

Issue 10 - May 2011

We hope you've had opportunity to make the most of some of the recent beautiful weather, which fortunately for many of us came at just the right time to coincide with chance to take a few days off work and enjoy the sunshine! Lets' hope we have more to look forward to as the summer progresses ...

In this edition of What's Hot we feature news about, amongst other topical items, the [Wolf Report](#) and the [Budget](#), along with updates about the work of the [Education Committee into the participation of 16-19 year olds in education and training](#).

The Wolf Report and its recommendations for the future of vocational education has generated a lot of discussion about this important area of education, which was previously sometimes felt by those involved to be a rather forgotten 'other'. Many of the recommendations of the report have been generally welcomed, in particular, the recommendation (made by Alison Wolf and subsequently taken forward by Secretary of State Michael Gove) that those licensed to teach in the FE and Skills sector should be recognised to teach in schools. This edition of What's Hot includes information about the [Wolf Report](#) along with responses from a variety of key stakeholders.

The future of HE remains uncertain, with debate continuing to rage about the impact on this vital area of the sector of both funding cuts and of the introduction of higher student tuition fees. Funding (as ever) forms an important focus across the sector, with providers funded through SfA and YPLA continuing to work together to understand and respond to the demands of Minimum Levels of Performance and adapt to cuts in future funding.

Lastly, the [Phase 2 report](#) of the LLUK review around the qualifications for Teaching and Learning Professionals (PTTLS, CTLLS and DTLLS) is now available and arrangements have been published for the [phased development of awards](#) to meet the revised structure. In addition, providers are already implementing delivery of the new [Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance \(TAQA\) awards](#), available since the Autumn (and replacing the old Assessor and Verifier awards).

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NATIONAL NEWS

FUNDING & CHANGES

The Budget 2011:

On 23 March '11 the **Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon George Osborne MP**, announced the Budget for the coming year, including a pledge by the Government to create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe, by:

- funding an additional 80,000 work experience places for young people, ensuring up to 100,000 places will be available over the next two years
- funding up to 50,000 additional apprenticeship places over the next four years, and
- expanding the University Technical Colleges (UTC) program to establish at least 24 new colleges

It also announced that **The West of England LEP** (Local Enterprise Partnership) would be one of ten LEPs in England to have one of the Government's new **Enterprise Zones** (EZ's).

SLIM's "Comment" (Edition 44, 25 March '11) reflects on what the Budget has to say about skills and employment and looks at the emerging reactions to the announcements.

Further responses from within the Learning & Skills Sector:

- AoC's Assistant Chief Executive, Julian Gravatt, outlines [what the 2011 Budget means for colleges](#) (24 March '11)
- [ALP's response to Budget announcement on Apprenticeships](#) (23 March '11)
- The Edge Foundation - [delighted as the Government funds UTCs and Apprenticeships in 2011 Budget](#)
- [NUS: Budget response](#) (FE News, 23 March '11)
- The Guardian - [Budget 2011: Osborne targets youth unemployment](#) (23 March '11)

Wolf Review of 14-19 Vocational Education:

Prof. Alison Wolf published her report **"Review of Vocational Education"** on 3 March '11.

The report's recommendations focus on:

- incentivising young people to take the most valuable vocational qualifications pre-16, while removing incentives to take large numbers of vocational qualifications to the detriment of core academic study
- introducing principles to guide study programmes for young people on vocational routes post-16 to ensure they are gaining skills which will lead to progression into a variety of jobs or further learning, in particular, to ensure that those who have not secured a good pass in English and mathematics GCSE continue to study those subjects
- evaluating the delivery structure and content of apprenticeships to ensure they deliver the right skills for the workplace
- making sure the regulatory framework moves quickly away from accrediting individual qualifications to regulating awarding organisations
- removing the requirement that all qualifications offered to 14- to 19-year-olds fit within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), which has had a detrimental effect on their appropriateness and has left gaps in the market, and
- enabling FE lecturers and professionals to teach in schools, ensuring young people are being taught by those best suited

read on to hear what the Sector has to say about the report ...

Wolf Review continued

[IfL interviews Alison Wolf](#) (14 March '11)

Following the publication of her landmark report on vocational education for 14-19-year-olds, IfL invited Professor Wolf to discuss the thinking behind some of her recommendations.

The [Skills Funding Agency](#) supports Professor Wolf's conclusion that Apprenticeships and vocational education, as well as the traditional academic route, are crucial to improving England's educational performance. (15 March '11)

[Review of Vocational Education - the Wolf Report](#) (ALP, 18 March '11)

[Colleges Respond to Wolf Review](#) (AoC, 3 March '11)

[Wolf Report welcomed by NIACE](#) (14 March '11)

and **Stephen Exley** asks ["Will Wolf's tough talking take FE to next level?"](#) in the **TES**, 11 March '11.

SLIM have also produced a ["SLIM Comment"](#) (Edition 43, 9 March '11) on the Review.

Visit [Edexcel's Policy Watch pages](#) for their comment on The Budget, Wolf Review and latest developments in the FE and HE sectors.

Minimum Contract Levels (MCL) - Support for Providers:

[Sub-Contracting Toolkit for the Learning & Skills Sector - updated version now available](#) (LSIS, 24 Feb '11)

The **Association of Learning Providers (ALP)** work-based provider toolkit has been updated and is now available to download from their website. This latest version addresses the minimum contract threshold, data management, and tips for sub-contracting with a new lead provider, and is useful for all learning providers who are now exploring new contracting arrangements.

[Supporting smaller independent training providers in collaborative contracting](#) (Excellence Gateway)

Working with key sector organisations, the **Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)** is helping providers to collaborate and respond to the introduction of Minimum Contract Levels (MCL) arrangements for 2011-12. This webpage summarises the support available and how to access it.

New [Contracts Finder](#) Website (SW Forum, 28 Feb '11)

This website (hosted by **Business Link**) provides a free contract finding service allowing small and medium-sized enterprises, charities and social enterprises to see and bid for **Government contracts** worth £10,000 and over.

[Transfer of Lifelong Learning UK responsibilities to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service post-March 2011](#)

Following the closure of **LLUK** on 31 March '11, this statement sets out the transfer of footprint responsibilities to **LSIS** and the creation of a [dedicated LLUK legacy website](#) to allow employers, partner organisations, researchers and policy makers to continue accessing the wide range of LLUK reports, case studies, factsheets, guides and documents that have been produced.

[Institute for Learning to take over Standards Verification UK's work on standards and qualifications post-March 2011](#)

As with its parent body (LLUK), **Standards Verification UK (SVUK)** ceased operations on 31 March '11. Services previously provided by SVUK on The Tariff of Qualifications (ITT) and GPRS Scheme have now been transferred to the [Institute for Learning \(IfL\)](#).

LIFELONG LEARNING

[Retaining and developing disabled staff in the lifelong learning sector](#) (LLUK, 11 March '11)

In recent years, the lifelong learning sector has made great progress in promoting equality for disabled learners and students, giving many of them the skills and qualifications they need to succeed. However, less progress has been made when it comes to our disabled staff. This guide, published by **LLUK**, is intended to support the lifelong learning sector to make the reasonable adjustments disabled employees require, and take anticipatory measures required by recent legislation.

[One million opportunities to Have a Go](#) (Excellence Gateway, 2 March '11)

Skills Minister, John Hayes, has given his backing to a campaign to create a million opportunities for people across the UK to learn new skills in 2011. **WorldSkills London 2011** is encouraging schools, colleges and businesses to organise "[Have a Go](#)" events that demonstrate the range of skills training opportunities that are on offer to local people.

[National programme gets over 100,000 adults learning](#) (NIACE, 29 March '11)

In less than 18 months 2,000 [Community Learning Champions](#) have encouraged over 100,000 people to take up learning in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities, according to a recent [report](#) published by **NIACE** to mark the end of the Community Learning Champions Support Programme (2009-2011).

[New approach to adult numeracy crucial](#) (NIACE, 18 March '11)

The [NIACE-led Independent Inquiry into Numeracy](#) has now published its recommendations and says, in order to improve the poor numeracy skills of adults (currently estimated to cost the economy £2.4b a year), the **Government** needs to adopt a new approach to numeracy that focuses on how adults use maths and numbers in everyday life.

[Tackling the challenge of poor numeracy skills - why some teaching and learning adds up while other provision falls short](#) (Ofsted, 8 April '11)

This [Ofsted report](#) (published April 2011) also suggests effective numeracy teaching that is built into practical training makes a real difference to young people and adults in their work and personal lives. However, weak numeracy provision focused on worksheets and repetitive exercises can leave them both failing to understand mathematical concepts and incapable of applying their learning in their everyday lives.

In response to the report, **NIACE** again [reiterates the need for a radical change in how adult numeracy learning is addressed](#). (8 April '11)

ESOL courses promote integration (NIACE, 14 April '11)

Responding to a recent speech made by the **Prime Minister** on immigration, **NIACE** has urged the **Government** to consider the impact changes to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision will have on integration and social cohesion.

LLUK launches new Client Entitlement Statement for Adult Career Service Users

(LLUK, 2 March '11)

This statement clearly explains the level of service that all users of adult information, advice and guidance services should receive, and is designed to promote good practice and client-focused service within the adult career guidance sector.

Available now - Career Learning for the 21st Century (LSIS, 24 Feb '11)

Over the past year, **LSIS** have been trialling seven CPD introductory modules in career learning, information, advice and guidance. These modules are now available to **download free of charge** from the **CLIAG section on the Excellence Gateway**, allowing experienced facilitators to deliver them in their own organisations or for local networks, partnerships or consortia.

You can also download the following publications directly from the **LSIS website** as well:

- [Career learning for the 21st century: a leadership issue for the FE sector](#)
- [Career learning for the 21st century: a leadership issue for the FE sector - sources of evidence](#)

20th Adult Learners' Week - 14-20 May 2011

The 20th Adult Learners' Week, co-ordinated by **NIACE**, takes place this month. The initiative continues to be the largest drive for learning of its kind and is celebrated in over 55 countries across the world. From learning Pilates to gaining a PhD, Adult Learners' Week celebrates learning and learners in all their diversity, inspiring thousands of people each May to try something new. The initiative promotes the benefits of all kinds of learning, whether it is for fun or leading to a qualification.

Learning South West, are the **Regional Adult Learner's Week Co-ordinators for the South West**. To find out more about what is happening in our Region [click here](#).

Quick Reads 2011

To tie in with Adult Learner's Week, **10 new Quick Read books** have been launched. **NIACE** have also put together a series of **podcasts**, talking to the authors of this year's books.

edUKation newsletter (Spring 2011)

Download your copy of the latest issue of the **European Lifelong Learning Programme's** quarterly newsletter for the Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes. It includes news, success stories and people's views on what it's like to take part in the programmes.

New NIACE CEO announced (NIACE, 24 March '11)

The Board of NIACE has announced that **David Hughes** (currently National Provider Services Director at the Skills Funding Agency) will be the new Chief Executive of NIACE, following the retirement of Professor Alan Tuckett in the Summer.

[ACEVO wants input on influencing Big Society agenda](#) (SW Forum, 14 April '11)

The Commission on Big Society, set up by the **Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)**, is seeking to articulate a vision for what needs to be achieved through the Big Society agenda, and to recommend practical steps. ACEVO have produced a **short online survey** to gain views on 9 key questions - [click here](#) to take part.

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

[LLUK Review of current teaching qualifications for the further education sector in England - Phase 2 Findings Report](#)

The Findings Report from Phase 2 of the Review (March 2011) is now available to [download](#).

The revised structures and units of assessment, including those for PTLLS, CTLLS, DTLLS and the subject specific qualifications for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL, will be completed during 2011 to allow them to be updated to reflect policy implications.

From 31 March '11, the responsibility for teaching and learning standards and qualifications moves to **LSIS**, who will work on these matters with and through the **Institute for Learning**, as the professional body for teachers and trainers across the further education and skills sector.

For more information about the phased introduction visit the [LSIS website](#).

[Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance \(TAQA\) Update \(March 2011\)](#)

Details of TAQA training units, development of support materials and future events and registration for Learning & Development. (City & Guilds, 25 March '11)

[PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS Update \(March 2011\)](#)

PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS update, including funding, LLUK Footprint and title changes to Level 5 subject specific qualifications. (City & Guilds, 25 March '11)

[The Education Bill 2010-11](#)

The Education Bill, introduced into the House of Commons on 26 January 2011, seeks to implement the legislative proposals in the **Department for Education's Schools White Paper "The Importance of Teaching"** and **measures from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** to improve skills, including two elements of the reforms to higher education funding. It is therefore a very wide-ranging Bill.

The latest version of the Bill was put before the [House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Education Bill](#) on **5 April '11**, and includes sections on:

- Part 4 - Qualifications and the Curriculum
- Part 6 - Academies
- Part 7 - Post-16 Education and Training
- Part 8 - Student Finance

To track the current progress of the Bill through Parliament [click here](#).

[Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into the participation of 16-19 year olds in education and training](#)

[This first evidence session](#) of the Committee's inquiry, held on **16 March '11**, looked firstly at some of the research evidence on barriers to participation, including financial barriers, and the value of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in overcoming these. The second part of the session looked at the implications for FE and sixth-form colleges of increasing to 18 the age until which young people must participate in education or training.

[Commons Education Select Committee calls for fundamental reform of Ofsted](#)

(www.parliament.uk, 17 April '11)

The Committee has completed its inquiry into the role and performance of Ofsted and has published its [second report](#), which suggests creating separate education and children's care inspectorates will help raise the quality of inspection and restore confidence in the inspection process

[Click here](#) to read **Ofsted Chief Inspector, Christine Gilbert's**, response to the findings. (wired-gov.net, 17 April '11)

[Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into Services for Young People launches Online Forum for 13-25 year olds](#)

(www.parliament.uk, 3 March '11)

As part of its on-going inquiry into services for young people, the Committee has launched an online forum to gather the views of 13-25 year olds on which services they want and would prioritise. The forum is being hosted by leading online student community, [The Student Room](#).

[Gill Millar, Learning South West's Regional Youth Work Adviser gives evidence to the Committee's oral evidence session on 30 March '11.](#)

[£50m investment in skills to drive growth](#)

(SfA, 7 March '11)

Secretary of State for Business, Vince Cable, and Minister for Skills, John Hayes, have launched a £50 million a year fund to help businesses develop the skills they need to drive growth.

The Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF) will deliver targeted help for employer groups to overcome barriers to growth within their sectors and industries. The funding can be used to deliver new training to boost innovation and productivity, enable industries to set new professional standards, or support new or extended National Skills Academies.

[£20m management training fund for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises is announced](#)

(SfA, 8 April '11)

Skills Minister, John Hayes, has called on senior leaders in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to take advantage of funding that will provide subsidised leadership and management training to help them grow their businesses. **The SME Leadership and Management development grant**, will support around 13,000 SMEs and social enterprises that demonstrate a potential for growth, helping stimulate innovation and employment, boosting the economy and helping develop a bigger and more cohesive society.

The fund, available from April '11, will be promoted directly to businesses by their **Regional Leadership and Management Advisory Service**. SME leaders should contact their local Service to book their free personal leadership and management assessment.

[YPLA Single Equality Scheme](#)

(YPLA, 13 April '11)

Following a consultation, the final version of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) Single Equality Scheme is now available to [download](#). The Scheme outlines the YPLA's approach to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into all aspects of its work and sets out four key objectives which are supported by a clear action plan.

[LSIS Accounts - essential information](#)

(LSIS, 4 April '11)

LSIS has written to all current Account holders setting out the key changes to the way in which LSIS Accounts will be awarded to organisations for this year.

[New Ofsted sharing good practice website](#) (Ofsted, 7 March '11)

Ofsted has launched a [new website area](#) showcasing good practice case studies from across the sectors they inspect and regulate. The site includes examples from schools, [adult learning and skills](#), and children and families services.

[Move over, celebs. Time for Air Academy](#) (TES, 8 April '11)

Standing celebrities in front of a class and expecting them to be able to teach is not exactly an original televisual idea, but a lot was asked of **Starkey, Campbell and co in Channel 4's venture into the genre - Jamie's Dream School**. The teenagers they are required to control are all school drop-outs or expellees. They drink, fight, smoke, swear and throw such emotionally charged wobblers that even a squad of helmeted riot police would be hard pushed to restore order. To anyone who works in FE, none of this will come as a surprise, says **College Lecturer, Stephen Jones**, in his article for the Times FE Focus.

[VQ Learner of the Year Awards 2011 – nominations now open!](#) (The Edge Foundation, 15 March '11)

Nominations for this year's VQ Learner of the Year Awards are now open. The awards form part of [VQ Day](#) (22 June '11) which celebrates vocational achievement.

The closing date for [nominations](#) is Friday 20 May '11.

Apprenticeships:

[Apprenticeships Rebrand](#) (SW Forum, 1 March '11)

Apprenticeship frameworks are to be rebranded following [an announcement by Skills Minister, John Hayes](#), during National Apprenticeship Week (7-11 Feb '11). Level 2 (GCSE level equivalent) apprenticeships will now be known as Intermediate Level Apprenticeships. Level 3 (A level equivalent) apprenticeships will become Advanced Level Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships will remain unchanged. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is also working to develop more Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4) frameworks.

[Launch of New Employers' Forum for Apprenticeships](#) (Skills- Third Sector)

Skills - Third Sector and **Fair Train** have jointly launched a new [Employers' Forum for Apprenticeships](#). The Employers' Forum will support the development, understanding and promotion of apprenticeships in the Third Sector including charities, social enterprises and the voluntary and community sector.

[Co-op launches Ethical Operating Plan listing 47 sustainability commitments – including section on inspiring young people](#) (EAUC, 1 March '11)

The Co-op has launched its Ethical Operating Plan which spans the breadth of its work on corporate sustainability. Within the Plan they aim to **"Inspire Young People"** by establishing a community programme that will directly benefit over 250,000 young people across the UK, and help them change their world through active citizenship. They also hope to help bring about a cultural shift in the way that young people are viewed and treated in this country.

[Red tape challenge kicks off](#) (Dept for BIS, 7 April '11)

The Government has launched a website challenging the public to help cut unnecessary regulations. [The Red Tape Challenge](#) will, for the first time, give the public and businesses a chance to have their say on regulations that affect their everyday lives; whether it's to speak up for well designed rules that are there to protect or challenge badly designed or badly thought through regulations that are an unnecessary burden. To have your say [click here](#).

Recent Publications:

[Girls making uninformed choices about careers](#) (Ofsted, 12 April '11)

An Ofsted report, "Girls' career aspirations", has found that some girls are receiving weak careers education, which is making it difficult for them to make properly informed choices about courses and careers.

[The Evaluation of the Functional Skills Pilot Summative Report](#) (QCDA, 11 March '11)

The Evaluation of the Functional Skills Pilot Summative Report is now available to download from the **QCDA** website.

[Leading Inclusion - A Guide to Leadership of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Learning and Skills Sector](#) (LSIS, 13 April '11)

[Pushing at Open Doors: A Guide to Building Cross Sector Learning Relationships](#) (SW Forum, 3 March '11)

This new "how to" guide from the **Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)** seeks to increase understanding between the voluntary, private and public sectors and broaden experience and skills.

[Engaging Employers to Drive up Skills: The Realities of Effective Employer Engagement - Current Opportunities and Challenges](#)

A strategic review from the **Centre for Innovation in Learning**, on behalf of the **LSN** and its partner organisations, which explores how support for employer engagement in the FE and skills sector can be strengthened and improved.

[UK Employment and Skills Almanac 2010](#) (UKCES, April 2011)

[Review of Employment and Skills](#) (UKCES, April 2011)

This Review identifies where and how joint working between the employment and skills systems provide an opportunity to maximise the outcomes for individuals and employers.

E-LEARNING

[Confused by copyright? In the dark about IPR?](#) (JISC, 7 April '11)

The **JISC-led Strategic Content Alliance** has created a new [e-learning module](#) to help update people dealing with intellectual property rights in universities, colleges, museums, libraries and other public bodies. The module provides an understanding of the implications and roles of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and licensing - all crucial to an institution's role as a provider, aggregator and/or publisher of digital content.

[e-Safety helpline launched](#) (Excellence Gateway, 17 March '11)

The UK's first ever helpline for professionals, specifically dealing with e-safety issues, has been launched. The helpline is part of the **UK Safer Internet Centre** and is for all professionals and volunteers who work with children and young people, and aims to address online safety issues they face, both professionally and personally.

[Conditions for successful innovation – a baker's dozen checklist](#) (FE News, 9 March '11)

Do you think your organisation is "innovative"? Is it really, or are "innovation" and "innovative" just a couple of terms that are routinely bandied around and which look nice in policy and strategy documents? **Seb Schmoller, Chief Executive of the Association for Learning Technology**, has put together a "baker's dozen" of ideas about innovation, based on the experiences of delegates at a recent "Embracing Technology for Success" workshop.

["Skilled to go" adult learners website - updated resources now available](#) (LSIS, 31 March '11)

The Office of Fair Trading's "Skilled to go" adult learners' resources website and its associated materials have just been updated. The website, which offers free resources for adult education teachers, is designed to help develop the literacy, ESOL and numeracy skills of learners in order to boost their knowledge and confidence in buying goods and services.

[Syncing student blogs with RSS feeds through innovative mobile applications and iPad devices](#) (Excellence Gateway, 17 March '11)

Plymouth College of Art lecturer, Martial Bugliolo, has successfully used RSS (really simple syndication) feeds to synchronise an iPad so that it aggregates all his students' digital sketchbooks, enabling him to employ a much more streamlined and innovate approach to delivering teaching and learning support for his students.

INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING (IfL)

[Gaining QTLS or ATLS: Professional Formation](#)

The window for IfL members to express their intent to take part in Professional Formation will be open from **1 April '11 - 31 May '11**. To find out more about the Professional Formation process [click here](#).

[IfL welcomes QTLS recommendation in Wolf report](#) (3 March '11)

IfL has welcomed Professor Alison Wolf's recommendation, in her independent review of vocational education, that further education teachers with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status should be recognised to teach in schools.

[New IfL Members' Online Community Network launched](#)

This new service has been created especially for **IfL members** to share ideas, resources and information with each other and to support teaching and training, including subject or vocational areas.

The online community provides a forum for members to share their experiences, tips and resources, find other members with similar interests in teaching and subject areas and to discuss the issues that are important to your teaching and training practice, and professional development.

*Sign up now by logging into your IfL membership account and clicking on the "**Community**" link which **appears at the top right of the page**.*

[IfL Podcast - Harnessing Technology](#)

Tony Prideaux talks to IfL staff about their views on the use of social networking sites and how this contributes and enriches the learning process.

[Institute for Learning Code of Practice Hearings](#) (YPLA, 25 March '11)

The **Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)** highlighted the following in their 25 March '11 e-bulletin - "We have been advised by the Institute for Learning (IfL) that their Code of Professional Practice Hearings has recently included a serious case relating to a further education teacher. Please read the [letter](#) from the IfL, and we urge you to take the appropriate actions when recruiting teachers, trainers or assessors."

[IfL patrons write to The Guardian](#) (12 April '11)

IfL has published in full a letter written by two of its patrons, **Lord Tim Boswell of Aynho** and **Barry Sheerman MP**, in response to an article published in the education section of The Guardian on 5 April 2011.

FURTHER EDUCATION

[Consultation on new £180 million 16-19 bursary scheme to replace EMA](#)

(Dept for Ed, 28 March '11)

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove MP, has laid out his plans for a new 16-19 bursary to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The £180 million will fund a bursary and additional learner support scheme to help the most vulnerable 16-19 years olds continue in full-time education.

The Department for Education is now carrying out an [8 week consultation](#) seeking the views of young people, parents and learning providers on the Government's proposed package of support for this group, which includes transitional arrangements for 16 to 19 year olds currently in receipt of an EMA, so the detailed arrangements can be finalised in time for allocations to be made for the 2011/12 academic year.

If you wish to contribute to the consultation process the closing date for responses is Friday 20 May '11.

[Enrolments 'to be hit' by post-EMA uncertainty](#) (TES, 1 April '11)

Colleges are braced for a fall in enrolments as students face months of uncertainty over whether they will be eligible for the Government's new bursaries, following the decision to hold a two-month consultation process on the new scheme.

[College principals fear EMA replacements will not be enough](#) (The Guardian, 5 April '11)

The proposed new 16-19 bursary scheme still entails a 60% cut in help for poorer students despite additional funding, according to **Janet Murray's** article in the Guardian.

[93% of college principals fear EMA cut will see students fail](#) (UNISON, 16 March '11)

93% of college principals are concerned that the abolition of the education maintenance allowance (EMA) will lead to a devastating drop in young people staying in education, according to a recent **UNISON** and **UCU** survey. The ["Save the EMA"](#) campaign continues.

[SfA offers lifeline after free courses withdrawal](#) (TES, 15 April '11)

Colleges are being offered a multimillion-pound reprieve after the **Skills Funding Agency (SfA)** acknowledged that thousands of learners could be lost because of fee increases. Next year, up to 300,000 learners on benefits will lose their entitlement to free courses and face full-time fees of over £1,000 a year, prompting many colleges to predict that the recruitment of adult students would plummet. Now the SfA has said that, where numbers fall because of the changes, funding will be partially protected.

Minimum Contract Levels (MCL):

[Minister stands firm as tensions grow over provider contracts axe](#) (TES, 11 March '11)

FE Minister, John Hayes, has said he will "prevail" in scrapping contracts for small apprenticeship providers for reasons of efficiency, despite objections by the **Department for Education (DfE)**.

['Wasteful' changes to FE contracts will go ahead](#) (TES, 8 April '11)

Controversial changes to the way FE contracts are awarded are to go ahead, despite strong criticism that a series of complex rules will waste money, writes **Stephen Exely**.

The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills has finalised plans to introduce a minimum contract level (MCL) of £500,000 for providers that receive Skills Funding Agency (SfA) cash. The aim being to save the SfA money by reducing the number of contracts it manages, but **a raft of exemptions** means that the MCL will not apply if it would lead to the loss of any apprenticeship places.

[Colleges will go broke 'sooner than you think'](#) (TES, 1 April '11)

Geoff Russell, Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency (SfA), has said colleges will have to adapt to a free market model in order to survive. Speaking at a recent LSIS conference, he warned that the number of colleges in financial difficulty could double "sooner than you may think".

[Forced study for unemployed could put FE funding at risk](#) (TES, 15 April '11)

Colleges have warned that plans to force unemployed people to attend classes could leave them out of pocket and cause disturbance for other learners. **The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** and the **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** is introducing a "skills conditionality" policy, in which jobseekers are ordered to attend training by Jobcentre Plus staff in return for unemployment benefit, as part of an overhaul of unemployment benefits.

[Colleges in the entrepreneurial economy](#) (AoC, 8 April '11)

This report has been published by **Enterprise UK** as a result of research commissioned by the **Department for Education-funded Enterprise Network**. The research attempted to shed light on the relatively under-researched area of enterprise and entrepreneurship provision in FE colleges in England. FE Colleges train over 4 million people every year, so have a critical role in creating a more enterprising UK - equipping people with the enterprise confidence and skills to be successful in their working lives.

[Further education boosts economy by £75 billion](#) (Dept BIS, 30 March '11)

A new **BIS Research Paper** "*Measuring the Economic Impact of Further Education*" (March 2011) shows people with FE qualifications generate an additional £75 billion for the economy over their lifetimes, with Apprenticeships generating around £40 for each pound of Government investment.

[Lecturers' banishment from schools to end](#) (TES, 4 March '11)

A "crazy" historical anomaly preventing FE lecturers from teaching in schools is to come to an end. As a result of the [Wolf review of 14-19 vocational education](#), QTLS (qualified teacher learning and skills) status is finally set to be recognised in schools, placing college lecturers on an equal footing with their school counterparts, who are allowed to teach in colleges.

[Best practice in safeguarding in colleges](#) (Ofsted, 11 April '11)

This **Ofsted** report highlights the results of a survey of best practice in safeguarding based on visits to 14 of the 15 colleges that received an outstanding grade for the leadership and management of their safeguarding arrangements in 2009/10.

[Date Announced for AoC Annual Conference and Exhibition 2011](#)

The 16th AoC Annual Conference and Exhibition will be on **15-17 November 2011 at The ICC, Birmingham**. To find more about AoC's plans for the event [click here](#).

[Right to anonymity could be extended to lecturers](#) (TES, 25 March '11)

College lecturers could get the legal right to anonymity if falsely accused of a misdemeanour by a student, the **Department for Education** has said, following campaigns by unions and politicians. Officials have confirmed that while school-based teachers will be the first to benefit from the new right to anonymity, which is being introduced as part of the [Education Bill](#) currently working its way through Parliament, it will be extended to colleges if it proves successful.

[Annual Workforce Diversity Profile 2008-2009](#) (LLUK, 11 March '11)

LLUK's Annual Workforce Diversity Profile (February 2011) is the most comprehensive analysis of the FE college workforce in England. It provides an analysis of trends across age, disability, ethnicity and gender in order to address workforce under-representation, development, progression and succession planning.

HIGHER EDUCATION

[Commons Select Committee Inquiry - The Future of Higher Education](#)

The Commons Business, Innovation & Skills Select Committee has started holding evidence sessions for its "Inquiry into The Future of Higher Education". To read about the sessions [click here](#).

[Supporting progression from Advanced Apprenticeships](#) (SLIM, 5 April '11)

The provision of high-quality information, advice and guidance is vital in helping both employers and Advanced Apprenticeship employees to make decisions about progressing to higher education - reveals a new study by **CFE** "*The Road Less Travelled - experiences of employers that support the progression of Advanced Apprentices to HE*" (January 2011) .

Tuition Fees – Latest News:

- **The BBC** has a number of pages dedicated to [University Funding](#) providing comprehensive coverage of all the issues.
- [Tuition fees: Teenagers seek human rights judicial review](#) (Guardian, 24 Feb '11)
Two teenagers are claiming Government Ministers breached equality laws with decision to almost treble university fees.
- [Exeter University becomes the first outside Russell Group to charge maximum fees](#) (Guardian, 2 March '11)
- [English students broaden their horizons to escape tuition fee rise](#) (Observer, 13 March '11)
With tuition fees in England about to soar, Universities in Ireland and Scotland are becoming attractive alternatives for new students.
- [Top-charging universities admit too few state school pupils](#) (Guardian, 31 March '11)
Almost half of the universities that have announced plans to charge £9,000 tuition fees are not meeting targets on widening their social mix.
- [Ministers admit plans for tuition fees are in disarray](#) (Guardian, 3 April '11)
The Universities and Science Minister, David Willetts, has refused to withdraw his claim that most universities will charge more than £6,000 a year only in exceptional circumstances, as Cabinet Ministers privately admit the plans are in serious disarray. The Government is now looking at cutting student numbers to offset the higher than expected cost of loans to the Treasury from a higher average fee.
- [Tuition fees 2012: what are the universities charging?](#) (Guardian, 19 April '11)
This list, produced by **The Guardian**, shows how much universities intend to charge in tuition fees from next Autumn.

[More support for students while studying](#) (Dept BIS, 13 April '11)

David Willetts, the Universities and Science Minister, has announced the **student support package for 2012-13** for new and continuing students, including those at alternative providers.

[Using RPI to set student loans will cost graduates up to £5,000 more, says TUC](#)

(wired-gov.net, 12 April '11)

A **TUC** analysis has found that a graduate with a student loan of £25,000 and on the average graduate salary will pay an extra £4,800 and take two years longer to pay off their student loan if it is uprated by RPI (retail prices index) rather than CPI (consumer prices index).

[Loans for part-time students – what could possibly go wrong?](#) (Guardian, 29 March '11)

It should have been good news, but mistakes made by the Government have resulted in an unfair student loan system for part-time undergraduates, says **Claire Callender**.

[University funding cuts: which institutions are worst hit?](#) (Guardian, 17 March '11)

Universities across England are facing large cuts to their funding according to figures release in March by **HEFCE**. This list, produced by **The Guardian**, shows which universities are worst affected?

[Helping institutions to make the right strategic decisions](#) (JISC, 11 March '11)

As senior managers are looking for more information about finance and costs, a fresh toolkit from **JISC** is helping them source hard evidence to support decision making. The popular **strategy infokit** has been revamped to include a major new section on 'business intelligence' and the role it can play in enabling institutions to make informed evidence-based decisions.

[UK university's New York ambition](#) (BBC News, 12 April '11)

Warwick University is bidding to become the first UK university to set up a campus in the United States, by entering a global competition, along with other leading universities from the US, Europe and Asia, to open a science campus in New York.

meanwhile ... [The Open University is to receive funding from the United States](#) to improve staying-on rates among poorer students, by providing online courses to improve basic maths for students in US community colleges. (BBC News, 11 April '11)

[It's official: girls are smarter than boys when it comes to spending at university](#)

(Guardian, 16 March '11)

A survey by **The Student Loans Company** debunks gender stereotypes and proves when it comes to spending girls outsmart the boys and are better at managing money

[Fancy doing a degree in CBeebies?](#) (Guardian, 13 April '11)

Well now you can ... sort of! The **University of Salford** is launching a new MA course called Children's Digital Media Production which will include masterclasses with **CBeebies** and **CBBC**.

[Student Demand for Skills in Sustainability](#) (EAUC, 16 March '11)

A major new research report, published on 10 March '11 by the **Higher Education Academy (HEA)**, shows first-year students believe their universities should be responsible for actively incorporating and promoting sustainable development to prepare their students for graduate employment.

[Goal-line technology brought closer by latest academic research](#) (Guardian, 14 March '11)

A visual media research group at the **University of Surrey** have been working on the technology that could end the agony of goal-line injustices, by using state of the art video analysis, of the kind used to create films like Avatar, to develop goal-line technology.

[Great goals that were disallowed](#)

REGIONAL NEWS & NETWORKS

[Major South West RDA asset sales set to go ahead](#) (13 April '11)

The Government has approved **South West RDA** plans to sell large parts of its asset portfolio across the region. 'Packages' of major assets n now be sold to three local authorities in region, while a separate range of other assets will be offered for sale at open market value.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs):

[Local enterprise partnerships gather to showcase action plans for local growth](#)

(Dept BIS, 7 March '11)

The **Prime Minister, David Cameron**, and **Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg**, hosted the first national meeting of local enterprise partnerships in Coventry on 7 March '11.

The **Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles**, also used this meeting as an opportunity to announce the formation of a **new Association of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** to help support shared learning, information exchange and better networking.

[British Chambers of Commerce to lead Association of Local Enterprise Partnerships](#)

(SLIM, 6 April '11)

Following his announcement of the formation of a national Association of Local Enterprise Partnerships in March, the **Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles**, has confirmed that the **British Chambers of Commerce** will lead the network.

[Solutions for Business Local Enterprise Partnership - Good Practice Guide](#)

(Dept BIS, 5 April '11)

Released by **The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)**, this good practice guide provides a useful tool to help support LEPs in their development.

[Heart of South West joins local enterprise partnership network](#) (Dept BIS, 31 March '11)

The **Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership**, which covers Devon, Plymouth, Exeter, Torbay and Somerset, has been **approved by Minister for Business, Mark Prisk**, and **Decentralisation Minister, Greg Clark** and becomes the latest to join the list of partnerships across England.

[Mark Prisk meets with West of England and Heart of South West local enterprise partnerships](#) (Dept BIS, 12 April '11)

Business Minister, Mark Prisk, has had his first meeting with local enterprise partnerships in the West Country and South West of England.

South West LEP websites:

- [Heart of South West LEP](#)
- [West of England LEP](#)
- [Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly LEP](#)

[More than £450m investment for regional jobs and growth](#) (Dept BIS, 12 April '11)

Winners in the first round of the **Regional Growth Fund (RGF)** have been announced. The South West winners include **South Devon College** and the **West Daily Press, with the University of Plymouth**.

State of the South West:

The following publications, produced by the **South West Observatory**, provide a useful guide to the current economy and labour market trends within in the South West.

- [Updated State of the South West 2011](#) (16 March '11) - find all the latest trends in terms of the Economy, Labour Market, Skills and Learning, Environment, Public Health, Culture and more in the one-stop-shop for regional data.
- [2011 South West Regional Accounts \(SWRAs\)](#) (March '11)
- [South West Regional Accounts \(SWRAs\): 11 years of data](#) - this paper provides an overview of the key regional messages provided by the latest SWRAs release.
- [Sub-regional Economic Indicators](#) (February '11) - provides a summary of the latest economic facts and figures for the South West's sub-regions.

Around the Region:

[Bridgwater College Principal elected new President of AoC](#) (AoC, 6 May '11)

Association of Colleges' members have elected **Fiona McMillan, Principal of Bridgwater, College** as their new President who will take up post from 1 August '11.

[Bridgwater students win silver medal at Young Garden Designers of the Year Awards](#) (30 March '11)

Students from **Bridgwater College** were presented with their medals by **HRH The Prince of Wales** at the inaugural [Young Garden Designers of the Year Awards](#) held at this year's Ideal Home Exhibition.

[Public-private degree course plan](#) (BBC News, 13 April '11)

Law and Business degrees, awarded by BPP University College, are to be taught at **New College, Swindon** from this September.

[Toni Elected NUS Vice President](#) (14 April '11)

Cornwall College Students' Union (CCSU) President Toni Pearce has been elected National Union of Students (NUS) Vice President for Further Education (VPFE) in the recent NUS elections.

[Poster is talk of the conference](#) (LSIS, 31 March '11)

A poster created by **David Finch and Fern Faux of National Star College, Cheltenham**, as part of their LSIS Research Development Fellows (RDFs) project, gained much interest at a recent RDF Research Conference. [Click here](#) to view the poster.

Regional Events:

- **Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network (WVLLN) & Aimhigher**
"Progression to HE - Supporting Effective Applications"

Thursday 16 June '11 at Somerset College, Taunton

This free event is primarily for tutors and IAG practitioners involved in preparing for and advising students on applications to higher level study.

To request further information e-mail [Lorraine Mather](#), Aimhigher Staff Development Stand Co-ordinator at Bridgwater College or tel: (01278) 441373

- **Vista - "Building Resilience and Managing Change through Turbulent Times"**
Friday 24 June '11 at Vista, Langport, Somerset

This one day course is for people interested in learning about managing change and building resilience in themselves and others, and will focus on participants own responses to change and how people support themselves and others through periods of turbulence.

[Click here](#) for further details and to book your place.

- **Wiltshire College - "HE & Employability Conference"**
Wednesday 6 July '11 at the Arc Theatre, Trowbridge

held in conjunction with Wiltshire Council, Aimhigher & Cascaid

Keynote Speaker: Dr Paul Redmond, Head of Careers and Employability at the University of Liverpool

Target Audience: Heads of Sixth Form and Tutors, Careers Co-ordinators, Level 3 FE College Tutors, Careers Adviser, Connexions PA's, NextStep Adviser, and Information Advisers.

[Click here](#) for further details and to book your place.

[Gill Millar, Learning South West's Regional Youth Work Adviser gives evidence at the Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into Services for Young People](#)

Gill was one of four people from national agencies representing youth services and young people to be invited to be a witness at the Inquiry's **first oral evidence session on 30 March '11**.

The session is now available to view on [Parliament TV](#).

[172 SMART Somerset companies win by training](#) (11 March '11)

Employers and their staff in Somerset celebrated the completion of a successful training enterprise project run by **Learning South West** by attending an awards ceremony at Bishops Hull House in Taunton on 11 March '11. The three year [Think Smart Project](#), co-financed by the European Union Social Fund (ESF) and the Skills Funding Agency (SfA), supported work-based learners by training owner managers and other employees to become learning coaches to support co-workers to complete vocational training courses.

[20th Adult Learners' Week \(14-20 May 2011\) - Regional Events](#)

As Regional Adult Learner's Week Awards Co-ordinator for the South West, **Learning South West** will be helping our Regional Award Winners to celebrate in style by hosting an **Evening Awards Ceremony in Bristol on Thursday 19 May '11** as part of this year's Adult Learners Week.

If you are planning any activities to help celebrate Adult Learner's Week yourself we would love to hear from you, please e-mail alw@learning-southwest.org.uk or call (01823) 347955.

[Learn+ Project - Partners in Diversity](#) (March 2011)

Learning South West is working in partnership with colleagues from Portugal, Poland, Switzerland and Turkey to deliver the Grundtvig European Lifelong Learning Programme funded [Learn+ Project](#), which is developing a training course for adult Teachers and Trainers using a blended delivery approach to support practitioners to manage 'Diversity' in Teaching and Learning.

The course includes four modules of support around issues of Leadership and Communication, Assessment and Management, and the Self-Reflection processes. At this point the training course is being piloted; this will help refine the course from a participant perspective and help us produce a very useful support programme.

If you would like to find out more about our work on this project please e-mail [Georgina Skirton](#).

Make the most of the spring sunshine - come along to Bishops Hull House for your meetings and events!

If you want to enjoy a lovely garden whilst networking and team building, come along to Bishops Hull House, a beautiful Georgian property offering three conference rooms, all with natural daylight and views over our gardens and the surrounding countryside. We can accommodate for up to 50 people, offering large or small meetings, free Wi-Fi throughout the building and Skype meetings upon request.

[Visit our website](#) for further details and costs or contact Steven Moore on (01823) 347953 or Emma Fawcett on (01823) 365438.

Golden Thread Summer Conference - Thursday 26 May 2011

Venue: The Cleve Spa Hotel & Conference Centre, Wellington, TA21 8SN

Would you like a break from news about cutbacks and policy changes? If so, you are invited to join us at the Golden Thread Project Summer Conference for an active and positive day with colleagues sharing ideas that work for Language, Literacy and Numeracy Learners. They are still out there and they still need you!

We will be "*weaving Skills for Life throughout the South West*" by:

- sharing ideas that work
- exploring key themes and issues, including Active Learning, Diagnostic Testing, Entry Level Resources, and Apprenticeships
- strengthening our networks, and
- planning the way forward

E-mail [Gail Hodge](#) or [Sue Edwards](#) for more details.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Institute for Learning South West Regional Conference: "IfL supporting CPD in the Regions"

Date & Venue: Tuesday 5 July '11, Taunton RFC, Hyde Park, Taunton

Working in partnership with **Learning South West** and the **SWCETT**, IfL are pleased to offer colleagues the opportunity to attend this one-day event for practitioners in the South West.

For further information **e-mail the [SWCETT Co-ordination Unit](#)** at Learning South West.

2011 Learning Opportunities Fair

Date & Venue: Thursday 29 September '11, Rookery Manor, Nr Weston-super-Mare

Learning South West's 3rd Annual Learning Opportunities Fair will be taking place in September and will showcase the regional and national programme support that is available in the South West.

If you are interested in discussing exhibition opportunities at the Fair or would just like to find out more about the event, **please e-mail [John Gibson](#)**.

Other Forthcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

South West Regional Senior Curriculum Managers' Forum	Monday 16 May '11
Professional Formation - Applying for QTLS/ATLS	Wednesday 25 May '11, & Wednesday 14 September '11
South West Regional Staff Development/HR Managers' Forum	Wednesday 8 June '11
South West Regional Teacher Education Forum	Thursday 16 June '11

If you would like further information about any of these events please e-mail: events@learning-southwest.org.uk

Learning South West Membership - Join Us Now!

Is your organisation interested in becoming a Learning South West Member? Why not visit our [Membership pages](#) to read about the numerous benefits on offer to our members, or contact the **Membership Team** on (01823) 347951, e-mail membership@learning-southwest.org.uk.