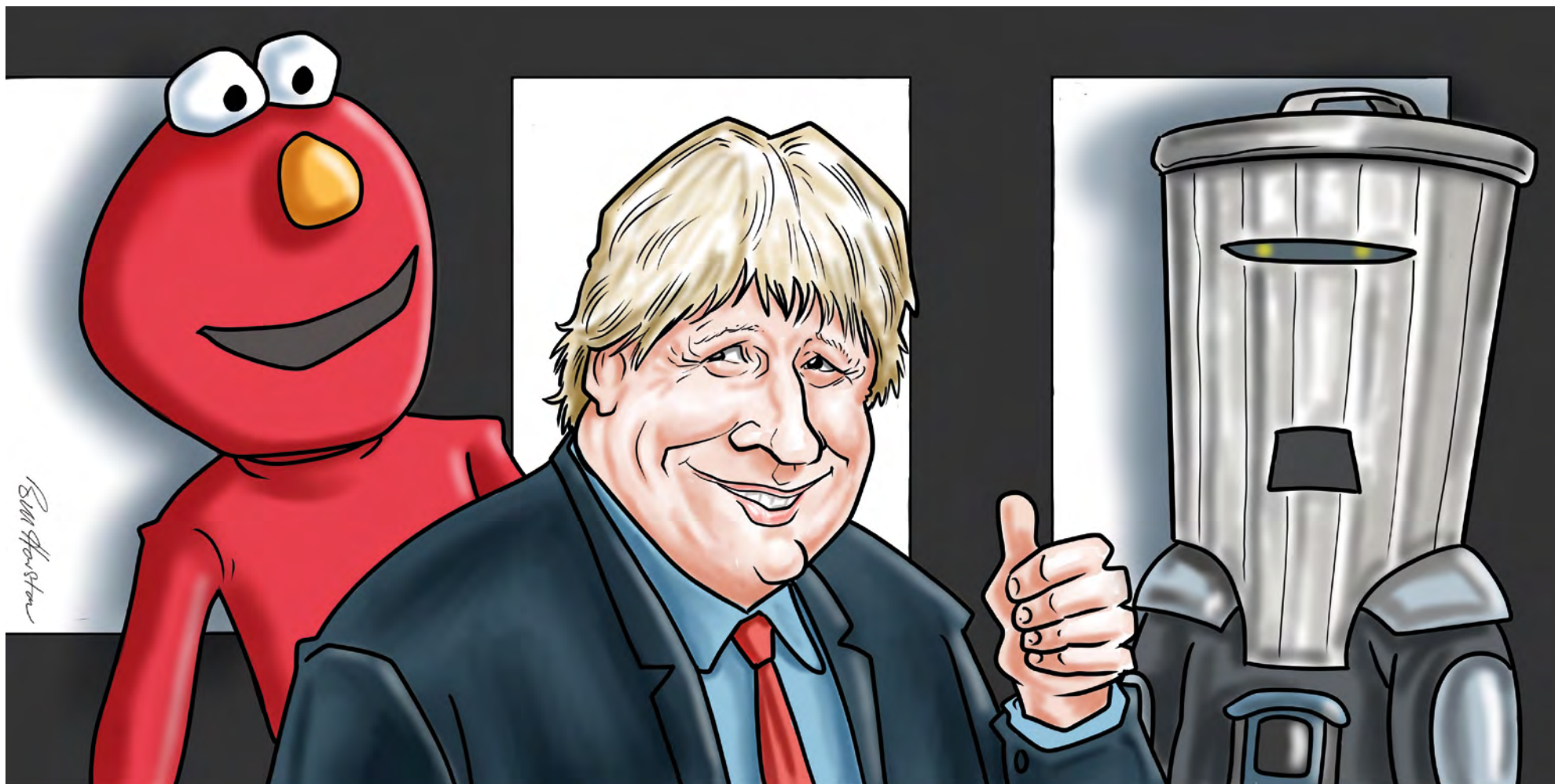


July

There was bad BAME news for the sector after FE Week found only seven per cent of college principals were from an ethnic minority background. Our analysis also showed that three out of nine English regions had an all-white set of principals. Further outrage struck in the further education sector when the ESFA demanded all subcontracting contracts, for both adult education budget and apprenticeship funding, include for the first time a "list of individually itemised, specific costs for managing the subcontractor". Meanwhile, FE Week sat down with Milton Keynes principal Julie Mills, who spoke about completing a PhD on prison staff, the college's institute of technology and some of the other 400 ideas she has "every day".



News



General election results full of drama sees Johnson return with huge majority

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Gordon Marsden and Anne Milton were two high profile FE casualties as the Conservatives secured a 76 seat majority in a dramatic general election.

The Conservative party can now form a majority government for the first time since 2015, and prime minister Boris Johnson will have a number of new FE promises to fulfil.

This includes a National Skills Fund which will put £600 million a year, £3 billion over the life of the parliament, towards creating a "right to retrain".

It is expected the fund will include money for a range of courses, including apprenticeships; and a proportion of it will be reserved for further strategic investment in skills and it comes on top of existing skills and training programmes.

The full details of the fund will be set out in the government's first spending review.

Johnson had also promised to put £1.8 billion into capital investment for further education, which the party said would make sure the entire FE college

estate would be in "good" condition.

However, colleges will have to match that funding with 21 per cent: so for every £1 the government puts in, the college will have to put in 21p.

And in August, chancellor of the exchequer Sajid Javid announced a £400 million boost for learners aged 16 to 19 that will come into effect in 2020/21.

What was missing from the Conservative manifesto at this election was a solution to the apprenticeships budget or a new numerical starts target.

Education secretary Gavin Williamson told FE Week last month the government did want to see a "substantial" increase in the number of people taking apprenticeships, but the focus was on "delivering on quality apprenticeships that lead to long careers".

When questioned about the fact T-levels were not mentioned in the manifesto, he said they were "absolutely the centre point of what we are doing in technical education" and is something the government will be "backing up with cold, hard cash as well".



It is not yet known whether Gavin Williamson will be kept on as education secretary following the election, but he said after being reelected in his South Staffordshire seat: "Thank you to all of you who supported me in my election campaign in South Staffordshire, but also everyone who supported the Conservatives at this election."

He will have to look for a new special adviser, however: his aide Richard Holden has been elected MP for Durham North West, taking the seat from Labour.

In fact, it is not yet known if any of the education ministers will remain in place in the next government.

One person we know will not be returning to the front benches is

Labour's shadow FE minister Gordon Marsden, who lost his Blackpool South seat last night.

Marsden lost out to the Conservative Party candidate Scott Lloyd Benton, 12,557 votes to 16,247.

Also not returning to the Commons is ex-skills minister Anne Milton, who lost her Guildford seat, where she stood as an independent after losing the Conservative whip.

She also lost out to her Conservative opponent, Angela Richardson, who won with 26,317.

Milton was pushed into fourth, behind Labour and the Liberal Democrats, with 4,356 votes.

Elsewhere, Tom Bewick, chief executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, was unsuccessful in his bid to become the MP for Dagenham and Rainham for the Brexit Party.

He secured 2,887 votes, behind Damian White for the Conservatives with 19,175, and then Labour's Jon Cruddas who won with 19,468 votes.

Other leading education figures such as shadow education secretary Angela Rayner and Robert Halfon, the chair of the education committee in the last Parliament, both held onto their seats.



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For an informal discussion please ring Ian Peake, Principal, on 01432 365300

Closing date: Sunday 5th January 2020

Interview dates: Tuesday 21st and Wednesday 22nd January 2020



Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality

Location: West London College **Salary:** Up to £110k **Reporting to:** CEO / Principal

We are seeking an exceptional Deputy Principal to join our strengthened senior leadership team at a very exciting time in our journey. We have made significant improvements in our financial position, and we are now focused on realising the huge potential that West London College has in fully meeting the needs of our students, staff, employers and communities. We are looking for a suitably skilled and experienced person who shares our vision and ambition to be the leading college in west London for technical and vocational education and skills training. The successful candidate will be highly effective in their pursuit of continuous improvement of standards, student outcomes, organisational effectiveness and curriculum efficiency. This role will provide a capable and ambitious leader with significant career prospects and the opportunity to make a major contribution to the educational, economic and employment landscape of the nation's capital city.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION:

West London College is committed to meeting the needs of its students and stakeholders, through collaboration and innovation across its curriculum and student services. Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College – known as West London College - is a large general and further education college with five main campuses at Hammersmith, Ealing, Southall, Park Royal and the west London Construction Academy. The College covers 12 miles across west London and enjoys a positive relationship with both of its respective local authorities; Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham.

In 2017 the College was graded 'Good' by Ofsted and the latest self-assessment aligns the judgements to the new EIF, with a significant focus on the quality of education and the actions being taken to continuously improve teaching, learning and assessment. Courses are offered in most subject areas, with the significant majority being those up to, and including, level two. Around three quarters of all enrolments are for adult learners, mostly studying part-time with the College. The College has a small cohort of apprentices and is looking to grow this provision aligned to the skills needs of west London. The College also has a small cohort of higher education students, which it is intending to grow. Commercial programmes are large and important part of the offer, and the College is seeing success in growing this income strand further.

The College intends to build on its emerging specialisms, particularly around construction and the built environment – a unique partnership between Berkeley and the West London Construction Academy has been awarded the Mayors' Construction Academy kite-mark for the quality of provision. Through the positive relationships with the two major London boroughs, increased 14-16 and high needs student numbers are highly likely due to exceptional student experience provided at the College.

ABOUT THE ROLE:

As Deputy Principal you'll take the strategic lead on curriculum, quality, student services and MIS across all five campuses. With your team of Assistant Principals, your skills and experience of FE leadership will enable you to effectively contribute towards moving things forward, whilst working closely with the CEO & Principal and a collaborative Executive Team to implement the new vision, mission and strategic objectives of the College.

WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

It is expected you will be people-focused strategic leader with experience of leading improvements of a similar scale and complexity to those required at West London College. You will have significant experience of operating strategically across curriculum and quality functions.

Through adopting an holistic approach to developing the College's specialisms of the future, through corporate partnerships and stakeholder engagement, your focus on providing an outstanding student experience will be at the forefront of your planning and everything you do.

For further information about the role, or to arrange a confidential chat, please contact our executive search advisers at Peridot Partners:

Drew Richardson-Walsh
drew@peridotpartners.co.uk
07739 364 033

Sarah Szulczewski
sarahs@peridotpartners.co.uk
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Closing date: 12pm Monday 3rd February 2020

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Our ideal candidate will have a successful track record of leading a large and diverse area of curriculum within a further education context, with strong proven leadership and management skills.

You will lead and inspire this large and diverse area of the College's curriculum, which has an annual area income of over £15m. You will lead a highly responsive curriculum and world class student experience, supporting the development and delivery of the College's strategic priorities.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the ability to take a leading role in liaising with key stakeholders, developing new business opportunities, delivering key income and performance targets and safeguarding students.

In return, we offer a highly competitive salary depending upon experience, a comprehensive benefits package and an exceptional opportunity to lead this high performing area of the College, supported by a professional and positive team who are dedicated to achieving educational excellence.



For more information and to apply visit <https://jobs.btc.ac.uk>

Closing date: Thursday 9 January 2020, 12 midnight

Interview dates: Monday 20 January and Tuesday 21 January 2020



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Faculty Leader

The postholder will be responsible for providing effective leadership, direction and line management for the teachers and staff within their curriculum team and wider remit. They will be accountable for the standards of teaching and learning, leadership of change and improvement and leading on curriculum innovation and development. The postholder will have a teaching load. Positions available in Maths & Physical Sciences/Business, Legal & Finance.

Permanent, full time, term time plus 10 days.
Actual salary range £45,972 - £50,303*

*SFCA leadership scale, terms and conditions, pay award pending

This vacancy closes at midday on 13 January 2020
Interviews/tests will be held: 22 January 2020

Teacher of Engineering (Electronics & Digital Systems)

The post holder will plan and deliver high quality effective teaching, enabling students to enjoy learning and achieve their full potential.

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Teaching salaries in range £24,098 up to £39,329 fte*
**teaching salaries are based on qualifications and experience and will be within the Sixth Form College's Teachers' pay scale range*

This vacancy closes at midday on 3 January 2020
Interviews/tests will be held 8 January 2020

Job description/person specification and details of how to apply can be downloaded from our website: www.eastnorfolk.ac.uk/jobs
EN is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all our students. Applicants must be willing to undergo appropriate screening, including checks with past employers and enhanced DBS clearance.

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.

If you share our passion about changing lives and communities, please email Kelly.Haddrell@abingdon-witney.ac.uk to request an information pack.

Closing date:

16th January 2020 9am

Interview dates:

11th and 12th February 2020



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 or email hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk.

Closing date - 16th December 2019

FUTURE TALENT

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT APPRENTICESHIP COACH AND ASSESSOR

Salary – c. £35,000 - £45,000 depending on experience. London based with some travel. Full time. Permanent.

We are looking for an experienced coach/ assessor for our new Level 5 and Level 3 leadership and management apprenticeships

Future Talent Learning is focused on developing a new apprenticeship training business that breaks the mould in terms of learning quality. This is an exciting opportunity to be at the centre of building a new business from the ground up and to make a real impact as one of our first coaches / assessors. We are a small and friendly team of 15 based in Balham. The role would be perfect for someone who is highly organised, great at motivating and supporting learners and who is enthusiastic

about continually pushing the boundaries of what good learning looks like. Future Talent Learning is part of Changeboard, a job board, media and events business, focused on serving the senior HR community.

We offer 25 days' holiday + bank holidays, 3 additional holiday days between Christmas and New Year, standard pension contribution, the opportunity to work flexible hours and to work from home for a large part of the role. There will be opportunities to progress to a more senior management role overseeing other coaches in the short-medium term.

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.

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EDITORIAL



Johnson government a thumbs up for FE investment but sad to lose Marsden and Milton

The huge 76 seat majority and return of the Conservative Party to government now puts the spotlight on Boris Johnson's FE and skills manifesto pledges.

Significant sums of additional funding for the sector will, we are promised, form part of the government's next budget.

From 2021 there will be, the manifesto says, a National Skills Fund with £600 million of "new funding on top of existing skills funding", a total of "£3 billion over the parliament."

In addition, close to £2 billion in capital funding has been ear-marked

for an 'estate upgrade' over the next five years, starting with £194 million in 2021.

Yes, more can and should be done to reverse the real terms cuts to post-16 funding rates and overall fall in adult education spending.

And, it remains unclear how the impending apprenticeship budget overspend will be avoided.

But the manifesto commitment to nearly £5bn in new funding over the next parliament shows Boris Johnson was serious when he said from the dispatch box in July that he

would make further education and skills "a priority for this government".

And last month the Secretary of State for Education Gavin Williamson could not have been clearer when he told FE Week our sector would be "at the heart of what we're going to do."

So after years of cuts to FE and skills funding under the David Cameron and then Theresa May governments, these Johnson pledges to invest again can't come soon enough.

Far less positive for the sector has been the

loss of Gordon Marsden.

Marsden has been an incredibly hard working shadow minister, at the heart of Labour's education team in seven of the last nine years, promoting the cause for both further and higher education.

He has also invested considerable time explaining Labour policies at our events and to our journalists since the day we launched in 2011, for which I am grateful.

Another champion of FE that sadly won't be returning to Parliament is the former Conservative skills minister and

independent candidate Anne Milton.

Milton fought hard for further education but, and through no fault of her own, she was mostly ignored within a Theresa May led government and Treasury that refused to listen.

Johnson has promised he will lead a government that is now listening to FE and as our readers have come to expect, we will be watching and scrutinising the detail of announcements over the coming months.

Nick Linford, Editor
news@feweek.co.uk

Readers' reply



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FE Week edition 300

That's some achievement, well done.

Ian Pryce

Well done. FE has always been a 'must read' for me. Here is to the next 300!

Tony Allen

Recall writing the first front page lead story for @FEWeek. My one & only article for the mag!!

Neil Merrick

Ofsted watch: 4 'insufficient progress' verdicts in mixed week for FE

Does anyone know the answer to this? How does a grade 4 provider actually turn the situation around? Currently, grade 4

= no RoATP - and no monitoring visit means no way to prove you have improved. Therefore, grade 4 is terminal! Am I right? Or are there ways through?

VIAGETTY

Labour leads FE Week readers' poll

We will still vote for them like turkeys voting for Christmas - Tories have decimated further education.

Mike Daykin

IFS warns FE funding pledges may lead to fraud and poor value for money

Capital's cheerleaders dislike redistribution non-shocker.

Steve Hewitt

UK competitor appointed to WorldSkills Champions Trust

Great to see @DanM3D appointed to this prestigious role.

Jo Maher

Great to read about @worldskillsuk @damm3d in @FEWeek who has been appointed to the @WorldSkills Champion Trust. Huge congrats dan!

Kate Moloughney

Profile: Corrina Hembury

Thanks @StaufenbergJ @FEWeek @NickLinford @shanermann for the interview in the 300th edition! It was great to speak with Jess about my time in FE and Apprenticeships. #AlwaysAboutTheLearners

Corrina Hembury

REPLY OF THE WEEK

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



Genius. Why not invest more money in a failed concept and then justify it by tweaking said concept to make it slightly less useless? Truly great strategic thinking.

Iron Pyrites

Experts

SUZANNE STRAW

Education to Employment lead at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)



T Levels: positive preparations continue but obstacles remain

Support for T levels remains buoyant among schools, colleges and independent training providers, but the qualifications still face a host of challenges, writes Suzanne Straw

This week, NFER published an update to its summer T levels report. Our previous study highlighted significant enthusiasm for the new qualifications, alongside some key challenges. In this latest update, as providers move closer to accepting their first T level students, they continue to be enthusiastic about their preparations and positive about progress regarding work placement flexibility and UCAS points.

However, there remain underlying concerns in key areas, particularly awareness of T levels. Providers are optimistic about the Department for Education's *NexT Level* awareness-raising campaign, launched in October this year, but whether it will gain sufficient traction with parents/carers and prospective students ahead of decision-making on post-16 options

remains to be seen.

In our earlier T level interviews and the roundtable discussion held with providers and wider sector representatives in October, providers raised concerns about their ability to gain timely access to schools to speak to students and make them aware of T levels and other technical and vocational pathways.

Of course, this was something the 'Baker Clause' aimed to help with. Introduced in January 2018, it stipulates that schools must allow colleges and training providers access to every student in years 8 to 13 to discuss the non-academic routes available to them.

However, research carried out by IPPR one year after its introduction showed that the clause had made minimal difference, with more than 70% of colleges saying they were still finding it difficult to access schools in their area.

It will be important that the national awareness-raising campaign is sustained beyond this initial recruitment phase. Providers have set modest

targets for their first round of student recruitment, with an estimated 2,000 students taking the first T levels from next September. To put this number into perspective, there were 594,000 young people in England who were aged 16 at the start of the academic year in September 2018.

“Providers have set modest targets for their first round of student recruitment”

Whilst providers are generally confident about achieving their initial student targets, they are concerned about the recruitment of larger numbers in the longer term, particularly without ongoing awareness raising and further clarification around two other issues of key importance to students.

The first relates to progression routes from T levels. Providers we spoke to welcome the allocation of UCAS points. However, universities are free to decide whether they will accept the qualifications. Reservations have already been expressed by Russell Group universities and questions raised regarding the types of courses T level students may be able to progress onto. The decisions of Russell Group universities could influence other universities and have the potential to tarnish T levels in the minds of parents/carers and prospective students.

Further questions remain around progression to apprenticeships. Although challenging to deliver, the time allocated to the industry placement is an important selling point for T levels. However, there is still uncertainty as to whether completing a T level will enable learners to progress onto a level 4 apprenticeship due to lack of occupational competencies. This is a particular issue for more practically-orientated apprenticeships such as

construction and engineering.

Other potential challenges expressed by providers in recruiting students relate to the size of the qualification and the number of guided learning hours. For young people reliant on part-time jobs and/or who have caring responsibilities, the time commitment may prove too great and at odds with the current flexibility provided by qualifications such as BTECs, which are available in a range of sizes and can be studied alongside A levels.

These are just a few of the concerns expressed to us throughout our conversations with providers over the course of this year. The enthusiasm and commitment of the colleges, independent training providers and schools we have spoken to is not in question. They are determined to be as ready as they can be for September 2020 and to deliver high-quality qualifications. However, whether students will have sufficient awareness, understanding and confidence to choose them remains to be seen.

BILL JONES

Principal, Leeds City College and deputy CEO, Luminate Education Group



We should recognise incremental progress in GCSE exam re-sits

The GCSE re-sits policy continues to be controversial, but it's really a matter of emphasis, writes Bill Jones. To prioritise their students, colleges should focus on progress rather than pass/fail measures

Back in 2015, government introduced a policy that required colleges to support students who had narrowly missed out on GCSE grade 4 in maths or English to continue with those subjects or risk funding. That policy was controversial, and continues to affect the sector, but in the face of some baffling criticism, Luminate Education Group decided to plough its own furrow.

Rather than acquiesce to a policy that would keep our students in a cruel cycle of re-sits; and rather than lowering our bar by releasing those who had narrowly missed out on a grade 4 to study the functional skills instead, we insisted that even those who had achieved a level 2 (totalling over 2,500, or over 40%, of our 16-18

year-old students) should pursue the GCSE in maths and/or English.

That decision was led by two key factors. First, judging by its low national pass rate at levels 1 and 2, the functional skills qualification is difficult for many students to achieve. It is not a soft option. Furthermore, it isn't recognised by many employers, or valued by many students.

“GCSEs, rightly or wrongly, are a much better passport for our students”

The allure of GCSEs, rightly or wrongly, is that they are a much better passport to well-paid, secure employment and higher education. Securing that advantage for as many

of our students as possible is essential if we are to be the vehicle of social mobility that the further education sector proudly claims to be.

Many of our students come from very deprived backgrounds. Over 50 per cent are from the lowest decile on the index of multiple deprivation. Many are highly able and very motivated but have underachieved for diverse reasons. Unsurprisingly, many have low levels of confidence and poor self-esteem. They are capable of so much more than their GCSE grades suggest and we are convinced that changing mindsets around a crude pass or fail distinction can benefit them hugely.

Focusing on progress rather than pass rates takes the pressure off students and allows them to focus on the skills and subjects that they need more development in. We provide coaching and confidence-building activities alongside the more conventional English and maths input.

It isn't without its challenges. Like

many colleges, we struggle to recruit and retain English and maths teachers who have the skills and qualities to work with the sheer number of students with complex and diverse

“We've worked on a 'grow-your-own' pipeline of future teachers”

needs on our rolls, some of whom can exhibit challenging behaviours. In response, we've worked on a "grow-your-own" pipeline of future teachers and coaches who learn their craft alongside fully qualified and experienced peers, overseen by some truly marvellous advanced practitioners and managers. This is beginning to bear fruit.

Our English progress scores have

increased from -0.45 in 2016 to +0.14 in 2019, a move from Quartile 4 to 1 in three years. Maths progress scores have increased from -0.51 in 2016 to -0.10 in 2019, a move from Quartile 4 to 2. We are delighted with the results, but we know we can develop and improve the model so much more. As with our students, so with us. It's not about passing or failing an external test, but about the progress we make and continue to make.

As an organisation, we are determined to increase still further the proportion of those who narrowly missed out at school who go on to achieve a grade 4 or higher.

We are convinced that our approach is a good one. It is by far the best way to keep our expectations high for all of our students and to demonstrate our belief in their potential. At least, that will remain true until government policy changes and there are better options than a binary choice between GCSEs and functional skills.

TOM LONG

Employment law partner and education sector specialist, Shakespeare Martineau



NDA: demystifying the notorious 'gagging' order

Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are often perceived as a tool to suppress or cover up inappropriate behaviour, writes Tom Long. But do they deserve their shady reputation?

This week, *FE Week* revealed an investigation into Hull College's alleged extensive and inappropriate use of NDAs. It follows reporting earlier this year by the BBC that universities were misusing them, and by *Schools Week* that their use is on the rise in large multi-academy trusts.

In the wake of the #MeToo scandal, public awareness about NDAs has grown significantly, but they are shrouded in mystery and suspicion. At their base level, they are simply tools to ensure confidentiality. This could be through the drafting of a standalone agreement, or through a confidentiality clause as part of a wider settlement agreement, which compels two parties to hold information confidentially.

In practice, these types of clauses

are most often used when an employer terminates someone's employment and there needs to be a level of certainty that the exiting individual won't use any insider information to damage the business, or won't make any derogatory comments about their former employer, for example. By signing a settlement agreement, in return for a payment, the employee waives all claims against their former employer.

NDAs become problematic when there are background circumstances around the termination of employment which are covered up, and the employee is left feeling "gagged" and unable to expose mistreatment.

The idea of simply paying someone to prevent them from telling their story resonated with the public and fuelled scrutiny around the widespread misuse of NDAs as a result of the #MeToo scandal. To see this affecting one college prominently this week, and perhaps others, is concerning.

Their use in the education sector

is by-and-large no different from any other industry. They are a standard tool used by employers when terminating employment contracts. However, because of the large amounts of public funding received by education institutions and their status as public organisations, higher standards of

"Their alleged misuse has cast them in a bad light"

behaviour are expected when taxpayers' money is at stake.

Their alleged misuse has cast them in a bad light, but NDAs form a perfectly normal part of business, particularly where there are genuine commercial reasons for including a confidentiality clause in a settlement agreement.

Employers should however assess

carefully, on a case-by-case basis, whether to use a confidentiality clause and what information it should restrict.

In the serious situation that the employee has been subject to harassment or discrimination, employers should think long and hard about whether it is appropriate to put in place an agreement which would prevent them disclosing their treatment.

Instead, if there are genuine commercial reasons to seek some confidentiality provisions as well as allegations of discrimination or harassment, it would be wise to state that an additional, separate investigation is ongoing to provide reassurance that the allegations are being taken seriously.

Individuals can disclose information as whistleblowers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. However, this is narrow in scope and permits them in most circumstances only to talk to their employer, which is not entirely helpful.

NDAs are firmly on the political

agenda, and tweaks to the legislation are likely to be on the way following a government consultation. Rather than full reform, the amendments would expand disclosure rights, allowing employees to take any sensitive information to the police, healthcare professionals and legal advisers.

Updates are also going to be accompanied by widespread guidance, from parties such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, ACAS and the Solicitors' Regulation Authority, to ensure that individuals are receiving the best possible advice when faced with a confidentiality clause.

NDAs – and confidentiality clauses – are here to stay and they play an essential role in many everyday business operations. Unfortunately, their alleged misuse in the education sector and beyond has made them a focus for public distrust. Education institutions must tread carefully to ensure they are using them in the most legitimate and effective manner.



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Bulletin



Hayley Wilcox

Director of quality and operations, InterLearn

Start date January 2020

Previous job

Interim director of quality, InterLearn

Interesting fact

She is an avid supporter of Derby County football club, and has even seen them play at Wembley before



Thomas Hamilton-Dick

Deputy principal, North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

Start date Spring 2020

Previous job

Executive director of curriculum, Nottingham College

Interesting fact

He has a background in the media and once worked in the USA as commercial camera operator



Dr Cilla Ross

Principal, WEA

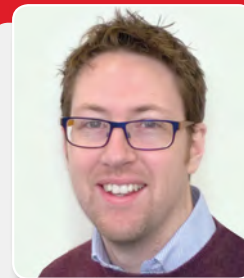
Start date December 2019

Previous job

Vice principal, WEA

Interesting fact

She inspired a group of young women impacted by the pit closures in South Yorkshire to go on to study, and saw them graduate from Sheffield University years later



Dean Hardman

Director of sport and student experience, Association of Colleges

Start date February 2020

Previous job

Head of commercial and member engagement, England Athletics

Interesting fact

He won a sitcom writing competition in 2009 for his piece on a Nigerian hairdresser, a Latvian minicab driver and an English slacker living together

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

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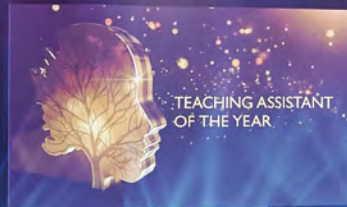
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FE Week Sudoku challenge

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



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



Last Edition's winner: Laurence Ford

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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