

ACER NEWSLETTER

The New ACER Newsletter

As part of the new developments at ACER, the newsletter:

- Provides a digest of developments from around and beyond the FE sector that will affect the way colleges operate
- Includes a summary directory of key publications for last month from AoC, DBIS, DfE, SFA, YPLA / successor body, Ofsted and other key sector bodies

I hope you will find it valuable – your feedback will certainly be valued in shaping it.

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THE WIDER CONTEXT

ENTERPRISE ZONES

Chancellor George Osborne has announced 11 new enterprise zones in August:

- located in Sandwich, Kingston-upon-Hull, Warrington, Newquay, Gosport, Hinckley, Hereford, Oxfordshire, **Northampton, Huntingdon** and **Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft**.
- The government estimates the zones, which are targeted in areas hit by cuts in specific industries, will create 30,000 jobs by 2015.

THE JOBS MARKET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) quarterly survey of 1,000 companies suggests that demand for workers from overseas has reached record levels because companies feel young people in the UK lack the skills to make them employable:

- The proportion planning to hire 16-year-old school leavers has fallen to 12% from 14% in spring 2010; 25% plan to recruit 17-18 year-olds, compared to 31% last year; 38% plan to take on graduates aged under 24, compared to 47% last year.
- However, 37% of respondents plan to recruit apprentices, compared with 24% last year.
- A quarter of respondents plan to hire foreign workers over the coming months.

A British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) survey of 2,200 UK „micro-firms“ (with fewer than 10 employees) has found that 55% want to recruit extra staff, but half of them said it was too difficult to find the right people.

- 22% said they would feel confident that a school-leaver with A-levels or equivalent would have the necessary skills for their business, and 47% would be nervous about recruiting from that age group.
- 36% were convinced that graduates possessed the right skills for their vacancy.

Recruitment companies are finding that companies that complain about skills shortages are often actually having a problem finding people who fit the company culture.

- Personality, attitude and cultural fit are all put first, above and beyond skills and qualifications on paper, even in industries such as IT, where skills were once considered the most important factor.
- The potential problem with this approach is that having „similar“ personalities and ways of working can hinder an organisation's ability to react to different customer needs.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In a poll commissioned by Santander, 60% of recruitment managers and directors said it "made no difference" whether a job candidate had a degree, and 80% would prefer a school-leaver with three years' work experience than a graduate.

- The firms came from the financial services, IT, manufacturing and education sectors. Small firms, in particular, were unimpressed by the value of a degree, although only 12% said school-leavers had the same aptitude for learning new skills as graduates, while 58% thought graduates would be quicker learners.

An increasing number of employers are targeting sixth formers as immediate recruits.

- The retailer Boots introduced its first business apprenticeship programme for A-level leavers this summer, offering twenty 18-month placements at its Nottingham head office.
- All of the „big four“ accountancy and professional services firms now run school leaver programmes, with Ernst & Young the latest to launch such an initiative.
- The HEADstart scheme offered by PricewaterhouseCoopers saw applications more than double in number to 1,600 for the 100 places it offered in 2011

A survey of 500 employers by apprenticeship body Working Links found that 86% looked for potential over experience in candidates, with enthusiasm, a commitment to learning and social skills cited as the top three attributes.

- Academic qualifications were the least desirable attribute, and only 9% cited poor literacy and numeracy as reasons not to hire young people.
- 19% of those surveyed had an apprenticeship scheme and 79% believed the government should do more to incentivise firms to take on apprentices. *[Well, they would say that, wouldn't they?]*
- In a companion survey of 500 young people, two-thirds are concerned about their job prospects and 70% said there were not enough apprenticeships to meet demand.
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- 24% had been given advice by their school about vocational qualifications and apprenticeships, compared to 70% who were given information about college courses

THE CITY AND GUILDS TOP 100

City and Guilds published a “Rich list of Apprentices” <http://www.cityandguilds.com/68139.html>
The report suggests that A-level students might think twice about their career options as research released to celebrate WorldSkills London 2011 the UK's biggest showcase of vocational skills for over 20 years reveals the riches accrued by Britons with a vocational education.

The **List** ranks wealth among those who have built their fortunes following an Apprenticeship or other practical qualification. And defying the downturn, the seventh edition of the List shows Britain's self-made, vocational elite are worth a collective **£17.6 billion** - a billion pound increase since 2008.

UKCES

In an article for FE News, Michael Davis, the new Chief Executive of the UK Commission for Employment & Skills explains how his organisation is reforming and refocusing to meet the challenges ahead.

- The UKCES has been tasked with "maximising UK skills to achieve enterprise, sustainable growth and job creation."
- The organisation has moved away from being a top-down government advisory body to becoming a vehicle for sustainable economic growth and social partnership, and is refocusing around four key priorities:
- Making and winning the economic argument for greater employer investment in skills;
- Enhancing the value and accessibility of vocational and technical training, particularly apprenticeships;
- Galvanising industry sectors to improve the skills and productivity of their workforce;

- Maximising the number of jobs available for unemployed people, particularly those who are young or furthest from securing employment

CAREERS ADVICE

From September 12th, an integrated English all-age careers phone line will start to operate, although young people will still be able to access the Connexions Direct helpline until the National Careers Service (NCS) is launched in April 2012.

- The NCS will be operated by BIS through the Skills Funding Agency. It will offer information, advice and guidance to adults through face-to-face sessions; and telephone and online support to young people and adults.
- Providers for the NCS will also be able offer their services to schools, but not under the NCS brand.
- The NCS will adopt a new service quality standard and workforce professional standards, setting the standard for other providers. BIS is consulting on how this might be achieved as part of its „New Challenges, New Chances“ consultation [see p19].
- The NCS will be inspected by Ofsted, which will also consider the extent to which students have a well-informed understanding of the options and challenges facing them as they move through school. Ofsted will also undertake a thematic review of careers guidance.
- The indicative BIS budget for information, advice and guidance services in 2012-13 is £84.4m. DfE will contribute £4.7m to the NCS helpline. Schools will meet the cost of securing access to careers guidance from their overall budgets.

The NCS Advisory Group set up by BIS and DfE has warned that the re-organisation of careers services in England could be "potentially damaging to young people's lives".

- Services are being cut before adequate replacements are created, with schools - rather than local authorities - being expected to provide advice for pupils but without any dedicated funding, which used to amount to £200m, being transferred. The new NCS will not provide face to face advice for young people.
- The government has said that services were often "poor quality and patchy". Local authorities retain their legal duty for supporting young people's education or training, backed by the £4.5 billion Early Intervention Grant over the next two years.
- The advisory group includes representatives of careers organisations, head teachers, education experts, business leaders and trade unions.

Figures obtained from 85 local authorities in England suggest that councils plan to spend an estimated £289m of their Early Intervention Grant on Connexions-related activities in 2011/12 – 38% less than the £467m centrally allocated to Connexions work in 2010/11.

- An estimated 10,792 staff were employed in Connexions-related roles in 2008/09 compared with 7,448 today, a fall of 31%.
- The study suggests that nationally there is only one full-time equivalent Level 4 or above qualified careers adviser to every 1,322 13-19 year-olds. The accepted ratio used to be one to 800.

YPLA

The YPLA has published its annual plan, for August 2011 to July 2012, setting out a small number of high-level objectives, each of which has its own delivery plan.

- It also includes details of spending plans for the financial year 2011-12, and the planning assumptions for the academic year 2011/12.
- Subject to legislation, the main functions and plans of the YPLA will be transferred to the Education Funding Agency – an executive agency of the DfE - from April 2012.
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STEM

STEM subjects accounted for five of the 7 subjects with the biggest increases in entry.

- Chemistry moved up two places to sixth in the top 10 most popular subjects, with a 9.2% rise in entries. Maths and further maths improved by 7.4%, biology 7.2% and physics 6.1%.
- This means entries for maths are now up 40.2% over five years, physics 19.6% and chemistry 19.4%.
- English remained the most popular subject accounting for just over one in 10 entries.
- 15,063 students have now completed a Diploma. £295.6 million has been spent to date on developing the qualification, funding consortia, training staff and subsidising transport for pupils. Ministers believe the Diploma should not receive government support that is unavailable to other qualifications, and Ofqual is consulting on ending the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS), which works out results across awarding bodies.

NEET STATISTICS

The proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds in England not in employment, education or training (NEET) has risen to 18.4% - the figure from the Department for Education is the highest for the second quarter since 2006, and is up from 16.3% last year. Nearly a million (979,000) 16 to 24-year-olds were Neet between April and June this year. Neets figures fluctuate during the academic year, peaking in the third quarter as school, college and university courses end, but this year's 18 to 24 figures are the highest for the second quarter since comparable data was first published in 2006; the previous was 17.6% in 2008. The figure is even higher for 19 to 24-year-olds, with 19.1% considered NEET.

The data is published for England only by the Department for Education, derived from the quarterly Labour Force Survey. The proportion of young people in England aged 16 to 18 who are considered Neet has continued to fall, however, amid a government drive to encourage more young people to stay on in education or training. It dropped to 9.8% in the quarter to June, down from 10.2% at the same point in 2010, and 11.9% the previous year. The figures come as record numbers - an estimated 220,000 - are expected to fail to get UK university places. And last week, figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that youth unemployment in the UK - the proportion of 16 to 24-year-olds not in work - had also risen, from 20% to 20.2% in the quarter to June.

FREE SCHOOLS

The first 24 Free Schools will open this academic year. 7 are primary schools, 5 are secondary schools and 2 are all-age schools. There are 3 Free Schools in the East of England:

- Moorlands Schools in Luton – a primary school which is part of the Barnfield Federation
- Stour Valley Community School in Suffolk – a co-educational secondary school for pupils aged 11-16
- The Free School, Norwich – a primary school.

Free Schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to parental demand. They can be set up by a wide range of proposers, including charities, universities, businesses, educational groups, teachers and groups of parents. They will have the same legal requirements as academies. Department for Education analysis indicates that Free Schools are targeting deprivation. Based on Super Output Areas - the most accurate reflection of a school's local community - the analysis found that of the 24 Free Schools opening in the next two weeks over a third (9 schools) are located in the 20% most deprived communities and half the schools (12 schools) are located in the 30% most deprived communities.

ACADEMIES

The Department for Education continues to press forward with its Academies programme - 1,000 new academies have opened in the last year and more than 40% of all secondary schools are now open or in the process of opening as academies.

As of September 2011:

- there are 1,300 Academies open across the country
- in 29 local authorities, the majority of secondary schools are academies
- a further 575 Academies are in the pipeline, with more applications expected in the new school year
- the first 12 special schools have become Academies and 25 are interested in doing so over the next year.

The 29 LAs where the majority of secondary schools are academies include, in the East of England, Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes, Southend-on-Sea, Peterborough.

A full list of academies can be found [in the academies section of the Department's website](#).

EBACC

The English Baccalaureate – the EBacc – was introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) as an additional measure in the performance tables published in January 2011. Pupils who achieve a GCSE grade C or better in English, maths, a language, history or geography, and two sciences achieve the EBacc. A survey of almost 700 maintained secondary schools by the National Centre for Social Research, for DfE, shows that from September 2011:

- 33 per cent of pupils taking GCSEs next year will be doing a combination of subjects that could lead to an EBacc.

- 47 per cent of pupils taking GCSEs in 2013 will be doing a combination of subjects that could lead to an EBacc.

This compares with data which shows that in 2010 just 22 per cent of GCSE-stage pupils were entered for the EBacc.

DBIS AND BENEFITS

Under new rules that come into force for the 2011/12 academic year, only benefit claimants on Jobseekers' Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group), who are required to seek work as a condition of receiving their benefits, will be eligible for free training .

However BIS has announced that:

- FE providers will also be given some local discretion to provide fully subsidised courses for people on a wider range of benefits.
- ... provided the training is to help them enter employment
- Colleges and training organisations will have the discretion to fully fund individuals who are unemployed and need skills training to help them enter work
- For example, the recipient of Income Tax Credit would not be eligible under this discretion, as they are in employment, but their unemployed partner may be, if they need skills training to help them enter work
- This discretion would also include learners who would require ESOL provision to access work. Unemployed status and the need for skills training to help them enter work would be confirmed by the individual in the form of a self-declaration to the college or training organisation

This flexibility provides access to the same range of learning aims available originally to those in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group).

DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

The Privy Council has granted foundation degree awarding powers to the Corporation of Newcastle College and the Corporation of New College Durham, following detailed scrutiny of their applications by the Quality Assurance Agency.

APPRENTICESHPS

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Skills Funding Agency have published a statement saying they are "determined to see that recent rapid expansion of Apprenticeships is not achieved at the expense of quality". This follows a dramatic increase in 25+ apprenticeships starts as covered in the new newspaper *FE Week* which detailed training providers delivering 12 Week Apprenticeships ([click here](#))

The NAS '*Statement on the Quality of Apprenticeship Delivery Models*' says: "NAS will work with the Skills Funding Agency and look critically at Apprenticeships delivered in a condensed way" and where the learner does not need to achieve the full apprenticeship framework "partial completion should be reflected in a reduction in the funding".

At the same time Skills Minister John Hayes has announced a package of new measures to make it easier for employers to take on large numbers of apprentices. Responding to the recommendations of a review

led by the Employer Reference Group, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and large companies, including BT and TUI Travel, Mr Hayes said that firms that contract directly with the Government to train apprentices will now benefit from simplified payment, reporting and assessment requirements. They will also receive better guidance to help them manage the recruitment, training and assessment of apprentices more efficiently and cost effectively.

Key aspects of the action plan for cutting red tape for employers include:

- A pilot for over 20 large employers who have volunteered to trial “payment by outcomes” which will eliminate a number of data returns and audit requirements.
- Providing an online plain-English toolkit for employers that clearly explains the end-to-end processes employers need to undertake for apprenticeships.
- Streamlining contracting arrangements.
- A commitment to no “in year” changes to contracting arrangements.
- A more proportionate approach to audit and inspection - reducing preparation time for employers.
- Greater use of electronic information, thus reducing paperwork.
- A more streamlined certification process.

KEY PUBLICATIONS

DBIS: NEW CHALLENGES, NEW CHANCES

A New Framework for....Excellence?

The paper runs to 30 pages before consultation questions, etc. and sets out how DBIS expects to extend freedoms to colleges over the coming years. The paper can be accessed through:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/publications>

There is little in it that has not been trailed or trialed before down the years and the major levers of organisational behaviour, accountability and funding, remain in full force. The formal mechanism for responding is through:

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Email: james.cutshall@bis.gsi.gov.uk

The paper makes proposals across nine issues and is, where relevant, a response to the Wolf Report recommendations. The nine areas are:

1. Vision for the FE landscape and shape of the sector
2. Introducing level 3 /4 loans and sharing responsibility for investing in skills
3. FE college and provider freedoms and flexibilities
4. Simplifying the funding system
5. Teaching, learning and qualifications
6. Review of Informal Adult and Community Learning
7. Review of literacy and numeracy provision for adults
8. Delivering higher education and skills

9. Deregulation and devolution

Reading through the text that accompanies these, the paper looks like a mixed bag of the next steps on in the path to freer colleges (items 1-3 and 9); the Wolf report responses (items 4-5); and outcomes of current consultation that affects the FE system (items 6 – 8).

The backbone of the proposals is that the market is the vision and the outcomes of market forces will deliver the goods. So, the **Vision for the FE landscape and shape of the sector** preoccupies itself with (new) structures for governance and ownership both with and through colleges and concerned with enabling more apprenticeships to happen (through ATAs and GTAs).

DBIS intends to issue a new policy framework for the FE landscape during 2011/12, replacing the current framework *Further Education Colleges – Models for Success* [<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/fe-improvement/models-for-success>], published in 2008. This will contain advice and information on the wide range of possible organisational and business models that are available for colleges and training organisations to consider. There is no mention of mergers.

Government-backed loans

- will be introduced from 2013/14 and will apply to provision at **Level 3 /4** for those aged 24 and over, including Access to HE courses as well as Advanced and Higher Level Apprenticeships.

New freedoms and flexibilities

- to 'strip away inappropriate powers' of the SFA and others (the only example given is to make inspection unnecessary for outstanding colleges)
- busting bureaucracy (though not clear how)
- Colleges in turn will need to 'demonstrate maturity' and respond to the needs of learners and employers.

Simplifying the funding system

- some consultation soon
- historically, every time the funding system is revived to make it simpler, there is an outcry that it is then not fair...which usually leads to more guidance and less simplicity...and so on.

Teaching, learning and qualifications

- to agree simpler and speedier ways for new qualifications to come on stream
- there are some other proposals in keeping with actions already announced in response to the Wolf Report (QTLS to be recognized in schools: prioritizing STEM)
- a new plan for LSIS and IfL to establish an independent commission on 'vocational pedagogy'. One for the jargon-busters...

Review of informal adult and community learning

- reiterates an almost Blunkett-esque belief in the value of IACL, before setting out the next steps...
- ...to 'publish details of the key implementation milestones in the skills investment statement for 2012/13'.

Review of literacy and numeracy provision for adults

- publish the outcomes of an internal review and...
- take it from there – urging colleges to great achievements.

Delivering higher education and skills

- arises from current consultation on the HE White Paper (this consultation closed on 20 September 2011)
- the chief interest of DBIS in terms of colleges lies in feedback on ‘awareness and identity, progression and innovative business models’.

Deregulation and devolution

- focused exclusively on collecting data more efficiently....a path well-trodden for many years that always seems to culminate in collecting data differently but not necessarily any better.
- the next step is to work with colleges to ‘develop and embed a new sector-led Public Information Framework.
- The key proposals?
 - gathering data that customers want...
 - ... in formats accessible to them

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE: VALUE FOR MONEY FROM THE EDUCATION OF 16 – 19 YEAR – OLDS

Complexity and lack of clarity make assessing VFM a bit tricky.....

The Public Accounts Committee published “Value for Money from the Education of 16- to 18- Year olds” on 18 July, 2011 and can be accessed through

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubacc

The Committee reviewed evidence based on 2009, when there were over 1.6 million 16- to 18- year-olds in some form of education and training in England at a cost of over £6bn. The system governing education for this age-group is described by the report as ‘devolved and complex’.

The Committee makes 8 recommendations:

- a. Educational achievements of 16- to 18-year-olds have improved over the last four years, but more needs to be done to enable the market to operate effectively.
- b. The framework of accountability for 16 to 18 education is complex and risks over-burdening providers.
- c. Local authorities have a duty to secure provision, but they lack an effective means to influence providers.
- d. Reducing funding does not in itself guarantee efficiency.
- e. Smaller providers can best provide choice and realise economies of scale by collaborating, yet the incentives to collaborate are weak
- f. Information to measure the performance of providers is not comparable, making it difficult to assess the value for money they offer and inhibiting the operation of a market driven by student choice.

- g. There is a lack of clarity about when and how the Department requires intervention in the event of failure.
- h. The Department has indicated that it believes that, by definition, it is better value for money to spend less on a replacement for the Educational Maintenance Allowance scheme, targeting it and removing deadweight costs. However, the potential impact on participation in education and training of the replacement for the Education Maintenance Allowance has still to be assessed, and the Committee will come back to this.

Just to add that, The Public Accounts Committee holds a special place in the minds of Ministers: it is a very important Parliamentary check on the efficacy of policy, and, by extension, of Ministers. What it says carries weight.

OFSTED: PROGRESSION OF POST-16 LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITIES

Is your Local Authority assessing needs...are your learners getting a good deal?

This was published in August and can be accessed via <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/progression-beyond-school-variable-for-young-people-learning-difficulties-and-disabilities-ofsted-0>

The first paragraph of the executive summary sets out the findings in standard Ofsted clarity:

“Too few young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress from school to complete programmes of learning in post-16 settings which develop greater independence; lead to further study, supported or open employment; or provide skills for independent living. A recent longitudinal study reported that an estimated 30% of young people who had a statement of special educational needs when they were in Year 11, and 22% of young people with a declared disability, were not in any form of education, employment or training when they reached age 18 in 2009 compared with 13% of their peers. Current figures from the Labour Force Survey show for quarter 1 of 2011 that 41% of men and 43% of women designated longer-term disabled were economically inactive”.

The headlines greeting the report emphasised the lack of clear processes of multi-agency assessment driven by Local Authorities as the prime cause of the problem. This is indeed how Ofsted sees things but there are some messages too for colleges:

- a. The good practice that emanates from what the colleges in the survey were doing
- b. The lack of knowledge about what Local Authorities’ duties are and the implicit option for colleges to understand this better and press for action
- c. Weaknesses in Foundation Level learning programmes
- d. The lack of practical real work opportunities for learners

JISC: TRANSFORMING CURRICULUM DELIVERY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Motivating learning, driving efficiency

A JISC research report published in June and available via

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/programmerelated/2011/curriculumdeliveryguide.aspx>

This report investigated the potential for technology to support more flexible and creative models of curriculum delivery and included one from our own College of West Anglia – Springboard TV – which looked at remodelling the curriculum around production activities and the impact of this on motivation. There is a simple analysis of what worked across the projects and strategies for facilitating change.

HE REFORMS:

Launch of consultation on the regulatory system 4 August 2011

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has launched a consultation on details of the regulatory system for future of higher education today, following publication of the higher education White Paper 'Putting students at the heart of the system', (***ACER CEO note circulated to ACER colleges in July***). The underlying principle is that all students receiving state support should be able to expect the same minimum guarantees on, for example, quality and access within a single simpler regulatory framework. The system needs to be proportionate for the sector as a whole. It will look to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy through risk based approaches, simplified processes and more reasonable requirements including on data. The closing date for comments is 27 October 2011.

A copy of the consultation can be found at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/hereform>

THE COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES INTERIM REPORT July 2011

Too complex a system to do too much good?

This inquiry was set up in January 2011 with the purpose of investigating the role that further education (FE) colleges can play within their communities and the added public value that they can bring to those communities in their role as leaders of learning at a time when colleges are being freed up to take more responsibility for the shape and balance of their educational offering and to respond to employer and learner needs. NIACE, the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the 157 Group are leading the inquiry, which is chaired by Baroness Sharp of Guildford. The commission will report in November 2011 – an interim report was published in July 2011.

Key findings to date include:

- Although many colleges are already embedded in their communities, by no means all colleges match up to best practice - in weaker colleges, Ofsted reports, partnerships are too often limited to work placements and there are insufficient links with community partners and organisations aimed at improving learning opportunities. Likewise, not enough thought goes into progression opportunities through university linkages.
- The funding system is unduly complex; too much top management time is consumed by funding complexity
- Governance structures must change alongside financial reform.

The report can be accessed here: [The Interim Report - A Dynamic Nucleus:](#)

UKCES: SKILLS FOR SELF – EMPLOYMENT

What do we do for the one in eight who choose this path?

Today, 13% of the workforce is self-employed: but the education system does little to prepare people for such working life. Reporting in August, UKCES commissioned the Institute of Employment Studies to research the skills needed for self-employment. One of the main conclusions is that self-employed people may find difficulties due to:

- insufficient self-awareness of own skill needs, and lack of self-assessment as ‘business people’
- lack of business experience and/or lack of relevant business training: with particular reference to skills such as cash flow/financial management, marketing/winning business, creating and management business systems
- insufficient ‘soft’ skills, including interpersonal skills
- lack of staff management skills (where relevant)

See <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/ers31-skills-for-self-employment> for more information.

NFER: STUDENT CHOICES

HE Fees hit application plans...

The NFER hit the press on A Level results day with the outcomes of a survey showing that 15% of school pupils who had been considering going to university in 2012 had decided not to go, owing to the imposition of new fee rates and a further 17% are considering an alternative path. For the full story see: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/about-nfer/press/releases/prospective-university-students-are-re-considering-their-options.cfm>

OFSTED: OFFICIAL STATISTICS: INSPECTION OUTCOMES

This latest release from Ofsted contains the following key findings:

- In the inspection year to date between 1 September 2010 and 30 June 2011, there were 306 full inspections and 12 full re-inspections of learning and skills providers. This included 84 colleges, none of which had an overall effectiveness judgement of outstanding at its previous inspection.
- Of the 84 colleges inspected between 1 September and 30 June 2011, five were outstanding and 34 were judged to be good. Of the remaining 45, four were found to be inadequate.
- Of the 159 independent learning providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 30 June 2011, the majority were providing good or outstanding work-based learning programmes. Sixteen providers were judged outstanding and a further 73 were good. Ten providers were found to be inadequate.
- Of the 47 adult and community learning providers inspected between 1 September 2010 and 30 June 2011, only one was judged outstanding, although the large majority were judged to be good. Thirteen providers were satisfactory and none was inadequate.
- Between 1 September 2010 and 30 June 2011 there were 19 inspections of prison and young offender institutions and nine probation inspections. None of these providers was judged to be outstanding and two prison and young offender institutions were judged inadequate. Of the remaining prison and young offender institutions, six were good and 11 were satisfactory. Two of the nine probation providers were judged to be good and seven were satisfactory.

File name	File type	File size
zipLearning and skills inspections and outcomes - Apr to Jun 2011 (Provisional).zip	zip	452.04 KB
zipLearning and skills inspections and outcomes - Jan to Mar 2011 (Final).zip	zip	156.80 KB
zipLearning and skills inspections and outcomes - Jan to Mar 2011 (Provisional).zip	zip	313.89 KB

FE REPUTATION STRATEGY GROUP

What Businesses want – the Further Education Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG)

FERSG have commissioned research into the reputation FE has with businesses. The research indentified 10 ways in which FE can improve its reputation:

- Stop selling and start listening
- Improve understanding and awareness
- Invest internally
- Be more commercial in outlook and appearance
- Customer service
- Collaboration not competition
- Lead on and actively contribute to the skills agenda
- Communicate more directly
- Show off buildings and facilities
- Actively manage reputation

[What Businesses Want.pdf](#)

POLICY EXCHANGE PAPER

Personalised welfare: rethinking employment support and Jobcentres

A report published by leading think tank, Policy Exchange, argues that government is wasting billions and letting down the unemployed by failing to diagnose claimants' underlying problems and barriers to work at an early stage. The report – *Personalised welfare: rethinking employment support and Jobcentres*- notes serious problems with JobCentre Plus (JCP). Only 29% of claimants say they are satisfied with their experience at Jobcentres. In research for DWP, employers reported "very negative" experiences with "really inappropriate" candidates sent for interviews. JCP's job search database is severely dysfunctional, and JCPs advisers are hamstrung by poor use of information, which gives them only very basic information about the claimants they are trying to help.

Recommendations include:

- JCP should be replaced by a smaller, cross departmental organisation called "CommunityLink". The main role of CommunityLink would not be to hand out benefits but to identify the support that people need and get them into long term work. The report says that an effective and personalised employment service rather than a benefits office would be of greater help to those looking for work
- New models of public service provision should be employed in the employment support side of JCP before CommunityLink is created. **This would allow JCP staff to set up mutuals or social enterprises to deliver employment support and to start to build market expertise so that they could compete with private and third sector firms** when CommunityLink is created and employment support contracted out
- To pave the way for the transition to a new model for the provision of employment support, there are other reforms that will make employment support more targeted and effective now and to prepare JCP for its future role including - **creating a full, personal record for each claimant; the creation of a national CV database and proper job matching system; freeing up advisers' time to focus on the most vulnerable; changing the culture of JobCentre Plus with the introduction, inter alia, of personal targets linked to job sustainability used as the key basis for performance reviews and remuneration.**

A copy of the report can be downloaded at:

[http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/pdfs/Personalised Welfare - Sep 11.pdf](http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/pdfs/Personalised_Welfare_-_Sep_11.pdf)