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FEWEEK

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2020
EDITION 309



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WE HAVE A WINNER...



...Gillian Keegan profiled in her first interview as the new apprenticeships minister

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UNDECLARED £20K BONUS 'HONEST ERROR'

- › College finally reveals 2018 payment amid DfE crackdown on transparency
- › Bonus doubles to £40k in 2019 from subsidiary business in Saudi Arabia

Exclusive

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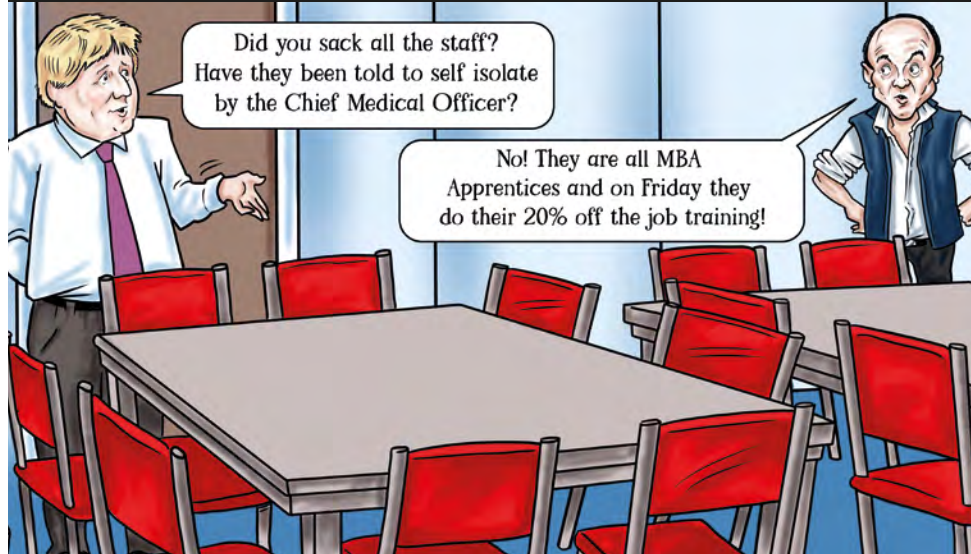
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FE WEEK IS PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF



Keegan honours skills mentor Milton at apprenticeship gala

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New apprenticeships and skills minister Gillian Keegan believes the job is “the perfect role for me in government”.

She made the statement during her first public engagement in post at the Annual Apprenticeship Conference’s gala dinner and awards ceremony (see page 20) on Tuesday evening.

Keegan said she was “delighted” to join the Department for Education and understood the sector had been waiting for the position to be filled “for a long, long time”.

The new parliamentary under-secretary of state received rapturous applause and cheers from both the nominees and attendees.

Keegan continued by saying it was “fantastic to follow in the fabulous footsteps” of her friend and mentor Anne Milton, who previously held the

responsibilities until she resigned from government in July 2019 due to “grave concerns about leaving the EU without a deal”.

The MP for Chichester thanked Milton for previously making her an apprenticeship ambassador and said it was “brilliant” to also see Gordon Marsden, former shadow skills minister, at the dinner as they had “done lots of work together” while she was co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group for apprenticeships.

Before entering politics, Keegan – who claims to be the only degree apprentice in the House of Commons – told delegates how she spent nearly 30 years working in multinational businesses.

During this period, she stated she was responsible for building teams, recruiting people in many sectors, across many countries, and in “fast moving” technology.

Keegan said she has “faced the skills gap many times, in many parts of my

career so I get exactly what businesses are solving for and how important apprenticeships and skills training is to businesses and their success”.

The minister joked that her comprehensive school in Merseyside was not “Liverpool’s Eton equivalent” and explained that she left school at 16 to become an apprentice, which was her “only option”, describing it as a “life changing moment”.

She concluded that “the way I look at apprenticeships, and particularly degree apprenticeships, is they’re a different route to get to the same destination”.

The self-proclaimed “huge fan” of apprenticeships was then introduced to each table after her speech, as she said it was “important for me to be able to come to say hello” and that she “very much” looks forward to working with everyone.

While she is one rank below that of the minister of state role her predecessor held, Keegan’s



Gillian Keegan

responsibilities remain mostly the same as Milton’s.

These include strategy for post-16 education (jointly with universities minister Michelle Donelan); technical education and skills, including T-levels and qualifications review; apprenticeships, including traineeships; the FE workforce and FE provider market, including quality and improvement and further education efficiency.

Keegan also covers adult education,

including the National Retraining Scheme and basic skills; Institutes of Technology and National Colleges; reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training and careers education, information and guidance, including the Careers Enterprise Company.

Milton, the former MP for Guildford, held the skills minister role from June 2017 to July 2019.

Read our full profile with Keegan on page 16.

2,500 learners affected as provider goes bust

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Exclusive

A training provider with more than 2,500 learners has entered administration, FE Week has learned.

Progress to Excellence Ltd (PtE) has closed down two months after it was judged ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted, leaving apprentices desperate for help to finish their course.

PtE’s financial accounts showed there were 140 employees for the year ended March 31, 2018 but it is unclear how many people the firm employed when they went bust.

Global consulting firm Duff & Phelps have been appointed as the administrators but were unavailable to comment at the time of publication.

Affected learners have taken to the comments section of FE Week’s website to complain that they received short to no notice about the closure over the last two weeks. Many of them said they were due to complete their programmes in the coming weeks.

One adult learner said PtE “owe a lot of people an apology” while another added they were “very angry and

shocked”.

A student who was hoping to finish in March also commented they had thought the course was their “way forward but [its] gone to nothing”.

Moreover, an apprentice due to complete a level 5 claimed to have been “totally left in the dark [as] to what will happen next,” having received no correspondence, and said they only found out through FE Week’s website following a report on PtE’s grade four in January.

The company confirmed at the time that it would be exiting the apprenticeship market with immediate effect, and would also be stopping to offer funding for courses via advanced learner loans.

Katy Lennon, then acting chief executive officer, previously told FE Week: “All employers and learners are being notified of this situation, and where necessary, they will be supported by ourselves and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to find suitable alternative training to support their professional development.”

FE Week attempted to contact the provider’s bosses this week but did not receive a response.

This week, a Department for Education spokesperson said:

“Following an inadequate Ofsted report, Progress to Excellence Ltd notified us of its intention to file for administration. As a result of this notification a termination letter was issued for the apprenticeship provision.

“We are acting swiftly to secure alternative high-quality provision for the learners that are affected.”

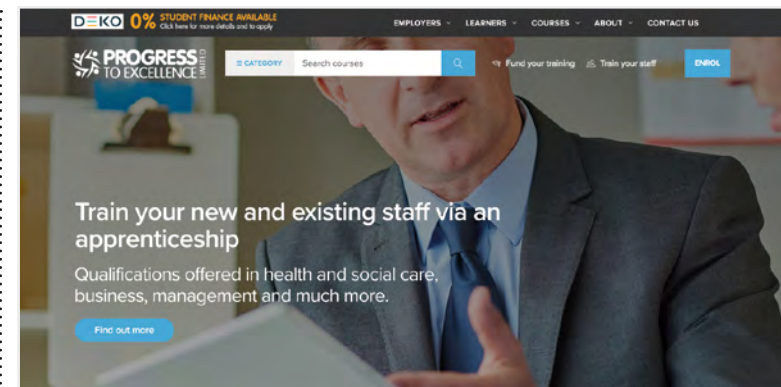
It has also set up a dedicated email, progress-to.EXCELLENCE@education.gov.uk for enquiries from concerned learners, parents or employers.

At the time of inspection in December, there were 2,008 apprentices, 609 adult learners and “a very small number of learners on traineeship programmes” at the Wirral-based provider.

The education watchdog reported that PtE’s leaders’ and governors’ growth strategy to expand the curriculum “had a negative impact on the quality of education and training that apprentices and learners receive”.

“Too many” apprentices and learners experienced “disruption to their learning because of staffing issues”, who told inspectors that they were “having a poor experience”.

A former assessor at PtE, who wished to remain anonymous,



supported Ofsted’s findings and told FE Week it was “like a revolving door there”.

They said that some staff members had warned the firm its expansion was going “far too quickly” and “if things do not change, there will be no company”. In the provider’s 2015 Ofsted report, it trained 1,900 learners.

The ex-employee also claimed the experience “totally put me off getting another job in education”.

PtE, which was established in 1997, dropped from grade two to grade four in January.

Its apprenticeship programmes included health and care, business and engineering and manufacturing at levels 2 to 5 while adult learners, who all used advanced learner loans to pay

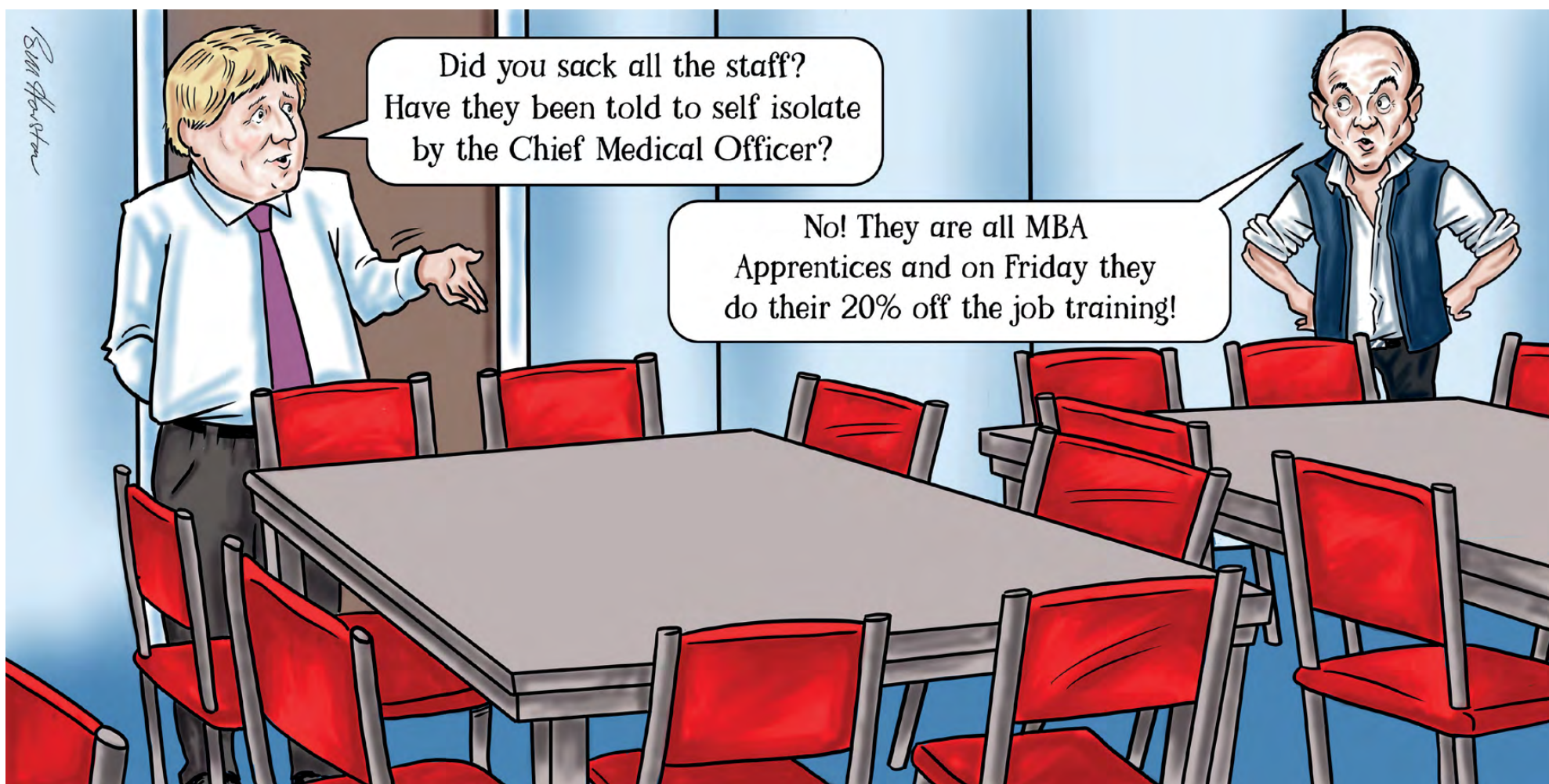
for their courses, studied hairdressing, beauty and fitness at level 3 and 4.

PtE subcontracted out around 250 apprentices to four subcontractors.

Despite action being taken by the new chief executive after she identified a decline in quality, “too many apprentices” told Ofsted they were having “a poor experience” and about one-fifth of current apprentices were beyond their planned end dates. In 2017-18, more than one-third of apprentices did not achieve their apprenticeship.

The inspectorate said governors failed to hold previous senior leaders to account, apprentices were routinely not placed on the right apprenticeship and training and assessment officers did not ensure that all learners are on the correct programme.

News



Controversial MBAs prove a hit in Whitehall departments

FRASER WHIELDON
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Exclusive

Whitehall is lapping up the MBA apprenticeship that the education secretary Gavin Williamson is “unconvinced” provides value for money, FE Week has found.

The Department for Work and Pensions told this newspaper it had 86 on the controversial programme, including those in the application process, while the Ministry of Defence has 17, with seven being “onboarded”.

And the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport had two taking the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship standard with the Open University.

The Department for Education itself has 34 staff on the programme.

Several government departments – including the Home Office, Cabinet Office, and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – said they had none.

Williamson made his comments in

a letter to Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education chief executive Jennifer Coupland ordering a review of the standard last week, adding: “I recognise that looking again at this standard may be unpopular with some levy payers.

“Whilst respecting the decisions that employers make about which apprenticeships and apprentices are best for their organisation, I am of the view that we absolutely need to safeguard the integrity of the apprenticeship brand and value for money of the levy.”

Shadow further education minister Emma Hardy has gone further by calling for degree apprenticeship funding to be limited to people aged under 25, those without a first degree, and in sectors with skill shortages.

She told the Annual Apprenticeship Conference this week the government’s “rushed implementation of the apprenticeship levy has resulted not in an increase in apprenticeship opportunities for the most disadvantaged, but quite the opposite”.

Oftsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman used her speech at

conference to express concerns that doubling the number of higher-level apprenticeships in general between 2016/17 and 2018/19 is to blame for a 45 per cent drop in starts at level 2 during that period.

However, the chief executive of the University Vocational Awards Council’s chief executive Adrian Anderson has defended keeping the MBA apprenticeship as “apprenticeships have just as important, if not more important, role in developing new progression routes and higher-level occupations for under-represented cohorts” as supporting them into lower-paid jobs.

He added that stopping the senior leader apprenticeship would have a “detrimental effect” on the NHS and police, which UVAC believes to be among the biggest users of the standard.

FE Week found several hospital trusts advertise the level 7 apprenticeship on their websites, and Health Education England, which oversees training for NHS staff, reported it has 13 staff on an apprenticeship with an MBA.



The Department for Health and Social Care does not have any.

“Government should be proud of the policy success of the apprenticeship reforms,” Anderson continued.

“The integrity of the apprenticeship brand is not being damaged. Apprenticeships are increasingly being seen as an aspirational programme and not just a programme for other people’s children.”

But degree apprenticeships like the senior leader standard, which has a

maximum funding band of £18,000, have been criticised for taking up great chunks of the apprenticeship budget.

The National Audit Office said employers are developing and choosing more expensive standards at higher levels than was expected by the Department for Education, which was “absorbing” more public funding.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education predicted in 2018 the levy could soon be overspent.

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News

Colleges on the frontline in the battle against knives

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Exclusive

Knife crime in colleges has more than doubled in recent years, new figures suggest, which has prompted leaders to introduce metal detectors and enforce bag searches.

The data obtained by FE Week from 22 of the 39 police forces in England reveal that almost 400 offences with the bladed objects have been recorded in colleges since 2015.

There were 39 in 2015, a figure that rose to 64 and then 71 in the following two years respectively. Offences in colleges peaked at 120 in 2018, but declined to 104 last year.

Knife crime more generally has been steadily on the rise since records began in 2011, according to the Office for National Statistics. However, the ONS cautions that “data can be affected by changes in recording practices, policing activity and victims’ willingness to report crime”.

While each police force has different methods of recording the data, the offences included possession, assault, threats or use of violence, grievous bodily harm, wounding, harassment, rape, robbery, criminal damage and affray.

“Carrying weapons doesn’t make students safe, it puts them more at risk”

However, full national figures for college offences are likely to be much higher than this because the London Metropolitan Police, which records the highest knife crime rates across the whole country annually, refused to release data in response to FE Week’s Freedom of Information request.

The findings come a month after two students were stabbed near a college in Cheshire and another teenager was attacked by the entrance to a college in Northampton.

College bosses across the country have reacted to the growing problem by investing thousands of pounds in new



equipment, but some have warned they are often restricted by a lack of funding.

Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG) searched and screened a total of 514 students across their two sites in September 2019 and January 2020, using handheld metal detector wands and random selection generators.

The group spent almost £3,300 on the equipment and training, of which £1,000 was awarded by Newcastle Borough Council.

Lesley Morrey, director of student engagement and partnerships at NSCG, said there were no “areas of concern” and the only object found was a fruit knife. “We want [students] to understand that carrying weapons doesn’t make them safe, it puts them more at risk,” she told FE Week.

Students “felt that we were taking their safety very, very seriously” and parents had praised the measures at open evenings. As a result, she believes the policy has “paid dividends” and had “the desired impact”.

Jayne Holt, assistant principal for learning services at Walsall College, said her college has “always worked proactively” with West Midlands Police to carry out knife arch operations as well as undertaking other safeguarding measures within the institution and alongside other agencies.

East Coast College principal Stuart

Rimmer also told FE Week the college uses targeted and random bag searches in combination with tutorial sessions on knife crime. He said: “Working in the prevention space feels positive and is well received by students.”

London South East Colleges established a “Twilight College” in 2019, as a result of several high-profile reports of knife crime in the capital. It delivers extra-curricular activities four days a week from 4pm to 6pm, when students may be more vulnerable to becoming a victim of knife crime on their way home.

This month, survey results from the college found 82 per cent of students agreed that they felt safer travelling home after attending, and four-fifths would like to be able to stay even later.

Principal Sam Parrett said expanding the initiative with “limited resources is challenging and we have had to (and will continue to) divert resources to it”.

“We would like this to be recognised with additional funding to support our capacity to develop this important area of work,” she added.

An Ofsted research report into knife crime in London from March 2019 found the “biggest barrier” that colleges face when tackling the issue was the cost.

Further data released in September 2019 by the education watchdog found that seven colleges in the capital use

knife detection wands and six use knife arches. It also showed that five use stop-and-search, and seven use “anonymous reporting procedures”.

The inspectorate reported the common denominator of students who were found carrying bladed objects was their “vulnerability”, with almost all having experienced poverty, abuse, neglect or living within troubled families.

Iryna Pona, policy manager at the Children’s Society, which works with young people at risk of, or affected by, criminal exploitation, said the data obtained by FE Week was “a real worry”.

“Exclusions only provide them with more time to spend on the street getting into trouble”

“Colleges could do more to spot the early warning signs that a student may be at risk,” she continued.

According to Pona, “too often” there is a rush to exclude students. She claimed colleges should work to understand and address the underlying

reasons for concerning behaviour, and that colleges should raise incidents of a young person carrying a knife with their local children’s social care team as a safeguarding concern.

“We know that funding cuts mean capacity can be an issue and the government must ensure all colleges have the resources they need,” Pona added.

A 2019 report by the all-party parliamentary group on knife crime also found colleges were said to not always engage well with students who were starting to get involved with street gangs or low-level criminal activity, with permanent or temporary exclusions only providing them with “more time to spend on the street getting into trouble”.

David Hughes, chief executive of the Association of Colleges, said: “Knife crime is a complex and worrying issue which AoC is working on with a range of national agencies and policy makers.

“We know that colleges take safeguarding and the security of their staff and students extremely seriously, based on a strong culture of non-violence. Sadly, there have been some serious incidents in colleges which always have a wide-reaching, long-lasting impact but those cases are relatively rare”.

Hughes added that no single institution can tackle knife crime alone and that he has been impressed with the partnerships which colleges have been developing with local partners, including local violence-reduction units, community safety partnerships and resilience forums.

In January, a new “Lives Not Knives” report by social justice charity Nacro revealed young people aged 15-to-19 believe they are not protected by the police, and that harsher penalties would not deter those who carry knives out of fear.

It called for an “urgently needed” shift on prevention, for interventions to be focused on tackling the underlying causes of violence as well as the provision of funding to support students who have been excluded.

A government spokesperson declined to comment on the figures obtained by FE Week but said engagement in education is a strong protective factor against involvement in violence and that it is important for colleges to equip children with the skills they need to be safe.

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News

£20k undeclared bonus was an 'honest error', claims college boss

BILLY CAMDEN
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Exclusive

A college has fessed up to failing to declare a £20,000 bonus made to its principal in 2018 amid a government crackdown on transparency.

Lincoln College boss Gary Headland told FE Week he was “both embarrassed and disappointed” that the payment was “erroneously not included” in that year’s accounts owing to an “honest error”.

His salary of £199,000 in 2017/18, as recorded in the Education and Skills Funding Agency official college accounts data, also does not include the bonus that was awarded for international work.

The £20,000 payment was disclosed in Lincoln’s 2018/19 accounts, alongside a £40,000 bonus for that year, but nowhere does it note the discrepancy and the only explanation came after FE Week started asking questions.

A financial auditor told FE Week that they would have expected the £20,000 prior year (2018) adjustment in the 2019 accounts to include a note to explain the past error, particularly as the government is very sensitive to the disclosure of senior staff pay.

Lincoln College’s main international venture is in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where its subsidiary is Lincoln College International (LCI) runs colleges.

LCI generated £30.1 million in 2018 and £25.7 million in 2019, more than half the college group income.

Headland said: “At the complete discretion of the board of corporation, I am able to be awarded an annual payment based upon the scale and performance of our commercial and international work.

“In our annual accounts submitted in December 2018, the discretionary payment was erroneously not included. This was an honest error and I am both embarrassed and disappointed in equal measure.

“Importantly, the oversight was not repeated in December 2019 in which full disclosure of all emoluments in 2018 and 2019 was made.”

The college did not explain why



Gary Headland

there was no note in the 2019 accounts to explain the error.

FE Week has asked the college’s external auditor firm, RSM, about the discrepancy.

The ESFA said it “strengthened” its financial reporting requirements for sixth-form and further education colleges last year.

Specifically, the agency’s finance record spreadsheet for 2018/19 requires, for the first time, that colleges record a figure for its “principal’s performance related pay and bonus”.

For colleges, this should be as simple as listing it separately from the “principal’s salary”.

Their updated rules state: “Corporations receive significant investment from public funds and need to demonstrate to stakeholders that decisions made on executive pay are evidence-based, proportionate and represent value for money.

“This year, as a matter of policy, we have increased transparency around executive pay to support accountability, and to help maintain public confidence and trust in executive pay.”

Burton and South Derbyshire College accounts for 2019, for example, now list a £35,000 bonus for 2018 and £36,000 bonus for 2019 separately from the salary figure.

Its 2018 accounts had lumped the bonus given to principal Dawn Ward in with her salary, totalling £218,000.

Her college runs the International Technical Female College in Jeddah in partnership with Highbury College.

A spokesperson for Burton and South Derbyshire College said: “As you’ve identified, ESFA requirements around disclosure changed in the year between the two sets of accounts.

“Our 2019 accounts adhere to the new reporting requirements and so the value is split out. Obviously, the total value reported in both sets of accounts is unchanged.”

However, it is clear from the ESFA’s college accounts direction for 2017/18 that “corporations must separately disclose the emoluments of the accounting officer” and “emoluments include: performance-related awards (including other bonuses)”.

Highbury College told FE Week the ESFA had given them permission

to delay the filing of their 2018/19 accounts.

One college FE Week found that has been in full compliance of the rules is Leeds City College.

It declared a £40,000 bonus

separately for boss Colin Booth in its 2018 accounts, and again in 2019.

The Association of Colleges developed its own pay code in 2018. It states that “awards made in respect of annual bonus arrangements linked to the achievement of specific annual objectives should not be consolidated”.

The membership body’s chief executive, David Hughes, told FE Week: “AoC’s governor’s council took the initiative in 2018 to adapt the university senior staff remuneration code for college use.

“We’re confident that the code and the open way in which colleges present information about senior staff pay will ensure that governing bodies properly account for the way in which they use public funds and the approach they take to rewarding, motivating and retaining staff to do incredibly challenging jobs.”

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “Further education colleges set their own salaries for staff, which we expect to be fair, represent value for money and be fully justifiable. We now require colleges to explain and justify the salaries of their key management staff in published accounts.”

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

7 STAFF COSTS AND KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION (CONTINUED)

The above emoluments include amounts payable to the Accounting Officer (who is also the highest paid of key management personnel) of:

	2018 £'000	2017 £'000
Salaries	199	199
Benefits in kind	28	8
National Insurance	32	29
	259	236
Pension contributions	10	9
Total	269	245

Governors' remuneration

LINCOLN COLLEGE Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2019

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

7 STAFF COSTS AND KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION (CONTINUED)

The total emoluments include amounts payable to the Accounting Officer (who is also the highest paid of key management personnel) of:

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Salaries	199	199
Additional discretionary payments in respect of Lincoln College	40	20
Benefits in kind	28	28
	267	247
Pension contributions	10	10
Total	277	257

The remuneration of the accounting officer was last determined on 8 May 2017 by the College's Remuneration Committee. The accounting officer was not involved in determining his own remuneration. The



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News

London is first to warn about AEB underspend for 2019/20

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The first signs of yet another adult education budget (AEB) underspend have appeared, after the Greater London Authority revealed delivery is “lower than expected”.

Agenda papers for a board meeting in February shows they are already taking action by moving unused funds to a budget for later in the year.

GLA officials have proposed to mayor Sadiq Khan that they shift £7 million, out of a £190 million AEB for the first eight months, to be made available in the last four months of the academic year.

“Working with providers to review performance issues and related actions”

The Education and Skills Funding Agency has previously used the same “re-profiling” tactic, taking advantage of the academic and financial years being based on different dates, when it was experiencing an underspend in-year.

The GLA’s agenda paper said that where performance is “lower than expected”, they are “working with providers to review performance

issues and related actions, and to identify whether allocations or contracts need to be adjusted to reflect the level of AEB delivery”.

They also note that there is a “risk that underspends are recovered by the Secretary of State in circumstances where the Secretary of State considers funds have not sufficiently been committed to be spent”.

FE Week understands AEB underspends for 2019/20 are also being experienced in other devolved areas, as well as in the national budget that is administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Previous analysis by this newspaper found that more than 400 colleges and training providers between them failed to deliver £73 million of AEB funding in 2016/17. Similar underspends have been felt in other academic years since then.

Brenda McLeish, chief executive of the Learning Curve Group – a training provider that was unsuccessful in obtaining devolved AEB contracts in a number of areas this year, told FE Week: “We are hearing about the potential of in-year underspend in a number of devolved areas.

“Any non-utilisation of funds would be disappointing given that the combined authorities claimed to have undertaken such extensive procurement exercises when selecting providers who could deliver the profiles allocated to them.”

She said that her provider received a “significant volume of enquiries” from learners wanting to access training in devolved areas but these are people “we are unable to help due to the fact we do not have funding in a number of devolved areas.”

GLA's original AEB allocations

Items	Budget (£)	19/20 FYE (Aug - Mar 20) £	20/21 FYE (April - Jul) £
Grant	262,891,610	164,889,000	98,002,610
Procured	32,500,000	21,667,000	10,833,000
Innovation Funding	6,418,265	1,284,000	5,134,265
Management & Administration (M&A)	4,635,000	2,991,667	1,643,334
Total	306,444,875	190,831,667	115,613,209

GLA's re-profiled AEB allocations

Items	Budget (£)	2019/20 FYE (August - March 20)	2020/21 FYE (April - July)
Grant (including Exceptional Learning Support)	262,497,602	164,141,498	98,356,104
Procured	32,500,000	15,166,900	17,333,100
Innovation Funding	7,319,523	2,283,152	5,036,371
Management and Administration (M&A)	4,127,750	1,881,235	2,246,515
Total	306,444,875	183,472,785	122,972,090

Source: GLA's AEB mayoral board agenda papers for February

She continued: “To discover that money is not being used when we, and other providers in a similar situation, have this level of interest would be hugely disappointing and letting down those most in need of support.”

Sector leaders have previously claimed the fault of not delivering

their allocations lies with “restrictive” rules and low funding rates, rather than providers.

Another issue was added following the introduction of FE loans for learners aged 19 to 23 in 2016/17,

“Potential growth for over-performing AEB procured providers to maximise delivery”

which meant that courses that used to be funded through the AEB were no longer included.

Underspend for the 2018/19 year cannot be calculated yet as the final allocations and spending figures are not due for publication by the

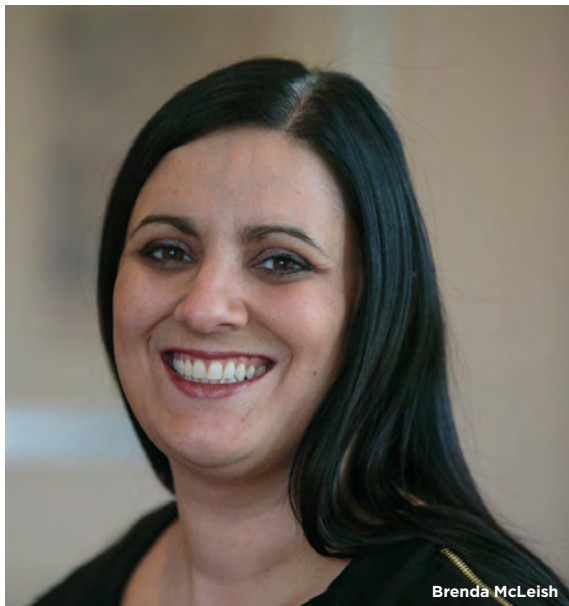
Department for Education for another month.

A spokesperson for the Mayor of London said: “The GLA has forecast expenditure to deliver the AEB for the 2019/20 academic year and we proactively monitor providers’ performance to ensure funding is allocated as effectively as possible.

“This includes funding potential growth for over-performing AEB procured providers to maximise delivery over the full academic year, which would be agreed in May.”

The spokesperson added that officials will continue to review delivery in line with the performance management approach set out in the GLA’s funding rules.

And the agenda papers for the February meeting said: “Importantly, understanding the delivery spend, identifying any underspends associated with under delivery and proposing options to utilise such funds in a prompt manner will improve the reputation of the mayor in successfully managing the AEB.”



Brenda McLeish



Sadiq Khan

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News

ESFA planning to limit providers by standards

BILLY CAMDEN
BILLY@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Exclusive

The Education and Skills Funding Agency is working on plans to require providers to be “accredited” for the apprenticeship standards they offer.

Keith Smith, the agency’s director of apprenticeships, this week said the limits are being considered to give employers more “confidence” in the “future” register of apprenticeship training providers.

Currently, end-point assessment organisations can only assess apprenticeship standards they’re experts in and approved for via application.

Yet providers that have never delivered apprenticeships have no restrictions on which or how many standards they deliver.

“We are looking at the capacity of those providers in their workforce”

During a speech at FE Week’s Annual Apprenticeship Conference on Tuesday, Smith said: “That is something we talk a lot about in terms of the future provider register and the extent to which we should start to look at accreditation by a different type of standard.



Keith Smith

“At the moment we have taken the view that we want to provide the opportunity that providers can play to their strengths. One thing we are beefing up in the provider register all the time is looking at the capacity of those providers in their workforce, about the professionalisation and the skills they bring to the bear in the sector.”

He continued: “We are trying really carefully to make sure we understand what it is to be a good provider, to actually have confidence in the provider register, and very carefully understand how we give assurance to employers and apprentices that they

are going to be finding their way to new providers who actually have the right capacity and infrastructure to be able to do good things.

“More on that to come.”

Smith added that it is “the reality” that providers will already be specialising in certain standard areas, and his agency is working to ensure any limits do not add further unnecessary layers of “bureaucracy” for training organisations.

Any restrictions would form the second phase of the ESFA’s attempts to strengthen its register of apprenticeship training providers, which was relaunched last year

following a host of problems with the original application process.

One-man bands with no delivery experience were, for example, being given access to millions of pounds of apprenticeships funding.

FE Week analysis shows that the ESFA has cut the number of main and employers providers on the register down by a quarter over the past year – from 2,234 in April 2019 to 1,628 in February 2020.

The reduction shouldn’t come as a major surprise considering the agency had promised to tighten up the register’s application rules and kick off those who aren’t delivering.

But this cull still has some way to go, as FE Week analysis also shows a further 29 per cent of providers currently on there are still not delivering and many more are in single starts figures.

“We want to provide the opportunity that providers can play to their strengths”

What makes restrictions even more likely is the fact that new providers with no track record will no longer be limited by a lack of non-levy allocation from November 1 as the ESFA moves small employers onto the digital apprenticeship system.

FE Week understands there are also plans being drawn up to potentially introduce funding caps on providers yet to have full Ofsted inspection.

Last year, the education watchdog was handed £5.4 million to carry out monitoring visits of all new apprenticeship providers, which have so far suggested the quality at about a quarter of them is poor.

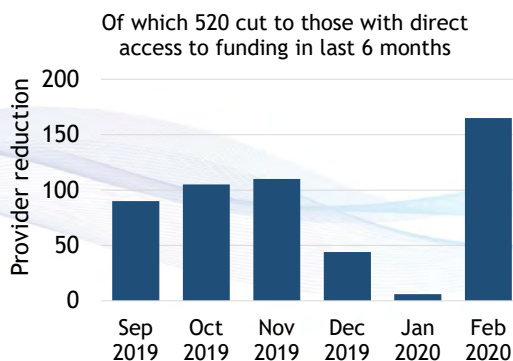
It is also understood that the ESFA will dedicate a special team to watch over the largest apprenticeship providers to ensure the sector does not suffer from another “too big to fail” scenario if one of them goes bust, as was the case with LearnDirect.

1. ESFA already started quietly removing providers with no delivery (27% so far)

RoAPT main + employer

Apr 2018: 2,234
 Feb 2019: 1,628
 - 606 (-27%)

Supporting/subcontracting providers rise from 388 to 439 but do not have direct access to funding



Analysis by FE Week

1. Cull has some way to go, with further 29% still not delivering and many more in single figures

And Ofsted has already visited and published monitoring reports where there is just 1 apprentice!

Ofsted says they can’t grade a new provider with single figure apprentices

So how often do Ofsted return and at what cost?

Starts in first 3 months of 2019/20 (Q1)	Providers	Percentage
0	471	29%
1	47	3%
2	38	2%
3	23	1%
4	23	1%
5	18	1%
6-10	95	6%
11-20	144	9%
21-100	439	27%
101+	330	20%
Total on RoAPT	1,628	

Analysis by FE Week



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The AELP National Conference 2020 will consider whether we are on the right track in respect of reforms to apprenticeships, traineeships, adult education, English and maths, and other provision.

The results of the mayoral elections in London and combined authorities areas in May will also offer pointers to devolved skills provision in the future. Delegates can discuss what the impact of a devolved adult education budget has been so far and what lessons have been learnt from devolution.

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News

T-levels 'lack breadth' of other countries' curricula

FRASER WHIELDON
FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

A review into the "uniquely narrow and short" technical courses in England has been called for ahead of the introduction of T-levels this September.

The Education Policy Institute think-tank (EPI) made the recommendation in an international comparison of technical education funding systems which said this country's 16-to-19 curriculum "remains an outlier for its narrow breadth, both for academic and technical pathways".

This approach "may be depriving students of valuable skills", the report added.

While welcoming T-levels' increased teaching hours, the "substantial" 315-hour industry placement and how they "will bring England closer to technical provision in high performing countries", the report also says the curriculum

"looks narrower" than similar qualifications in other countries.

The new flagship courses will not address the differences in curricular breadth between England and countries such as Norway and Germany beyond securing basic levels of literacy and numeracy, the report says.

As T-levels will last for half as long as technical qualifications in other countries, this "probably stands in the way" of broadening the curriculum.

EPI's research was funded by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, which is working on preparations for T-levels and is co-running professional development for the qualifications with the Education & Training Foundation.

"The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, and do not reflect those of the foundation," the report stresses.

The government, the report proposes, ought to commission an independent

review to consider if the breadth of 16-to-19 courses is properly providing the basic and technical skills "young people need for the labour market and for progression to further study".

If this means providers have to increase provision, the government "must" match this with appropriate funding rates. The report found funding support for students fell by 71 per cent in real terms between 2010-11 and 2018-19.

The joint general secretary of the National Education Union Kevin Courtney said the government "must learn from this challenging report", adding that 16-to-19 students need "sustainable funding" and "real support" for living, learning and travelling costs.

The Association of School and College Leaders' post-16 and colleges' specialist Kevin Gilmartin urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak to address the "desperate need" for additional government funding for the sector in

the Budget on March 11.

The countries the EPI compared England against were found to offer a broader curriculum, for example, technical students in Norway spend more classroom time studying subjects such as English, maths, PE, natural sciences and social sciences than their vocational specialisation. Technical students in Austria take courses on entrepreneurship, digital skills, communication skills and, in many cases, up to three foreign languages.

In Germany's dual-system, students attend a vocational school up to two days a week and, apart from theoretical and practical knowledge for their apprenticeship, they also take general subjects such as economics and social sciences.

Germany's system was thrown into the spotlight after education secretary Gavin Williamson pledged the UK to overtaking Germany in technical

education opportunities by 2029.

However, the report did note that the breadth of curriculum in other countries varies depending on factors including qualification level and whether it is a classroom-based programme or apprenticeship training.

David Robinson, report author and director of post-16 and skills at the EPI, said: "If it wishes to draw level with countries like Germany, the government must give further consideration to properly funding technical education, in order to sustain quality.

"We must also ask serious questions about the structure of our upper secondary programmes, which are uniquely narrow and short by international standards. The breadth of the curriculum and length of technical courses should be reviewed."

A Department for Education spokesperson said: "The secretary of state has been clear that boosting further education is at the heart of his vision for a world-class education system.

"We are investing significantly to level up skills and opportunity across the country. In addition to our £3 billion National Skills Fund, we have announced a £400 million increase to 16-to-19 funding for 2020-2021, creating longer, higher-quality technical apprenticeships."

SAM TUCKETT

Senior Researcher, Post-16 and Skills,
Education Policy Institute



Popularity of vocational training in UK not reflected in funding

School leavers are favouring a vocational qualification over a more academic path, yet not enough cash is there for them, writes Sam Tuckett

Today's 16-year-olds considering vocational pathways could be forgiven for feeling a little overwhelmed by the number of options presented to them when they finish school. This is now the position faced by most young people in England, with most opting for vocational or technical qualifications over a purely A-level route.

They might be further overwhelmed if they knew they would attract nearly a quarter less funding than their peers taking more traditional academic routes. And they might be alarmed to know that funding for 16 to 19-year olds has fallen by 16 per cent in real terms since 2010/11.

Indeed, England is something of an

anomaly by international standards, as shown in new research published by the Education Policy Institute. Other OECD countries simply do not see such a gulf in spending for academic and technical routes – in fact on average, these countries spend 16 per cent more per technical student than they do on academic students.

In Germany for example, funding levels for students taking technical qualifications are 37 per cent higher than their academic counterparts.

This begs the question, why? Much of the answer lies in the kind of courses that are being funded, and how the offer to students in England differs to that in more successful countries.

Paradoxically, some factors suggest that the UK should actually have higher levels of funding for technical qualifications. For example, young people in England are much more likely to be undertaking classroom-

based education instead of an apprenticeship, with higher costs for the government in terms of providing the teachers and infrastructure.

But aside from this, the way our technical educational system is structured points towards lower

"Funding for 16 to 19-year olds has fallen by 16 per cent since 2010/11"

levels of funding. In England, it is generally expected that courses will be completed within just two years. There is no standard course length that applies in other countries, but compared to the highest performing, two years is markedly on the short

side. In Austria, some programmes last as long as five years.

Students in most high performing countries will also follow a much broader curriculum, typically including English, the local language, maths and often subjects beyond the scope of the core qualification. In England, those that didn't achieve a GCSE pass in English and maths at school will continue study in these areas, but others are able to drop these subjects. England is almost unique in the developed world in requiring students to specialise in such a small number of subjects at age 16.

It is also the case that we have a lower proportion of students on high cost courses such as engineering which attract more funding. While it isn't easy to make direct comparisons across countries, levels of student support here also reflect the current funding squeeze: in England the total money available has decreased by 71

per cent since 2010/11.

Technical education is therefore less well funded in the UK than in higher performing countries, at least in part, because students here get fewer hours and lower cost education.

So, where to go from here?

T-levels will help to bridge some of this divide. The 2020 rollout will include an increase in teaching hours and a substantial industry placement, and there has been a trickle of government proposals to rebalance funding towards the more technical subjects.

However, if we are to bring provision closer to that of high performing countries, and the Secretary of State is to realise his grand ambitions for technical education, including "overtaking Germany", reforms must be bolder. But to really improve our international standing, we must first get the fundamentals right.

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City & Guilds reports 17.8m UK workers have outdated skills

Completely agree and potential for further decline with the apprenticeship levy policy diverting funds previously used for people development being collected by HMRC. Employers I speak to now can only cover the costs of compliance training, very little left for development.

Colin Huffen

Game over for level 2 business admin apprenticeship

So an apprentice on a 12-month apprenticeship working 30 hours a week would be contracted for 1,560 hours, 20 per cent is 312 (this figure will then be reduced for allowed holidays). The total learning hours for the current level 2 Diploma in Business Administration is 450 hours (229 to 351-guided).

Learners at this level will often require support for maths and English, many would find level 2 functional skills a real stretch and not meet entry criteria for a level 3.

This is a real shame as a significant number of potential apprenticeships and opportunities are for young people. The normal demographic training solution at level 2 does seem to have been hijacked by the desire to push the degree apprenticeship agenda which - valuable in its own right - should not be at the expense of others.

Richard Brooks

Okay what have I just heard, this is not fair for young people who are now undertaking the level two course. This means those young people who are doing the course won't get a job out of it.

My question is: what is going to happen to those young people who are now doing the level 2 course, will they get a job or is it just a waste of time for them.

Eman ace

Complete madness, level 2 is what apprenticeships are about. Then hopefully moving on to higher levels.

Laura Miltos

Investment and strategy needed to rescue UK from its low skills doldrums

Sadly adult learning has been thrown onto the bonfire during austerity years and is still no better off with next year's funding increases which are aimed at 16-19-year-olds only. The sooner this government takes seriously that adult classroom learning has benefits the better.

Pete Johnson

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Game over for level 2 business admin apprenticeship

It is a tragedy what has happened to apprenticeship training for those at the bottom, and for countless long-established ITPs for whom the levy and standards have been nothing short of a disaster.

Phil



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To work effectively with the Governing Body, Principal/CEO and the Senior Management Team to ensure the strategic aims and objectives of the College are achieved and provide expert advice, where appropriate.

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- To establish, maintain and implement effective financial and resource planning arrangements which support the College's objectives and strategic aims.
- Ensure ongoing financial viability and work to achieve improvements in efficiency, economy and effectiveness through the allocation and development of resources.
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through astute financial management in order to provide a distinctive high quality student experience

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Profile

Introducing...

GILLIAN
KEEGAN*Apprenticeships and skills minister***JESS STAUFENBERG**
NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

Apprenticeships and skills minister and Chichester MP Gillian Keegan could be a win-win for the Conservative Party. She hails from the country's 'most Labour seat', was a 16-year-old shop floor apprentice, and has a masters-level business intellect.

Gillian Keegan, the new apprenticeships and skills minister, strikes you as the sort of MP that the Conservatives need more of. Her life story could be an advert both for apprenticeships – being the “only degree-level apprentice in the House of Commons” – and the appeal of conservative values to the “red wall” working-class background she’s from. We meet at FE Week’s Annual Apprenticeship Conference, almost three years since the Chichester MP first won her seat in parliament. She’s sitting very safely, with 58 per cent of the vote in the December election. But this most southern of cities, which has returned a Conservative MP since the

1800s (except a brief flirt with a Liberal in the 1920s), puts Keegan almost a five-hour drive away from where she grew up, in Knowsley near Liverpool.

‘I’ve done a PhD in patience’

She describes her childhood home as “the most Labour seat in the whole country” and she’s right – the MP there won more votes than any other from the party at the most recent election. Keegan appears proud of her political independence of mind from the inheritances of her childhood, explaining her experiences with a matter-of-fact, concise tone of voice that matches it. If she hadn’t been brokering international business deals for the last 30 years, one feels she’d have made an excellent no-nonsense college principal.

“As my mother said, ‘the Conservative vote left when you left

home,’” Keegan concedes, without laughing. However when asked if voting Conservative since age 19 made her unpopular, she follows up with a chuckle: “I’m popular so I can get over the fact I’m a Conservative.”

It must have been quite an inheritance to overcome. Her grandfather was a miner, her nan worked in a biscuit factory, her father was an office manager who wasn’t paid very much and lived in a caravan during the week, and her mother did secretarial work. It’s clear their daughter showed an unusual resilience to the difficult circumstances around her. She was the only pupil to get 10 O-levels at her comprehensive secondary school, having rejected the expectation that girls do only sewing and home economics and instead also studying engineering and technical drawing with her favourite teacher, Mr Ashcroft.

When she entered the workplace aged 16 she was the only girl in the group of trainees at Delco Electronics, a subsidiary group of General Motors that made in-car electronics. None of the boys went on, like she did, to complete the employer-sponsored degree at Liverpool John Moores University. Perhaps the fact school enabled her to take a route out explains why Keegan “loved school” – although it’s not exactly clear how much there was to love.

“They actually closed my school down two years after I left. Some kids did A-levels, but you were never going to get a decent grade, you were never going to get to university. The provision of education was so poor you had to find another way around.” It gives Keegan a very real understanding of the lack of opportunity in areas like hers. “I’ve done many things

with many of the world’s brightest people. But all the people I met at that Knowsley comprehensive school were as bright as anyone I’ve ever met since.” She adds: “We would be classed as people who would have to go down a vocational route, because they weren’t bright. But we were bright. We just didn’t get the opportunity to show we were bright.”

It was while working in the car factory for General Motors that Keegan’s political views began to emerge – she was unimpressed by the trade unions trying to battle the company’s decisions. “It was the 1980s and there was a lot of sort of highly unionised behaviour in the car factory, which is actually what made me a Conservative.” She calls these the “bad sort of unions who would be out because they wanted to preserve working practices, not because they wanted to move to where the company wanted to be.” Her views solidified as she took a job in London for NatWest and soon began international business in earnest, heading to Tokyo for weeks on end to negotiate contracts. Some of these were about the contactless card payments we take for granted today.

After a stint with MasterCard, Keegan moved to Madrid for a company called Amadeus, learnt to speak Spanish and bought a flat there, which she still has. While at the company she was part of an initial public offer, or IPO, where the private business is sold on the stock market – meaning Keegan will have got a big financial reward, or, as she puts it, “the financial freedom to think of other careers”. But despite all this, Keegan notes that a sense of misfit can linger on. Aged 40, she did a Sloan Fellowship, which is like an MBA, at the London Business School, “because

you always feel you haven’t got the qualifications to match your intellect, if you had to go about it a different way. I wanted to prove to myself I could do a masters.” Just a couple of years later, she was an MP.

The almost rags-to-riches story puts Keegan in a powerful position to advocate for apprenticeships, and also for social mobility from a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps experience. She names the dyslexic businesswoman, Jo Malone, creator of the luxury scent brand, as someone she deeply admires for beating the odds. She also makes a great point about the unique value of a rotational apprenticeship such as hers at General Motors. “By the end of it, pretty much myself and the other apprentices were the only people apart from the CEO and the CFO who actually understood how



Gillian delivering her maiden speech at the House of Commons, June 2017

“As my mother said,
‘the Conservative
vote left when you
left home’”



the whole thing worked, because most people when they get into a large multinational business do not get to go around the whole thing.”

She adds: “Even if you go on a graduate programme you very seldom get to see it, because you’re normally assigned to a department or assigned to specific roles.” Her passion for apprenticeships impressed former skills minister Anne Milton, who had already talent-spotted Keegan before she was an MP and put her in touch with Women2Win, an initiative co-founded by Theresa May to encourage Conservative women to stand for office. Now, she further urged Keegan to become an MP ambassador for apprentices, and Keegan eventually also became co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on apprenticeships. Today, with the post of a dedicated apprenticeships and

skills minister having gone unfilled since Milton resigned over a no-deal Brexit in July, Keegan finds herself taking up the reins in her mentor’s old office.

“I get ideas by chatting with people”

Which brings us to the question of how she will fare in that office. It’s a turbulent time in the Conservative party, with the chancellor already having resigned, bullying allegations engulfing the home secretary and ministerial aides disappearing left, right and centre. One thing worth noting is that several of Keegan’s natural political allies are gone. Justine

Greening, respected both in and out of the party, first met Keegan at a party for London Business School graduates in 2017.

“I didn’t know what she was then but she was something important. And I plucked up the courage and went to speak to her and she then helped me on my journey [...] to become an MP.” Keegan says she’s done a “PhD in patience” by becoming an MP – working with volunteers and coming to terms with the fact that parliament does not work like a super slick international business – something mentors like Milton and Greening have helped her understand. She laughs as she claims she’s designed her “own apprenticeship in being an MP”, with stints on the public accounts committee, as a parliamentary private secretary to the Treasury, home secretary and Department for Health,

as well as posts with the Ministry of Defence. Like Greening, Keegan seems good at listening. “I’m a people person. I get ideas by chatting with people.”

But both Greening and Milton are now gone – unable to match their own values with the direction of the Conservative Party. Keegan backed Rory Stewart for the leadership, but he too has quit. Many commentators have said some of the party’s best moderate talent has left the backbenches.

But Keegan says she exemplifies an important truth about people from backgrounds like hers. “I’m sure the people in many of those areas of the ‘red wall’ that became the ‘blue wall’ are people who are very similar in terms of values, outlook and opportunity to where I grew up. And I’ve always thought, if you took the brand away, and you just looked at the values and what you could

achieve, I’ve always thought most of them would vote Conservative [...] And actually, as it turns out [...] now 30 years on, they have.”

Yet there is some undeniable data. Further education has been badly hit by falls in college funding under the Conservatives. And whilst the apprenticeship budget has risen with the introduction of the levy, rates could be slashed by over 40 per cent.

As someone from a struggling area of the country, who knows deeply the value of apprenticeships, Gillian Keegan is the kind of MP the cabinet should nurture, listen to and promote.

She must ensure the party sticks to its 2019 manifesto commitments to properly invest in further education. Meanwhile, the cabinet would do well to support her to make sure she does not go the way of Stewart, Milton and Greening.

Bulletin

Movers & Shakers

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



Martin Tucker

Principal, Truro and Penwith College

Start date September 2020

Previous job

Director, Penwith College

Interesting fact

He plays tennis and has played rugby at a high level



Andy Cole

Interim principal, Gateshead College

Start date February 2020

Previous job

Principal, Kensington and Chelsea College

Interesting fact

He is supporting the Phoenix Bury football club



Colin Hughes

Chief executive, AQA

Start date September 2020

Previous job

Managing director, Collins Learning

Interesting fact

He was previously education editor of The Independent

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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Apprenticeship Awards 2020



Beej Kaczmarczyk receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award



Anne Milton and Gordon Marsden receiving Special Recognition Awards



Gillian Keegan

FRASER WHIELDON FRASER@FEWEEK.CO.UK

The winners of the Annual Apprenticeship Awards 2020 were crowned at a glittering gala dinner in Birmingham on Tuesday night.

More than 500 sector leaders, staff and apprentices gathered to find out the results of the awards, which are run by FE Week and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

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

providers and employers.

New apprenticeship and skills minister Gillian Keegan was in attendance to celebrate the winners and said it was a “huge pleasure” to be there.

She paid tribute to her predecessor Anne Milton, who was in the audience, saying it was “fantastic to follow in the fabulous footsteps of my friend and mentor”.

The minister also said it was “brilliant” to see former shadow FE minister Gordon Marsden there as well.

Taking home the provider of the year award was Leeds College of Building, and the group told FE Week they were “thrilled” to be winners.

Judges said it was “clear” from their application and evidence that they “were enthusiastically dedicated to helping apprentices achieve their full potential, and absolutely committed to steering the next generation of innovators”.

Employer of the year was awarded to Hays Travel, which took over Thomas

Cook this year.

“Hays Travel is a true believer and champion of apprenticeships,” the judges said. “It was evident from their application that apprenticeships are embedded within their organisations culture and thus valued and supported by stakeholders.”

“We were surprised and absolutely buzzing when we were on stage”

They were “so delighted” to win the award, said apprenticeship delivery manager Carole Hodgson, considering they were up against some “prestigious” companies.

“Shocked,” was how Hays assessor and trainer Gemma Morrell reacted to their win: “We were surprised and absolutely buzzing when we were on stage.”

As well as being praised by Gillian Keegan, Milton and Marsden also walked away joint winners of the special recognition awards.

Shane Mann, managing director of FE Week’s publisher Lsect, said: “Tonight we also recognise the contribution made by two former MPs, Anne Milton and Gordon Marsden. As frontbench MPs for government and opposition they made significant contributions to the apprenticeships sector in the UK and globally.

“Regardless of whether you agree with their political decisions and positions, it is undeniable that they placed enormous energy into improving the apprenticeship sector. They are both worthy recipients of this year’s awards.”

Marsden called the gong a “really fantastic award” and he was “very, very touched” by this “great tribute” to the sector.

Milton felt “completely overwhelmed” and said it was a “pleasure” serving across the Commons with Gordon, but their thanks must always go to the sector who do a “fantastic job”.

Apprenticeships expert and veteran Beej Kaczmarczyk received the lifetime achievement award.

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2020 winners honoured



British Racing School receiving the Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Derby Business College Limited receiving the Business & Administration Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Lifetime Training receiving the Care Services Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Lifetime Training receiving the Catering & Hospitality Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Skills Group receiving the Construction Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Manchester Metropolitan University receiving the Digital Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Aspiration Training Ltd receiving the Education & Childcare Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Abingdon and Witney College receiving the Engineering & Manufacturing Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Truro and Penwith College receiving the Hair & Beauty Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Performance Through People receiving the Health & Science Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Paragon Skills receiving the Legal, Finance & Accounting Apprenticeship provider of the year award



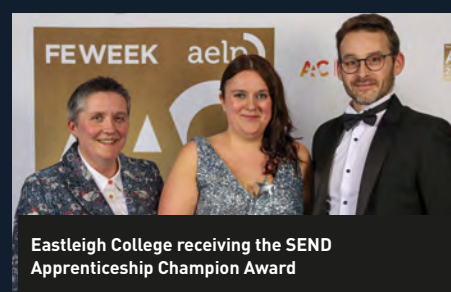
Remit Group receiving the Sales, Marketing, Procurement Apprenticeship provider of the year award



Performance Through People receiving the Transport & Logistics Apprenticeship provider of the year award



WhiteHat receiving the Apprenticeship Diversity Award



Eastleigh College receiving the SEND Apprenticeship Champion Award



Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group receiving the Promoting Apprenticeships campaign of the year award

"We were delighted to award Beej with the lifetime achievement award," said Mann. "Beej has given so much to education throughout his career.

"He is also one of the great characters of the FE sector, regularly putting the 'fun' into funding analysis and has a magic way of entertaining those who he supports and informs on sometimes the driest of subjects.

"We've had another fabulous evening celebrating all that is best about apprenticeships"

"As he nears his retirement, and the possibility of finally realising his aim of getting in more golf, it is perfect timing, and massively well deserved." Kaczmarczyk said he was "really pleased" but



Jane Hadfield, Health Education England receiving the Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships - Individual award

also "very surprised" by this "great honour".

"Hopefully this reflects on everybody I have ever worked with," he said.

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said: "We've had another fabulous evening celebrating all that is best about apprenticeships and the hardworking people who offer bright futures to learners who embark on our flagship skills programme.

"Congratulations to a great set of winners and it's really pleasing that Gillian Keegan has been here with us to hear about these wonderful success stories."



Little Inspirations Ltd receiving the Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships - Employer award



South Devon College receiving the Outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships - Provider award



Hays Travel receiving the Apprentice employer of the year award



Leeds College of Building receiving the Apprenticeship provider of the year award

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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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

Spot the difference To WIN an FE Week mug



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



Last Edition's winner: Mo Dixon

Solutions

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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