



FE providers encouraged to get flexible See pages 8 & 9



AELP conference summary: Graham Hoyle, CEO of AELP, provides a visual demonstration of DWP style funding (we added the box!) *Picture by Nick Linford*

Monday 6 February 2012

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Sue Rimmer profile



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Campus Round-up



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inside...

More than 14m learner accounts unused

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Less than 0.01 per cent of more than 14 million learning accounts have been accessed directly by learners, figures obtained by *FE Week* reveal.

The statistics, released in a Freedom of Information (FoI) request to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), show only 800 learners have accessed their Personal Learning Record (PLR), out of 14,166,906 Unique Learner Numbers (ULN) which have been created to give them access.

The PLR is managed by the Learning Records Service (LRS), a team of 17 staff within the SFA which enables the sharing of learner and achievement data across the education and skills sector.

The provision and maintenance of the ULN, which the FoI response

says cost £7.2 million to implement, is also one of the services delivered by the LRS.

It was first piloted back in 2006, before being rolled out in 2008, with access for the first learner to the LRS in January 2009.

However, the SFA, in the FoI document, say access to the accounts by learners will increase when they are promoted actively.

It reads: "It is not possible to quantify all the interactions on behalf of a learner.

"However, 1.76 million individual learner records have been accessed and updated.

"Many of these transactions will have been triggered to support a learner such as enabling a claim for public funding of learning.

"Direct access for learners to their records has not been actively promoted and the total number of learners that have accessed their record directly to date is 800.

"We expect this figure to rise sig-

nificantly with the roll out of easier ways for learners to access their record online and promotion of routes, such as via Lifelong Learning Accounts in England."

Denise Gledhill, head of funding and learner records at Wakefield College, said there seems to be a "general lack of awareness" about the LRS.

She added: "As a college, we incorporate standard information about the LRS within the Learning Agreement at enrolment, as required.

"Only two learners, from around 8,000 learners enrolled so far this year, have contacted my team this academic year, to request their ULN."

Although admitting it is difficult to quantify time and money invested in LRS, Mrs Gledhill said that on average, one member of staff spends 20 per cent of the week investigating ULNs - which includes matches, duplicates and serious errors.

She also said: "We are not opposed

to the principle of ULNs and the Personal Learning Record, but as a college we are currently seeing no benefit from the LRS."

It is not the first time concerns have been raised about ULNs and Personal Learning Records - as its use by awarding bodies has previously been questioned.

Little more than a year ago, the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) raised members' issues on the system over lack of control and responsibility for errors.

At the time, FAB's chief executive Jill Lanning also said that exam boards were "nervous" over the prospect of confidential data being shared.

Meanwhile, in November, at an *information authority* meeting, the group "expressed concern that they have to put a lot of time and effort" into ULNs, but they said awarding bodies "do not seem to have bought" into them.

Mrs Lanning, speaking to *FE*

Week, said: "We are still discussing details with the LRS about moving forward.

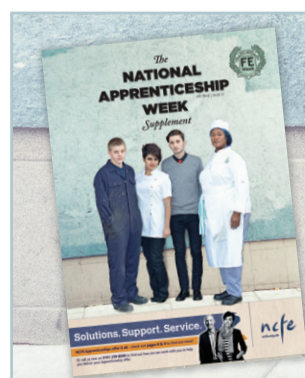
"Some awarding bodies are signed up to it, with some only for a trial period, but some are still biding their time to decide."

The LRS provides services to more than 7,600 organisations, including schools, FE providers, higher education institutions, careers services and awarding organisations.

Since the introduction of the LRS, it is estimated the UK education sector has benefited from £56.9 million of avoided costs, while total salary costs including for all LRS staff were £847,722.54 for 2010/11 and £463,395.15 for 2009/10.

The increase is explained by the "recruitment of a permanent team following completion of the programme" that set up the service.

However, the SFA was unable to comment further at the time of going to press.



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16-18 apprenticeships fall

Nick Summers @SummersNicholas

The rise in adult apprenticeships has continued to accelerate in the first three months of the new academic year, while the number of starts aged between 16 and 18 has dropped, new data has shown.

Provisional figures, published by the Data Service in the Statistical First Release (SFR) last week, show that the number of new apprentices aged 25 and above has risen to 53,300 in the first quarter of 2011/12, up from 27,600 in the same period last year.

Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for further education, skills and regional growth, says the figures show a disregard for the widening gap in apprenticeship volumes.

"Officials disregarded the imbalance of post-25 and said never mind the quality, fill the width," Mr Marsden said.

"You can't turn these things around overnight and they've recognised now that they do need to do more of the 16 to 24."

A spokesperson at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) says it is "not possible" to compare the provisional figures with data from 2010/11.

"Provisional data for the first quarter of the 2011/12 academic year (August 2011 to October 2011) provide an early view of performance and will change as further data returns are received from further education colleges and providers," the spokesperson said.

"Quarterly figures for 2011/12 will be updated throughout the year and will be finalised in the January 2013 Statistical First Release. It is not possible, therefore, to directly compare provisional data for the first quarter of the 2011/12 academic year with data from earlier academic years."

The growing number of adult apprenticeships, shown to be up by 93 per cent in the SFR provisional figures, follow four consecutive quarter increases in 2010/11.

Tess Lanning, research fellow at the IPPR,

says the rise in adult apprentices reflects an "increasingly broad definition" of what counts as an apprenticeship

"Over the past decade apprenticeships have become increasingly less likely to offer a route into skilled employment for young people," she said.

"Instead, the biggest increases have been for adult apprentices, most of which are existing employees, many in low-paid jobs."

The number of apprenticeship starts aged 16 to 18 dropped by three per cent in the first quarter of 2011/12, down to 53,700, according to provisional statistics in the SFR.

The figures follow record levels of youth unemployment, which has now reached 1.04 million for young people aged 16 to 24, announced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) last month.

"What these figures show is that the government was too slow to respond to the crisis in youth unemployment by adjusting the priorities," Mr Marsden said.

"They were too slow in picking them up and even when they did so, the pick-up in those 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 areas, although it has increased, has not increased anywhere near enough in volume to match the huge increase in post 25."

A BIS spokesperson said the government would be doing all it could to help young people get back into work.

"The private sector is playing an important role: creating over half a million jobs in the past year - the highest in the G7 countries - and we are in turn supporting business by cutting corporation tax to make the UK the most competitive tax system in the G20 and making an unprecedented investment in apprenticeships," the spokesperson said.

"It is vital that we do all we can to help young people without work get back into employment with good long term career prospects."

The total number of new apprenticeships starts hit 457,200 in 2010/11, up 14,500 from provisional figures published in October last year.

FE Week news in brief

HE in FE gets a boost

Thousands of extra degree places are to be delivered by FE colleges.

Universities minister David Willetts has announced that 143 FE colleges will receive funding for around 9,500 extra places.

The news has been welcomed by the 157 Group.

Lynne Sedgmore CBE, the group's executive director, said: "We see the announcement as a huge statement of confidence in FE colleges."

Mrs Sedgmore said the benefits of studying HE in FE are "vast" and were outlined in their October 2011 policy paper.

Marilyn Hawkins, chair of the 157 Group and principal of Barnet and Southgate College, added: "This is excellent news for our colleges and we hope it sets a precedent for even greater expansion of HE in FE."

"Expanding the number of HE places in FE colleges offers greater choice for many learners, including those who have to juggle learning, work and family commitments."

"Many people who would otherwise have been unable to progress on to HE level courses will now do so, and we believe all learners should know that FE colleges can be a first choice for access to HE, not a second choice."

Less than satisfied

The reliability of the 'FE Choices Publication of Outputs' data has been questioned by one of the UK's largest vocational training providers.

Elmfield Training Ltd has asked the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) to review the data after receiving a score of 2.8 out of 10 for employer satisfaction.

All of the employer satisfaction data for Elmfield Training has since been withdrawn from the 'FE Choices Publication of Outputs' website.

When questioned, an SFA spokesperson said: "There is no problem with the FE choices data. Following the publication last week, one provider has queried their Employer Satisfaction score, we have agreed to review and will feedback to this provider accordingly."

Apprenticeship success rates highest ever

Nick Summers @SummersNicholas

Apprenticeship success rates have risen for the fourth consecutive year across all age groups, according to new government data.

The statistical first release (SFR), published by the Data Service last week, shows a 2.6 percentage point increase in apprenticeships at all age groups and skill levels.

The completion rate of all 16 to 18 apprenticeships rose to 74 per cent in 2010/11, up from 72.4 per cent for the previous twelve months.

John Hayes MP, minister of state for further education, skills and lifelong learning, said: "Clarity of policy, strength of commitment and certainty of purpose has delivered record numbers of apprenticeship starts, outstanding

success rates and growth across all sectors."

The SFR also revealed an 83.2 per cent completion rate for 16-18 higher apprenticeships, rising to 84.8 per cent for learners aged 19 and above.

"Thousands of higher apprenticeships will open up new pathways to excellence for the brightest and best learners," Mr Hayes said.

"A zero tolerance approach to unnecessary red tape, and new financial incentives for small firms will enable more employers to offer gold standard training to match and beat our international competitors."

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) says the statistics prove the apprenticeship programme is in "rude health".

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of AELP, said: "The latest official statistics show that right across the board, apprenticeships are playing a key role in lifting skill levels in the

UK workforce and giving thousands of young people a successful start to their careers in manufacturing and service sectors. "

Total completions for 16 to 24 year-olds hit more than 160,000 in 2010/11, up by 16.8 per cent on the previous year.

Mr Hoyle added: "Amidst all the doom and gloom surrounding the economic outlook, employers and providers deserve major credit for significantly increasing the number of apprenticeship places and for offering quality training when they have to contend with higher costs on their businesses."

The SFR data also showed an increase in the success rates for advanced level apprenticeships, with an average completion rate of 78.6 per cent across all age groups in 2010/11.

Intermediate level apprenticeships had a similar increase, with a success rate of 72.2 per cent for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and 78 per cent for those aged 19 and above.

Employability qualifications are just the job

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Increasing unemployment is fuelling a sharp rise in demand for short employability qualifications, figures obtained by *FE Week* reveal.

Statistics from three major awarding bodies - Edexcel, City and Guilds and NCFE - report significant increases in registrations for courses which aim to improve CVs, improve interview techniques and aid application writing.

Although aiming to help get people into work, the qualifications, in some cases, only see little more than a third enter employment.

Despite this, the reason behind the surge in people registering for the qualifications is blamed, by the bodies, on rising unemployment rates.

However, it could also be down to the opening up of the single Adult Skills Budget from August last year, which means training providers who previously offered apprenticeships or workplace learning are now able to deliver outside the workplace.

Figures from Pearson, owned by Edexcel, from the start of September to the end of November in 2010 and 2011, show registrations of their Workskills qualification by training providers rose from 1,951 to 27,878 - an increase of some 1,428 per cent.

However, during the same time period, numbers for non-training providers - schools and

colleges - have slightly decreased from 87,753 to 87,244.

The total for both provider types is 115,122 in 2011 - an increase of 25,418 when compared to the total of 89,704 in 2010.

A Pearson spokesperson said: "More than ever, individuals wishing to progress in the workplace, in education and in training, need to demonstrate flexible and wide-ranging skills."

Further analysis shows the increase is due to the introduction of a 'Designed for Apprentices' model of the qualification, accounting for 24,909 of 2011's figures. The qualification was not available the previous year.

A spokesperson for Pearson confirmed that there are no apprenticeship frameworks that mandate a Workskills qualification, adding: "As far as we understand it, providers are taking this in addition to their apprenticeships - even though it's not funded - as it helps learners with the apprenticeship programme.

"As there is no additional funding for this, we took the decision to provide free registration for the WorkSkills qualifications as part of the BTEC Apprenticeship package when registering on full frameworks."

Fellow awarding body City & Guilds (C&G) has also revealed an increase in registration numbers for their Employability and Personal Development qualification.

In the same time period, figures have risen from 15,160 to 24,872, but they were unable to split the figure by provider type.

A spokesperson for the organisation said: "This increase can probably be attributed to the sharp rise in UK unemployment figures recorded over the same period."

The spokesperson added: "With high levels of unemployment, people are focusing on developing the skills needed to find work. The qualifications help learners develop employability skills that employers require, helping them be more attractive in a competitive job market or progress into education."

NCFE, due to "commercial sensitivity" were unable to provide specific details, but have revealed that registrations for their eight employability qualifications have risen by 396 per cent during the past 12 months.

A spokesperson for NCFE said: "The growth is understandable when you consider the emphasis now being placed on the government to ensure young people are prepared for work and rapid growth in unemployment figures.

"These particular qualifications are popular as they provide core skills needed to help people gain employment and get their first step onto the career ladder."

The Skills Funding Agency said greater access to the Adult Skills Budget was "intended to simplify the funding system" and increase opportunity for learners.

A spokesperson said: "This means that training organisations that have previously been restricted to workplace learning can also deliver provision geared to meet needs of individu-

als, including helping unemployed people into work."

The Agency also said that colleges and providers are "free to make their own decisions about the mix and balance" of their provision, including the specific qualifications they deliver, when asked about the budget's use.

Among those offering employability skills is RTT Group, which delivers the full-time qualification over two weeks at 10 sites across England.

Nick Barton, director of operations employability at the provider, said: "We will expect to see 7,500 to 9000 clients from Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme and Work Choice from across the country by the end of this academic year.

"That could easily increase by 25 to 50 per cent if we could fund it.

"The numbers are more than double than we saw last year through Response to Redundancy and Routes into Work."

When asked about job progression, Mr Barton added: "We can't offer 100 per cent of the learners employment.

"We offer 100 per cent of learners in our Sector Based Work Academy programmes that we run with Jobcentre Plus, a guaranteed interview and work experience.

"Our job entry rate is better than many Welfare to Work providers and, depending on where we are delivering in the country, we expect it to be over 38 per cent and for our Work Programme customers, over 50 per cent."

Vocational quals counted out

Nick Reinis

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Concern has been raised at the government's expulsion of thousands of qualifications from school league tables.

While stating that its members would welcome the strengthening of vocational education, the Association of Colleges (AoC) believes it should not be allowed to result in less 14 to 15 year-olds being exposed to vocational qualifications.

It comes after the education secretary, Michael Gove, announced that the number of vocational qualifications that will count towards a school's GCSE performance in league tables is being cut from 3,000 to 70.

Just 125 vocational qualifications will be included from 2014 and only 70 will count towards the main performance measure - the percentage of pupils getting five A* to Cs at GCSE, including English and maths. The other 55 will count in the tables, but will not contribute towards the main measure.

It is an attempt to stop schools encouraging youngsters to take qualifications that boost league table position, but do not help prospects, and follows recommendations made in a report by Professor Alison Wolf last year.

An AoC spokesperson said: "Colleges will welcome the implicit endorsement that provision of vocational education needs to be strengthened to ensure that high standards are maintained in all types of institutions, including schools, in order to ensure the

delivery of high quality vocational provision that our young people need in order to secure satisfying and fulfilling future employment."

Currently, there are 63,000 14 to 15-year-olds enrolled in a college; with 3,500 full-time and 59,000 part-time.

The AoC spokesperson added: "Evidence has shown that colleges are best-equipped to deliver high quality vocational education and we believe that all 14-year-olds should have the opportunity to attend their local college.

"Colleges were pleased with the Wolf Report's support for colleges looking to enrol more 14-year-olds onto full-time courses.

"Alison Wolf was insistent as to the value of high quality vocational provision for young people.

"Whilst the announcement confirms that commitment, we would be concerned if it resulted in fewer young people who would benefit from an early exposure to vocational learning having that opportunity.

"Ultimately, we believe that colleges should take centre stage in the delivery of vocational education and become hubs of vocational excellence, using their expertise and resources to support provision in their locality.

"And we are in discussion with the Department for Education to make this intention a reality."

The Department for Education said some of the qualifications still to be included are subject to future review and schools will remain free to offer any other qualification accredited and approved for study by 14- to 16-year-olds.

FE WEEK & ME

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AND THE WINNER IS...

JAYDE KIRKUP

from East Durham College

We asked students to send in a 500-word article explaining what brought them to college, along with their hopes, fears and aspirations and asked you to vote for your favourite entry.

Almost **350** FE Week readers voted in our online survey so a big thank you to all those who voted.

It was a close competition with the winner, Jayde Kirkup taking the top spot with just a few votes. Jayde will receive either a Macbook Pro or £1000 worth of John Lewis vouchers.

Look out for our write-up of the competition in the next edition of FE Week.

NAO's verdict on adult apprenticeships

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

Funding rates are unreliable

The funding rates used to pay training providers for delivering an apprenticeship are not based on robust information, according to the NAO.

The NAO says the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and NAS have set tariffs without "reliable evidence" to support estimated training costs.

The 'Adult Apprenticeships' report states: "The Agency and the Service currently set tariffs without sufficiently robust information on the cost of provision.

"This may mean that some frameworks have become more financially attractive to offer than others."

The NAO say both the SFA and NAS are unable to judge the extent to which providers may be generating significant profits or losses as a result of inaccurate rates.

Skewed funding rates on individual frameworks have led to some employers not paying the expected contributions towards training providers' costs.

The report adds: "Employers pay apprentices' wages and deliver on-the-job training, but some are not paying the expected contributions towards training providers' costs.

"Employers are required to contribute towards the cost of adult apprenticeships, and the funding rates paid to providers assume employers contribute at least half of the training costs, either in cash or 'in kind'.

"However, evidence suggests that some employers do not pay the required contributions."

Simon Waugh, chief executive of the NAS, says the government is devoted to raising quality in the programme and driving out poor performance.

"We are working with the Skills Funding Agency and other partners to raise the bar on quality, recognise excellence, and drive out poor performance; reducing unnecessary red-tape and bureaucracy for those who engage with the Apprenticeship programme," Mr Waugh said.

The NAO report references a survey, conducted in 2009, which found that 43 per cent of providers choose not to collect fees from employers.

"With full contributions from employers, government funding could deliver more or higher quality apprenticeships for the same cost," the report states.

Amyas Morse, head of the NAO, said: "It [BIS] needs to target resources more effectively; confirm the training provided is in addition to what would have been provided without public support; and make sure that the funding system is informed by robust information on the cost of delivery."

Adult apprenticeships are good value for money

Adult apprenticeships offer good value for money, but the government needs to focus its resources on industries which offer the best economic returns, a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) claims.

The independent body says the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) needs to "set its sights higher" on the apprenticeship programme, despite exceeding all previous expansion targets.

Amyas Morse, head of the NAO, said: "The apprenticeships programme has been providing a good return for public spending.

"Nevertheless, the Department should set its sights higher in order to get better value from the £0.5 billion and rising now spent on adult apprenticeships each year."

The apprenticeship programme has increased by 140 per cent during the last five years, of which 68 per cent were learners aged 25 or above.

Previous recruitment targets set by government were smashed, at least in part, by the 182,100 new adult apprenticeship starts in 2010/11.

David Hughes, chief executive of NIACE, described the increase in adult apprenticeships as "great news".

He said: "NIACE is pleased that the NAO

confirms BIS' view of there being a public value of adult apprenticeships and endorses their prioritisation."

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC), added:

"This is a balanced report from the NAO, which confirms that apprenticeships are valuable for young adults, that the expansion in adult apprenticeships has been well managed, but that action is needed in a number of areas."

However, the NAO report also criticises BIS and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) for not targeting the higher level qualifications, frameworks or age groups which will have the biggest impact on the economy.

The report states: "The Department needs robust evidence to identify which qualifications

are having most impact and where the additionality delivered against public funding is greatest.

"The Department should use this information to decide where to target its resources. It has recently announced its intention to do so, though has yet to publish details."

More than 80 per cent of the expansion between 2006/07 and 2010/11 was covered by 10 apprenticeship occupations, with health and social care, customer service and retail coming out on top.

John Hayes MP, minister of state for further education, skills and lifelong learning, said: "The report rightly identifies a need to prioritise investment where returns are greatest, and that is what the government is doing.

"We will continue to drive improvement by developing new

higher level apprenticeships, giving training providers more freedom to meet the needs of local businesses, reducing bureaucracy and making financial incentives available to small firms hiring their first apprentices."



The unknown level of 'dead-weight'

The value of adult apprenticeships is being exposed to significant dead-weight, according to the NAO.

The NAO says "optimistic" figures produced by BIS assume all of the training delivered by apprenticeships would not have occurred without public support.

The criticism follows statistics by BIS, reported in March 2011, which estimate that adult apprenticeships deliver a return of roughly £28 for every £1 of public spending.

The NAO says the programme produces a return closer to £18 when considering all levels of an apprenticeship.

The NAO report states: "The difference between our figures and those of the Department reflects the sensitivity of the calculations to the underlying assumptions, in particular our respective assessments of

the available evidence on the potential wider impact of the training on the productivity of the workforce."

Skills minister John Hayes said he was pleased with the NAO estimates.

£1.2bn
Programme cost in 2010-11, including £451 million for adults

"I am delighted that the NAO has recognised the progress we have made and that they identify the extraordinary economic benefits of apprenticeships," Mr Hayes said.

"Few, if any, other government programmes produce anything like the return of £18 for

every £1 spent let alone the still greater return that our economists estimate."

The NAO says BIS has failed to assess the level of additionality (the extent to which public funding results in training that would "not otherwise have occurred) being delivered by the apprenticeship programme.

The report states: "The Department assumes that, for economic returns to apprenticeships, all public funding achieves additionality, but lacks data to support this; therefore any reduction in additionality would result in an equivalent reduction in the economic returns."

The NAO says BIS has an evaluation in progress which will help them to measure the additionality of the apprenticeship programme, with results available in early 2012.

One in five adult apprenticeships under six months

A growing number of adult apprenticeships are being delivered in under half a year, the NAO has revealed.

The report says 34,600 apprenticeships were delivered by providers in less than six months in 2010/11, making up nearly a fifth of completions for learners aged 25 and above.

A further 6,200 (three per cent of adult completions) were found to be less than three months long.

The NAO says the rapid expansion of the apprenticeship programme "presents risks that need to be managed."

"In four of the top ten fastest-expanding subjects around a quarter or more apprentices completed in six months or less (2010/11)," the report states.

53,110 starts
in customer service – most popular apprenticeship subject, 2010/11

"In one of the fastest-growing subjects, IT and telecoms professionals, over two-thirds (68 per

cent) completed in under six months."

The NAO say SFA and NAS are currently investigating 87 providers thought to be delivering 'short duration' apprenticeships and have said they will be checking to see if providers are complying with their contractual obligations, and will close down provision if necessary.

Simon Waugh, chief executive of NAS, said: "We will continue to strive to ensure that Apprenticeships represent the best value for money for the investment made in them by government and by employers."

FE Week profile

Sue Rimmer ~ her story

Nick summers

@SummersNicholas

The Principal of South Thames College talks to *FE Week*

“We are heading towards the edge of a cliff, which we’re going to fall off,” says the principal of South Thames College, describing the on-going funding crisis in further education. Strong words perhaps, but Sue Rimmer speaks from a vast amount of experience in the sector. It would be unwise not to listen.

Raised in Birkenhead, Sue says she had a happy childhood. Growing up, her father worked in a factory and her auntie lived just around the corner. The area has mostly been knocked down now, making way for modern redevelopments, but back then it was a stable community.

“It was the type of environment where you walked to primary school and you weren’t that far away from the secondary school. I simply wasn’t aware of anything different,” she explains with pride.

Aged 16, Sue left secondary school with Grade 1 CSEs, quickly snapping up a job as a pharmacy technician at Clatterbridge Hospital. Within a year she had moved onto the research laboratories at Unilever, a “strange environment” with different peers.

“I was with middle class girls who hadn’t got the A-levels to go to University and were waiting to get married and have kids. So I found myself in a slightly strange environment where I didn’t quite fit.”

The opportunity to do an ONC at her local FE college came from work, but Sue decided to drop out in the first year, later embarking on an eclectic mix of O-levels and A-levels. By her mid-twenties Sue had “got into her head” that she wanted to go to University, and with little inspiration, she decided to pursue being an educational psychologist, based on the preconception that they “earned a lot of money”.

Although Sue stayed in Liverpool to study her degree, by this point she had already moved away from home. The decision, acceptable by most modern standards, was frowned upon at the time.

“The only reason you left home was to get married. So nobody could understand why I was leaving home and not getting married. I broke the trend.”

University allowed Sue to study psychology, sociology and education, but perhaps more importantly than that, it was where she met, her husband, Andy Wilson, principal of Westminster Kingsway College.

“At the end of my second year, I went along to this Union meeting where the new president stood up, and I thought, well, he’s

quite nice,” Sue says.

A plan was soon set in motion. Sue was in charge of organising the end of year sociology party, and cleverly decided to book Andy’s band, ‘Chokey Bill and the Rampsmen’. The pair started dating on the night of the party and have been inseparable ever since.

Graduation steered Sue towards a profession in the public sector. With little interest in neither higher education or the schools system, Sue quickly decided to try an FE teacher training course in London.

A mature student herself, Sue then developed an interest in adult returners and access courses. Despite her working class background, Sue says she was unprepared for some of the people she would meet.

“I hadn’t experienced anybody, who I was aware of, who were gay and I hadn’t experienced discrimination. The scale of the abuse that some of these women, who I was tutoring and who must have been older than me, it was, it was quite an eye opener for me.”

Education is a route out of deprivation, and it was this potential for change that really ignited Sue’s passion for adult education.

“I was a fairly passionate person anyway, but I became very passionate about how these women could change their lives through education. It was a route out of difficulty for them, and so I got very, very involved with it.”

Sue climbed up the ladder in a number of London institutions, spending time as a lecturer at Lambeth College, an equal opportunities coordinator with the Greater London Council (GLC) and a coordinator at the Open College of South London.

“I thought, well if I don’t apply for the job and somebody gets it that I don’t like, then I’ll always wonder...”

“I’ve always tried to do everything I did really well. I’ve never planned any of the next stages. If an opportunity crossed my path that seemed to make sense, then I’ve taken advantage of it.”

The chance to step into management came along unexpectedly, when a principal asked if she would be interested in taking over an ageing site in Kennington.

The campus was like a blank canvas for Sue, allowing her to build new facilities,



Picture by Nick Linford

including a new library and canteen, on a shoe string budget. Soon everyone wanted to be taught on her campus. It wasn’t long before the principal of Carshalton College noticed her phenomenal work.

“When they put me in Kennington, they expected me to run it reasonably efficiently, but they were actually really surprised how I’d made it the centre that everybody wanted to go to. Therefore they wanted me to apply for this job, which I applied for and got.”

Moving to Carshalton was the step that pushed Sue up into senior management. By this point Sue had moved away from the teaching profession, realising she could have a bigger impact further up the career ladder. While appreciative of her increased influence, Sue says she misses the immediate feedback from teaching in further education.

“When you’re that close to the ground you get immediate feedback. You’ve made a difference to this person’s life, rather than, a more dispersed impact on a lot of people’s lives.”

Sue didn’t look back though. Some years later Sue moved to South Thames College

as deputy principal. When she arrived, the institution was sat in the bottom ten per cent of the country. Just eighteen months later, when the college was judged to be ‘satisfactory’ by Ofsted, a five year plan was drawn up to improve the college. It was then that the current principal, aged 63, decided it was an appropriate time to retire.

“I hadn’t expected her to go so quickly. But I thought, well if I don’t apply for the job and somebody gets it that I don’t like, then I’ll always wonder...”

As principal, Sue has spent the last decade giving the college an incredible makeover, tackling the college’s financial difficulties, merger proposals and crumbling buildings with the utmost vigour.

“My approach has always been that if you’re taking on students who are coming from a deprived background, particularly the younger students if they’ve already failed before, then you basically have the obligation to give them the very best opportunity you can.”

Sue Rimmer has experienced a lot in further education and by the looks of it, she has no plans to stop any time soon.

See our *Apprenticeship Week Supplement* for more from the Experts...

The government need to sharpen their focus



It's great as Shadow Skills and FE Minister to celebrate this fourth annual Apprenticeships week. Looking back on Labour's record in Government, our revitalisation of Apprenticeships remains for me one of our most substantial achievements.

Lifting the number of starts from a mere 65,000 in 1996/97 to just under 280,000 was buttressed by the then Secretary of State John Denham launching the National Apprenticeship Service alongside National Apprenticeship Week.

Being the Shadow Minister covering Apprenticeships has allowed me to continue my previous work as chair of Parliament's Skills Group and on the Select Committee - championing both skills and the FE sector and arguing for a continued focus on take-up, progression and quality.

It has been a particular pleasure to see the contribution that FE Colleges have been making countrywide engaging with employers and apprentices alike.

Having worked with John Hayes in the Skills Group, I don't doubt his longstanding commitment to the vocational route and desire as Minister to build on this strong Apprenticeship legacy we left.

But there's much more his Government, BIS and especially the Department for Education should be doing to expand access and safeguard quality.

The vast bulk of their expansion has now been shown to be on the back of 25-plus apprentices, many following courses previously covered under Train to Gain. In many cases these have value, but they do little to tackle the huge challenge of the sceptre of a generation of jobless young people.

That's why I've just been putting forward ideas from Labour to help do just that. We recognise Apprenticeship strategy has to go hand in hand with boosting growth in the regions on the back of an active industrial strategy - which this Government has failed to do. Skills and growth policy must be linked on the ground. It's no good Government pushing apprentice-

ships, if there's not enough pull from employers. We also need to see FE Colleges as a crucial link here - which is why Labour believes they must take a central role in the new Local Enterprise Partnerships.

We're calling on Government to make a step change in the quantity of quality apprenticeships available to young people.

That includes a major expansion via SMEs - incentives for large companies to buddy up with supply-chain smaller partners in taking them on.

“There's much more [the] Government, BIS and especially the Department for Education should be doing to expand access and safeguard quality”

We would use the unspent and so far unfocused Growth and Innovation Fund - and use the £60 million there to boost the work of training organisations - GTAs and ATAs - and to enable FE colleges and learning providers to work effectively with HE and LEPs to build collaboration helping more businesses to take on apprentices as part of local growth strategies. This builds on our existing commitment to ensure all public procurement contracts handed out over £1million come with taking on apprentices.

This would expand the range and reach for apprenticeships and create the new opportunities young people are crying out for. Expanding the quantity of apprenticeships must not come at the expense of their quality.

Already BIS Ministers' race for numbers has brought some casualties here - that needs to be remedied urgently, not just for 16-18 years but also for the cohort beyond it - as I urged the Government in Parliament's debate on apprenticeships before Christmas - with new safeguards on minimum course duration.

They need to take heed of what the Select Committee's Apprenticeship enquiry will say - and make sure the unexpected departures at the top in the National Apprenticeship Service and Skills Funding Agency do not throw up further problems.

The priority must be for a sharper view of what Apprenticeships are for, with clear progression strategies - including into HE - and real jobs on completion.

Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for further education, skills and regional growth

Apprenticeship advertising Is it counterproductive?



with the Youth Training and Youth Opportunities Programme schemes of the 1970s and 1980s, despite extensive promotion of Level 3 and Higher Level Apprenticeships. Promotion of Apprenticeships as a scheme for young people of the very highest calibre seems to have had very little impact on employers' perceptions.

Indeed, Apprenticeship advertising appears to have had exactly the opposite effect with some, who become ever more suspicious about quality the more they see Apprenticeships pushed in the media.

“These young people must be really poor if the Government has to put in so much effort to get employers to take them on” is the reaction we received from some employers - and Apprentice recruitment agencies report finding the same.

This leaves the Government in a Catch 22 situation - if increased promotion may cause more cynicism amongst some of those employers they really need on board, what can they do to attract new employers to the scheme?

“So, after national advertising and promotional campaigns, are the employers flocking in? Not perhaps to the degree that had been hoped”

Employers we spoke to who had been initially suspicious but won round reported that it was personal contact that made the difference - with providers they trusted, with colleagues in the same industry with positive experiences to share, and in particular with Apprentices themselves.

So perhaps Simon Waugh's successor might wish to consider ditching the advertising altogether and throwing the marketing budget into the Ambassadors Network and local promotion.

Local good news stories about known employers and real Apprentices may in the end prove the simplest, most effective way to get the Government's Apprenticeship messages across.

Tricia Hartley, chief executive of Campaign for Learning

The Government has committed itself to creating an extra 250,000 Apprenticeships by 2015. This is a challenging target, particularly in an economic downturn, with increasing youth unemployment and dramatic reductions in opportunities in the very industries, such as construction, that have traditionally provided places.

Initial progress was good. By June 2011, the target of an extra 50,000 starts in 2010-11 had been substantially exceeded, with over 103,000 extra places.

But there were concerns that these initial gains were not sustainable - in particular, that small companies that had taken on Apprentices in response to the initial push could not maintain the same level of recruitment year on year.

A strong case was made to the Cabinet Office, and Francis Maude relaxed the ban on Government advertising to help reach the target.

So after national advertising and promotional campaigns such as '100 Apprenticeships in 100 Days', are the employers flocking in? Not perhaps to the degree that had been hoped.

While recruitment has been steady, some sectors (including many parts of the public sector) are notably slow in taking up the opportunity to recruit Apprentices - and recent evidence hints that promotion may be part of the cause, rather than the solution.

One problem seems be employers' perceptions of who Apprentice candidates are. Last year the Campaign for Learning undertook small-scale research for Pearson on barriers to Apprenticeships - and found many employers had a marked suspicion about the quality of Apprenticeship candidates.

Some equated the Apprenticeships of today

FE Week Expert

Response to 'Government publish FE Choices'



If you saw *FE Week's* front-page headline "Private providers ahead of FE colleges in government learner satisfaction survey" and also visited the FE Choices website (<http://fechoices.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>) you might be puzzled.

Yes: you can bring the data together as *FE Week* does; but FE Choices doesn't compare provider types like that and isn't meant to. Instead, it lets you look at individual providers, and a number of scores for each – learner satisfaction is just one – allowing comparisons against the worst, median and best providers of the same

type. The website is designed to be useful to employers and prospective students comparing individual institutions, and may therefore send a wake-up call to under-performing providers.

The data is limited. It only sorts learner satisfaction data by age and level of qualification, not programme area and doesn't differentiate employer satisfaction at all. Providers with very small numbers of respondents are excluded from the calculations.

This applies to the majority of the private providers serving my own area, including one major national player. It seems that even when calculated, these indicators are commonly based on under one-third of learners.

Providers who have the Training Quality Standard are exempt from the employer satisfaction measure, which reduces its value as a benchmark.

The data actually tell a rather more positive tale about colleges than the *FE Week* commentary. Their lowest median learner satisfaction score is over 7 out of 10 – I'd normally be delighted to recommend a service rated at that level.

Median level colleges typically had only 7 per cent of users or fewer recording satisfaction ratings of 3 out of 10 or below. More importantly one can't make any serious

comparisons between FE colleges and private providers without like-with-like comparisons – learners from similar backgrounds studying the same types of qualification.

Comparing the employment rates of learners at the different provider types is seriously misleading. In colleges higher proportions of learners want to continue education on completing their current course, including entering university.

This is confirmed by the learning rate data, where the comparison with private providers strongly favours FE colleges.

The combined learner destinations rate is a far better measure of comparative performance and shows an equally high median score (82 per cent) for both colleges and private providers.

To put the learner satisfaction data in context, it helps to see them in relation to those for past years, and for other sectors.

The FE Choices data indicate a marginal deterioration in the median learner satisfaction rating for FE colleges (and for employer satisfaction across all types of provider). Whether this constitutes a trend is too early to say.

The last National Learner Satisfaction Survey

commissioned by LSC in 2007 revealed that 90 per cent of FE learners and 91 per cent in WBL were fairly satisfied or better, with 27 per cent & 26 per cent respectively extremely satisfied. The equivalent numbers expressing any dissatisfaction were only 7 per cent & 6 per cent.

FE compares well with equivalent data for other sectors, The 2011 National Student Survey for higher education indicated that 83 per cent were satisfied overall, and 8 per cent dissatisfied.

Many of the highest ratings, incidentally, applied to HE in FE colleges. The most recent customer satisfaction data for retail banking and for energy supply are much less positive.

The real story ought therefore to be that learner and employer satisfaction levels across all types of FE provider are reassuringly high.

Setting one type against another risks confusing this message, for the media and the general public alike.

FE Choices may help inform user decisions and assist providers to improve quality; and publishing this information encourages providers to help make the data better, as quickly as possible.

Peter Davies, researcher and consultant, Policy Consortium



Our fully-integrated BTEC Apprenticeships offer a number of benefits:

- Free assessment and delivery materials
- UK's largest team of dedicated account managers
- Clear progression opportunities for learners across all sectors
- Allow a completely holistic delivery with a choice of assessment methods
- SASE/SASW approved, fit-for-purpose qualifications developed alongside Sector Skills Councils

"BTEC Apprenticeships offer a seamless approach from registration to certification, throughout the whole learner journey."

Patrick Tucker,
Quality Systems Manager
– City of Bristol College

BTEC – a recognised and trusted brand

To find out more information on BTEC Apprenticeships visit www.btecapprnticeships.com, call 0844 576 0045 or email btecapprnticeships@pearson.com

FE Week Events...

Flexibility and 'black box'

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

In the seemingly ever-changing landscape of further education, providers are forced to adapt at a rapid rate of knots.

With that in mind, and in the wake of a number of challenges to the sector and a raft of new policy announcements, AELP put together a weighty agenda for its annual 'In-Tray' conference, in Leeds.

It focused on five themes; youth unemployment, apprenticeships, employability, funding simplification and delivery.

However, it was discussions around flexibility and 'the black box' approach which caught the imagination.

It was a theme set from the outset, particularly by AELP chief executive Graham Hoyle, in his opening address when discussing the single Adult Skills Budget, which was opened up to providers on August 1 last year.

He said: "You have a single flexible budget, some of you don't believe it, some of you don't know how to use it, and some of you are scared about using it. I'm told by the SFA that 128 providers out of about 1,000 use it.

"That's a darn good figure from a standing start against something which we never thought would happen."

Stewart Segal, director at Aegis, later described "a change of culture" in the sector.

He said: "There is more flexibility. The move this year to a move flexible contract was a massive move forward.

"Some of you have taken part in that new flexibility and delivering new things, others are very good at what you do and sticking to it and that's absolutely right. You should be choosing what's good for you."

Mr Segal, meanwhile, also added: "There are flexibilities in the new contract that we are uncomfortable about.

"There will be lots of times when the rules are unclear.

"We need to be brave and take hold of those opportunities and deliver a programme that's right for you, that's right for the employers and right for the learners and justify it when it comes to it."

Mr Hoyle also called for more freedom, in the form of 'the black box' approach similar to the one used by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in its flagship Work Programme.

He said: "There's two big things we are asking for, and I think I almost heard a yes to one of them, we are basically saying we want a DWP type 'black box' to design a bespoke offer for often difficult young people.

"I think we really want to check it out because if it really is the case, I'm not disbelieving you, but we need to look again and grasp if we have got that freedom, so I'm hoping that's a tick in that box.

"The other one, and I won't go into today as we don't have time, is we're still concerned and it's a policy led thing, not a funding led

thing, that we still believe that the whole of foundation learning should be not just giving them extra qualification, but actually focusing on getting them (the learner) into work as a positively funded outcome and we are not there yet."

The approach was also referred to by Olly Newton, head of raising participation unit at the Department for Education (DfE) in his speech.

Following which, Mr Hoyle said: "The words I picked up on were 'black box'. We've not heard that from DfE before, but we have from DWP. That's music to our ears. We want to unpack and look inside that black box."

In reply, Mr Newton said: "The black box we are talking about is similar to what we are talking about with the Work Programme.

"We will put out information on the first phase in the next few weeks."

Meanwhile, a question from the audience floor asked about flexibilities in foundation learning.

It sparked an encouraging response from Kevin Street, head of funding development at the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).

He said: "Whatever a learner needs when they come through that door, deliver it, put the learner first, think about progression first and then think about how you are going to fund it.

"If you get any hassle from our auditors for doing that then we will personally take them on, because that's the intention of the programme and the intention of the funding methodology."

He added: "Anybody who wants to come to me in the coffee break and say 'I want to do that for our foundation learners but I can't fund it', I'll go back tomorrow and I'll fix it."

Nick Chomyk, funding policy development manager at the Skills Funding Agency, spoke about the work currently ongoing to simplify the funding system.

He said: "We have people out there who don't understand how it works.

"After three years of the existing system, there are still people struggling and we need to make it more transparent."

He added: "Every single qualification will be given a rate. When you simplify things you do end up with rough justice.

"Complexity gives you precision, but it's getting the balance between the two because we don't want rough justice."

However, Mr Street also spoke out about a "poor" response to the 16-19 funding review consultation from independent providers.

He said: "It was single numbers. That indicates you are not particularly engaged with this consultation, you haven't seen the issues around it. The AELP did respond - an extremely good response.

"So we have to assume that the AELP represent your views because the response was so low. Today, I really want to get you back engaged with that so you can recognise that it's important to you."

Mr Segal conceded that the response to the 16-19 consultation "was not a good signal", adding: "The AELP response was very strong and lots



of people supported it and thought that was all that needed.

"So we need to be careful that it's not seen to be a low response because we are not interested."

However, Mr Hoyle asked Mr Street not to worry about the lack of responses from independent providers.

He said: "We pushed those out twice, before they came back to you to 600 members. A lot of members join to get behind AELP. So please don't worry about the apparent lack of response, they have done it through ours."

While flexibilities formed an important part of the debate at the conference, discussions also took place on a range of other subjects.

Michelle Manson, managing director at Best Ltd, asked about the government's recent announcements on wage incentives.

She said: "Wage incentives for the Work Programme, which are available to employers, but can an employer access the apprenticeship incentive as well? We don't want these initiatives competing against each other.

"A Work Programme customer should be able to access an apprenticeship programme and will an employer, if not allowed to access both of the incentives, will they choose one over another?"

"We certainly don't want to disadvantage any youngsters on the Work Programme from taking an apprenticeship."

Mr Newton replied, saying the issue has been raised by a number of organisations.

He added: "There hasn't been a final decision made yet.

"But I know it's at the top of the agenda in terms of discussions DWP and Treasury colleagues are having.

"Clearly we need to get the balance right to in the right outcomes without double funding."



"Anybody who wants to come to me in the coffee break and say 'I want to do that for our foundation learners but I can't fund it', I'll go back tomorrow and I'll fix it"

- Kevin Street, head of funding development at the YPLA

' at top of AELP 'In-Tray'



The definition of 'black box' funding

The term 'black box' has been adopted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to describe the funding approach implemented in the Work Programme.

The definition of 'black box' is a system which judges results, in this case employment outcomes, without any knowledge of its internal workings.

In the Work Programme, training providers are paid by government agencies based on the number of learners which find a job; it doesn't what training programme or

framework has been delivered, provided the end results are the same.

A Work Programme report, published by the DWP in June 2011, states: "Rather than asking providers to make one-size-fits-all services work for a wide range of participants with varying needs, government is providing freedom for providers to personalise support for the individual in a way that fits the local labour market.

"This is sometimes referred to as a 'black box' commissioning approach."

Graham Hoyle, on getting flexible

It was one of the buzz words from the conference, but what exactly does flexibility mean to independent providers?

Speaking to *FE Week*, Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the AELP, said it is something to be embraced by the sector.

He said: "One of the big things that has come out of the conference is the scope for our members to embrace the flexibility offered to them.

"We have a government philosophy through the Skills Funding Agency saying, 'you go out with your marketplace with you stakeholders, your communities, find out what you need and do it'.

"The AELP message is embrace this offer of flexibility and there's real scope for you to really do what your customers want."

However, Mr Hoyle admitted not all providers would be happy to give up their business plans in favour of flexibility.

He said: "There's also an interesting side to it that for many of our members their core business has been apprenticeships.

"They are good at it so they have not got an awful lot of inclination to move out of it but it appears to be a high government priority just now.

"So, on the other hand it's absolutely right that some providers say, 'that's fine but we are good at this and we will do more of it, I'm sticking to apprenticeships' and that cannot be a wrong answer.

"In fact, if everybody took the flexibility route and they did less apprenticeships, I have a feeling there would be some political repercussions.

"So at the moment we're saying more of our members could do more for unemployed as well as working with apprenticeships."

However, Mr Hoyle also warned that some members are "holding themselves back".

He said: "They are fearful of doing something and someone down the track six months later saying, 'sorry you're not doing that, we're taking your funding back'.

"So there's a tension there and we have to get confidence through the system and say 'be bold'.

"I think independent providers more of them ought to explore broadening portfolios, but not criticising top class apprenticeship providers that are producing the kind of figures we have seen this week with 96 per cent achievement, employer and learner satisfaction rates sky high."



Nick Chomyk talks funding simplification



Stewart Segal talks of cultural change



Delegates were given plenty of opportunity to ask questions and make comments.



FE Week's Nick "news hound" Reinis interviews Graham Hoyle

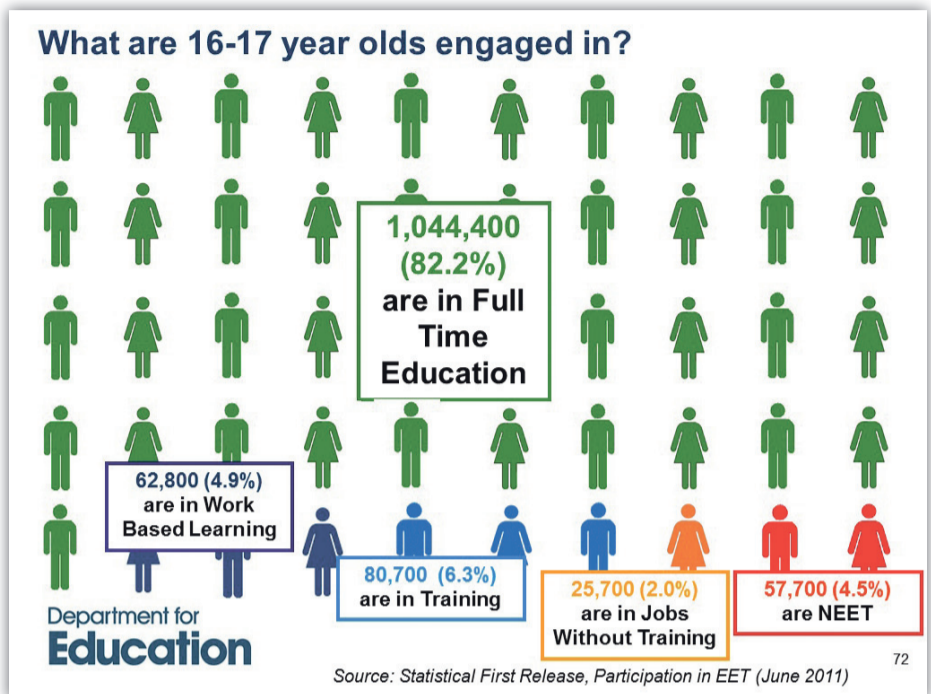
Pictures by Nick Linford


FE Week gets technical

FE Week brings you a selection of presentation slides from the AELP's 'In-Tray' Conference. See pages 8 & 9 for a full round-up of the event.

Work Programme Challenges 

- **Performance expectations:** high in a difficult labour market
- **Finance:** recognition of economy and local economies
- **Capacity and capability:** skilled staff and stimulating innovation, especially in-work support
- **Disadvantaged groups:** toughest test, toughest action needed
- **Supply chain:** difficult period, now need to invest
- **Partnership and co-operation:** local authorities, skills, health, housing etc + Primes working together
- **Scrutiny and transparency:** the more the better
- **Wider picture:** welfare reform will make a difference
- **Customers:** coping with fears and meeting expectations



 Institute of Employability Professionals **Ambition 2014**

- To have established the Institute for Employability Professionals
- To have an embedded, industry led framework of qualifications, part of a National Skills Academy
- The industry to be seen as one of choice by prospective employees with defined entrance points, good progression routes
- To have 40% of practitioners holding or working towards Level 3 by 2013 and 60% by 2015
- To raise the number of qualified managers to 50% by 2015
- To have Level 3 and Level 4 Apprenticeships established
- To have developed new units to meet new areas e.g. Working with ex offenders
- To continue to work together as an industry

Our Programmes for 2012 

What are we offering this year?

- Functional Skills Regional Training Events (Feb-March)
- Literacy, Language and Numeracy Training Events (Feb-March)
- Functional Skills Convention – 26 March, London
- Apprenticeship offer

www.excellencegateway.org.uk

Making Apprenticeships work for young unemployed people

- In the Budget 2011, Government announced an extra 40,000 apprenticeship places targeted at young unemployed people
- Work Experience extension period where employers offer an apprenticeship
- Closer working between Jobcentre Plus and the National Apprenticeships Service
- An Access to Apprenticeship Programme will:
 - provide help for young people aged 16-24 who need that little extra boost in moving into employment as an apprentice.
 - enable everyone to progress into a full Apprenticeship as quickly as possible – and within 6 months
 - enable participants to spend the majority of the time on the 'Access to Apprenticeship' pathway in the workplace
 - help more young people develop and demonstrate the skills and knowledge employers look for in apprentices

 Department for Work and Pensions

Youth Contract 

- Likely 'Soft Launch' in Apprenticeship Week
- £1,500 paid in 2 phases to the employer (2/12 months)
- 40,000 places
 - 20,000 for under 50 employees
 - 20,000 for under 250 employees
- 16-24
- Employers must not have had an Apprentice in the last 3 years.
- Providers must use AV to advertise vacancies

National Apprenticeship Service

THIS YEAR'S IN TRAY
LEEDS UNITED FC, ELLAND ROAD, LEEDS
THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2012

al association of employment and learning providers

Getting the Balance Right

Skills Funding Agency

Government Policies and Priorities

Audit volumes

Skills Funding Agency

Funding stream	2009-10 actual visits (LSC)	2010-11 actual visits (Agency)
Apprenticeships and Train to Gain	1,175	185
Learner Responsive (16-18 and ALR)	75	73

FE Loans : Key facts

Skills Funding Agency

- FE Loans will be introduced from the 2013/14 academic year.
- The agreed FE Loans budget will be:
 - £129 million in the 2013-14 financial year and;
 - £398 million in the 2014-15 financial year
- FE Loans will provide support for those aged 24 and over to access advanced (Level 3) and higher (Level 4) Further Education courses and Apprenticeships including:
 - Qualifications and Apprenticeship frameworks at Level 3 or above and equivalent to or larger than a QCF Certificate.
 - A-levels.
 - Access to HE courses.
- Repayment will begin the April after the individual has left the course and are earning over £21,000.

Revised inspection framework: a broad timeline

Ofsted

- public consultation ran from 1 September to 24 November 2011
- consultative pilot inspections September 2011 to January 2012
- 'live' pilot inspections February and March 2012
- publish revised inspection framework and inspection handbook in May 2012
- commence inspections under the new framework from September 2012.

Board Meeting 10 February 2009 | 116

Geoff Russell Predictions

- The market will be freed of regulation, bureaucracy and security
- Success will be achieving outcomes for customers, not targets for the state
- Colleges will be more like independent learning providers; independent learning providers will be more like colleges
- Colleges will compete across the entire spectrum of education markets domestically and internationally and will look very little like they do today

Stewart Segal

ypla The case for changing the funding formula

Young People's Learning Agency

- Schools White Paper**
 - "We are also committed to all young people staying on in education and training to age 18 and a simple post-16 funding system which is fair and transparent will underpin this commitment."
- Wolf Review**
 - "Funding for full-time students age 16-18 should be on a per programme basis, with a given level of funding per student [adjusted] for differences in the content-related cost of courses, and for particular groups of high need students."
 - Students without Grade C English and maths should progress towards them post 16
- Purpose of funding formula review**
 - To ensure the 16-19 funding formula better supports the Government's aims for transparency and fairness
 - To respond to the social mobility agenda through funding for disadvantage
 - To support the reforms recommended in the Wolf Review
- Raising of the participation age**
 - Compulsory participation for 16 and 17 year olds by 2015.

Championing Young People's Learning

FE Week campus round-up



South Cheshire College student goes on special VIP visit to Number 10 to see PM

A South Cheshire College student was given a birthday treat to remember when he hooked up with the Prime Minister at Downing Street.

AS-Level student Ryan Worth was invited to meet David Cameron at 'Number 10' in a special one-off visit organised as a surprise present by his sister Natasha who joined him on the trip.

Ryan and Natasha both travelled down to the capital by train before taking a taxi to Downing Street where they were whisked through the famous black door for the VIP visit.

On arrival, the duo were greeted by Cameron's Personal Secretary and Press Office Secretary.

Ryan and Natasha were then taken on a tour

of some of the rooms including the Terracotta Room, Pillared Room (used when international agreements are being signed) and the state dining room.

Ryan and Natasha were then taken into the Cabinet Room where Ryan was able to have a one-to-one chat with David Cameron himself.

The 18-year-old quizzed the Prime Minister about why he decided to go into politics and also told Cameron that he thought people with disabilities were under-represented in parliament.

Ryan said: "It was a great opportunity to be able to meet such an important world leader, to talk through certain issues and convey my enthusiasm with regards to politics."

Bolton College student looks back on history



A Bolton College learner who visited Auschwitz as part of an annual national education trip has been inspired to make a documentary about the Holocaust.

Sophie Baxendale (17) visited Auschwitz last November and has since created a 30 minute film which she will present to her peers over the coming weeks.

The documentary includes images and footage from Auschwitz concentration and extermination camps I and II. Sophie acts as a narrator throughout the film.

She said: "I've always been interested in history and was keen to represent Bolton College as part of the national education trip

to Auschwitz.

"We received a talk from Auschwitz survivor Kitty Hart Moxon to prepare us for the trip, but nothing could prepare me for what I saw.

"It was a very emotional expedition and while I was there I decided that I wanted to make a documentary to share with my peers."

Bolton College lecturer Kathryn Terry accompanied Sophie on the trip.

She added: "She has put a lot of time and effort into creating something which will help to raise awareness of the atrocities which took place during the Holocaust."



Weston College fronts new autism campaign

Weston College's groundbreaking Specialist Support Model has been chosen to front a new national campaign for students on the autistic spectrum.

Music technology degree student Steven Philp (24), who has Asperger's Syndrome, gave a speech about 'Finished at School' campaign to MPs and professionals at the House of Commons last month.

The year-long campaign backed by Ambitious About Autism, aims to secure greater opportunities for those aged 16 to 25.

Weston College began its provision for students with learning difficulties or disabilities in 1981, with just eight enrolments.

Now there are 980 further education students and 57 higher education students receiving various levels of learning support at the college.

Advanced practitioner Barbara Titmuss said: "The key to working with students on the autistic spectrum is to understand that each one is affected differently."

Steven Philp added: "I don't need help with academic work but do with the social side. Weston College is like my second home."

South Birmingham College trained up



Staff at South Birmingham College are now equipped with the skills and equipment to provide the emergency first aid and CPR.

The vital training ensures that there is always a staff member on hand across the college who can give emergency CPR to adults and children, as well as being able to deal with choking and bleeding.

The training was provided by charity Central Rescue UK, which is registered with the British Heart Foundation to teach the Heart Start programme.

Although the course was provided for free, South Birmingham College has donated £1,000 to the charity in thanks for giving staff these important skills which might one day save a life.

Stuart Granger, from Central Rescue, said: "We are delighted to have been able to come to South Birmingham College and provide these vital lifesaving skills

Graham Burton, from South Birmingham College, and a volunteer at Central Rescue, said: "We are delighted that we now have ten members of staff trained to deal with life threatening emergencies, and we would like to thank Heart Start for providing this."



Solihull College students meet phone mogul

Students from the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy had a special treat as mobile phone giant Richard Moat dropped in to the hub at Solihull College.

The students, studying the Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, welcomed Richard, a trustee of the Peter Jones Foundation, the Academy's parent organisation, to the college to discover his successful entrepreneurial career.

Until recently, Richard was chief financial officer and deputy CEO of Everything Everywhere, the company that runs Orange and T-Mobile.

He is also former managing director of T-Mobile in the UK and former CEO of Orange

in Romania, Denmark and Thailand.

In addition to finding out about Richard's successful career in the mobile phone industry, the students discussed the various activities and projects they've been getting involved in since they began their course in September.

Richard said: "I have only been involved with the Academy since August 2011 but already I am extremely impressed with the students' level of enthusiasm and passion, and it's great to see the range of goals and aspirations they have."

Student Kyle Raffo added: "It has been a fantastic opportunity to meet Richard and have such a high-profile business person be interested in our work."



Burton and South Derbyshire College students club together for building project

A cricket club is the latest project to benefit from the skills of hard-working construction students at Burton and South Derbyshire College.

Students on a range of construction trade courses have started work on Whittington Cricket Club's new clubhouse, after impressing the English Cricket Board (ECB) with their work on the Darley Abbey Cricket Pavillion when it was completed earlier this year.

Wood machinist students will start work by constructing the window components, and bench joinery students will complete the frames in order to construct a dry shell of a building with a roof, heat and light before the

Christmas break.

Students on plumbing, painting and decorating courses will then work on the internal finish, with the aim of completing the project in April 2012.

The new facility will provide the cricket club and community members with showers and toilets, changing rooms, entertaining space for social events and secure storage for ground and personal equipment.

Programme area manager Ian Vanes-Jones said: "At the college, we believe in giving our full-time construction students as much on-site experience as possible to ensure they are genuinely ready for the challenges and reality of life on a building site."

Can you tell me how to get to Havering College?



Students at Havering College of Further and Higher Education were more than tickled pink when Elmo from Sesame Street's live touring show dropped in.

The irrepressible Muppet character visited the Ardleigh Green Campus in Hornchurch, Essex, to meet some of the students who will be performing alongside stars from Sesame Street at The London Palladium for one night only on March 26. The Havering College project is part of the Cultural Olympiad having been granted the Inspire Mark by the London 2012 Inspire programme.

The accreditation recognises projects that meet the values of the Olympics and

Paralympics in terms of promoting respect, excellence, friendship and equality.

Inspiration will bring together 250 young people from Havering College and schools in Havering, Redbridge and Barking and Dagenham.

Music Practice degree student Lucy Murphy (20), from Hainault, will be performing Somewhere Over the Rainbow in Inspiration.

She said: "It's very exciting. I've been fortunate enough to have had parts in previous college show in the West End.

"Appearing on stage at the London Palladium with Elmo will be a great experience."

South Essex College appoints new principal



South Essex College is the largest college in the eastern region and has campuses across Basildon, Southend and Thurrock and offers everything from entry level courses to degrees and apprenticeships to its 17,000 students.

With nearly 30 years in education, prior to being principal of Sunderland College, a role which she has held for seven years, Ms O'Donoghue was previously the principal of Bsix Sixth Form College Brooke House, in Hackney.

Chair of the college's corporation Richard Launder said: "The appointment comes at a time of considerable investment in new facilities, development of new courses and planned expansion.

"Angela's significant experience and skills complement those of the excellent staff, and her appointment will be pivotal to these developments as we move forward as a lifelong learning education provider."

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education has appointed Angela O'Donoghue as its new principal and chief executive.

Ms O'Donoghue, currently principal of Sunderland College, is expected to begin her new role in August, ready for the start of the next academic year.



Hats off to Warrington College for record breaking musical theatre performance

Warrington Collegiate students took to the stage to perform extracts from Seussical-The Musical in London at her Majesty's Theatre, for Sunday Night Live.

Based on the books by Dr. Seuss, the children's favourite musical showcased the rising talents of students studying musical theatre at the collegiate.

Ariane Sallis (17), from Golborne, who played Gertrude McFuzz and is applying for Drama School said: "London was inspiring.

"It gave me a flavour of industry expectations, but the hunger for more. Thank you to the tutors for making this opportunity possible."

Previously, the Broadway hit Seussical-The

Musical had been performed as an interactive and immersive experience for the audience.

In the all singing all dancing, lively production, performing arts and musician students at Warrington Collegiate played to packed houses daily performing 16 shows in a record breaking two week run.

More than 1,200 children and 1,000 adults enjoyed the show and the cast delivered 16 free community workshops in local schools.

Emma Garnett (19), from Winwick, who played the iconic Seuss character, the Cat in the Hat, said: "Performing a show to such a young audience really brought out a different side of my acting. I found the long run tiring but so much fun."

Cornwall College stepping up for fitness



Seven campuses, five days, five million steps. That was the aim as students and staff at Cornwall College stepped up to the students' union's pedometer challenge. The result saw them smash the target, clocking up almost 6.5 million steps - equivalent to walking from Land's End to John O'Groats 3.7 times.

Nat Mitchell, student participation officer, said: "This was a novel way of encouraging students and staff to think about their fitness levels by recording just how many steps they were taking each day."

Cornwall College is part of Healthy FE, a national framework which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of those in the further education (FE) sector.



NEWHAM
COLLEGE
LONDON

BE 'OUTSTANDING'

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, Newham College is right at the heart of the community in East London, inspiring our students to achieve their goals. As one of the host boroughs for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is a real sense of excitement and optimism in the air as our local area and economy is transformed. There has never been a better time to join us.

Fixed-term STEM Development Manager (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

£44,520 pa

The College is looking for an experienced project manager to be responsible for the direction, coordination and development of a new STEM curriculum within Newham College. Key tasks will include undertaking research into a new STEM curriculum including identifying funding opportunities for 14-19 year old learners, leading the planning and implementation of a new STEM curriculum for the start of the new academic year and presenting reports to senior managers on project progress, problems and solutions. The ideal candidate would have an in depth understanding of STEM programmes and have experience developing successful curriculum within a Further Education setting. Candidates should be available for an immediate start. **Ref: 3504.**

This position is subject to CRB clearance at Enhanced Level.
The College is committed to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of all learners and expects all staff to share this commitment.

To apply, you must complete an application form.
Please complete a form online at www.newham.ac.uk/employment or email job.vacancies@newham.ac.uk or call our 24 hour recruitment line on 0208 257 4450 to request an application pack.

Closing date: 9 February 2012

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feweek.co.uk
and click on
'recruitment'



GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

Director of Learner Services £50K plus benefits (Ref: G102)

The Grimsby Institute Group is one of the largest and most successful providers of education and training in the country with campuses in Grimsby, Scarborough, Skegness and Louth.

We need a highly experienced inspirational leader and manager to join our team in leading on the future development of all aspects of Learner Services across the Group in supporting the learner journey from first contact to final destination.

Our ideal candidate will have the skills to develop, lead and implement strategies for high impact learner welfare support, learner engagement and enrichment, pastoral support and additional learning support to ensure the maximising of learner achievement and progression.

If you are looking to join a forward thinking, innovative organisation committed to putting the learner at the heart of all that it does then we'd like to hear from you.

The Grimsby Institute Group strives to be an Equal Opportunities employer. We welcome all applications, particularly from under-represented groups.

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

Please apply online at:
www.grimsby.ac.uk/vacancies
Closing date: 17th February 2012

FE Week & Lsect are hiring!

Lsect
Learning & skills ~ events,
consultancy and training



Office Manager

25 - 35k (DOE)

Reporting directly to the Managing Director of a small but rapidly growing business (10 staff), this person would be responsible for day-to-day office management, including staff and financial administration.

Please send a copy of your CV to jobs@lsect.com

Advertising Sales Executive

22-25k plus commission (DOE)

You will be responsible for all recruitment ads, setting yield and revenue targets and creating new advertising opportunities for clients. You will be selling direct to clients but will also be sourcing business opportunities through advertising and recruitment agencies.

Please send a copy of your CV to gemma.ryder@feweek.co.uk

Go to www.feweek.co.uk/index.php/jobs/ for more

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Head of Curriculum Centre (Business, Computing & Technology)



Blackburn (with UK and International travel)
Salary: £65,000 per annum | Reference Number: 1139

Inspire, Innovate and Achieve with us

Blackburn College is an 'Outstanding' Beacon College who were awarded one of the best Ofsted Inspection reports in the country. We're not just outstanding for students, we're also a vibrant and rewarding place to work.

Each and every person at Blackburn College is charged with encouraging and motivating the citizens of the future. Together as our vision statement says, we Inspire, Innovate and Achieve. Not bad for a day job and more than a little rewarding.

We're looking for an experienced and enthusiastic Further Education (FE) Manager who will be responsible for the management of our Motor Vehicle, Computing and Business departments. You'll provide outstanding educational leadership in the development,

planning, delivery and monitoring of the curriculum and student experience, working with other Heads and the Executive to deliver the College's strategy and objectives.

With a proven track record of managing a large team, meeting targets and strong leadership skills, you will need experience in quality assurance procedures and an ability to develop sector/target facing curriculum. In particular, you will have a good understanding of Self Assessment and business planning processes.

Closing Date: 17th February 2012 | Assessment Centre: 14th March 2012

Blackburn College respects diversity and seeks to recruit a representative workforce. The College is currently under represented at management level by Male and BME colleagues and we particularly welcome applications from these groups. Any appointment will be based on merit.



To apply visit: www.blackburn.ac.uk/jobs

Dean of Higher Education



Blackburn (with UK and International travel)
Salary: £75,000 per annum | Reference Number: 1143

Do you aspire to shape the future of HE within FE?

University Centre at Blackburn College is the second largest provider of HE within FE in the country and, in an ever more dynamic HE landscape, is at the forefront of developments in the sector. With one of the best IQER reviews in the country, we've over 3000 students on higher education courses.

Our vision is to inspire, innovate and achieve. So it'll come as no surprise to you we've recently opened a £14 million University Centre and are planning a £7 million STEM building. On top of this we're celebrating that over one in ten of our students achieved a First Class Honours degree, work with a large cross section of employers to develop foundation degrees and are active in all the major international education markets.

The opportunity offered is for an enthusiastic and innovative academic leader to provide

strategic direction for a dynamic and large HE provision from Higher Level Apprentices to MBA and Masters provision.

A self motivated individual you will oversee the management of our University Centre and provide outstanding educational leadership in the development, planning, delivery and monitoring of the HE in FE curriculum and student experience. This is a senior post with an outstanding college and offers perfect career progression for someone who aspires to be a Principal of the future.

Closing Date: 17th February 2012 | Assessment Centre: 9th March 2012

Blackburn College respects diversity and seeks to recruit a representative workforce. The College is currently under represented at management level by male and BME colleagues and we particularly welcome applications from these groups. Any appointment will be based on merit.



To apply visit: www.blackburn.ac.uk/jobs

Business Development Director

£65-70k + performance related bonuses



London College of Beauty Therapy (LCBT) is the leading specialist college for beauty and related industries. Founded in 1995, the college is now the largest in the UK delivering approx 30% of NVQ Beauty Therapy qualifications in London and the provider nationally of the Diploma in Retail Beauty Consultancy, developed by LCBT with key employers in the industry.

LCBT are looking to recruit a Business Development Director.

As Business Development Director you will play a key role within the senior management team of the company. You will be providing clear direction for the successful identification, design, implementation and monitoring of strategic projects within the company; including planning, bid management, budgeting, forecasting, expansion, new business opportunities and subcontracting arrangements.

Director of Curriculum & Quality

£65-70k + performance related bonuses

LCBT are looking to recruit a Director of Curriculum & Quality to be responsible for the planning, management and implementation of the curriculum offered by LCBT together with the quality assurance and improvement strategies. The incumbent will be responsible for the development and delivery of teaching to ensure an outstanding learning experience for students of all ages.

You will lead and promote the College's quality improvement strategy, ensuring that procedures and processes are developed, implemented, which are fit for purpose and integrate with the requirements of Ofsted, the SFA, the YPLA, and other relevant bodies. You will also set standards to ensure the College curriculum and quality strategy aligns to the overall strategic direction of the company.

To apply for these roles please send your CV and a covering letter to recruit@lcbt.co.uk and to find out more go to www.feweek.co.uk/jobs

The closing date for applications is 10th February



Head of Operations

OTE £50K



Charnwood training group are looking to recruit a **Head of Operations**.

The role involves:

- Full accountability for the timely delivery of a National Skills Funding Agency contract of up to 20 million
- Full budget accountability
- Interpreting financial and performance data to manage a resource of approx. 200 staff, nationally ensuring that the Charnwood resource is effectively utilised in all areas to meet Skills Funding Agency and business objectives.

You will be responsible for:

- Managing the National delivery to meet contract targets
- The management of the department profit and loss to budget targets
- Maintaining a minimum company timely completion rate of 85%
- Maintaining minimum 95% SFA audit satisfaction
- Maintaining company Ofsted grade 2 standards
- Increasing business performance to drive profits

To apply please send a copy of your CV and a covering letter to HR Manager: kirsty.lowde@charnwood.co.uk

For more information go to: www.feweek.co.uk/jobs

Closing date for applications: March 31st 2012



