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"BTECS RECOGNISE THAT THERE'S DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE BUT NOT IN THEIR POTENTIAL."

Teanna Maguire Midwifery Undergraduate at Manchester University and former BTEC student

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DfE's plan for full opening FE to young people and adults

BILLY CAMDEN
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Government restrictions imposed on FE colleges and providers that limited the number of students they could teach on campus owing to the Covid-19 pandemic will be dropped from September.

Education secretary Gavin Williamson announced on Thursday that all learners, including adults, as well as 16-to-19-year-olds, should be welcomed back to campus from the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

It came just two days after skills minister Gillian Keegan told parliament that the scientific advice "indicates that we need to take a phased approach" to FE reopenings that "limits both the number of young people in attendance and how much they mix with other learners and staff".

Colleges and other FE providers closed to all but vulnerable students and children of key workers on March 23 but began an initial wider reopening on June 15 by welcoming some 16-to-19-year-old learners.

Guidance published by the Department for Education 48 hours after Keegan's statement said that a full return in September is now "possible" because "we are continuing to make significant progress in tackling the virus" and the "balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of young people and adults being able to take part in a full education, including attending on site".

The guidance, specifically for FE providers, importantly states that there will be "no set requirement" to make cohorts "smaller than a normal class size".

But leaders are encouraged to create "bubbles" of class groups, keep them separate from others and maintain social distance between individuals where possible.

A mix of both remote education and classroom teaching is also recommended, and the DfE says this blended learning offer may need to become "essential".

Williamson said: "I want to reassure parents and families that we are doing everything we can to make sure schools, nurseries, colleges and other providers are as safe as possible for children and staff, and will continue to work closely with the country's best scientific and



Gavin Williamson

medical experts to ensure that is the case."

The education secretary also used his announcement to say that routine Ofsted visits will not resume until January 2021.

Chief executive of the Association of Colleges, David Hughes, said the DfE's guidance offers "some clarity" to college leaders and staff planning for the safe reopening of their building and campuses in September, but they "should continue to make their decisions based on health and safety advice and their local context".

"There is no doubt that much of the teaching in colleges will need to be a blend of online and on-campus delivery, and colleges have learned a lot about how that mix can work best for different groups of students," he added.

Bill Watkin, chief executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, welcomed the "flexibilities" in the guidance and said he was "pleased to see that colleges can continue to deliver a blend of online and face-to-face learning if that is what is best for students".

"Some colleges will want all students to return in the autumn, but transport remains a major barrier to that," he added.

The guidance states that the DfE "expects" colleges and providers to "provide a full programme of study and training offer for learners of all ages from your normal term start date in September 2020, including those with special educational needs and disabilities".

Leaders must decide the "appropriate mix" of face-to-face and remote delivery, adding that post-16 learners are "more likely to undertake

self-directed study but may still need additional support, you should make sure that planned hours meet the relevant funding guidance".

They should also "assess" the gaps in learners' knowledge and skills they may have missed as a result of lockdown early in the autumn term, focusing on the "most important content, and prioritise this to help learners to catch up".

Remote education may "need to be an essential component of delivery for some pupils, alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown", the DfE continued.

"You are therefore expected to plan to ensure anyone who needs to stay at home for some of the time is given the support they need to make good progress."

The guidance sets out six health and safety "prevention" steps that providers "must take" ahead of September.

It includes advice on "minimising" contact with individuals who show Covid-19 symptoms, ensuring that learners and staff clean their hands regularly, promoting the "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach, and creating separate "bubbles" to reduce the number of "contacts" between learners and staff.

Providers must also consider how to "limit use of public transport" for students, by "encouraging" walking, cycling and "other forms of active exercise where appropriate".

Staggered start and finish times should also be implemented.

You can read the DfE's guidance in full by visiting <https://bit.ly/2Zy0eTF>.

College takes ‘difficult decision to close’ in local lockdown

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Leicester College closed on Wednesday as part of the country’s first localised lockdown following a flare-up of Covid-19 cases in the area.

On Monday evening health secretary Matt Hancock told the House of Commons that the seven-day infection rate is 135 cases per 100,000 people in Leicester, which is three times the rate of the next highest city.

He then announced the closure of non-essential retail and schools in the area from Thursday to all but vulnerable children and children of key workers.

Leaders of Leicester College, the only general FE college in the area, met on Tuesday to discuss how they should proceed and then confirmed they have closed all their buildings.

Principal Verity Hancock said: “Leicester College has taken the difficult decision to close from July 1 due to the reimposed lockdown conditions. The situation will be reviewed in two weeks, in line

with government advice.

“This is very disappointing news for staff, students and apprentices who have worked so hard to prepare for important assessments and exams, but we must play our part in keeping everyone safe and helping to beat this latest Covid-19 outbreak.”

She added the college will continue to prepare for what they “all hope” will be a full reopening in September.

All colleges closed to all but vulnerable students and children of key workers on March 23 but were allowed to begin reopening to more students from June 15 as national lockdown measures eased.

Leicester College started its wider reopening on June 24 by inviting in students and apprentices “who are required to complete a practical or written assessment, under strict conditions”.

The college had carried out a deep clean of all buildings, installed screens at visitor/information desks and hand sanitisers around campuses, with one-way systems being created to allow for social distancing.

Classrooms had also been assessed and capacity

in rooms was reduced to ensure appropriate social distancing measures.

Further information on the college’s website about the local lockdown states that all assessments are “now postponed” and “if you have previously been contacted to come into college, you should not”.

Gateway Sixth Form College is also based in Leicester and has also decided to close following the local spike in Covid-19 cases.

Principal James Bagley told FE Week: “We will continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our community and to do all we can to ensure that infection rates are brought back under control.

“It is with regret that this will probably mean the college will not now open to students prior to the start of next academic year.

“Pastoral and curriculum staff will continue to support learners remotely, as they have done since the college closed to students in March.”

Government guidance for educational and childcare settings affected by the Leicester lockdown can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3dUjRKO>.

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PM promises 'every young person' the 'chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement'

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From front

The prime minister has promised to offer an "opportunity guarantee" that will give "every young person the chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement" to boost the economy after Covid-19.

But details of how the policy will actually work or how much it will cost will not be released until next week when chancellor Rishi Sunak launches his economic recovery plan.

Boris Johnson chose Dudley College's new Institute of Technology to launch his "new deal", which accelerates £5 billion on infrastructure projects across the country to "build build build", on Tuesday.

He said that for a "century we have failed to invest enough in further education and give young people the practical training and further education they need" before reiterating that the government will invest £1.5 billion for refurbishments to "dilapidated" college buildings, starting with £200 million being brought forward and made available this year.

The prime minister then said: "We will



Boris Johnson

also offer an opportunity guarantee, so that every young person has the chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement so that they maintain the skills and confidence they need to find the job that is right for them."

Johnson has previously said he thinks that every young person should be given an "apprenticeship guarantee".

Responding to this week's commitment, Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Mark Dawe said: "The fact that the prime minister sees work placements as a key part of a new opportunity guarantee for young people is an important step forward and we recently submitted at the government's request what has been holding back the highly effective traineeship programme from taking off.

"We believe incentives for SME employers will be needed."

It was reported by The Sun on Monday that chancellor Rishi Sunak could be about to announce handouts of £3,000 to employers for each apprentice under the age of 25 they hire.

Dawe said the AELP "does not believe that the floated £3,000 employer incentive is going to cut it. To meet a 50 per cent wage subsidy, the subsidy for a young apprentice in their first year should be around £4,000 and up to £7,500 in second year, depending on their age."

Following Johnson's speech, the Department for Education

said the "guarantee" involves several government departments, and the detail is still being finalised.

The DfE added that the basic premise is that it recognises the substantial risk that some young people who would usually enter the labour market this year will find themselves unemployed.

Sunak is expected to announce on his economic recovery strategy next Wednesday (July 8).

Dudley College principal Neil Thomas said it was an "honour to be able to showcase what is happening in the FE sector to the prime minister and talk about the vital role the sector will play in helping to speed up the economic recovery from the Covid downturn".

He told FE Week that he was "encouraged" there was a "recognition of the fact further education has been underfunded for many years and that if the sector is to play its full part in economic recovery, which the government understands we are in a pivotal position to do, this needs to be addressed".

"Like my counterparts across the country I'm concerned that if we don't see action to address the downturn in apprenticeships, colleges will be forced to close provision and lose the skill set of the staff who deliver those programmes," Thomas added.

"Losing staff and provision from exactly those areas where it will be most required to help the economy recover and grown in both the short and long-term would be a terrible mistake, in my opinion."

Vacancies slump on Find An Apprenticeship site

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The number of vacancies on the government's Find An Apprenticeship website plummeted by more than 80 per cent in each of the first two full months of lockdown.

"Repurposed" data published by the Department for Education last Thursday revealed apprenticeship vacancy figures for the first time since they were last published in 2017.

The figures showed that in April and May

2020, there were 2,020 and 1,850 employer vacancies for apprentices, which compares to 10,400 and 12,580 in the same months of 2019 respectively.

But a number of high-profile businesses have announced large-scale apprentice recruitment drives in recent weeks to buck this trend.

British multinational defence, security, and aerospace company BAE Systems, for example, has announced it is continuing with plans to recruit 800 apprentices – a "record" number – this year.

On Sunday, the UK's largest independent

travel agency, Hays Travel, announced plans to take on 700 apprentices nationwide.

Commentary published alongside the DfE's vacancy data said the figures from Find An Apprenticeship represent "only a subset of the total number of vacancies available across the marketplace as a whole, as many apprenticeships are not advertised through this website".

The department said it has begun publishing this data again "temporarily" as part of its efforts to "repurpose our statistics and commentary to make them more relevant to the current pandemic".

Provider shuts its doors to hundreds of apprentices

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From front

Exclusive

A training provider has laid off all 30 staff and shut its door to hundreds of young engineering apprentices, *FE Week* can reveal.

West Yorkshire-based Kirkdale Industrial Training Services Limited (KITS), an Ofsted grade 2 registered charity that is more than 50 years old, informed their staff and the government of the decision to close on Tuesday.

A total of 278 young apprentices, typically in the engineering and manufacturing sector, have now been left without training provider. The decision also impacts 62 learners on study programmes taught by KITS through a subcontract with Calderdale College.

“It was noted that 300 independent training providers/ colleges are estimated to be at risk”

While this publication did not receive comment from the charity’s owners about the situation at the time of going to press, it is understood the main reason for pulling out of delivery was coronavirus related.

KITS website has been taken down and its phone went unanswered.

The Department for Education said their officials are now working with the company to help make sure their apprentices are able



to continue their studies with alternative providers.

Calderdale College, which declined to comment, will be responsible for making alternative arrangements for the young people on study programmes so they can complete their learning.

While KITS is understood to be one of the first apprenticeship providers to shut up shop as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it did report a healthy financial position in its latest accounts for the year ending March 2019.

They show a £122,259 surplus and state that the charity’s financial position “remains strong” with cash in the bank of £2.2 million.

KITS decision to cease trading came in the same week the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education published their latest board minutes and warned of up to 300 “at risk” providers.

The minutes, for a meeting in March, state: “The chief executive outlined the anticipated impact of Covid-19 on the apprenticeship programme. It was noted that 300 independent training providers/ colleges are estimated to be at risk, and that there were reports of disruption to

apprenticeship assessments.

“It was further noted that a poor economic outlook for employers may reduce levy receipts, affecting apprenticeship starts and completion rates.”

A spokesperson for the quango told *FE Week* the 300 figure was an “early possible estimate” of what the impact of Covid-19 might be, based on a consensus of other informed stakeholders, such as the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

Since March, the AELP has been warning government that providers could soon go bust as a result of the pandemic, without extra financial support as apprenticeship starts drop off.

Data published last week by the DfE showed that from March 23 – when lockdown began – to May 31 there were 26,090 starts compared to the 50,050 reported between those months in 2019 – a fall of 47.9 per cent.

While the ESFA has offered providers some form of Covid-19 supplier relief, in which they receive payment in advance of delivery, it excludes the majority of apprenticeships – those offered by levy-paying employers.

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London AEB administration costs hit almost £5m

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The cost of managing and administering the adult education budget for the Greater London Authority has shot up to almost £5 million – including £300,000 for a new learner survey.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan was criticised by college principals last year after he took control of the £311 million AEB for the capital but announced plans to top-slice £3 million of it annually to hire and pay the wages of 50 new bureaucrats to dish out the fund.

New agenda papers for an AEB mayoral board meeting that was set to take place on July 1 have now revealed that expenditure “of up to £4.93 million to cover management and administration of the AEB for the 2020-21 financial year” has been requested.

A spokesperson for the mayor of London told *FE Week* that the same cost for the 2019-20 financial year, which covered staffing, legal services and provider engagement, came to

just £1.8 million – but this only covered the period August 2019 to March 2020.

The £4.93 million for this full financial year will include £3 million for 53 administrative staff who form a skills and employment unit, with the rest being spent on contract management systems, research and evaluation, provider audits, legal services, provider engagement, and board and governance support.

Asked to defend the costs, which are siphoned from frontline learning, the mayor of London’s spokesperson said: “We constantly monitor AEB funding to ensure it is allocated as effectively as possible.

“The mayor has committed that any savings from the administration budget will be reallocated directly to learning provision.”

A chunk of the £4.93 million – around £300,000 – has been earmarked for the development and pilots of the GLA’s “large-scale” AEB learner survey.

FE Week reported in January that the authority was planning to become the first

devolved area to launch a regional survey to measure the impact of AEB provision across the capital.

A feasibility study has since been run and the GLA plans to pilot the survey in 2020-21, with “full-scale” delivery scheduled for autumn 2021.

It would likely be in addition to the three separate surveys already undertaken annually by colleges, contractors on behalf of the Department for Education and by Ofsted during inspection.

While the GLA told *FE Week* around £300,000 would be used this year to develop the survey, it is not clear whether this will be the total cost of the survey.

The GLA was one of seven mayoral combined authorities with deals to handle AEB spending in their regions from 2019-20.

The six other areas were the West Midlands, Liverpool City region, Greater Manchester, the West of England, Tees Valley, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

A further combined authority will take control of their AEB from 2020-21: North of Tyne.

FAB seeks new chair and vice as Eeles and Fennell step down

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Paul Eeles and Terry Fennell, the chair and vice-chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies respectively, are to step down from the positions at the end of the year.

The pair have each served two terms – seven years – on the board and will officially leave the membership organisation at their next annual general meeting in December.

A statement from the FAB board said they will put in place a succession plan over the summer and a further announcement will be made in the autumn.

Eeles, who is also the chief executive of the Skills and Education Group, joined FAB as a board member in 2013 and became chair in 2016.

He said it has been an “honour and a privilege to serve on the FAB board for over seven years

and to have been its chair for just over four years”.

“When I was elected chair my overriding goal was to ensure FAB was sat around the right tables with agencies and government on behalf of its members, representing the collective voice of the awarding sector on the issues that impact directly on members and the learners and stakeholders they serve,” he continued.

“Together as a board, staff and membership we have achieved that. I am proud of our achievements. This now feels the right time with a strong staff and board to step down.”

Fennell, the chief executive of awarding body FDQ Ltd, also joined the FAB board seven years ago and was elected vice chair in 2016.

“I have really enjoyed serving as vice chair

at FAB and I have learnt so much from the various apprenticeship and technical interest groups that I was fortunate to oversee these past few years,” he said.

“It has also been a pleasure supporting Paul as chair and you could not find a more committed and passionate advocate to represent the interests of the awarding sector. I wish Tom [Bewick], the hardworking federation team, the board and indeed all FAB members the very best in the future.”

Bewick, chief executive of FAB, said: “On behalf of the whole staff team, past and present, I would like to say how fortunate the organisation has been to have been led and supported at board level by Paul and Terry, who both care so much about the future of UK awarding, apprenticeships and assessment.

“When I came into post just over two years ago, they communicated a very clear vision of where FAB needed to develop. It is a great credit to them both and their leadership skills that they retire from the board having created a far more innovative and influential industry body.”



Paul Eeles and Terry Fennell

ESFA to force ‘significant’ reductions to FE subcontracting by 2022/23

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The Education and Skills Funding Agency has set out the measures it will take to “significantly” reduce subcontracting in further education over the next three years.

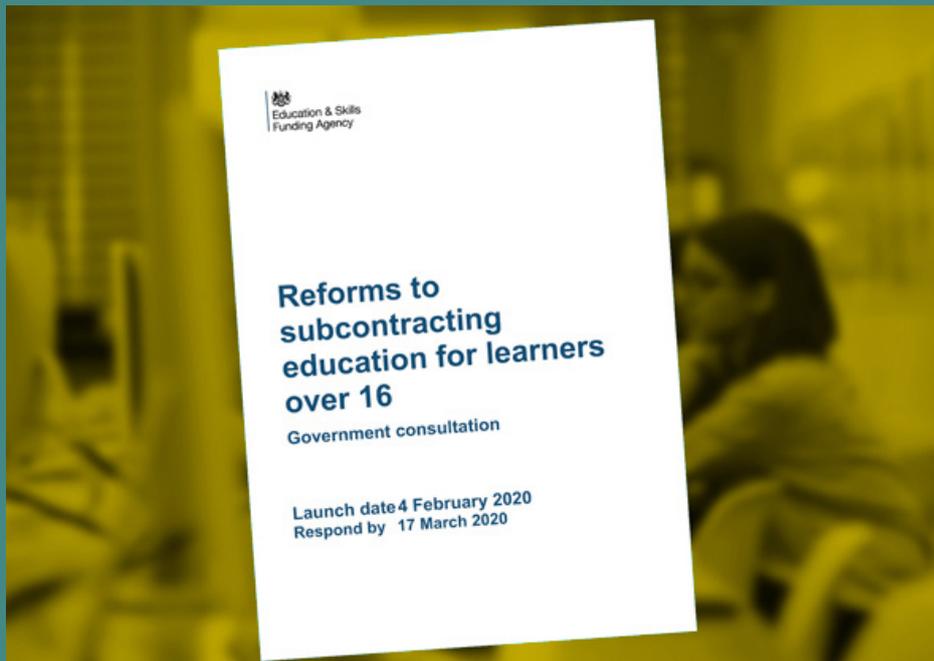
Headline actions to tackle “poor oversight and fraud” include a cap on the volume of subcontracted provision, a new national “standard” all providers will have to meet, “acting on the use” of brokers to “sell on” provision, and requiring prior approval for distance subcontracting.

The agency made the announcements on Tuesday as part of their response to their subcontracting consultation that was run earlier this year and which received more than 400 responses.

Here are the key things you need to know about the 10 proposals from the consultation, how they were received and what the ESFA is planning for each of them.

1 Providers to publish a reason for subcontracting

The ESFA said an educational “rationale” for subcontracting should be signed off by the provider’s governors or board and published on the provider’s website, alongside their management fee structure and a list of subcontracting



partners.

Eighty-two per cent of respondents to this proposal either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with this, and the proposal has now been adopted. The ESFA has given providers until October 31, 2020 to publish their rationale.

2 Introduce stronger criteria, including prior approval, for distance subcontracting

The ESFA proposed that providers submit a case for subcontracting at a distance – any delivery that is an hour or more away from the main provider’s campus.

More than a quarter of respondents, 27 per cent, “strongly disagreed” with this, saying it would “negatively impact” remote learners and that IT and online learning make it “irrelevant”.

The agency admitted distance arrangements are integral for certain delivery models, but expressed concern

about how appropriate oversight can be maintained.

As a result of respondent concerns, providers will need prior approval just for distant 16-to-18 study programme provision from 2021-22, where delivery is outside their normal recruitment area.

3 Volume controls on provision

The agency’s consultation proposed decreasing the volume of provision a provider could subcontract over three years: from 25 per cent of a provider’s ESFA post-16 income in 2021-22, to ten per cent by 2023-24.

But 37 per cent of respondents said they “strongly disagree” with this, saying subcontractors “will be put out of business”.

As a result, the ESFA said it will “take

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forward work” this academic year to establish the “right threshold for that cap and timescales for a staged reduction”.

The agency will, however, require all providers to produce a plan during the 2020 autumn term setting out how they will achieve a reduction in subcontracted provision, and the ESFA will undertake a “random sampling exercise” of plans early in the 2021 calendar year.

4 Prior approval for some whole programme subcontracting

The ESFA’s consultation had proposed that from 2021-22 “we would introduce stricter controls on the circumstances in which the whole of a learner’s programme could be subcontracted, and providers will be required to obtain agreement from the ESFA before doing so”.

But 52 per cent of respondents either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with it, according to the consultation outcome.

As a result, the ESFA said it will “introduce the requirement for prior agreement” only for all 16-to-18 and adult education budget programmes, not

apprenticeships, that “exceed a specified guided learning hours duration, effective from 2021-22”.

5 Ofsted to monitor big subcontractors

The ESFA proposed to monitor the volume/value of provision held by a single subcontractor and where that is above £3 million, they said they would refer the provider to Ofsted for inspection.

Seventy-two per cent of respondents supported this.

The agency said it will now “take steps to ensure that large subcontractors are monitored and managed more effectively than at present” and they will “share this information with Ofsted” who “also believe that large subcontractors should be subject to more inspection”.

6 Require a direct contractual relationship between a lead provider and a third-party provider giving specialist input

This refers to sports clubs involved in subcontracting, where the agency wants there to be no financial transactions between the subcontractor and the club.

While this only affects certain respondents, most of those that put a definite answer did agree with

this measure and the ESFA said this requirement will come in from 2021-22.

7 Introduce one set of funding rules for subcontracting

Nearly three-quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this, with most saying the current multiple sets of rules make compliance difficult.

By 2021-22, the ESFA will publish a single subcontracting reference guide containing the rules for all provision types.

8 Providers and ESFA to publish top-slice retained for subcontracted provision

The ESFA said it will extend the requirement to publish information about managements fees retained in subcontracts to include 16-to-19 provision by 2021-22.

They will also “reserve the right to challenge and potentially act” with providers where “we learn of cases where the funding retained exceeds 20 per cent and offers “little value”.

9 Introduce an externally assessed standard for subcontracting management

This externally assessed standard for subcontracting would, the ESFA proposes, effectively act as a licence to practise.

A majority of respondents supported this proposal, but opponents see it as an additional burden and a potential duplication of Ofsted’s role.

The ESFA said it will develop a standard for all funding streams for the 2021-22 academic year, and it will obtain assurance in areas such as planning and governance and managing contractual and supplier risk.

10 Implement changes from 2020-21 where possible

Thirty-seven per cent “strongly disagreed” with this, so the ESFA, in light of the Covid-19 outbreak, has decided to roll out reforms at a more “cautious” pace. The ESFA will still implement some changes from the next academic year but phase them in until 2022-23.



Specialist colleges honoured in inaugural Natspec awards

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Leading post-16 providers that teach students with special educational needs and disabilities have been recognised for excellence in the sector at the inaugural awards of specialist further education organisation Natspec.

There were over 50 entries to the six categories, which included partnership working and innovative use of technology – the winners of which were announced at a virtual ceremony held over Zoom on Thursday.

Natspec chair Bernie White said the organisation had seen throughout the Covid-19 crisis that staff have been adapting practice, refining expertise and learning new skills to support students.

"I'm sure all the work we're celebrating will continue to be relevant as more students return to college."

Chair of the judging panel, former HM inspector for FE and skills Nigel Evans, said it was a "privilege" to judge the awards, as the standard of the submissions was "very high and demonstrates the innovation, expertise and creativity within the specialist further education sector".

"Learners have been placed firmly at the heart of college decision-making"

The innovative use of technology award was given to Derwen College in Shropshire for its "support work apps", a series of unique apps for tablets and mobile phones which support students with special educational needs and disabilities into work.

Evans, who judged this category, said Derwen's work "showed a strong use of partnerships resulting in products that are easy



to use, professional in appearance and will be easy to transfer to other employment settings".

The pathways to employment award went to Yorkshire provider Camphill Wakefield, for having an "aspirational" pathway into employment embedded into the curriculum, which included vocational profiling, job-matching, in-work support and careers guidance.

Former principal of specialist provider Foxes Academy, Tracey Clare-Gray, who judged this category, awarded it to Camphill because "expectations of employment are embedded into learning [so] students are supported into employment".

Welsh provider Coleg Elidyr won the student voice award for its student forum, which was used to influence organisational quality improvement.

Natspec's Sarah Laszlo, who judged this category, said she was "particularly impressed" with the provider's commitment to engaging lower-level learners in decision-making. "All learners have been placed firmly at the heart of decision-making at the college," she said.

The wellbeing and mental health award was won by Ambitious College in London for its work in occupational therapy. This included a dedicated TV channel, bespoke curriculum and weekly yoga sessions.

The judge for this award, Helen Brooks, who helped develop the SEND Code of Practice while working at the Department for Education, called

it a "really innovative idea" that had an impact across the whole college.

In the inter-disciplinary working category, which recognises joint-working between different disciplines within an organisation, the award was given to National Star College in Gloucestershire for its Right Time, Right Place initiative, which introduced a personalised learning co-ordinated tutor role to improve consistency across the college. Judge Pete Vickers, who has spent 30 years working in FE and specialist provision, said Right Time, Right Place had meant "great progress" for learners and staff.

Wargrave House LEAP College won the partnership working award for its Post-16 And Friends of Lyme And Wood Community project, a collaboration between college and community groups to provide a range of work experience opportunities, including setting up a community allotment and working in a pop-up café.

Judge Yolande Burgess, who leads on young people's education and skills for London Councils, said the college's students are "integral to the community benefit of maintenance and development of park land", and skills development is "built into" opportunities linked to learning goals and outcomes.

The award ceremony was closed with a medley performed by Coleg Elidyr's virtual choir, which included songs by Bob Marley and from The Jungle Book and Mary Poppins.

Feature

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Locked-up and locked-down: how prison education has fared during Covid-19

YASEMIN CRAGGS MERSINOGLU
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FE Week takes a look at how prison education has adapted after face-to-face teaching was suspended following the Covid-19 outbreak

Formal prison education was largely suspended almost four months ago as part of a wider national jail lockdown to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) advised the Justice Select Committee on March 24 that it was moving to an "exceptional delivery model" and confirmed that non-essential activities should be stopped.

Since then, inmates, who usually spend at least ten hours a day outside their cells, with many using that time to study with tutors from colleges and training providers, have been in lockdown for up to 23 hours a day.

Latest HMPPS data shows there have been a total of 44 deaths among prison service users where Covid-19 is suspected to be the cause and 510 prisoners have tested positive so far, according to the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Scottish Prison Service College in Falkirk was closed at the end of April after a suspected outbreak of coronavirus among its trainers.

As a result of safety concerns, colleges and training providers have taken different



approaches to overcome the challenges posed by the current restrictions in order to continue providing some form of education to their learners in jail.

Weston College, in Weston-super-Mare, which is one of four providers of the Prison Education Framework, has been printing 150 different learning packs every week and distributing them to the 19 prisons they serve on a bespoke basis.

These include packs tailored towards English and maths assessments for GCSE and functional skills as well as technical and vocational qualifications.

Andrea Greer, deputy principal of prison education, HR and reputation at Weston College, told *FE Week* they had to "mobilise the distance learning materials and remote learning materials incredibly quickly" during this "unprecedented time" because there was "obviously a need to try and keep up as much momentum as possible".

She said Weston College has been trying to ensure the programmes are delivered sequentially where possible, while staff have been marking work and offering feedback to individual learners. They had also distributed books to residential units before prison libraries were locked down to ensure reading material was available.

Although the service has received "really, really positive feedback" from prisoners about the learning packs, Greer admitted that the discontinuation of face-to-face education will "disrupt continuity and focus". She said that some

learners may find it difficult to adapt to in-cell learning or find that noise or other distractions on residential units impedes their studying. The deputy principal was also concerned about the effect of confinement, a lack of visitors and anxiety about the pandemic on participation.

The provision offered by the providers of the Prison Education Framework usually includes a core curriculum of English, maths, ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages. It varied across prisons pre-lockdown as the numbers of hours of education to be offered are not stipulated in the contracts but can reach up to five to six hours a day.

Prison governors have the autonomy to decide about other services that will make up their education offer and therefore the amount of face-to-face teaching available is dependent on individual prisons.

At HMP Coldingley, in Surrey, for example (a prison where Weston College teaches), prisoners can opt for six weekly hours of education, in which they are able to type up assignments or access the virtual campus. This hosts resources such as the Open University's virtual learning environment.

Further disruption will be experienced by prisoners who may not be able to complete qualifications if they are transferred or released before delivery resumes. Moreover, newly arriving prisoners will not be able to access the full induction programme about their learning and training options.

 **HMP/YOI Portland** @HMPYOI_Portland

We would like to give a huge thanks to our colleagues from @westoncollege for creating these fantastic resource packs for our learners. This has been a huge team effort & will help our men to continue their education in-cell during these difficult times. #teamporland Thank you



Staff at Portland Prison and Young Offender Institution tweeted their appreciation for the provision of learning packs

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Feature

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CONTINUED

However, Greer understands that some prisoners who had completed or almost completed learning may receive calculated grades, similar to this year's cohort of students at other FE providers. She said: "As per Ofqual guidelines there are likely to be some claims for expected grades, especially for functional skills, provided that there is evidence of learning progress and performance plus assessments indicating that learners were on track to pass examinations."

Another prison education provider Novus, which is part of the LTE Group, has used in-cell television, prison radio, telephony and digital resources to "support, engage with and educate" their learners in addition to distributed physical learning packs.

A spokesperson said: "Current restrictions have meant we've not been able to have the same face-to-face contact with our learners so we have had to adapt our delivery to address the challenges of the current situation."

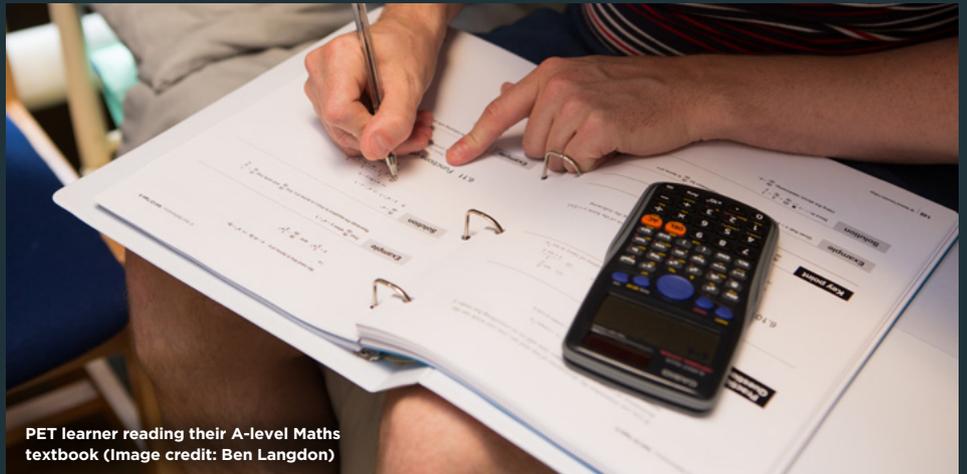
It has also worked with partners such as Koestler Arts, Music in Prisons, Sing Inside and White Water Writers to develop "adaptive offers that bring the classroom to the cell".

Sarah Hartley, operational lead for creative arts, enrichment and families at Novus, added: "Access to, and engaging with, the creative arts is something that can be hugely beneficial when prisoners are confined to their cells and in isolation. Creative activities are integral to the opportunities that we are producing across Novus to engage with our learners from afar."

Learners in all Novus establishments have been invited to participate in a project with Tate Modern called "A Future I Can Love". Their in-cell brief is to respond to the pandemic through sketches, written word, poetry and music.

All four Prison Education Framework providers, which also include Milton Keynes College and independent learning provider PeoplePlus, are having twice weekly meetings with the MoJ, HMPPS and awarding organisations to share best practice, and Weston College's learning packs have been uploaded to a shared portal so they can be accessed by other educators.

Greer said: "I think that there was a concerted effort on the part of all



PET learner reading their A-level Maths textbook (Image credit: Ben Langdon)

providers to work together for the benefit of those learners. It's quite an open forum... that's worked really well over this lockdown period."

In contrast, one young offender institution has been delivering two hours of socially distanced face-to-face education every weekday throughout lockdown, according to HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, who conducted scrutiny visits in April.

The young people, aged between 15 and 18, have been able to keep two metres apart at Parc, in South Wales, which is run by security company G4S. This has included classroom-based pathways as well as carpentry, cookery and PE. They additionally receive in-cell workbooks and library provision through a delivery service.

Furthermore, online in-cell teaching has been taking place in some institutions but is similarly not widespread due to limited access to remote learning platforms.

The Prisoners' Education Trust (PET), which provides educational materials to people in prison, has also been working with staff to continue delivering distance learning courses during this time. The charity is calling for all prisoners to have restricted in-cell access to a computer device and an intranet where they can access interactive educational resources.

Francesca Cooney, head of policy, said: "It would completely revolutionise education provision and this Covid crisis has really highlighted the digital divide between people in the community and prisoners."

She added that enabling prisoners to progress in individualised courses and to complete assessments "would have made all the difference in lockdown" and is "necessary if

education in prisons is going to be relevant".

Cooney believes prison education is vital as it can give inmates "good outcomes", which helps them succeed when they are released. The MoJ's data lab found that ex-prisoners who had completed education courses during their time in jail – which include GCSEs, A-levels and level 1-3 diplomas – were 25 per cent less likely to reoffend, and 26 per cent more likely to find employment in their first year of release. In addition, the department has reported that participation in prison education carries a net benefit of approximately £5,400 to £5,600 per learner.

A conditional roadmap on the easing of lockdown in prisons, published by the government in June, set out that when education activities do resume, they will do so with "considerable restrictions and adaptations", including reduced capacity, and progress will be "slow and incremental".

Although the average number of course applications received by the PET per month has dropped significantly from 220 to between 40 and 50 over May and June, the charity predicts a rise in engagement once prisoners are able to access education departments.

Cooney added: "I think they'll be really looking forward to having the opportunity again. [But] even when education comes back in on the ground in prisons, that will be socially distanced education initially, so far fewer people will be able to do it than were doing it before, and there were never enough spaces in the first place for people."

A government prison service spokesperson said: "Restrictions on daily life in our prisons have helped save lives and protect the NHS. Workbooks and in-cell activities have been provided and services will return to normal when it is safe to do so."



Sarah Hartley, operational lead for creative arts, enrichment and families at Novus

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Profile

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Introducing...

SAM KNOWLTON

Principal,
Oxfordshire UTC



'UTCs provide
an education
with purpose'

JL DUTAUT
JL.DUTAUT@FEWEEK.CO.UK

FE Week meets a principal who has found her place at the intersection of education and industry

As we begin our interview with the awkward launch of a video conferencing call, I can't help but notice a splendid triptych of Earth from

space on Samantha Knowlton's office wall. I want to ask about it, but the moment passes in microphone and camera adjustments. On-screen meetings have become a staple of professional lives, but Knowlton's entire experience of principalship has been defined by it.

Appointed at Oxfordshire UTC on 25 April (although she had met staff and colleagues during handover), she has had to lead the institution either remotely or while social

distancing. "I was expecting to do an INSET day face-to-face with staff. I spent three months planning it down to the dress I was going to wear and in the end there I was in my slippers with only the top half showing."

"I don't know any different," she adds, seemingly unfazed.

University technical colleges have had a bad press over the years, from allegations of poaching students to doubts about claims about their incredible destinations. Controversy

Profile

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rumbles on. Just three weeks ago, the public accounts committee followed up on last year's damning National Audit Office report into UTC financial failures with serious questions about £3 million paid by the Department for Education to the Baker Dearing Trust, owners of the UTC brand and the colleges' official membership body.

But Knowlton strikes you as an eternal optimist, the kind of person who sees an opportunity and goes after her target. How UTCs fit into the education jigsaw seems less important to her than how this one fits in locally. "They are perhaps not as well publicised as they should be," is all she'll offer to that.

UTCs are simply a net good to the students who attend them, she says. "It's education with purpose. Students coming into a UTC early on have an idea that they want to do something scientific or engineering-based. A UTC is a great place to explore that more technical aspect and it gives them a platform into industry without floundering around."

And "floundering around" is anathema to Knowlton. Thus her immediate involvement at Oxfordshire UTC, long before getting her slippers under the table for a Zoom INSET. "One of the things we wanted to do was some development of the curriculum. I was appointed back in December, so I had between December and Easter to join in with that. By



Skydiving over Salisbury for her 50th birthday, 2019

the time I arrived in April, the team was ready to present a really good curriculum pathway model that's enabled us to drive recruitment.

The senior team had started the work before her arrival, but her grasp of the college and marrying its community's curriculum need to a recruitment strategy belies her engagement and drive. Her first principalship has had an auspicious start: it's in a new sector and needed her to relocate - all in the midst of a global pandemic and looming recession.

Many businesses have already felt that recession. It's hard to imagine another education institution (other than apprenticeship providers) more vulnerable than a UTC, whose continued effectiveness depends extensively on industry participation. Already, work experience and industry placements have been lost to lockdown.

Knowlton is adamant that her students' education has not suffered overall, but simply been refocused as an interim measure. But the challenges posed by Covid-19 are only beginning. "We have a programme in place.

The big challenge will be the demand on those work experience places that employer partners are able to satisfy. The risk is that our work experience for the new year 10s coming in, and what will be our year 11s, is going to need to be doubled up next year - or we've got to think about a programme of doubling up the following year."

"The big challenge will be the demand on those work experience places"

Yet with a new curriculum model designed to give students a clearer route through to year 13 from their entry point in year 10, and ongoing face-to-face work with employers who remain committed to their involvement with the college, the groundwork Knowlton and team have put down looks like a strong foundation on which to weather those shocks.

So how can someone so new to the region, to the college sector and to leadership have started so confidently in the face of an unprecedented crisis? In truth, although



Year 2 school photograph, Bloxham, 1975

Profile

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she has only just moved from Swindon with husband David, neither is entirely new to Oxfordshire. David's family lives here, as does her father. She's been around the world and then around the country once or twice since she left, but this is where Knowlton was born.

When her mother "packed up and left for Australia" when she was 11, Knowlton says she "just carried on being sporty and achieving and driving forward". Living alone with her dad, an entrepreneur who supported all her endeavours, she picked up from him that "if you're not falling over, you're not trying hard enough".

"That's kind of how I've lived my life, and I suppose it's what I want for my students ... giving them a safety net by which they can fall here before they go ahead and fall in the boardroom."

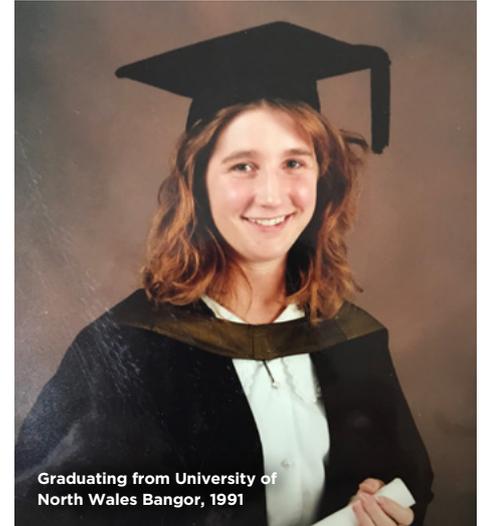
If there's been any falling over in Knowlton's life, it's been on the field of play rather than on the job. There's been plenty of weaving, mind, but with the benefit of distance it starts to look like a straight line to this point.

In a way, Knowlton is not entirely new to the technical education sector either. After completing her O-levels at Warriner School in Bloxham, she attended North Oxfordshire Technical College in Banbury for A-levels before studying geological oceanography at

Bangor University with a view to working in the oil industry. But a crash in that sector led to a master's in applied oceanography, which allowed her to use European Space Agency satellite imagery and data. She "really enjoyed that", she says, and the pieces of the triptych on her office wall start to come together.

"Students get a platform into industry without floundering around"

She went on to work in communications when "Motorola bricks" were launched, developing algorithms to stop criminals cloning phones. It seems a vast jump from oceanography, but again, distance gives perspective. Simply, learning to code and to develop "a logical mind" were transferable skills - although she joined the company in customer service and barged her way into the coding team by berating her superiors for their inefficient practices. A logical mind, yes, backed by a character that had no truck



with floundering.

A chance meeting with a teacher during a gap year travelling around Asia when she was 25 sowed an idea in her mind. When she got home, she bided her time in the same job while waiting for PGCE enrolment to come around. She completed it in 1996 and by 2007 was an assistant headteacher with an MEd and an NPQH. But her education career was stopped in its tracks.

In 2006, she'd picked up a bow for the first time. In 2009, she left teaching to train for the 2012 Olympics archery team, coming eighth at the world championships in Las Vegas on the way. Sadly, her Olympic run ended with injury in 2011, and after self-funding that adventure by working as a managing director for a bow manufacturer, it was time to return to the classroom.

Eight years into her second stint in the profession, there are many strings to Knowlton's bow. With roles in classrooms and in leadership in Berkshire, Hertfordshire, East Sussex, West Sussex and Wiltshire, she has found a place where education and industry meet, where floundering is shunned and where young people who know their targets can start their flights in safety.

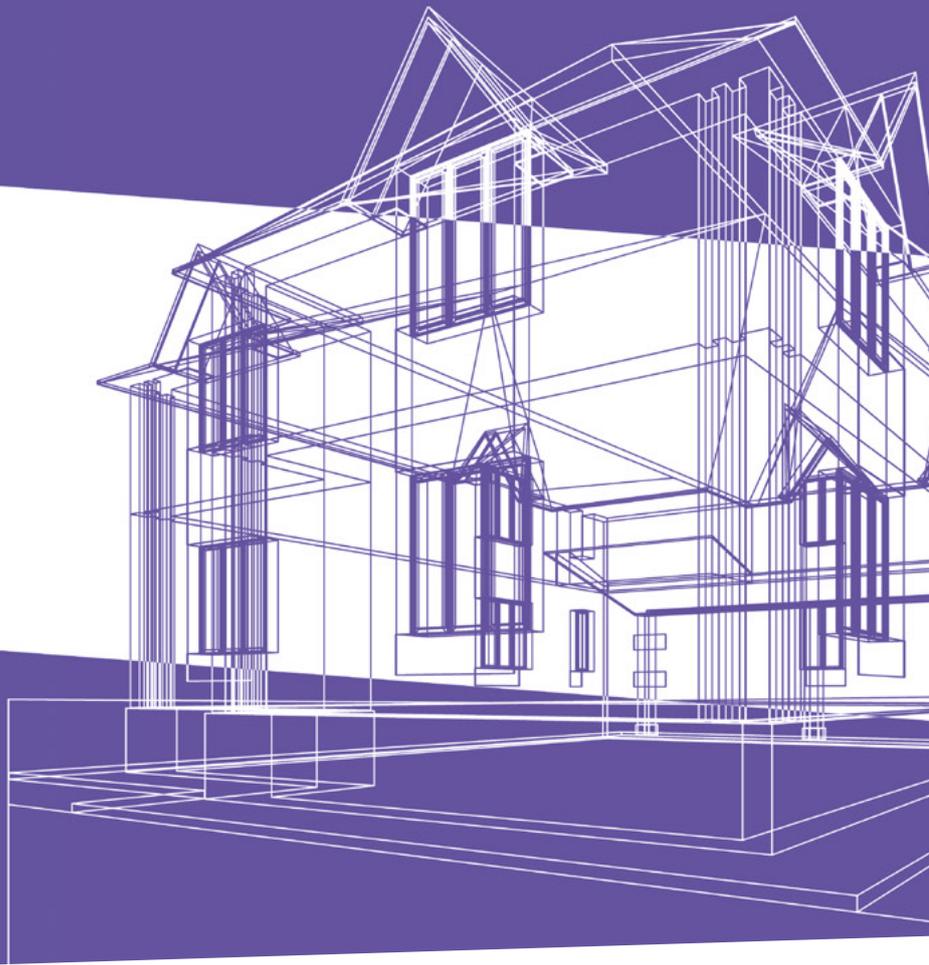
"Being a principal of a school was what I wanted to do. Being a principal of a college that combines my two backgrounds, it's a really exciting opportunity."

She has many more targets to hit, but from any distance that looks like a career bullseye.



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IAN PRETTY

Chief executive,
Collab Group



Why we must avoid the 'one size fits all' approach to FE

Covid-19 has changed the way colleges work - and so will the upcoming FE white paper, writes Ian Pretty

The past few months have been game-changing with colleges forced to modify almost everything they do in the wake of Covid-19. But more change appears to be on the horizon in the form of a new FE white paper.

We know that there are several issues that the white paper should address. Post-16 skills have a regulatory system that is not fit for purpose, outdated governance models and insufficient funding. Colleges and universities are also in competition, especially around the delivery of level 4-5 provision.

There is potential for the paper to catalyse deeper strategic partnership between the government and the FE sector. A model like this already exists in Northern Ireland, where colleges have a seat at the table when the Department for the Economy decides on how to respond to globalisation, technological change and the demand for new skills. This model is not perfect: Northern Irish colleges have gained more access, but the price has been less autonomy.

The white paper will need to address the structure of the sector. Policymakers praise the "small is beautiful" model of colleges, delivering



locally, embedded within their communities, and rooted in place. But we also hear that the government wants to rationalise the sector to possibly as few as 50-60 college groups in England. Each model has strengths and weaknesses, but will the white paper support one model over the other?

We think that there are advantages to a group model. College groups can leverage economies of scale to invest in high-cost provision, they can better weather financial storms and reduce government intervention, and they would be better able to form strategic partnerships with the government.

But how would smaller standalone colleges be integrated into such a system and what is the mechanism by which to achieve more regional college groupings? There is undoubtedly an element of déjà vu here with the area-based review (ABR) process not too far in the rearview mirror.

The ABR process had very

mixed success and failed to achieve the government's primary objective of fewer, larger and more financially resilient colleges. The reason was simply that the government could not force mergers. Perhaps it is considering following the lead of the Scottish government where colleges were brought into the public sector, compelled to merge and subject to ministerial oversight. This is not something Collab Group could support for the English sector as it would undermine the autonomy of colleges to make long-term strategic decisions in the interests of communities and learners.

“Will the white paper support one model over the other?”

In a world of English devolution, control in Whitehall would create a wedge between

combined authorities and colleges. London's economy and population are bigger than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined; Greater Manchester's economy and population is larger than Wales. Perhaps the white paper should advocate a reset of FE to create a closer alignment to devolved skills strategy and funding and away from Whitehall?

College groups can leverage economies of scale Collab supports a drive towards regional colleges, but also recognises this won't be right for all providers. There is a social and economic value in smaller community and specialist providers that may not easily ingratiate into a wider group structure.

So, is there a "third way" between the group model and full reclassification? Perhaps smaller colleges should be allowed to revert to public sector control in the way that sixth-form colleges were offered to become MATs? This would ensure their long-term stability within the public sector, while still maintaining autonomous regional or college groups across geographies.

Ultimately, the white paper will not represent the first change for the sector, nor even the last. But the government needs to recognise the pivotal role that colleges play in supporting learners, communities and economic recovery.

CLARE HATTON

Head of skills and delivery, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)



How FE can support the economy and drive social mobility

Construction Gateway in the West Midlands has resulted in wider economic benefits and more students finding jobs, says Clare Hatton

“Levelling-up” has become a buzz word in politics, particularly following the prime minister’s pledge to provide equal opportunity and future prosperity.

But as we continue to navigate a global health crisis, it is set to become even more important as we try to ensure that economically disadvantaged populations no longer fall behind and that the new wave of unemployment is quickly addressed. A step-change in FE is needed, providing a deeper understanding of the evolving needs of communities to equip people with the right skills and training opportunities to drive improvements in local economic performance, as well as rebalancing productivity and social mobility.

“We must be strategic now and in the aftermath of the pandemic”

In this year’s Budget the government said it would spend £1.5 billion over five years upgrading and improving colleges. This is a positive move, but more

cash is needed in the impending spending review to address the urgent need to boost the economy, especially in the light of Covid-19. The role of FE in driving adult education, skills retraining and supporting the wider levelling-up agenda will therefore be substantial and calls for a more collaborative approach.

Shifting priorities and provision
FE is vital in securing the country’s future and shaping our economy and society. With more than 2.2 million young people and adults requiring education and skills training, this has never been more important. However, we must consider reinvigorating the system to ensure we can be strategic in helping individuals and employers requiring support, now and in the aftermath of the pandemic.

We must create more accessible routes to rebalance the opportunities for a wider range of people; greater collaboration is needed between colleges, providers and employers to identify and address the skills needs of their particular regions. Devolution has allowed the WMCA to effectively respond to the region’s sectoral priorities, targeting investment in skills where it is needed. Having control of the adult education budget for the West Midlands has given us the autonomy to better identify and respond to the needs of learners and employers, matching the right skills with the incoming demand.



Learning from successes
Unemployment is generally higher across the West Midlands than the UK average, and workers are generally lower skilled. However, the region has performed better than average in terms of improving these measures since the foundation of the combined authority. Processes focus on training and skills provision, and job opportunities that support the region’s wider economic and social priorities.

Our Construction Gateway programme, which provides basic construction training through the classroom and practical onsite experience, targets the hardest to reach residents. This includes the long-term unemployed, ex-offenders and BAME groups. Forty-nine per cent of students have been from BAME groups and 5 per cent have been women (compared with 7 per cent and 1 per cent respectively across the sector). The programme has successfully delivered a much stronger focus on matching skills funding with the skills needs of construction, and this knowledge has in turn

helped the relationships between training providers and major construction employers to improve significantly. They have been able to better understand the current vacancies and the relevant training requirements to meet immediate and future skills needs.

Consequently, employers have identified improved access to skilled, motivated and “work-ready” staff, also improving the perception of those within harder to reach demographics. Greater collaboration and better understanding can now be applied to other sectors and regions in a bid to rebalance social disparity.

Looking ahead
The importance of building strong partnerships with business, employers, FE colleges and training providers, and being responsive to their needs, has never been so important. The FE sector must adopt a more collaborative approach to skills and retraining, building local knowledge and relationships to address the economic and social priorities and close the wealth and opportunity gap.

Opinion

DO YOU HAVE A STORY?
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NEIL BENTLEY-GOCKMANN

Chief executive,
WorldSkills UK



Digital skills are the key to recovery, so the UK must up its game

With the government setting out its plans for infrastructure investment and skills, we need to better prepare for a digital economic future, writes Neil Bentley-Gockmann

As we emerge from the worst stages of the coronavirus and start to deal with the economic and social consequences of having to shut down whole sectors of the economy, governments will be competing more fiercely than ever for investment to help sustain and create jobs.

Underpinning this will be a renewed focus on higher quality skills, which will be critical for the future of the economy. This is certainly the message that comes across loud and clear in EY's 2020 Attractiveness Survey *Building Back Better*, which looks at trends in inward investment into the UK.

Attracting inward investment is as important now as it was in the early 1980s when the UK's traditional industries were in decline and unemployment was high. EY identified in its report that investors prioritise skills supply over many other factors when looking for a location for their capital and that inward investors in the UK are particularly focused on digital projects. This, combined with the tech sector representing almost eight per cent of the UK economy and continuing to grow fast, means the development and supply of higher-level digital skills will remain an economic priority.

The trends highlighted in

EY's survey are important to us at WorldSkills UK as we work with our partners across the UK and globally to address some of the challenges raised in the report about skills supply and quality. We know from our recent work in launching our Centre of Excellence, in partnership with NCFE, that there is an incredible appetite in the sector, despite the current challenges, to drive excellence in technical education. That is why we have set out three key actions in our new report, *Answering the Call for Digital Skills Excellence from International Investors*.

“At WorldSkills over the past six years, the UK ranks ninth globally and has potential to do better”

Firstly, we will explore new digital skills competitions. Looking at our international performance at WorldSkills over the past six years, the UK ranks ninth globally and has potential to do better. In recent years we have moved into new digital areas, ranging from cyber security and 3D games and more recently to industry 4.0, industrial robotics and building



information modelling. However, by working with our partners in colleges and training providers and investing more in a broader range of digital skills to reach global standards, we will be helping develop the skills base needed to help attract more inward investment.

Secondly, we will help level up digital investment beyond London. We will bring together sector leaders, who have signed up to the WorldSkills UK Centre of Excellence, to share best practice on how developing higher standards can attract inward investment across the UK. With current inward investment patterns for digital projects heavily skewed to London, we need to contribute to evening out investment opportunities and levelling up economic prosperity in areas where it is most needed. In tracking demand for our digital skills competitions, we see a wide geographic spread including from north-west England, West Midlands and East of England, Glasgow and South Wales. Such locations would be attractive to

inward investors as more cost-effective locations in which to invest to create new jobs, if the right skill supply is in place.

Thirdly, we will focus more on global quality standards. We will bring partners together at an international skills summit in autumn 2020 to debate what we can learn from international benchmarking in skills development to help drive up quality to world-class standards that investors want to see. As we look ahead to the next global competition in Shanghai in 2021, we will review the UK's skills pedigree with insights into how other countries are developing their technical skills base, as well as looking ahead to the opportunity to showcase our skills to the rest of the world.

A focus on investor-led economic development is key to achieving prosperity. Please join us to turn insights into actions to help ensure the UK skills supply can help win more digital inward investment to maintain and create new jobs for more young people across the UK.

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READER'S REPLY

New employer incentives will form part of 'apprenticeship guarantee', claims ESFA director

A very interesting read. However, further consideration is required regarding the offer of an apprenticeship to further benefit young people and the misplaced offer of an apprenticeship used as free CPD for adults already in employment. The latter takes away from those disadvantaged young people who really benefit from this investment.

Zoe, website

I also found it an interesting read, but I think more needs to be done to help independent training providers. Maybe a cash incentive for every traineeship recruited and moved successfully on to a level 2 apprenticeship standard in the next 12 months. Also maybe an additional supplementary payment per apprenticeship student for the next 12 months to help with additional costs of delivery due to the financial impact of Covid-19. Smaller class sizes/PPE/illness/self-isolation et cetera all come at a cost to the training provider. Not to mention the possibility of further lockdowns.

Christine Tilley, website

How one adult education provider went above and beyond the conventional

An excellent example of a college at the heart of its community.

Rebecca Taylor, website

Possible stay of execution for Newton Rigg College

Tragic we're looking at another land-based college closing, but why are the governors letting the same organisation that said they should close review other options?

Simon Ryan, Twitter

Treasury excluded colleges from £1bn catch-up fund just hours before DfE announcement

Just a touch of the same old... FE expected to do more for less...

REPLY OF THE WEEK

Official figures reveal 85 per cent fall in apprenticeship vacancies



Hugely depressing. Just underlines urgent need for ministers to come up with cast-iron agreement that any so-called "apprenticeships guarantee" should have job attached as well as provider training support. Always live in hope, but PM's souffle New Deal not promising...

Gordon Marsden, Twitter

feels like the compulsory retake of GCSE maths and English all over again! Think the government need to realise just what FE/post-16 providers actually do!!!

Tracy Wilkinson, Facebook



Imagine what we could achieve for our learners and our communities if, just once, FE was front and centre of funding.

Tracie Fryer-Kanssen, Facebook

College to axe 107 jobs after 'short-sighted' DfE rejects Covid support plea



Isn't it a shame that principals need to focus on financial issues rather than their students and teaching & learning?

Jane Le Poidevin, LinkedIn



This is such bad news for the FE sector and such a shame for this sector that supports the vocational training of our future workforce!

Maggie Slaughter, LinkedIn

Movers & Shakers

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



Baroness Nicky Morgan

Board Member, Careers and Enterprise Company

Start date July 2020

Previous job

Education Secretary

Interesting fact

Nicky was the first woman ever to chair the influential House of Commons Treasury select committee when elected in 2017



Glenys Pashley-Crawford

Governor, Blackburn College

Start date April 2020

Concurrent job

Consultant in the FE and skills sector

Interesting fact

She is a former deputy principal of an FE college and an Ofsted HMI



Eugene Lowry

Managing Director, Skillnet Limited

Start date June 2020

Previous job

Operations Director, Skillnet Limited

Interesting fact

He owned a racehorse that won the Courage Handicap two years in a row in 1999 & 2000

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

FEWEEK

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