

**BUDGET: EXTRA  
£4BN FOR FE OVER  
5 YEARS CONFIRMED**



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**ESFA RELAX RULES  
IN RESPONSE TO  
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Page 10

**WE HAD TO MAKE  
IT WORSE BEFORE  
WE GOT BETTER**



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# FEWEEK

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EDITION 310

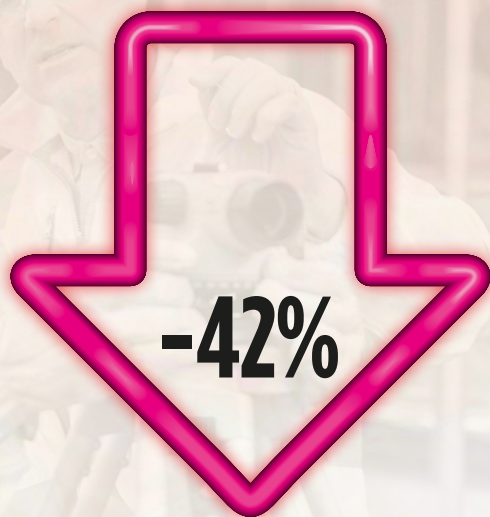
## SHREWSBURY COLLEGE LOSES GRADE 4 BATTLE

OFSTED SET TO PUBLISH ORIGINAL SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AFTER RETURN VISIT

EXCLUSIVE YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU YASEMIN@FEWEEK.CO.UK See page 3



## DFE REVEALS SME LEVY INEQUALITY



**-100K STARTS**

**SMALL AND MEDIUM EMPLOYERS**



**+16K STARTS**

**LARGE EMPLOYERS**

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## CASHING IN ON MBA APPRENTICESHIPS

- CMI charges £5.7m to assess 4,000 learners as CEO income jumps 25% to £336k
- Entrepreneur becomes top provider this year with £3m of starts in one month
- Vested interests 'lining their pockets', claims former adviser to skills minister

Exclusive NICK LINFORD BILLY CAMDEN NEWS@FEWEEK.CO.UK

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# Another UTC to lower 14-19 age range from September

FRASER WHIELDON  
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Another university technical college is scrapping its 14 to 19 age criteria and will start recruiting 13-year-olds from this September.

Greater Peterborough UTC (GPUTC) announced the change following “positive” feedback in a consultation. It opened in 2016.

Principal David Bisley explained it is “essential local young people passionate about science, technology, engineering, and maths are now able to come to our school at an even earlier age,” as Peterborough has “a significant emerging skills shortage within its engineering sector”.

He added: “Having a year 9 allows us the opportunity to embed the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be a successful learner and gives the students the chance to

experience a project-based learning approach before their GCSEs start in year 10.”

GPUTC was rated as ‘requires improvement’ by Ofsted in February 2019 partly because “too much emphasis was placed on maximising pupil numbers and too little attention was given to matching pupils’ interests and aspirations to the UTC’s curriculum”.

The college currently trains 261 pupils, according to the government’s Get Information About Schools site, against a capacity of 500.

Switching recruitment age from the original 14 to 19 is a growing trend among UTCs as they bid to tackle low student numbers, which in 11 cases has led to them shutting after becoming unviable.

The JCB Academy in Staffordshire and UTC Sheffield have both accepted students from year 9 since September 2018. The London Design and Engineering UTC has also begun



Greater Peterborough UTC

accepting students from the age of 13.

UTCs in Plymouth and Wolverhampton, as well as The Leigh UTC in Dartford in Kent, have gone even earlier by enrolling pupils from year 7.

And in November 2019 *FE Week* revealed that applications for three new UTCs were in the works but, like a traditional school, students will join aged 11, rather than at 14.

While some sector leaders have encouraged UTCs to drop their recruitment age from 14, others, including former schools minister David Laws and former Department

for Education minister Lord Agnew, have told them to lift it to 16, to allow them to differentiate themselves and avoid competing with academies.

The Baker Dearing Trust, which represents UTCs, has strongly opposed them expanding beyond the colleges’ original 14 to 19 model in the past.

But the trust’s chief executive Simon Connell told *FE Week* last September that changing the entry age could be a “pragmatic solution” for colleges with low rolls, which need to up their capacity “significantly”.

A trust spokesperson has previously said it expects “many more UTCs to

apply to extend their age range”, and they are supportive of UTCs wanting to do this “where it is appropriate”.

One of the main challenges for UTCs has been recruitment, with 39 previously being forced to hand back money to the government because they missed recruitment targets, leaving them with a combined debt of around £11 million.

A National Audit Office report published in October 2019 into UTCs calculated that the DfE has spent £792 million on the programme since it was launched by education secretary Lord Baker in 2010.

## Shrewsbury college loses grade 4 battle with Ofsted

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU  
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Exclusive

A college accused of serious safeguarding failures has failed to overturn an ‘inadequate’ judgment following a second visit from Ofsted inspectors.

*FE Week* understands that Shrewsbury Colleges Group will have a grade four report published imminently after its complaint to the education watchdog was not upheld.

Leaders at the college, which teaches more than 9,000 students mostly aged 16 to 18, previously alleged the education watchdog ran out of time to check evidence in its first inspection in November.

Inspectors revisited last week but

found that the same safeguarding concerns persist.

Following the first visit, principal James Staniforth said he had “never experienced anything like this” after 27 years in education.

The college told *FE Week* the first judgment was “wrong”, denied safeguarding was “ineffective” and claimed that Ofsted’s decision was “changed on the final day of the inspection without adequate explanation”.

Shrewsbury Colleges Group declined to comment following the latest visit from Ofsted.

*FE Week* understands representatives from the National Education Union have also raised concerns over safeguarding procedures across the group, both before and after the visit from the inspectorate.

The college group did previously admit that West Mercia Police were called to an incident during the inspection, after a suspended student tried to regain entry to college, and that



Shrewsbury College

some fire call-points were disabled during the inspection “in order to stop further false alarms” after a fault and a student caused two separate false alarms.

Ofsted was originally set to report that students and staff do not feel safe and the college had not taken sufficient steps to help ensure their safety.

Inspectors also allegedly found that staff required to carry out site security roles have not received adequate training and necessary risk assessments to ensure effective safeguarding covering the college estate were not in place.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency previously asked the college

to appoint an independent review of safeguarding by an approved consultant following a referral from Ofsted.

A two-day audit took place at the end of January, and it concluded that there was “a strong culture of safeguarding evident which is underpinned by established policies and procedures”.

“There is substantial evidence to support this statement as detailed in the report,” the summary continued.

Last month, Staniforth maintained the college was “a safe place to study” and it was “confident” the evidence available would demonstrate the effectiveness of our safeguarding practices”.

The principal added the college was looking forward to Ofsted returning and would await their judgment.

Shrewsbury Sixth Form College and Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology merged to become Shrewsbury Colleges Group in August 2016.

Both FE providers were rated ‘good’ in their final inspections before the merger.

The group is now based across three campuses and has a turnover of £23 million.

It advertises itself as Shropshire’s largest provider of post-16 education – which teaches 70 per cent of all 16-to-18 students in the county.



James Staniforth

## News

# Budget confirms college capital and National Skills Fund promises

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The chancellor's budget has confirmed the Conservative manifesto funding boosts for college buildings and the National Skills Fund, but stopped short of making any new investments for FE.

Rishi Sunak promised £1.5 billion for college capital projects on Wednesday, which rises to £1.8 billion over five years when including the "Barnett consequential" for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## "Colleges will be keen to access the £1.5 billion capital funding"

And the National Skills Fund will total £2.5 billion over five years for England.

While there was no brand new money for FE in this week's budget, hopes are high for more cash in the upcoming spending review. Sunak said this process has now been launched, and it will "conclude" by July.

The chancellor used his speech to pay tribute to his predecessor, Sajid Javid, who was "passionate about levelling up further education".

"At the spending round he increased funding for 16-19 education by £400 million," Sunak said.

"Today I can secure his legacy with £1.5 billion of new capital over five years to dramatically improve the condition of our entire FE college estate.

"My predecessor wanted to level up further education. Saj, we're getting it done."

The Treasury's budget document states that the capital investment "will ensure that colleges have cutting-edge facilities to train people for jobs in the industries of the future, and is part of the government's plan to upgrade the nation's infrastructure".

It also said the government will "consult widely in the spring" on how to target the National Skills Fund "most effectively, before confirming details at the spending review".

The budget document added that the government will "now look at how to improve the working of the apprenticeship levy" to support large and small employers in "meeting the long-term skills needs of the economy".

And it promised the government will "ensure that sufficient funding is made available in 2020-21 to support an increase in the number of new high-quality apprenticeships in small- and medium-sized businesses".

The document said the Treasury will also provide an additional £7 million to support a total of 11 maths schools for young people aged 16 to



Rishi Sunak

19 in England, covering every region. And, as previously announced, eight new Institutes of Technology will be launched with £120 million.

For T-levels, the budget document confirmed that £95 million will be offered to providers in England to "invest in high quality facilities and industry-standard equipment to support the rollout" of the qualifications launching from autumn 2021.

Association of Colleges chief

executive David Hughes said: "Today [Wednesday] showed a clear shift in attitude towards technical and vocational education, after a decade of neglect.

"Colleges will be keen to access the £1.5 billion capital funding and will want to shape the new National Skills Fund to make sure it works for their communities and for the people and employers they support.

"To create a truly transformative

post-16 education system the comprehensive spending review later this year must commit to long-term investment, ensuring no one is left behind."

## "If we want to see a levelling up of prosperity... we need to invest in skills"

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, said: "We were expecting a stripped-down budget focused on manifesto commitments and that is what we got today.

"All roads now lead to the autumn spending review, where the government must seize the opportunity to secure an improved, long-term settlement that will benefit all students."

Stephen Evans, chief executive of Learning and Work Institute, said: "If we want to see a levelling up of prosperity across the UK, we need to invest in skills. New investment in the National Skills Fund is welcome, but with the number of adults improving their skills at a record low we need to go further."

## Minister promises 'significant funding' in 'coming year' for SME apprenticeships, claims AELP

**BILLY CAMDEN**  
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New skills minister Gillian Keegan has pledged "significant funding" for additional small business apprenticeships in the "coming year", the Association of Employment and Learning Providers has claimed.

On Wednesday the Treasury confirmed to *FE Week* that Rishi Sunak's budget did not include any new cash for apprenticeships despite the accompanying red book document stating that "government will ensure that sufficient funding is made available in 2020-21".

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe says he has since met with officials in both the Treasury and Department for Education, and they have promised that fresh funding

is coming.

"Immediately after the budget, AELP had confirmed in person by the Treasury, the apprenticeships and skills minister and senior DfE officials that there will be significant funding for additional SMEs' apprenticeships for the coming year and in the spending review," his newsletter to members said on Thursday.

"We have to trust that this is the case given where I have got the commitment from and, therefore, celebrate that AELP's call for support for SMEs has been listened to and is one of the few new announcements of extra money in the skills system.

"I have agreed to meet with the Treasury again in the near future to further discuss this and other matters."

Dawe added: "Having had almost an hour and a half with the minister today, what I can

confirm is she is a massive champion for work-based learning, apprenticeships and the range of work that the ITPs do, as long as it is quality and demonstrates benefit to the learner and employer.

"But we have to be robust, demonstrate the quality of what we do at all levels and in all sectors."

No figures for how much this extra funding will total have been revealed so far.

Both the DfE and Treasury have told *FE Week* that no decisions on the spending review have been made yet.

The AELP has repeatedly warned that levy shortages meant small to medium enterprises were being cut out of apprenticeship funding.

In January, new boss of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, Jennifer Coupland, called for an additional £750 million to prop-up small business

apprenticeships.

When making her plea she said the levy has led to small businesses cutting their training by ten per cent, while levy-payers have increased theirs by 20 per cent.

She added that the £750 million would cover the cost for about 85,000 apprenticeships which non-levy payers cannot fund.

New DfE data released today found that small and medium sized employers, those with fewer than 250 staff, fell more than 100,000 (42 per cent reduction), compared to a rise of over 16,000 for large employers (8 per cent rise).

The IfATE first projected that the apprenticeships budget would soon be overspent in 2018. The National Audit Office has since also warned that current funding for apprenticeships is unsustainable.

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## News

# Struggling Gateshead delays annual accounts as auditors conclude investigation

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Exclusive

A college has delayed signing off on its 2018/19 accounts as forensic investigators shed light on its unexpected £6 million deficit for the first time.

Independent auditors were drafted into Gateshead College late last year after the shock shortfall was discovered. Principal Judith Doyle and chair John McCabe have since left their positions.

While full details on the cause of the deficit are still not known, the college has confirmed that the investigation has now concluded.

A spokesperson told *FE Week*: "The forensic investigation instigated by the board established that the financial position is not as the board understood it to be at the start of July last year because the income position was overstated and the expenditure was



Gateshead College

substantially understated.

"This meant the college's projected out-turn and the 19/20 budget were inaccurate."

They stressed that the report "does not suggest that there has been any misappropriation of college funds".

FE Commissioner Richard Atkins intervened at Gateshead College

when the shortfall was first revealed. His report will be published "in due course".

In the meantime, the college's accounts have been delayed. They are expected to be finalised by the end of March or early April, the spokesperson said.

Experienced FE leader Andy

Cole was appointed as Gateshead College's interim principal in February following the resignation of Judith Doyle – who was the highest paid college leader in 2017/18.

He told *FE Week*: "In the short time I have been here I can see that this is a vibrant college providing excellent education, training and outcomes for its students and fulfilling an important role in the regional economy.

"We need to do all we can to maintain this by implementing a swift and effective recovery plan to restore the college's financial health in the shortest possible time and I'm working closely with the board, the executive team, wider college staff and the relevant stakeholders to make sure that this happens."

John Hogg, a former deputy FE commissioner, was drafted in to replace McCabe – who commissioned the independent audit into the deficit – as chair in January.

Shortly before Cole came on-board, Gateshead College launched a redundancy consultation and put

26 jobs at risk to help "address some short-term financial pressures the college is facing at the moment".

Ofsted then downgraded the college from 'outstanding' to 'requires improvement'.

Inspectors said the information leaders provided to governors about the college's finances over recent months had "not been sufficiently accurate to enable governors to hold leaders to account for the management of resources and the college's significant financial deficit".

Gateshead College received a financial notice to improve from the Education and Skills Funding Agency in January after it had "been assessed as experiencing serious cash flow pressures". The college is currently in formal intervention.

A new three-year financial plan has since been agreed on, and it is hoped to return Gateshead College to surplus by 2020-2021.

It recorded a surplus of £748,000 in 2017-18, according to its latest accounts.

## DfE launches last-minute T-level placements research

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The government has embarked on a very last-minute mission to find out if students could fail to secure the mandatory T-level industry placement.

A tender to evaluate the controversial component of the new post-16 technical qualifications went live last week, with fewer than six months to go until students take their first class.

The Department for Education's procurement documents said the timing makes this evaluation "particularly vital".

It will focus on support measures announced last May to help providers and employers deliver T-levels, which included flexibilities in the mandatory 315-hour industry placement so learners could split the placement across two employers, and special allowances for certain routes: learners on the construction route, for instance, can complete a charitable project for 105 hours of their placement.

That's in addition to £55 million in capacity and delivery funding

handed out in 2019/20, after the DfE released £60 million in 2018/19, and adjustments in the 16-to-19 discretionary bursary fund "to account for the additional costs students might face due to participating in industry placements", like travel and subsistence.

One of the questions intended to be answered by the evaluation is: "Are there any routes where sourcing placements is still challenging, or placements are not deliverable? If so, why?"

Three T-levels – in the digital, construction and education routes – will start in September 2020, with more being rolled out every year until 2023.

As the evaluation contract end date has been set as October 31, the DfE will not know what further support will be required until learners are already sitting the qualification.

The National Union of Students' vice president for further education Juliana Mohamad-Noor said: "Tendering for some evaluation work just a few months from their beginning seems to show that there are still concerns about gaps in provision."

But the union, Noor says, is "glad to see the government looking at how to make placements flexible" and they hope to see bursaries are used "to ensure cost is no barrier".

A DfE spokesperson called the evaluation "routine" and added that since the launch of an industry placement pilot in 2017/18 they have commissioned several evaluations of placement delivery, as well as a further review of the available support.

The industry placement has become the most controversial element on the level 3 qualifications, with Scarborough Sixth Form College saying they dropped out of delivering the digital route last year partly because of the difficulty they had in securing sufficient numbers of placements.

Boston College principal Jo Maher previously told *FE Week* her provider had not signed up for T-levels as they had found placements "a challenge for rural areas" like theirs.

Fellow Lincolnshire principal Janet Meenaghan, of New College Stamford, has also said making placements work in the area was



"really, really difficult" because a lot of the county's businesses were either small or micro, many with just one or two staff members.

An earlier review of the support measures put in place by the DfE in 2018/19, including the £60 million for the capacity and delivery fund and £5 million invested in the National Apprenticeships Service to link employers with providers, is due to be published this spring.

The initial T-level rollout was delayed by 12 months in 2018 amid worries about its pace, yet at that time the then-education secretary Damian Hinds refused a request by the DfE's permanent secretary Jonathan Slater to delay their start from 2020 to 2021.

Bidders have until Monday, March 16 to express an interest in the new tender. The successful bidder will be selected in the week beginning April 27. The contract value is unknown.

# Cashing in on MBA apprentices: CMI income rockets as CEO pockets a £66,500 bonus

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From front

Exclusive

It is boom time at the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), a charity with a turnover last year of £15 million, where thanks to the invention of the apprenticeship standard is set to see income more than double this year and its chief executive has received a £66,500 bonus.

CMI is approved to end-point assess seven apprenticeship standards from the level 3 team leader to the controversial level 7 MBA and already have 28,350 registered apprentices, at a levy cost estimated to be more than £250 million of which CMI would receive fee income of around £26 million.

Accounts for CMI published this year reveal the chief executive, Ann Francke, has already been rewarded with a £66,500 bonus, increasing her income to £336,000, a rise of 25 per cent on the previous year.

A spokesperson for CMI said the bonus was agreed by a "remuneration committee" and was "in recognition of the successful growth in learners, chartered managers and invoiced revenues in line with the organisation's mission and purpose as set out in CMI's Royal Charter".

But the astonishing growth in

management apprenticeships funded from the levy, as first predicted by FE Week in 2016, has not proven universally popular.

So CMI has been working hard to keep policy makers onside, spending £2.315 million last year, 15 per cent of all expenditure, on what their accounts call a "representational role and public relations".

## "These vested interests are showing little concern for the best interests of apprentices or taxpayers"

They spent even more in 2018, £3 million, and have launched over 12 reports, such as one called 'The value of chartered managers', as well as sponsoring roundtable events at Conservative Party conferences.

CMI also hold regular events in parliament to lobby MPs, such as earlier this month in which their twitter feed said it was "great to have our MP Barry Sheerman here to celebrate management apprenticeships today" and there was "much excitement about the value of management

apprenticeships".

A spokesperson for the charity claimed the expenditure on public relations was "not lobbying and it covers the direct and overhead costs for all thought leadership and research which is critical to delivering CMI's mission".

CMI produces data of their own and claims it shows the over 4,000 starts on the senior leader (MBA) apprenticeship is "driving up social mobility, levelling-up regional skills and boosting productivity".

But the lobbying appears to have failed to impress the secretary of state for education, Gavin Williamson, who said last month he was "not convinced the levy should be used to pay for staff, who are often already highly qualified and highly paid, to receive an MBA".

Williamson went on: "I'd rather see funding helping to kick-start careers or level up skills and opportunities. That's why I've asked for a review of the senior leader apprenticeship standard to ensure it is meeting its aims."

The spokesperson for CMI responded, saying: "De-funding higher level management courses or other drastic steps, taken in isolation without looking at the whole apprenticeships programme in the round, risks damaging our ambitions on addressing skills shortages, as well as reducing the quality of provision and training opportunities across the country."

But Tom Richmond, former adviser



Ann Francke

to the former skills minister Matthew Hancock, produced his own report in January, which claimed the levy was descending into farce.

Richmond took particular aim at hundreds of millions being spent on "rebadging management training and professional development courses for more experienced employees".

In response to figures in the latest set of CMI accounts, Richmond said: "It is disappointing to see that, for all its good intentions, the apprenticeship levy is now being openly exploited for commercial gain. Far from improving the productivity of UK plc, it appears that the startling growth in 'management apprenticeships' is just lining the pockets of senior executives at the CMI as well as some training

providers.

Richmond added: "These vested interests are showing little concern for the best interests of apprentices or taxpayers, yet they are consuming hundreds of millions of pounds that could have been used to help young people start a career in a skilled job or occupation.

"Gavin Williamson was right to voice his concern about the rapid emergence of MBAs within the apprenticeship system. Even so, our recent EDSK report called on the government to go much further by scrapping fake apprenticeships such as rebadged management training courses, as this will ensure that the levy funding prioritises younger recruits instead of existing employees."

Apprenticeship standard	Level	Current max funding per apprentice	Starts registered with CMI for end-point assessment to date*	Max levy funding	CMI end-point-assessment fee per apprentice*	Potential CMI fee income
Team leader / supervisor	3	£4,500	11,580	£52,110,000	£675	£7,816,500
Business administrator	3	£5,000	220	£1,100,000	£650	£143,000
Associate project manager	4	£6,000	72	£432,000	£1,200	£86,400
Junior management consultant	4	£9,000	26	£234,000	£850	£22,100
Operations / departmental manager	5	£7,000	8,147	£57,029,000	£1,000	£8,147,000
Chartered manager (degree)	6	£22,000	4,228	£93,016,000	£1,100	£4,650,800
Senior leader (degree)	7	£18,000	4,077	£73,386,000	£1,400	£5,707,800

\* Source: CMI

Total

28,350

£277,307,000

£26,573,600

## Feature

## Entrepreneur tops MBA apprenticeshi

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From front Exclusive

The controversial level 7 senior leader apprenticeship has again hit the headlines in recent days, after the education secretary questioned whether the £18,000 levy-funded MBA was “value for money”. The programme is traditionally associated with high profile universities running courses for executives in the corporate sector. But *FE Week* found it is an entrepreneur servicing schools that has now hit the MBA apprenticeship top spot so far this year...

David Cobb, who runs education-services organisation Oceanova, moved into the apprenticeships market in 2018.

One of his subsidiaries is a small London-based company called Captiva Learning, which trades as the National College of Education. It recorded the most senior leader 7 starts (180) out of all training providers on the standard in the first quarter of 2019/20.

Last year they recruited 250 individuals onto the programme. Overall they are the provider with the second biggest number of starts on the apprenticeship since its launch in February 2018 – pipping many top universities such as Middlesex and Exeter.

Government data shows Cranfield University has the largest number of starts, totalling 989 so far.

Captiva could earn up to £3 million



### Top 10 providers of the MBA apprenticeship in the first quarter of 2019/20

Provider Name	2017/18 MBA participation*	2018/19 MBA participation*	Q1 MBA starts 2019/20 **	Total
CAPTIVA LEARNING LIMITED	0	250	180	430
CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY	246	572	171	989
THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM	0	62	130	192
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER	0	129	120	249
UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH	0	103	100	203
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA AT NEWCASTLE	0	52	77	129
THE UNIVERSITY OF READING	0	150	76	226
THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD	0	16	75	91
LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY	15	112	74	201
ASTON UNIVERSITY	36	187	73	296

Source: \* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/848363/Apprenticeship\\_Participation\\_1415\\_1819\\_final\\_v0.2.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/848363/Apprenticeship_Participation_1415_1819_final_v0.2.xlsx) \*\* [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/861526/Underlying\\_data\\_apprenticeship\\_starts.csv.zip](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/861526/Underlying_data_apprenticeship_starts.csv.zip)

from the 180 apprentices they recruited in September if they charged the standard's upper funding rate of £18,000.

**“This is the goose that lays the golden egg for teacher retention”**

And when the 250 previous starts are combined, that income rises to over £7 million in less than two years.

Cobb is a well-known businessman in the schools sector, specialising in teacher recruitment and training. He is listed on Companies House as an

“active” director for 15 firms.

All the higher level apprenticeships his company delivers are to school staff, mostly academy trust chief executives, headteachers and deputies.

He says while he has no numerical growth target, he does want to extend the offer further across England.

Defending the apprenticeship, he told *FE Week* it is often a “mischaracterisation” that the standard is simply an MBA being done on the cheap by senior executives at big FTSE 200 companies such as Deloitte.

“I just don't think that's right,” Cobb said. “Around 90 per cent of our level 7 learners are doing it as a master's. It is an important qualification for senior leaders and actually when you look at the numbers, over 60 per cent have been done in the public sector.”

“I'm not sure Gavin Williamson would stand by policies that cut off funding to public sector leaders, which is what this is doing”



# Table with £3m starts in September

Cobb's customers are exclusively schools. His firm also delivers to over 200 apprentices across the level 3 team leader/supervisor and level 5 operations/departmental manager.

So, with double the number of starts on the level 7 standard, why are schools lapping up this management apprenticeship with Captiva? Cobb puts it down to the "substandard" National Professional Qualifications for teachers that have been on offer over the last 10 to 15 years.

"If we're facing a recruitment crisis in education we're facing a bigger leadership crisis and actually master's is the currency amongst these people. They're postgrad qualified professionals in their own right in schools."

## "Around 90 per cent of our level 7 learners are doing it as a master's"

He added: "We're quite surprised by Williamson's statement in that respect because all different sorts of money is being poured into different types of organisations to address recruitment and retention in education, but this is the goose that lays the golden egg in terms of retention, and now we're talking about reducing the funding

where it's clearly working very successfully."

Cobb said he joined the apprenticeships market shortly after the levy reforms because "we thought this would be an important development".

He admits that his firm receives criticism from the schools sector for being "profiteers", but the "truth is we have really invested heavily into this because it's something we passionately believe in".

While the upper funding rate for the level 7 standard is £18,000, Cobb says his provider does follow the funding rules and takes into account an apprentice's prior learning and experience when setting rates for individuals. His firm has charged the maximum of £18,000 in 84 per cent of starts so far, Cobb claims.

He puts his rapid growth in the market down to an "extraordinary value proposition for schools".

Apprentices made up an average of only 0.9 per cent of the workforce in schools across England in 2018-19, despite the government's 2.3 per cent public sector target.

"It's really difficult for

schools to engage with the levy because it's not part of their culture," Cobb said. "There's still an unintended snobbery around apprenticeships, because the word apprentice means failure.

## "People don't leave their jobs, they leave their managers"

"So part of us raising awareness is about changing that narrative in schools. It's something we're really working hard every single day to do."

Captiva had its first monitoring report from Ofsted published in December, which resulted in 'reasonable progress' ratings across the board. However, Ofsted only inspects provision up to level 5, as the higher levels are the responsibility of higher education regulator the Office for Students.

While Captiva isn't on the OfS register of HE providers itself, Cobb says they are registered with the regulator through its partnership with a private higher education institution, the University of Buckingham.

He confirmed that the OfS has never visited the

Gavin Williamson

provider to inspect the quality of the level 7 provision.

But Cobb offers assurance that delivery of the level 7 standard is "quality", largely because four of his lecturers "are HMI inspectors" that apply an "Ofsted lens."

They are among 30 lecturers, tutors and assessors on his apprenticeship delivery team, who are mostly senior figures in education, ex-headteachers and school improvement advisers.

He says he has also recruited the former national schools commissioner, Sir David Carter, to lead on his MBA programme.

With its head office in London, apprenticeship training with Captiva is mostly delivered in the workplace as well as at various rented offices across England.

"We spend a lot of money and we have put a lot of energy into going and visiting apprentices in the workplace, delivering progress reviews, ensuring that the apprenticeship is supported by line management, that it's actually having an impact at employer level as well as learner level."

Cobb's first cohort of level 7 apprentices, which totalled 156, are due to complete their programmes this summer.

Summarising his view on the management apprenticeship, he said: "People don't leave their jobs, they leave their managers. That's why management education is so important. It's absolutely fundamental to successful organisations, whether that'd be a business or whether it's a public sector institution."

## Controversial but popular level 7 MBA apprenticeship faces cull

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Two weeks ago the education secretary demanded a review into the controversial MBA apprenticeship "to safeguard the integrity of the apprenticeship brand and value for money of the levy."

A letter, sent from Gavin Williamson to the new boss at the Institute for Apprenticeships, Jennifer Coupland, sets June 1 as a deadline for determining whether the level 7 senior leader standard will continue to be funded.

It came less than a month after Coupland told *FE Week* that public funding for management apprenticeships is "perfectly legitimate".

Williamson's letter said: "I am unconvinced

that having an apprenticeship standard that includes an MBA paid for by the levy is in the spirit of our reformed apprenticeships or provides value for money.

"I question whether an MBA is an essential regulatory or professional requirement to work in this field of senior leadership. It is of the utmost importance for the integrity of the programme and the apprenticeships brand that each and every standard meets our highest possible expectations.

"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."

*FE Week* was first to report, back in 2016, that management apprenticeships were already the third most popular, proving to be "unstoppable" and would likely "rocket to the top spot once the apprenticeship levy kicks in next year".

Our analysis shows there have been 6,387 starts on the level 7 MBA since its launch in 2018.

Williamson's letter follows warnings from the IfATE that apprenticeship funding could soon be overspent.

The National Audit Office reported in March last year that there is "clear risk" that the programme is not financially sustainable after the average cost of training an apprentice hit double what the government predicted.

And the Department for Education's

permanent secretary has previously admitted that "hard choices" will need to be made to stop the apprenticeships budget from going bust.

Despite Williamson's concerns, *FE Week* has found that Whitehall is lapping up the MBA apprenticeship.

The Department for Work and Pensions last week 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 DfE itself has 34 staff on the programme.

David Cobb



## News

# Covid-19: UK colleges remain open as France and Ireland set to close

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Closing schools and colleges at this stage of the coronavirus epidemic could do "more harm than good", Boris Johnson has warned.

On Thursday the prime minister reiterated advice that education settings "should only close if they are specifically advised to do so".

It comes after the government's emergency Cobra committee agreed to move from the "contain" to the "delay" phase of its response to the pandemic.

However, the government is advising colleges to call off any international trips with students under the age of 18 they have planned.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser, said that while it's "true that

there's some effect in closing schools" the effect is "minimal".

## "It could cause more harm than good"

"Actually, you'd have to do it for 13 to 16 weeks or longer, and you don't have to be a very advanced mathematician to work out that the chances of keeping children not speaking to each other or playing with each other over 13 to 16 weeks is zero," he said.

"Therefore, you have to be very careful to make sure you take the right measures that will stop this, rather than things that might end up with children, for example, going to stay with grandparents at a time when they might be most vulnerable."

Dr Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, also said it was important to "do the right things at the right time. This is going to be a long haul. It's critical we do not start things in advance of need."

The move to the "delay" phase of



the government's response comes after the number of cases in the UK rose to over 450.

The government warned earlier this month that its plans could include school and college closures. France and the Republic of Ireland announced earlier this week that all of its schools and colleges would close. Italy, Japan and parts of China made similar decisions earlier this month.

The Association of Colleges has issued guidance for its members.

"The Department for Education has confirmed that we have now moved

into the delay phase in an attempt to manage the coronavirus outbreak. As it stands, colleges will stay open," it says.

"For AoC that means, until further notice, all our events, sports fixtures, network meetings, policy group meetings, and any other meetings required in the normal provision of our services, will proceed as planned.

"If staff have self-isolated, or tested positive, then of course they will not participate in any of these activities.

"If you have a confirmed case within your college visit <https://www.gov.uk/health-protection-team> The

site will assist in the next steps to take, including helping to organise a deep-clean of the college. This is not for suspected cases, but for confirmed cases only.

"Keep checking official Public Health England guidance for up-to-date info, advice and guidance.

"We will of course inform staff, colleges and partners immediately if this position changes. Until then, it's business as usual."

Visit <https://bit.ly/2QbSanY> to read the government's COVID-19 guidance for education settings



Boris Johnson

## Coronavirus: 'break in learning' rule suspended for affected apprentices

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The government will allow apprentices to have a "break in learning" if they cannot be assessed as a result of the coronavirus epidemic.

Training providers usually incur a financial penalty under normal funding rules if they record a break in learning that is not driven by the learner. However, this move "should protect funding" where the assessor is ill.

The Department for Education released on Monday the latest guidance, which applies to apprentices who have reached gateway and those

who have experienced gaps in training as a result of Covid-19-related illness.

It stated: "The normal breaks in learning process should be followed and therefore we only need notifying once a break in learning has exceeded four weeks."

The advice also permits employer-driven breaks if an apprentice's employer has to follow government advice to take action that results in an apprenticeship having to be paused.

The DfE said: "On these occasions, a break in learning can be used where there will be a break of longer than four weeks."

It stressed that all stakeholders need to "recognise that the health and wellbeing of individuals is a higher

priority than performance measures" and advised adhering to the current escalation process of raising end-point assessment (EPA) issues through external quality assurance providers in the first instance.

In order to "maintain the integrity of high-quality assessment of apprenticeships", the situation will continue to be monitored and further advice and modifications relating to specific assessment methods will be issued if necessary.

The Institute for Apprentices & Technical Education is expected to publish further guidance in response to the coronavirus shortly.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers said the measures

will "help to alleviate the difficulties that the spread of the coronavirus is already causing in respect of providers, EPAOs, apprentice employers and apprentices themselves" but called for more action to be taken urgently.

AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said: "We welcome the prompt change to the break in learning rule, but it's vital for the DfE to recognise and respond to the fact that in asking individual training providers and EPAOs to request exceptional treatment by learner is unrealistic. The system simply couldn't cope with the volume, and therefore we need a change to a rule that will apply to everyone.

"As well as breaks in learning, AELP

will be asking the DfE to look at possible impact in relation to face-to-face-delivery and assessment, time limits on EPA and rules around payments up to gateway and completion. Measuring success in the future, which affects the funding and official registration of apprenticeship training providers, will need to allow for these circumstances."

He added that the government should address apprenticeship contract payments to providers and the need for a coherent approach to all further education and skills providers to ensure they survive "what is likely to be a period of falling attendance and falling recruitment".

# BTEC AWARDS 2020



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## Profile

Introducing...

SIMON  
COOKPrincipal,  
MidKent CollegeJL DUTAUT  
JL.DUTAUT@FEWEEK.CO.UK**FE Week meets the college principal who is determined to revitalize the fortunes of a neglected corner of England**

If anywhere feels like a left-behind coastal region, Medway is it. Yet, after decades of moving around Europe, England and South Africa, this is where Ipswich-born Simon Cook, principal of MidKent College, has decided to drop anchor. "This organisation is under my skin, and this has become more than just a job. This is about changing the area we work in."

We are standing at the window of his office on MidKent's Gillingham campus. From this vantage point, he describes to me everything in sight, and even some things that aren't.

On the horizon is the Medway River. "We're working to get better access to it," he tells me. "Some of the young people we teach haven't ever raised their eyes to notice it's there."

He points out the largest gas

storage station in England, the new developments on the water's edge, St Mary's Island, which used to be a base for nuclear submarines and where residents are "not allowed to plant certain things in their gardens" as a result of what was buried there.

**"Whether you want to use the words 'anchor', or 'civic institutions' – that's our place"**

Slowly, he steers my gaze ever closer to the building we are in. Lower Lines Park, on the other side of the college car park, is so called after the Napoleonic War defences that were built there. The upper lines – a giant trench Cook describes as the college's very own moat – are to our left. Under the car park are tunnels built by the Royal Navy, which are regularly broken into by "urban explorers".

Across the road are what used to be officers' houses. I hadn't noticed, but on closer inspection they are quite different from the rows of terraced houses behind them where the workers who used to man the vast operation of the Chatham Royal Navy dockyard lived. In 1984 the dockyard was closed down, bringing a 414-year history to an end, and devastating the local economy.

Our attention is on Gillingham, but there's no doubt Cook is just as invested in the history, geography and community around MidKent's other campus in Maidstone. "I'm not interested in what's going on in other parts of the country. I'm interested in what's going on in Medway and Maidstone, and the impact we can have on those communities, which, for me, goes back to what colleges always existed for. Whether you want to use the words 'anchor', or 'civic institutions', that's our place."

When we turn our eyes away from the estuary view, Cook walks me along a patchwork panoramic display of the college's history. He could speak volumes about each frame if I let him. And I'm tempted, but today is the college's careers fair and it's already clear he's a hands-on leader who will later rue having missed the fun and networking of talking to his students and all the visiting local employers.

The event has been running for only three years, but it looks like a professionally run, well-established tradition. It's not really designed to



Simon as a baby: he has always felt fortunate to have been brought up by a family who instilled a sense of pride and strong work ethic

secure employment directly but to create community and partnership. As we talk, it becomes clear to me that this is this principal's superpower. Every employer, every colleague in every place he's lived: he remembers them by name, has a story to tell about them and knows where they are today.

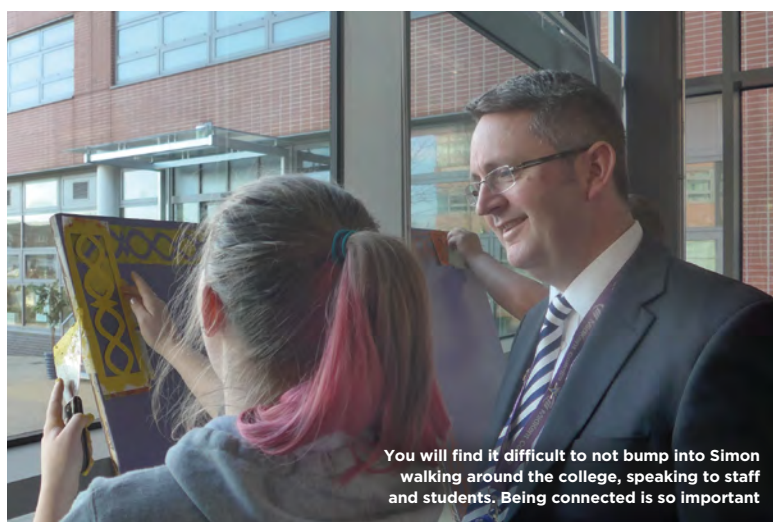
What Cook seems most proud of is how bringing local businesses in contact with young people has helped to break down stereotypes. Back in his office, looking at the patchwork mural, he points out the gendered courses on offer in the 1950s. "That's still reflected today. We don't do things like secretarial but let's replace that with hair and beauty, for example... What hasn't changed is that if you're a young person who's not doing well at school somebody somewhere is going to say to you, 'Well, that just means you're good with your hands!'"

Famously, Kent is still a selective authority, and Cook talks with genuine concern about the young people who arrive at college having been let down

twice – effectively failed at the age of 11, and then often again at the age of 16 – young people who have been biding their time at school because they "think they're destined for a career in construction... Yet we go down to Maidstone and it's totally different. There's a much more white-collar community. A trade is the last thing you think is relevant. Let's raise the profile of technical education."

Cook has some skin in this game. He was one of those children for whom the academic curriculum seemed to lack purpose. He left school at 14 and got on to an apprenticeship in an Ipswich hotel kitchen. Living with his grandparents for 18 months and inspired by his carpenter grandfather to work hard and take pride in his finished work, he gave it all he had.

The result was that the first half of Cook's working life was spent



You will find it difficult to not bump into Simon walking around the college, speaking to staff and students. Being connected is so important

**“This organisation is under my skin, and this has become more than just a job”**



Simon always speaks passionately about his time working as a chef and says that the high pressure and standards prepared him well for life as a principal & CEO

in kitchens in what was a stellar career. By 19, he moved to Park Lane's Intercontinental, then its sister hotel in Frankfurt at the age of 21, then on to other Michelin-starred restaurants in Germany.

I interrupt him to ask about Gavin Williamson's policy drive for technical education in England to rival Germany's within the decade. His answer is succinct: "Good luck with that."

I press him for more insight. "I think about my craft and the esteem in which being a chef was held in that country, and around technical qualifications. If you did a job, and then you went for your 'meister' qualification, you were really held in high esteem whether you were a builder or a bricklayer or chef."

In fact, it was only last year that Germany rolled back some of its deregulation around the Meisterpflicht (master craftsman) qualification. For

a long time, it was illegal to start a business or hold an elevated position in a company without it. The regulations are back on the Bundestag statute book after trades lobby groups successfully argued that the 2004 marketisation had created business instability and resulted in too few apprentices being trained.

But Cook didn't stay long enough to involve himself in any of that. Adventure beckoned and he headed to South Africa. In another Michelin-starred kitchen near Cape Town he met his wife-to-be. But there was a problem. A short stint for her in the hotel business had made her certain of one thing: "There is no way I'm marrying a chef," she told him.

Together, they moved back to England. Feedback from an apprentice in South Africa gave him a clue about what he might do next. The seed sown, it wasn't long before he crafted himself

an opportunity to try out teaching, and he has never looked back.

Cook has repeated in FE what he did in haute cuisine. He gained his CertEd at Bournemouth & Poole College, then moved to Somerset. There, a change of leadership and his wife's difficulty integrating caused him to consider quitting, but he restored his professional confidence by becoming an Ofsted inspector, and then went on to become deputy principal at Cornwall College.

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before his boss and mentor there, David Linnell, was hospitalised and announced he would be stepping down. Not prepared to go through another leadership change so soon, Cook moved on, and that is how he found himself at MidKent. But it wasn't long before disaster struck here too. Principal Sue McLeod, MidKent's first female principal, was diagnosed with a brain

tumour and passed away very suddenly.

In post for only a year as deputy, Cook was encouraged, despite himself, to apply for the top job. He has now been principal for five years.

**“What we needed was to make things worse before they got better”**

It hasn't been an easy journey. However, two grade 3 inspections from Ofsted in 2015 and 2017 didn't shake him from his path. "It just added more and more pressure, knowing that what was wanted was rapid improvement. It was a real tension, because I knew rapid improvement would mean we'd

crash again. What we needed was to make things worse before they got better. We needed to get sustained improvement."

The approach worked, and in 2018, MidKent was given a clean bill of health by the inspectorate, with a grade 2 report.

Is the Michelin star of college grades the next target, I ask? "Holding on to Michelin stars is harder than getting them," he replies, "because everybody else wants to be better than you. That's what we spend so much time doing. We are here for our students first and foremost, and if that means becoming an outstanding college as recognised by Ofsted, that's a great byproduct."

This seasoned college principal has bigger fish to fry than to chase after an ephemeral accolade. Medway is bidding for city of culture status and supporting the effort to turn the region's fortunes around is firmly on his horizon.

## News

# BMet to sell Stourbridge campus for just £3.55m

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Exclusive

A college campus that was controversially closed last summer has been sold for £3.55 million, just five years after £5 million was spent on a refurbishment.

The news comes as published accounts for Birmingham Metropolitan College also reveal property revaluations have contributed to a £23.7 million deficit last year.

The college told *FE Week* that it has now exchanged contracts for its site in Stourbridge with boarding school Old Swinford Hospital.

A spokesperson for the college said they are “satisfied that we achieved best value”, despite the sale price being £1.45 million less than the refurbishment costs in 2015.

The Stourbridge sale, which triggered strong local opposition including from MP Margot James, was



decided on by BMet as it bid to pay back debts which had totalled £8.9 million to the banks and £7.5 million to the Education and Skills Funding Agency by May 2019.

The group’s recently published 2018/19 accounts show that it generated a deficit of £23.7 million in 2018/19. However, £18.6 million of this was owing to “impairment loss” of its assets.

A BMet spokesperson explained that

the “value of the assets on the college’s balance sheet relates to historic value associated with a collection of assets that does not reflect the current market value.

“In layman’s terms the college has not had any cash loss because of impairing assets – it’s all book loss.”

The spokesperson said that overall, BMet is making “significant strides in reducing its level of debt and in 2018/19 the college reduced its

operating deficit by half” – from £6.251 million in 2018 to £3.323 million in 2019.

“In 2018/19 the college continued to monitor against its financial recovery plan with an aim to return to good financial health,” they added.

Stourbridge College, which dates back over 100 years and joined BMet in 2013, was closed following a review by the FE Commissioner.

Its 900 learners were transferred to Dudley and Halesowen colleges, and some staff were also absorbed by the two colleges in September 2019.

BMet’s accounts show that it received a combined £2.4 million from Dudley and Halesowen for the transaction.

In addition, BMet is expecting to receive a further £500,000 from Dudley associated with the disposal of its Arts and Design Centre.

Despite closing down the Stourbridge site to balance its books, the accounts state that the net proceeds from the sale will be used to “invest in the future” of BMet’s James Watt campus.

It will also go some way to “further reduce” its £8.9 million debt with Lloyds Bank.

While BMet’s accounts have been signed off as a “going concern”, its auditors said there was a “material uncertainty”.

“The college is dependent on the continued support of its bankers for the continued provision of loan facilities and the Education and Skills Funding Agency for short term cashflow support,” they state.

“These events and conditions indicate that a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the college’s ability to continue as a going concern.”

Old Swinford Hospital is a £12,000 a year state boarding school founded in 1667.

Negotiations to buy the Stourbridge site from BMet got underway in October, following heightened concern that it could become housing.

The school teaches students from years 7 to 13, where parents pay for boarding at an annual cost of £11,940. The DfE pays for the tuition.

## Broker offering subcontracting deal for 'completed' 16-18 sport trainees

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Exclusive

A learner find firm is attempting to broker a subcontracting deal for 16 to 18-year-old trainees who have already completed their placement at football clubs.

Prime providers that take up the offer from Develop Your Staff (DYS) would break government funding rules, according to an auditor.

An email from DYS, sent to providers with direct access to funding, asks: “Do you have any underspend on your 16-18 traineeship funding contract which needs spending?”

Of the five unnamed providers looking for access to funds, one of them “delivers sport traineeships and delivers nationally, great links with football clubs and fantastic success data”.

“They also [have] 65 unfunded learners based around London, all completed. Their prime ran out of funding so they were unable to process.”

Another is “seeking around £30,000 for their unfunded learners, they are based in Yorkshire and deliver sports and construction and in addition to the £30,000 they require, they would be looking at enrolling an additional 15 candidates per month”.

DYS’ hunt comes amid a consultation

on radical Education and Skills Funding Agency rule changes. It states that “entering into subcontracting arrangements for financial gain” is not acceptable.

The consultation includes a dedicated section on subcontracting of sport-related provision, as it is an area that the ESFA is “particularly concerned” about.

“While we recognise that it [subcontracted sports provision] provides access for some learners who might otherwise be disengaged, there have been cases where weaknesses in oversight arrangements have given cause for concern,” the ESFA has said.

“Problems have arisen as there is generally also a sports club involved as a third party in the programme which may provide specialist coaching, and the boundaries between the funded education programme and the associated coaching activities become blurred.”

Existing ESFA ‘funding and performance management rules’ state that it is “vital” that all directly funded organisations must “properly monitor and control all subcontracted delivery”.

While DYS would not itself be in breach of any government funding guidelines, an experienced individual learner record auditor, who did not wish to be named, told *FE Week* that any provider who entered into a subcontracting arrangement after

learners had already completed their traineeships would be breaking the funding rules.

Danny Scargill, the managing director of DYS, would not provide the names of the providers he is trying to broker subcontracts for, but he insisted the ESFA extract quoted by *FE Week* is “simply part of the commentary: it is not a rule”.

He said: “The providers we are working with, certainly in relation to our post, are not directly funded. We are simply helping to coordinate supply with demand.

“It is not a breach of the rules for any providers to use consultants to help accelerate their funding spend, certainly when there are critical situations or unexpected issues.

“A couple of the providers advertised have unfunded learners, learners who could ultimately be disadvantaged due to the providers losing funding from their primes. We have stepped in to help them with our large network of clients. I am sure you would agree that this not something that should be criticised.”

Scargill added: “We provide a particularly beneficial service in this sector. When a training provider loses funding, learners are always the people that suffer. They are left in limbo and are often unable to complete qualifications that they have started. This should not happen and, in some circumstances, we can help those learners by finding

### Do you have any underspend on your 16-18 Traineeship funding contract which needs spending?

We are currently working with five separate quality providers seeking partnership opportunities for 16-18 Traineeship funding.

For your organisation (as the funder) our introduction to any of these providers is totally cost free as we are acting as a consultant for these providers.

**Provider 1** delivers sport traineeships and delivers nationally, great links with football clubs and fantastic success data. They also 65 unfunded learners based around London, all completed. Their prime ran out of funding so they were unable to process.

**Provider 2** delivers public service traineeships, they are looking for £100,000 and are located in the North West (Bury).

**Provider 3** is seeking around £30,000 for their unfunded learners, they are based in Yorkshire and deliver sports and construction and in addition to the £30k they require, they would be looking at enrolling an additional 15 candidates per month.

**Provider 4** is based in the North West and deliver Barista and Barwork traineeships, fantastic track record in this provision and have a cohort of 15 starting in Liverpool on the 25/03/2020. This will be for 10-15 every month until August, they will then be expanding the delivery to Manchester and their cohorts will be 10-15 per site each month.

**Provider 5** delivers to a number of different sectors and the traineeships are for health and social care, warehousing and logistics. They are looking for circa £50,000 and are located in the North East

Develop Your Staff’s subcontracting broker pitch to prime providers

alternative funding streams that would otherwise be unavailable to their training providers.

“The funding allocation system that is currently in place is not perfect but we are helping to perfect it. With our assistance (and similar from other brokers) the market for learners continues to increase and learners have

a safety net where their provider loses funding”

DYS’ website states that it has “no upfront fees for our telemarketing service”...“we simply charge a fixed fee per candidate found”.

Scargill would not reveal how much his firm makes from placing each learner with a provider.



Coleg Cambria has rapidly established itself as a leading UK education provider. Estyn awarded Cambria the highest outcomes possible at the most recent inspection, with “current performance” and “prospects for improvement” judged as “excellent”.

**If you believe that you have the vision, skills, expertise and enthusiasm to make a difference and help us realise our ambitions, we want to hear from you. For further information about the posts please visit our website:**

[www.cambria.ac.uk/careers](http://www.cambria.ac.uk/careers)

## BE PART OF AN OFFICIALLY EXCELLENT COLLEGE

Due to a large scale transformational project the college has six exciting opportunities within its senior management team.

### Vice Principal Work-based Learning & Employer Engagement

Responsible for all work based learning delivery, open distance learning and partnership delivery.

### Vice Principal Academic Studies

Delivery of all remaining HE programmes, Access programmes and A level delivery.

### Vice Principal Technical Studies

Delivery of vocational and technical qualifications. Level 2 & 3 and the management of the equine and animal centres.

### Vice Principal Life Skills & Adult Learning

Will work across all sites with a focus on the delivery of life skills programmes for 16-18 year olds and adults.

### Vice Principal Engineering, Construction & Digital

Delivery in Engineering, Construction and ICT/Digital across FE level 2 & 3, WBL and HE.

### Vice Principal Quality

Responsible for the effective development of all aspects of quality assurance and fostering an ethos of continuous improvement.

**Closing date for applications is Sunday 22nd March 2020.**



Sefydlodd Coleg Cambria ei hun yn gyflym fel darparwr addysg blaenllaw yn y Deyrnas Unedig. Rhoddodd Estyn y canlyniadau uchaf posibl i Cambria yn yr arolygiad diweddaraf, a barnwyd bod ei “berfformiad cyfredol” a’i “ragolygon ar gyfer gwella” yn “rhagorol”.

**Os ydych yn credu fod gennych chi'r weledigaeth, y sgiliau, yr arbenigedd a'r brwdfrydedd i wneud gwahaniaeth ac i'n cynorthwyo i wireddu ein huchelgeisiau, hoffem glywed gennych chi. I gael rhagor o wybodaeth am y swyddi hyn, ewch i'n gwefan:**

[www.cambria.ac.uk/careers](http://www.cambria.ac.uk/careers)

## HOFFECH CHI WEITHIO I GOLEG SY'N 'RHAGOROL YN SWYDDOGOL'?

Oherwydd prosiect trawsnewidiol ar raddfa fawr, mae gan y coleg chwe chyfle cyffrous yn ei uwch dîm rheoli.

### Is-bennaeth Dysgu yn y Gwaith ac Ymgysylltu â Chyflogwyr

Yn gyfrifol am yr holl ddarpariaeth dysgu yn y gwaith, dysgu o bell a darpariaeth partneriaethau.

### Is-bennaeth Astudiaethau Academaidd

Darpariaeth rhai rhaglenni AU, rhaglenni Mynediad a darpariaeth Safon Uwch.

### Is-bennaeth Astudiaethau Technegol

Darpariaeth cymwysterau galwedigaethol a thechnegol. Lefelau 2 a 3 a rheoli'r canolfannau ceffyleg ac anifeiliaid.

### Is-bennaeth Sgiliau Bywyd ac Addysg i Oedolion

Yn gweithio ar bob safle gan ganolbwyntio ar ddarpariaeth rhaglenni sgiliau bywyd i bobl ifanc 16-18 oed ac oedolion.

### Is-bennaeth Peirianeg, Adeiladu a Digidol

Darpariaeth Peirianeg, Adeiladu a TGCh/Digidol ar draws lefelau 2 a 3 AB, DyyG ac AU.

### Is-bennaeth Ansawdd

Yn gyfrifol am ddatblygiad effeithiol pob agwedd ar sicrhau ansawdd a meithrin ethos datblygu'n barhaus.

**Y dyddiad cau ar gyfer ceisiadau yw dydd Sul 22 Mawrth 2020.**



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Landex is unique as a membership organisation in having as a primary goal, the continuous improvement of its 40 members across the UK with specialist land based provider status. It seeks to achieve this through annual peer review, a CPD programme, and the development of outstanding teaching and learning supported by interactive learning materials. In addition, it seeks to represent its members with a wide range of external agencies and funding bodies, as well as securing and delivering funded projects of benefit to its members.

Due to the impending retirement of the current Chief Executive, we wish to recruit for 1st August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.

This position provides an outstanding opportunity for a person with extensive experience of the further and/or higher education sectors to lead a dynamic organisation at a time when technical education and skills are enjoying an enhanced profile and recognition of their importance to the nation, the environment, food production, and the economy.

The work involves substantial activity across the country and at member Colleges and Universities. The Board is seeking to recruit the right individual for this important role and is therefore taking a flexible approach to this appointment. Remuneration package negotiable in the region of £100K/annum for a full-time position.

Further details are available from: [www.landex.org.uk](http://www.landex.org.uk)  
Potential applicants are welcome to discuss the position informally with Chris Moody, the current Chief Executive.  
Tel: **01604 550109** E-mail: [chrismoody@landex.org.uk](mailto:chrismoody@landex.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications: Friday 27th March 2020**



**WEST LONDON COLLEGE**

### Head of English and Maths

**West London College.**  
**Up to £56,640 per annum.**  
**36 hours per week.**

We are seeking an experienced Further Education Manager who can deliver the continuous improvement of our English and Maths (E&M) provision.

This job role will lead on raising standards in the learning, teaching and assessment of E&M and have operational and strategic responsibility for its provision in the College. You will be an advocate of innovative approaches to teaching and learning to ensure a culture of continuous improvement. You should also be experienced in all aspects of curriculum planning and operations.

You should be an excellent leader and manager who is able to develop and implement a College wide strategy for E&M that meets the needs of a multi-cultural community. You should also be able to prepare and lead teams through internal and external inspections, manage budgets and meet student recruitment and achievement targets.

**For more information and a candidate pack visit [www.wlc.ac.uk/jobs](http://www.wlc.ac.uk/jobs)**

**Closing Date: 30 March 2020**



Gliddon Road,  
Barons Court,  
London  
W14 9BL



The Green,  
Ealing,  
London  
W5 5EW



Beaconsfield  
Road, Southall,  
Middlesex  
UB1 1DP



Unit 1, Nucleus  
Park, Central Way,  
Park Royal, London  
NW10 7XT



Southall Waterside,  
170 Brent Road,  
Southall  
UB2 5LE



**West London College**  
wlc.ac.uk



**Buckinghamshire College Group**

Aylesbury Wycombe Amersham

### Curriculum Manager - Business & Computing

Job reference: REQ0211

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 Curriculum Manager, who will be overseeing Business & Computing departments in Amersham.

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, to give 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
- 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.buckscollegelgroup.co.uk](http://www.buckscollegelgroup.co.uk) or email [hr@buckscollegelgroup.ac.uk](mailto:hr@buckscollegelgroup.ac.uk)



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Our people make us different and make us stand out, and now we are looking to strengthen our team with a number of consultant appointments across Finance, MIS and Curriculum. These employed consultant roles are within our interim leadership and management team and successful candidates will be placed in interim roles throughout the UK.

Interested candidates are welcome to have an initial discussion with our Director of Operations, Judith Richardson on 01454 617707 or [Judith.Richardson@fea.co.uk](mailto:Judith.Richardson@fea.co.uk).

For more information visit:  
<https://fea.co.uk/consultants/>

**Closing date: Noon on Tuesday 14 April 2020**



## Curriculum Manager for English

Job reference: REQ0178

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 English, 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
- 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 <https://www.buckscollegigroup.ac.uk/what-we-do/working-at-bcg> or email [hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk](mailto:hr@buckscollegigroup.ac.uk)



## ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL – CORPORATE RESOURCES

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Closing Date: 20th March, 2020 | Interviews: 30th March, 2020

Are you an experienced Corporate Services Manager looking for a new challenge?

Have you always wanted to live and work within an area of natural beauty with a vibrant culture?

Do you want to work in a College rated good by OFSTED, and with outstanding financial health?

Currently ranked 1st in a national league table of FE colleges and consistently ranked in the top five percent of UK Colleges for learner success rates (for 16-18 year olds); Kendal College is seeking a knowledgeable and experienced person for our Assistant Principal role to lead our Finance, Estates and HR Teams.

### Why Choose Us

Set within the breath-taking UNESCO World Heritage site of the Lake District, Kendal College is an FE College that consistently punches above its weight on the national stage. Kendal College has been rated good by OFSTED, and is classified as having outstanding financial health. Under the leadership of our Principal, Kelvin Nash, Kendal College is embarking on a series of bold steps to grow the College and remain a top-notch education provider for Cumbria and the North West region.

As a member of the College's Senior Leadership Team, you will have the opportunity to work in a friendly and supportive environment, alongside outstanding staff and contribute towards the College's strategic objectives.

### What We Offer

- A generous holiday entitlement of 35 days
- 7 efficiency days per year in addition to your hard-earned holiday allocation.
- A College that is committed to developing its staff and providing opportunities for advancement.
- Collaborative working within our departments and campuses to support our endeavours to work smarter and achieve an effective balance between home and work.
- Excellent CPD opportunities to grow and develop.
- On-site canteens with locally sourced ingredients.
- A Cycle to Work scheme and discounted gym membership.
- A comprehensive Staff awards, rewards and Wellbeing scheme

### Job Purpose

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to support the strategic management of the College and to be the lead for finance, estates and human resources, therefore enabling and facilitating the delivery of high quality education and training and the long term sustainability of the College.

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.

### Key Accountabilities

- To be responsible for establishing, maintaining and implementing effective accounting and financial control, management information and reporting arrangements within the College as required by the

College's Board, financial regulations, funding bodies and statutory requirements.

- 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.
- To maintain and provide timely and high quality information across the College to support managers in their decision making and planning processes.
- To develop and implement effective support services in Finance, Estates and Human Resources, leading and managing the teams effectively.

### Essential qualifications & experience

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- Fully qualified accountant (CIMA, ACA, ACCA, CIPFA)
- Working in a senior role in a similar organisation
- Preparing and presenting reports to Boards
- Extensive practical knowledge and experience of managing day to day finance operations
- Knowledge and understanding of funding arrangements and regulatory frameworks in education or other public sector organisations
- Sound knowledge and understanding of GDPR, HR and Estates operations

### Safeguarding Statement

Kendal College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

To apply for this post you must complete the application form available on the College website [kendal.ac.uk/jobs](http://kendal.ac.uk/jobs)

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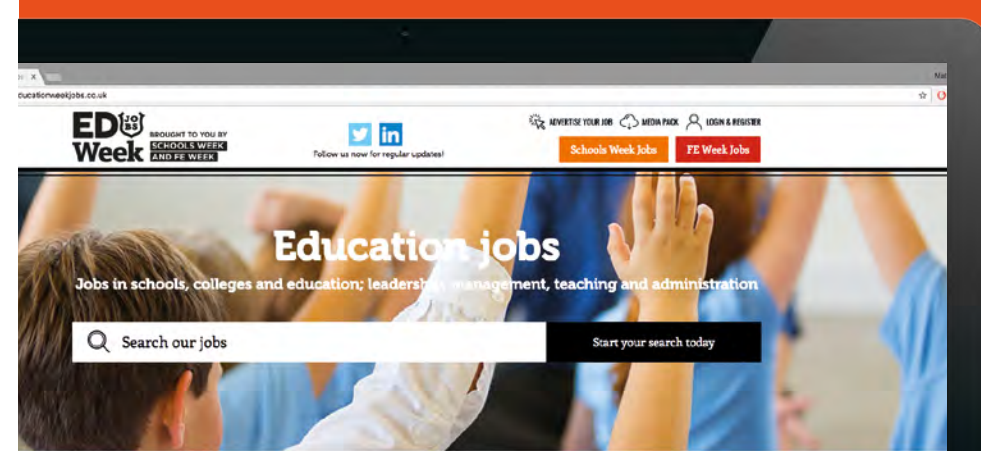
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- Teaching Assistant**  
Locations: South East  
Company: Harris Primary Academy...  
Harris Primary Academy Mayflower is a thriving, diverse and friendly three-form entry academy that launched in September 2014 and is funded through the free school programme. We serve
- Early Years Educator**  
Locations: South East  
Company: Harris Primary Academy...  
Harris Primary Academy Mayflower opened in September 2014 to meet the significant need locally for new places. We opened with a 3 form Reception cohort and the school will continue to
- Assessor in Digital Market...**  
Locations: East Midlands, North W...  
Company: Creative Alliance  
Full-time & part-time hours available  
7AYE although freelancers would be considered as month based term contract. Do you want to help the next generation of Digital Marketing
- Curriculum Manager - Pro...**  
Locations: North East  
Company: Derwentdale College  
Salary £63,75 - £67,66 per annum (full-time permanent post)  
Derwentdale College is successfully undertaking a journey of transition and innovation. We are an ambitious organisation with

**FE Week Featured Jobs**

- Head of Quality and Curriculum**  
Cornel are recruiting





# BTEC Level 2 in Music Industry Skills

Designed to help post-16 learners stand out from the crowd, the **BTEC Level 2 in Music Industry Skills** combines practical knowledge and creative ability to ensure students gain the skills they need to start and succeed in their careers.

## This BTEC Level 2 is designed to be used flexibly as:

- part of a full-time 16–19 study programme, alongside GCSEs, work placement, and enrichment activities
- a qualification to support development of technical skills or off-the-job training for those in work
- a roll-on, roll-off programme for an Apprenticeship or employment.

Available in Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma sizes.

100% internally assessed

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**Unit 2:** Professional Development

**Unit 7:** Self-promotion in the Music Industry

and have a choice of two optional units from;

**Unit 3:** Creating Music

**Unit 4:** Music Performance

**Unit 5:** Music Production

**Unit 6:** Sound Engineering

PUEK A1427b

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BTEC-music-industry-skills](https://quals.pearson.com/BTEC-music-industry-skills)

## News

# DfE stats lay bare drastic SME shift following levy launch

**YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU**  
**YASEMIN@FEWEEK.CO.UK**

The Department for Education has revealed for the first time how the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 has led to a huge shift away from small employers.

Apprenticeship starts with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have fallen 40 per cent, while starts with large employers rose eight per cent.

One of the most affected industries, according to the figures, is health and social work. It experienced a fall of just over 50 per cent in SME starts, from 70,810 in 2016-17 – the last time the figures were published – to 34,820 in 2018-19.

In total, there were 81,300 health and social work apprenticeship starts last year, in comparison to 121,680 who started on the programme in 2016-17.

Another sector hit by the launch of the levy in April 2017 is hospitality. Its

SME starts dropped by 68 per cent, from 12,460 in 2016-17 to 3,950 last year.

Starts at SMEs in the “wholesale and retail trade” and “manufacturing” industry both fell around 40 per cent over the two-year period.

The former decreased from 22,690 to 13,080 while the latter declined from 18,620 to 11,100.

The overall number of apprenticeship starts for all employers dropped by 20 per cent, from 449,830 to 366,170 between 2016-17 and 2018-19.

The findings were revealed in the DfE’s analysis which “looked at the impact of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy on employers engaging with apprenticeships”.

Mark Dawe, the chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, told *FE Week*: “This analysis is very timely with IfATE launching its consultation on funding bands because while the limited availability of non-levy funding is

undoubtedly a major factor, the unviable funding rates for certain standards in, for example, hospitality and adult social care go a long way towards explaining these shocking falls.”

“Neither a flatlining economy nor stuttering social mobility are going to change for the better unless both factors are properly addressed.”

The DfE’s analysis will be of particular interest to the education select committee, which held their first oral evidence session this parliament this week on the impact of, and possible reforms to, the policy.

Stephen Radley, director of strategy and policy of the Construction Industry Training Board, told the committee it had been “very challenging for the construction industry, although the experience has been very varied”.

The latest figures show apprenticeship starts at firms in the construction industry have fallen 23 per cent, from 25,230 to 19,360 at SMEs.

This contrasts with a rise at large

construction firms of 23 per cent, from 6,390 to 7,830.

In January, new boss of IfATE, Jennifer Coupland, called for an additional £750 million to prop up small business apprenticeships.

The Treasury poured cold water on hopes for new funding, after it confirmed that yesterday’s budget offers no extra cash for the programmes.

But the AELP has since claimed that new skills minister Gillian Keegan has pledged “significant funding” for additional small business apprenticeships in the “coming year” following a private meeting (see page 4).

The DfE’s analysis showed that public administration was the only sector to experience a rise in the number of apprenticeship starts at SMEs, although this was recorded at just two per cent – from just 630 in 2016-17, to 640 in 2018-19.

However, almost all of public administration apprenticeships (98 per cent) took place within large employers

in the last year, which saw starts rise 23 per cent after the introduction of the levy, from 22,180 to 27,190.

It was also one of only four industries to see an overall growth in starts over this period.

New legislation from 2017 set public sector bodies with 250 or more staff a target to employ an average of at least 2.3 per cent of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period of April 2017 (when the levy was introduced) to March 2021.

The other sectors bucking the trend last year were information and communication (28 per cent), mining and quarrying (22 per cent), and professional and scientific programmes (nine per cent).

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “We are continuing to work with all employers including small and medium businesses to make sure more people get the skills they need to get ahead and employers have the skilled workforce they need to grow.”

Advertorial

## Formula 1 linked STEM challenge kickstarts engineering careers

Three boys from deep in the Kent countryside stood on a stage on turn 1 of the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi just days before Formula 1 cars skidded and smoked around the corner at the last race of the F1 season. The boys, ‘Evolve UK’ were crowned F1 in Schools World Champions in front of an audience that was not just the other 53 teams competing, but also personalities, luminaries and drivers from the world of motor racing. The three 17 and 18 year olds were rewarded for years of hard work with university scholarships, the F1 in Schools World Champions trophy, VIP paddock access at the Grand Prix, F1 garage tours and a life-changing experience.

George Stonor, Freddie Bull and Lewis Fowler started doing F1 in Schools in an after-school STEM club. All three were interested in engineering and thought the challenge of creating a miniature Formula 1 car would be good fun and an opportunity to combine an interest in motorsport with applying some of their classroom learning in a practical project. With the support of their D & T teacher, Phil Harvey, the boys set to work and were quickly hooked on the challenge. After competing successfully at regional finals, then reaching the national finals, at their fourth attempt the boys reached the World Finals and beat the rest of the world to take the World Champions title.

George, Freddie and Lewis collected awards for winning the Knockout Racing competition, Pit Display Award and Enterprise Portfolio Awards, before jumping on to the top step of the podium to claim the World Champions trophy, as fireworks lit up the sky to celebrate their success. Two of the three boys applied for and won places in the Unilever Williams Engineering Academy, a mentoring scheme operated by Williams F1 team that is only open to F1 in Schools World Finalists. Academy students from previous years have secured placements and

full-time employment with the team as a direct result of their success in F1 in Schools and the Academy, just another opportunity opened up to the boys from their achievements.

Along with the World Champions title the boys have won scholarships to City, University of London, UCL Mechanical Engineering and University of Huddersfield. All three are taking up these opportunities to assist with the costs of their further education.

George Stonor said of the F1 in Schools experience, “We went to the World Finals hoping for a top ten finish and possibly an award, so to have won three awards was amazing, but to be World Champions is just so much more than we could have imagined. We really didn’t think we could do it, especially with so many good teams, it’s just incredible. We’ve been devoted to this competition for so many years, it’s taken over our lives, but it’s been so worth it.”

The trio’s achievements were recognised by Formula 1, with an invitation for the boys to visit the company’s headquarters in central London. They gave key F1 personnel including Ellie Norman, Director of Marketing & Communications and Liam Parker, Head of Corporate and Consumer Communications a presentation of their work, showed their car and their portfolios, to Pat Symonds, Chief Technical Officer, Formula 1, who took a keen interest in their engineering knowledge.

Since competing the boys have been mentoring younger students at their school who are hoping to follow in the footsteps of the World Champions and joined the judging panel at this year’s South East Regional Final.

For more information [www.F1inSchools.co.uk](http://www.F1inSchools.co.uk)



# EDU WEEK JOBS FE WEEK

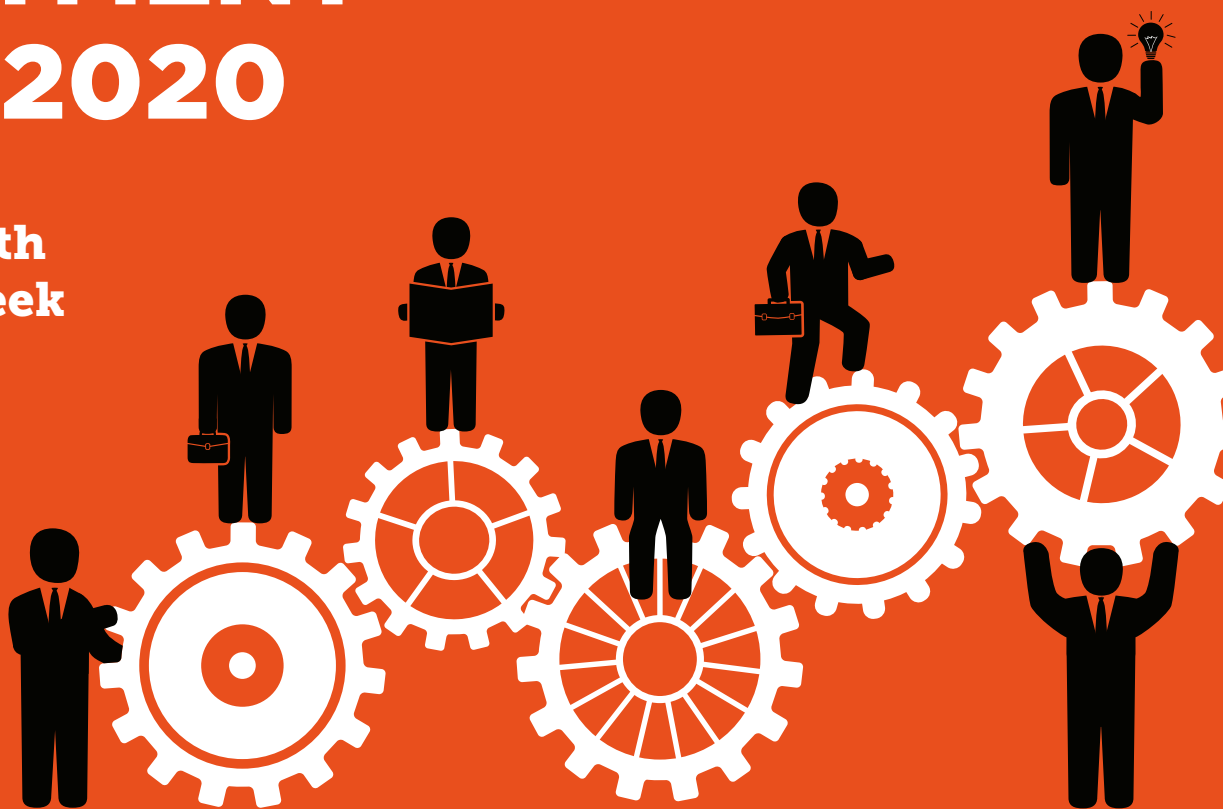
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## Readers' reply



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WEBSITE

### ESFA planning to limit providers by standards

How about large general FE colleges that deliver a wide scope of occupations for their communities (and wider)? And I'd wager there'll be some kind of fee to secure "registration". As long as it doesn't remove funding from the front line.

Paul Butler

### Controversial MBAs prove a hit in Whitehall departments

I have never understood the logic of attaching the levy payment to public sector organisations. They run off taxpayers' money and then they pay taxpayers' money into the levy in order to draw it back out. Would it not be easier to have state-funded organisations to find the money from their own budgets? That way, they would have to justify their spending to their own budgetary committees and the impact upon the overall

levy pot would be reduced. Or maybe that's just too simple.

Philip Gorst, website

### Further calls to target apprenticeship funding at the industrial strategy

Great to see that this report highlights the need for apprenticeship strategy to be aligned with the Industrial Strategy. The lack of alignment at the policy level between DfE and the Treasury is in danger of putting the major successes of the apprenticeship reforms at risk. Let's not forget that in addition to the requirement to significantly raise the level of digital skills across sectors, the lack of leadership and management skills was also identified as a major barrier to increasing productivity in the Industrial Strategy. One of the great success stories of the reforms is that employers have enthusiastically demonstrated their

willingness to invest in the apprenticeships required to deliver the digital, leadership and management skills needed.

Darryll Bravenboer, website

### If ATE boss: Business admin level 2 'undermines' efforts to create 'well-regarded' programme

This on one hand and then on the other hand so many concerns about lack of 16-18-year-olds starting on level 2 apprenticeships. They can't have it both ways, the content of level 3 business administration standard is not suitable for most school leavers in their first job role.

Emma Guy, Facebook

What a load of rubbish. What are the school leavers going to do? Level 3 is too advanced for most. Will be a massive gap in the market and hit small providers hard.

Emma Shaw, Facebook

## REPLY OF THE WEEK

### ESFA planning to limit providers by standards



We already have to demonstrate competence for the register with CVs and a competencies matrix. I would, however, welcome this, being a specialist provider for hospitality and, as long as there is not another quango set up with a fee to pay, then this can only strengthen apprenticeships.

Adele C Oxberry

## Bulletin

# Movers & Shakers

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



**Kirstie Donnelly MBE**

Chief executive,  
City & Guilds Group

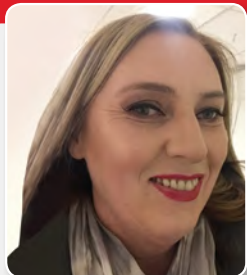
**Start date** March 2020

**Previous job**

Managing director, City & Guilds and ILM

**Interesting fact**

At the age of 16, she developed her own apprenticeship by applying to work on a campsite in France for 8 weeks. The first her parents knew of it was when she asked for a lift to the station!



**Donna Donlon**

Director of finance and  
operations, Luton Sixth  
Form College

**Start date** June 2020

**Previous job**

Head of faculty for business and IT, Luton Sixth Form College

**Interesting fact**

She has had a career as both an accountant and then a teacher, and now she is going back to accountancy



**Christine Elliott**

Interim chair,  
The College of Policing

**Start date** March 2020

**Previous job**

Non-executive director, College of Policing

**Interesting fact**

She was previously a director at the WW2 code breaking site, Bletchley Park

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

## FEWEEK

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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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

Solutions: See right

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Spot five differences. **First correct entry wins an FE Week mug.**  
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Last Edition's winner: Ken Fisher

**Solutions**

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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