

### Issue 13 - January 2012



Welcome to 2012! We hope you had a good Christmas and New Year - and managed to enjoy some quality time away from work.

This edition of What's Hot contains a wealth of news, including:

- Sectorial responses to the [Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2011](#) offering comment on the ways aspects of this will impact on our Sector.
- Information about the [Ofsted Annual Report for 2011](#) which provides a useful perspective on the current state of education in post-16 education and training. This inevitably raises continuing areas for development, but positive findings include 70% of colleges being judged as good or outstanding at their most recent inspection; a significant increase in the percentage of training providers judged as outstanding and the identification of strong leadership as a key contributor within these organisations; and 75% of adult and community learning providers were judged as good or outstanding with a recognition that of their particular strength in engaging hard to reach and vulnerable learners.

There are also some interesting reports which examine [learner](#) and [employer](#) perspectives on students' skill levels and the importance of a [global perspective](#) - with some key discrepancies identified between them!

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### FUNDING & CHANGES

#### 2011 Autumn Statement

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, **George Osborne**, delivered his **2011 Autumn Statement** to Parliament on 29 November 2011. Some 20 different education and training measures were announced, underlining the importance attached to raising education and skill levels as a key feature of the Chancellor's plans to build a stronger economy for the future.

**Pearson's Policy Watch** – [The Chancellor's Autumn Financial Statement. What did it mean for education and training?](#) (30 Nov '11) draws out the main points affecting the Sector.

[The Association of College's overview of Autumn Statement 2011](#) (29 Nov '11) looks at the announcements directly affecting colleges.

Whilst, **SLIM** has produced one of their informative "[SLIM Comment](#)" papers (edition 48, 30 Nov '11) on the Autumn Statement.

#### The Education Bill 2011 Receives Royal Assent

The [Education Bill](#) received Royal Assent on **15 November 2011**. The majority of provisions in the Act are due to commence by the end of January 2012, with those relating to the abolition of arms-length bodies – the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA), Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) - being commenced at the end of this Financial Year (March 2012) and the remainder at the start of the School Year in September 2012.

Sections of the [Bill](#) that may be of particular interest include:

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

#### CEOs of NAS and Skills Funding Agency to step down in coming months (FE News, 17 Jan '12)

Marking the end of their three year journey as **Chief Executives** of the **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)** and the **Skills Funding Agency**, **Simon Waugh** and **Geoff Russell** have announced plans to step down in March and August of this year, respectively.

#### Review of Skills Funding Agency published (SfA, 20 Dec '11)

The **Government** has now undertaken its review of the Skills Funding Agency and the statutory post of Chief Executive of Skills Funding, and you can read **Skills Minister, John Hayes, written statement** [here](#).

The main point of interest is the decision to make the Skills Funding Agency **an Executive Agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)**.

**Nick Reinis** comments on this change in his article for **FE Week**, [Skills Funding Agency to become an Executive Agency](#) (20 Dec '11)

## [New Challenges, New Chances: Further Education & Skills Reform Plan – Building a World Class System](#)

The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) has published the [Government's response](#) to the recently undertaken Consultation "New Challenges, New Chances" (1 Dec '11). In addition they have also produced a [Skills Investment Statement 2011 -2014: Investing in a World Class System](#) (1 Dec '11), and published a [Summary of Responses to the Consultation](#) (Dec '12)

SLIM's policy briefing "[SLIM Comment](#)" (edition 49, 6 Dec '12) looks at the new strategy and summarises the proposals.

Whilst, [NIACE has welcomed the new proposals for the reform of FE](#) as they set out a strong vision for adult education with learners at the heart of a system which delivers economic and social renewal for individuals, families and communities. (2 Dec '11)

However, an article in the TES, "[reduced adult participation pinned on apprenticeships and loans](#)" (9 Dec '11) brings our attention to the Government's expectation that 462,000 places in funded adult education will to be lost by 2013, according to their **Skills Investment Statement**.

## [Education Funding Agency - Latest Information](#) (DfE, 7 Dec '11)

From 1 April 2012, the **Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)** functions will transfer to the new **Education Funding Agency (EFA)**. For all the latest information on the EFA, visit the [Department for Education website](#).

## [16-19 Funding Statement](#) (YPLA, 14 Dec '11)

The YPLA has published the **16-19 Funding Statement for the funding of education and training in England for the 2012-13 financial year**. The Statement outlines indicative levels of funding to be invested in the 2012-13 financial year and the learner numbers and funding policies to be applied in the 2012/13 academic year by the YPLA, and will be of interest to local authorities, schools, academies, colleges and other providers.

To accompany the Statement the YPLA have also produced a useful [Q&A Document - Issue 3](#). (3 Jan '12)

## [16-19 Bursary Fund – Provider Q&A \(Version 9\)](#) (YPLA, 13 Dec '11)

This document, produced by the YPLA, gives additional information to learning providers (schools, academies, colleges), training providers and local authorities on the **16-19 Bursary Fund**. It contains some frequently asked questions about the eligibility criteria for the fund, the administration and MI requirements.

## [The Education Foundation – The UK's Education Think Tank](#)

On 28 November 2011, **The Edge Foundation** officially launched "[The Education Foundation](#)" – a new UK-wide education 'think tank' to help lead, shape and deliver change and reform in the education system.

To coincide with the launch The Education Foundation has produced its first publication, [Education Britain: the journey to education reform](#), detailing the thinking of 35 UK and global education leaders. Areas covered include educational system change, the need for voice as well as choice based reform, redressing the academic vocational divide and visions for the future of education in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

### **BIS Research Papers on Skills for Life**

The **Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS)** has recently published a couple of Research Papers focussing on Skills for Life:

#### **[Research Paper No. 57 - 2011 Skills for Life Survey: Headline Findings](#)** (Dec '11)

- commenting on the initial findings, **Carol Taylor, NIACE's Director for Research & Development**, has insisted that it is vital to continue investing in the literacy and numeracy needs of adults - [read more](#).

#### **[Research Paper No. 61 - Review of research and evaluation on improving adult literacy and numeracy skills](#)** (Dec '11)

- which finds that learner progress in literacy is greater where teachers have qualified teacher status, and in numeracy where teachers are qualified in maths to Level 3 or above (irrespective of qualified teacher status). Another key finding is that the growing range of demands and contexts for reading and writing, and for using and manipulating numeric data, is further evidence in favour of a focus on functional skills.

#### **[IfL and LSIS to lead commission on adult education and vocational pedagogy](#)** (IfL, 1 Dec '11)

The **Institute for Learning (IfL)** and the **Learning & Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)** are to support an **Independent Commission on Adult Education and Vocational Pedagogy**, which is being established to ensure that there is a clear, sector-owned policy to support outstanding teaching and learning in further education and skills, including making full use of the potential of technology; following an announcement by the **Government** in its formal response to the [New Challenges, New Chances Consultation](#) (*Section 4: Excellence in Teaching and Learning - ensuring world-class programmes*).

#### **[Basic-skills reform will focus on least able](#)** (TES, 2 Dec '11)

Funding for literacy and numeracy, which represents about a quarter of the skills budget, is to be reformed amid claims that colleges and training providers are failing to help adults with the greatest problems.

#### **[Adult education is for all, unless you have autism](#)** (TES, 13 Jan '12)

The numbers are stark. Students with autism have only a one in four chance of continuing their education after school, according to research carried out for the parent-run group **[Ambitious about Autism](#)**; but now colleges are joining the charity's campaign to transform opportunities for autistic people in the FE sector.

According to **Ambitious about Autism**, school education for autistic students has improved hugely since the 1996 Education Act introduced new rights for parents and children; but the charity is calling for the right to specialist support to be extended to the age of 25, as promised in the special educational needs (SEN) green paper.

#### **["Teacher Educator" - the website for Teacher Education and Teacher Educators in the UK Lifelong Learning Sector](#)**

If you are working to support teachers on any of the current Lifelong Learning Sector teaching qualifications, such as Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), Certificate in teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLTS) or Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) then this site is for you!

**[Now Available Online - The National CETT Journal "Teaching in Lifelong Learning"](#)** (Dec '11)

"**Teaching in Lifelong Learning: A journal to inform and improve practice**", which is produced collaboratively by the **National Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs)**, is now available to download online. As well as the latest edition, Volume 3, Issue 2 - December 2011, you can also access copies of previous Journals on the site too.

**[Are you involved in Family Learning or work with families and children?](#)**

(SW Forum, 6 Dec '11)

Join other voluntary and community sector organisations on [www.familylearningnetwork.com](http://www.familylearningnetwork.com).

**The National Family Learning Network (NFLN) website** is a one stop shop for practical resources and support for anyone involved in family learning. It has **free** downloadable resources, news updates, job vacancies, events and the latest funding opportunities.

Registration is free and takes less than a minute [www.familylearningnetwork.com/user/register](http://www.familylearningnetwork.com/user/register).

**[Leading long-distance learning provider is saved by a 'miracle'](#)** (TES, 23 Dec '11)

In a move hailed as a "Christmas miracle", the beleaguered **National Extension College (NEC)**, the pioneering distance-learning institution that paved the way for the Open University, has been saved from extinction, by being taken over by the **Open School Trust (OST)** - [read more](#).

**[2012 - European Year for Active Ageing](#)**

**2012** will be the **European Year of Active Ageing (EY2012)** and will celebrate active ageing and solidarity between generations across Europe.

**Society is increasingly appreciating the contribution that older people can make at work, at home and in the community.**

**Visit the official [EY2012 website](#)** to see what initiatives are taking place across Europe and how you can get involved.

**European Lifelong Learning Programme:**

**['Erasmus for All' proposal](#)** (23 Nov '11)

**The European Commission** has released its proposal for the successor programme to the Lifelong Learning, International and Youth in Action Programmes.

The new programme, provisionally called '**Erasmus for All**', will run from 2014 to 2020. **Read the European Commission's proposal [here](#).**

**[Go further in Europe - Funding opportunities for Further Education](#)** (15 Nov '11)

If you work for a College or within Further Education, the **Lifelong Learning Programme** has a range of opportunities available for your students and staff to work with and learn from organisations across Europe.

Why not take a look at the LLP's [latest publication](#) to learn more about the different activities and funding streams your organisation can access. Also hear from a college that has approached the LLP less as a sweetener for students and employees than as a vehicle towards becoming a truly international training provider.

## European Lifelong Learning Programme cont:

### ["Get Connected" Online Community](#)

This online community is all about 'virtual mobility' discussing how to maintain relationships, work together and build up networks through social media and online technologies. The site is primarily aimed at organisations involved in the [Leonardo](#), [Grundtvig](#) and [Transversal](#) programmes, however you might find the ideas useful if you are involved other strands of the [Lifelong Learning Programme](#).

## EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

### [Policy Tracker – 'Keeping track of what happened in the world of education for December 2011'](#) (The Pearson Centre for Policy & Learning, 17 Jan '12)

### [Building Engagement, Building Futures](#) (BIS, 15 Dec '11)

The Government has published its plans to increase the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work - "[Building Engagement, Building Futures](#)". The Strategy includes radical reforms to schools, vocational education, skills and welfare provision, and has **five priorities for action**:

- Raising attainment in school so that young people have the skills to compete in the global economy.
- Helping local partners provide services that support all young people, putting us on track to achieve full participation for 16-17 year olds by 2015.
- Encouraging employers to offer more high quality Apprenticeships and work experience places.
- Ensuring that work pays and giving young people the personalised support they need to find it, through Universal Credit, the Work Programme and the Get Britain Working measures.
- Putting in place a **new [Youth Contract](#) worth almost £1 billion** over the next three years.

#### Responses to the Strategy from within the Sector:

- [Pocket Watch – Participation Strategy for 16-24 year olds](#) (Pearson CPL, 16 Dec '11)
- [SLIM-Comment](#) (edition 47, 29 Nov '11) focuses on the new Youth Contract.

### [£250m to give employers power over skills training](#) (BIS, 17 Nov '11)

**The Prime Minister, David Cameron**, has announced a new scheme giving businesses the power to design, develop and purchase the vocational training programmes they need. Employers will be invited to bid for a share of the new £250 million government fund (Employer Ownership Pilot) early in 2012.

Closely linked to this announcement is the recently published **UK Commission for Employment & Skills (UKCES) Report, "[Employer ownership of skills: securing a sustainable partnership for the long term](#)"** (13 Dec '11), which **recommends [employers take centre-stage on training](#)**.

**Pearson's Pocket Watch - [Employer ownership of skills](#)** (16 Dec '11) takes a closer look at the UKCES report and how employer ownership might work?

## [£61m investment in employer led projects to boost enterprise, jobs and growth](#)

(UKCES, 24 Nov '11)

Over £61 million will be invested in projects to drive employer investment in skills across all four nations of the UK. The investment, provided through the [Employer Investment Fund](#) administered by the **UK Commission for Employment and Skills**, will support **18 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)** with a range of employer designed and led skills solutions.

## [Growth and Innovation Fund \(GIF\): Phase Two Launched](#) (SfA, 28 Nov '11)

**Business Secretary, Vince Cable**, and **Skills Minister, John Hayes**, have launched the second phase of the [Growth and Innovation Fund \(GIF\)](#). The GIF helps employers develop their own innovative, sustainable skills solutions which have the potential to transform growth in their sector, region or supply chain.

The Government will be providing £34 million in funding for 2012-13, and with matched funding from businesses, there will be around £60 million available under the GIF this year.

## **Ofsted:**

### [Raising ambition and tackling failure - The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11](#) (22 Nov '11)

**Ofsted** has published its [Annual Report for 2010-11](#). The Report draws on over 31,000 inspection visits from across the schools, early years, children's social care and learning and skills sectors in England.

- **Her Majesty's Chief Inspector Miriam Rosen** [introduces the Ofsted Annual Report 2010/11](#) (video, 6:19 mins)

and

- **Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (2010/11) Matthew Coffey**, introduces the [Learning and Skills highlights](#) from the Report. (video, 4:32 mins)

[Ofsted News - Issue 2, November 2011](#) is an **Annual Report special**, which includes a **section on Adult Learning and Skills**.

### **Responses to the Report from within the Sector include:**

- [Ofsted annual report 2011 - AoC statement](#) (AoC, 22 Nov '11)
- [IfL raises the importance of teaching and learning](#) (IfL, 22 Nov '11)

### **Other news:**

#### [2011 Official Statistics: Learning and Skills inspections and outcomes](#) (6 Dec '11)

This page provides details of **Ofsted's quarterley releases** on statistics relating to the **inspection of learning and skills providers** in England throughout 2011, and a timetable for future releases during 2012.

#### [Volunteering can be beneficial to the most vulnerable youngsters](#) (5 Dec '11)

**Ofsted** has published a **report** based the results of a survey it carried out to see what works best in engaging young people in volunteering within schools, colleges and in the community.

**'Choosing to Volunteer'** finds that by involving young people with their communities - volunteering can provide alternative opportunities for young people to achieve their goals and develop a better sense of civic duty and responsibility.

[Learning and Skills: November 2011](#) - this **update** provides **inspectors and stakeholders** with information and guidance about Ofsted's inspection work in learning and skills.

## **WorldSkills UK - National Competitions are now open** (NAS, 1 Dec '11)

A brand new cycle of **WorldSkills UK national competitions for 2011/12** has opened for entries! This year, [55 WorldSkills UK national competitions](#) are being hosted by a range of organisations across the UK. Entrants can showcase a wide range of skills from automobile technology and caring to stonemasonry and floristry. The competitions are designed to help people enhance their technical and employability skills at the start of their career, helping them progress in the workplace.

To find out more visit the [WorldSkills UK website](#).

**Competition applications must be submitted before 15 March 2012.**

## **Apprenticeships:**

- **MPs call for a Royal Society of Apprentices** (AoC, 8 Dec '11)

**The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning** has called for a **Royal Society of Apprentices** to be established to help promote apprenticeships and enhance the professionalism and esteem of apprentices.

The call follows the **APPG's** year long **Inquiry into Apprenticeships** (which published its [report](#) on 8 Dec '11) to examine how the **Government's** ambitious targets for a further 250,000 placements can be achieved and the barriers that currently exist which may hinder the progress of the £1 billion public investment.

- **FE Week's Nick Summers visits parliament to meet the apprentices working in MP's offices** (13 Jan, '12)

- **Business, Innovation and Skills Commons Select Committee announces New Inquiry into Apprenticeships** (www.parliament.co.uk, 21 Dec '11)

**The Business, Innovation and Skills Committee** has announced its intention to conduct an **Inquiry into Apprenticeships**. [Click here](#) for the **terms of reference** and the **guide to written submissions**.

Written evidence should be sent to the Committee at [biscommem@parliament.uk](mailto:biscommem@parliament.uk), **by close of business on Friday 3 February 2012**.

- **Apprenticeship Week 2012: 6-10 February**

The **5th National Apprenticeship Week** takes place from 6-10 February 2012. [Click here](#) to find out how you can get involved!

- **Small Employer incentive to employ an Apprentice** (NAS, 6 Dec '11)

**The Government** has [announced a new incentive](#) to encourage thousands of small firms that don't currently employ apprentices to take on a young apprentice aged 16 to 24. The incentive is for employers with up to 50 (and in some cases up to 250) employees and comprises a payment of £1,500 payable in two stages. It will be available to small firms in all industries and for Apprenticeships at all levels from April 2012. [Click here](#) to find out more about the **Employer Incentive**.

- **NAS improves its service for small and medium businesses (update)** (NAS, Dec '11)

As part of its commitment to continually improve its service, the **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)** has reviewed the service it provides to small and medium sized employers, taking into account feedback from a number of sources including government and employers. As a result, a revised service specifically tailored to small and medium sized employers has been developed and will officially launch in the New Year.

- **Government funding for 19,000 degree-level apprenticeships** (BIS, 1 Dec '11)

It has been announced that **£18.7m** from the **Higher Apprenticeship Fund** will support thousands of apprenticeships up to degree equivalent in the construction, advanced engineering, and financial services, enabling employers, colleges and universities to deliver the advanced skills most critical for growth.

## Apprenticeships cont.

- [LSIS supported project promotes apprenticeships to young people](#) (LSIS, 6 Dec '11)

A new [apprenticeship toolkit](#) has been developed by the **London Vocational Peer Group (LVPG)** to help schools, colleges and other providers spread the message about the benefits of apprenticeships and to ensure their learners make more informed choices for the future.

## Recent Publications:

- [What are apprenticeships for?](#) (AELP, 10 Nov '11)

This **Association of Employment & Learning Providers (AELP)** [paper](#) describes and celebrates the recent history of the apprenticeship brand, which no longer simply embraces first jobs for 16 year olds, but has developed to allow tens of thousands of young people to be converted from dead end 'jobs without training', and upskill adult employees to enable them to progress to higher skilled jobs/higher education, often tackling low levels of literacy and numeracy on route.

- [Rethinking apprenticeships](#) (IPPR, Nov '11)

This **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)** [report](#) brings together key international experts, industry professionals and policymakers in an attempt to set out a policy agenda that explores how to strengthen the role of apprenticeships in society and the economy.

## Third Sector:

### [Uncertainty over funding of Skills - Third Sector](#) (Third Sector News, 11 Jan '12)

Support for the workforce improvement body has not yet been confirmed beyond March 2012. Neither Skills - Third Sector nor its two government funders are able to confirm whether its financial support will continue with less than three months of this financial year remaining.

### [TSNLA thanked by LGA, Hoxex, AoC and AELP for raising teaching qualifications issue at recent LSIS England Skills Committee](#) (TSNLA, 10 Nov '11)

### [LINKS - Developing People & Skills](#) (Skills - Third Sector)

**LINKS** is a new tool, developed by **Skills - Third Sector**, for charities and social enterprises to help them develop the right skills in the right way for the right money. To find out more [click here](#).

### [Commons committee gives its views on the Big Society agenda](#) (SW Forum, 19 Dec '11)

The **House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee (PASC)** has published its [report](#) on **The Big Society**, with an extended headline of *"Big Society doesn't do enough to help 'the little society': Without a coherent implementation plan, there is confusion over message, whilst smaller charities face barriers in contracting and commissioning policies."*

PASC calls on the Government to appoint a single minister to take charge of the agenda and recommends the introduction of impact assessments for every Government measure.

## INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING (IfL)

### [Updated list of teachers and trainers who should not be employed in the further education and skills sector](#) (SfA, 14 Dec '11)

The **Institute for Learning (IfL)** has issued an letter to the sector listing those teachers and trainers who should not be employed in the further education and skills sector, following the outcome of recent case hearings leading to the expulsion of three teachers from membership of IfL.

### [IfL announces results of 2011 Advisory Council elections](#) (IfL, 25 Nov '11)

IfL has announced the results of the elections to its Advisory Council. [Click here](#) to see the full list of elected representatives, including **Learning South West's Chief Executive, Paula Jones, Rosie Brown from Strode College, Street** and **Wendy Henwood from Cornwall**.

### [IfL's response to the DfE's Consultation on QTLS for teaching in schools](#) (IfL, Dec '11)

IfL has responded to the **Department for Education (DfE) consultation** on proposals to enable teachers with QTLS to teach in schools as qualified teachers. **2,500 members** responded to IfL's survey to share views and help shape the [IfL's response](#) in support of the DfE proposals.

**Download** the latest issues of [Intuition](#) (Issue 7, Winter 2011/12) and [CPD Matters](#) (Issue 2, Winter 2011/12)

## FURTHER EDUCATION

### [Stand by for yet another year of raised temperatures](#) (TES, 6 Jan '12)

**Stephen Exley** looks at the FE sector's burning issues that are likely to stay aflame in 2012.

### [FE suffers crushing blow from Ofsted](#) (TES, 25 Nov '11)

**Ofsted** found "**not a single instance of outstanding teaching and learning**" amongst the colleges inspected during 2010-11, according to its recently published [Annual Report](#).

### [A simple way to help the FE sector save millions](#) (TES, 23 Dec '11)

Simplifying funding and cutting red tape have become two key mantras of the FE sector under the Coalition. A [recent report published by the National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#) argues that this is not before time, estimating that the admin costs to colleges of managing the current raft of funding, qualification and assurance systems amount to £180 million a year, with the figure rising to an astonishing £250-300 million for all FE providers.

While welcoming the efforts of **BIS** and the **SfA** thus far as a "good start", the NAO warns that the bodies have failed to grasp the sheer magnitude of the problems they face.

[The Skills Funding Agency's statement](#), in response to the National Audit Office Report "Reducing Bureaucracy in FE in England". (SfA, 16 Dec '11)

### [FE loans available to learners from March 2013](#) (FE Week, 22 Dec '11)

Learners will be able to apply for a further education loan from March 2013, according to a clarification by the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)**.

The announcement, published in [A Guide to Further Education Loans for colleges and training organisations](#) (SfA, Dec '11), states: "*The FE Loans system will be launched in March 2013, at which point learners can apply for an FE Loan in advance of courses starting in the 2013/14 academic year.*"

Anyone aged 24 or above and studying a course at level 3 or higher will be eligible for the new funding scheme, worth up to £4,000 depending on the qualification.

**[Business and learners to benefit from stronger, more flexible FE sector](#)** (BIS, 1 Dec '11)

Key reforms to Further Education will see businesses helping to develop the courses that best meet their needs for growth, increased education exports and promotion of excellence in teaching as recently announced by **Skills Minister, John Hayes**.

Measures outlined in [New Challenges, New Chances](#) will give employers the power to support the design and delivery of new courses, helping create greater confidence in qualifications and equip learners with the skills they need.

**[Lack of understanding about vocational options persists among young people](#)**

(C&G, Sept '11)

This [report](#), produced by the **City & Guilds Centre for Skills and Development**, suggests that parents and young people both tend to have very fixed ideas about academic versus vocational routes and that these perceptions are rarely challenged by teachers (or parents).

**[Ofsted wants to let students and employers rate colleges](#)**, but union fears website would be an outlet for grievances. (TES, 2 Dec '11)

**[Challenges and Chances for Learners in 2012](#)** (FE Week, 13 Jan '12)

In honour of the new strapline for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, **FE Week** has asked two further education (FE) experts, **David Hughes, Chief Executive of NIACE**, and **Toni Pearce, NUS Vice-President for FE**, what they thought the "*New Challenges, New Chances*" would be for learners this year.

**[Colleges in their Communities Inquiry - final report published](#)** (NIACE, 1 Nov '11)

If colleges in England are to do 'more with less' then the Government needs to cut 'red-tape' and all colleges need to do more to engage with and respond to learners and their local communities. This is the headline finding of the [Independent Commission on Colleges in their Communities](#) which published its **final report - [A Dynamic Nucleus: Colleges at the heart of local communities](#)** in November. The Commission is also calling for a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders, working closely with local employers, within a new community curriculum.

**[Qualifications and Credit Framework \(QCF\) qualifications confirmed for public funding \(updated 5 Jan '12\)](#)**

This list, published by the **Skills Funding Agency (SfA)**, is intended for Sector Skills Councils, Sector Bodies, Awarding Organisations (AOs) and Providers. The list identifies the qualifications within the **QCF** that have so far been confirmed as appropriate for public funding as part of the **single adult skills budget in 2011/12**.

**[Help your learners benefit from the QCF: LSIS shows the way forward](#)** (LSIS, 2 Dec '11)

**LSIS** has developed a range of [tailored resources](#) to help organisations make the most of the **Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)**. The QCF not only gives individuals the chance to learn in a more flexible way but also enables a wider range of organisations, including employers, to have their training officially recognised.

[Government gives green light to 12 new Studio Schools](#) (The Edge Foundation, 14 Dec '11)

[Studio Schools](#) are a new concept in education and designed for **14-19 year olds of all abilities**. These small schools for 300 students are designed to feel more like a workplace than a school, with a 9.00 am – 5.00 pm working day and year round opening.

Amongst the 12 new schools announced is [The LeAF Studio School in Bournemouth](#).

## HIGHER EDUCATION

[University application late surge](#) (BBC News, 4 Jan '12)

There has been a late surge in university applications for the UK, according to **UCAS**, but total numbers are still down on this time last year. Applications from people wanting to go to university in 2012 picked up last month despite the trebling this year of maximum tuition fees.

[ITT cuts may force closures](#) (THE, 5 Jan '12)

Although this article focuses mainly on the impact of cuts to ITT for secondary education, the potential "loss of infrastructure" in university accredited provision will be of relevance to **all** parts of the Sector.

['Wrong statistic' blamed for Aimhigher's fall](#) (THE, 5 Jan '12)

A decision to use the "wrong statistic" to measure the success of **Aimhigher** contributed to the demise of the national widening participation scheme, an academic has claimed. **Neil Harrison, Senior Research Fellow in Education at the University of the West of England in Bristol**, has argued that there was strong evidence for Aimhigher's success.

### **AimHigher South West "legacy" DVD now available**

Following the closure of the National AimHigher Programme the **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**, wished to ensure that there should be an Aimhigher "legacy" of widening participation expertise and knowledge of practice. This **DVD** has been produced as part of that legacy, drawing upon the work of the three **Aimhigher partnerships in the South West - Aimhigher LIFE, West and Peninsula**.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the DVD please contact [Stephen Furness](#), Aimhigher SW Regional Manager, UWE, Bristol.

[Summer schools lead to better chance of top university place, says study](#)

(The Guardian, 18 Jan '12)

Teenagers who attend summer schools are significantly more likely to get into a highly competitive university than children with similar academic profiles who don't – and the benefit is greatest for the poorest children, according to a **recent report** published by the educational charity, [The Sutton Trust](#).

**Researchers at Bristol University** have uncovered a "summer school effect", which reveals that more than three-quarters (76%) of children who get into a summer school then go on to an elite university, compared with just over half (55%) of children with a similar academic and social background who did not apply for a summer school place.

### [Winning widening participation](#) (SLIM, 15 Dec '11)

A scheme to widen access to higher education, involving the **Universities of Exeter and Bristol**, has received national recognition by winning a **Times Higher Award**. The prize for '**Widening Participation Initiative of the Year**' went to **Realising Opportunities**, which is a collaborative programme run 12 leading UK universities promoting fair access to higher education and encouraging social mobility for able students from under-represented groups.

### [NUS launches "I Am The Change"](#) (EAUC, 24 Nov '11)

The **National Union of Students (NUS)** have launched a new project called [I Am The Change](#) to encourage and support students to campaign for positive change at their college or university. The "change" can be on anything students want, whether it be educational, community based, environmental, personal development, health and wellbeing, careers and politics.

Watch this [short video](#) (2:40 mins) to find out more about the project.

## REGIONAL NEWS & NETWORKS

### [Merger of equals' in the South West](#) (TES, 25 Nov '11)

A merger between **Stroud College** and **Filton College** has been approved by the **Government** and is set to be completed in **February 2012**. The new institution will be called **South Gloucestershire and Stroud College** and has been described by the colleges as a "merger of equals", although Filton's Principal will have delegated responsibility for decisions at Stroud until the merger is complete.

**John Huggett, Filton's Chair of Governors**, said: *"It is a merger of equals, with each college in a strong financial position and well-matched in terms of our ambitions to increase learning - and life - opportunities for all our students. The merger means we will be able to expand our engineering and sports provision at Stroud and introduce other new courses."*

### [AoC Beacon Award 2011/12 - South West Winners](#) (AoC, 17 Nov '11)

**City of Bristol College** and **Exeter College** were amongst the winners at this year's **AoC Beacon Awards**, and a number of other [South West Colleges](#) also reached the shortlisting stage.

- [Exeter College wins Edge Award](#) (The Edge Foundation, 17 Nov '11)
- [City of Bristol College earns Beacon Award at ceremony](#) (This is Bristol, 29 Nov '11)

### [Careerpilot is live!](#)

**Careerpilot** is a **free website helping 14-19 year olds in the South West** to plan their future work and study, including to degree level.

It offers:

- Information on the pathway choices at [14](#), [16](#) and [18](#)
- Information on [16 job sectors, routes to work and study - including to degree level](#)
- [Progression Planner](#), [Profile Builder](#), [Find a Provider](#), [Lesson Plans](#), etc.

## Around the Region:

Congratulations to [Malcolm Wharton, Principal of Hartpury College](#) and [Margaret Ellen Winser, Chair of the Board of Governors at Truro and Penwith College](#), who have received a **CBE** and **MBE** respectively in the **2012 New Year's Honours List**.

### [Filton College teams up with housing charity](#) (FE News, 16 Jan '11)

**Filton College** has partnered up with housing charity [1625 Independent People](#) to give construction apprentices hands on building repair experience by undertaking maintenance work on properties owned by the charity.

### [Attention! Military academy set to open at Bicton College](#) (Exmouth Herald, 4 Jan '12)

The first-ever military academy at a taxpayer-funded college in the UK will start next September.

### [Turning up the volume on the learner voice: our groundbreaking d/Deaf training is in demand](#) (LSIS, 2 Dec '11)

**d/Deaf students from Exeter College** have contributed to a pioneering approach, supported by **LSIS**, to raise greater awareness of the challenges facing d/Deaf\* learners, which has attracted top-level interest from the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)**, the **Skills Funding Agency (SFA)** and the **Office for Disability Issues**.

### [Voluntary Sector Apprenticeships Launched in Plymouth](#) (This is Devon, 21 Nov '11)

An apprenticeship for people wanting to work in the voluntary sector has been launched in **Plymouth**. [Community and Social Action Plymouth \(CASAP\)](#), in partnership with the **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**, has created apprenticeships for young people wishing to work in the voluntary and community sector.

## Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs):

### [South West LEP summaries and areas updated](#) (SLIM, 10 Jan '12)

An overview of each of the **regional local enterprise partnerships**, along with a coverage map for each area has been updated, and now available from the **SLIM website**.

## LSIS Support for Literacy, Language and Numeracy Programme: South West Regional Events : February - March 2012

The **LSIS Support for Literacy, Language and Numeracy Programme** is running a series of full and half-day events across the South West at various locations during **February and March 2012**.

### Examples of events on offer include:

- Developing Numeracy with Vocational Learners
  - (a) assessment
  - (b) concepts
  - (c) planning & tracking
- Training the Numeracy Teacher Trainers
  - teacher training for developing numeracy with vocational learners
- Developing Whole Organisation Approach (WOA) to Numeracy (employers) inc. support with partnership working
- Developing Innovative & Creative Approaches to Teaching Literacy (focus on Entry Level learners)
- Understanding Dyslexia & Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties

### Event Fees:

- Half Day - £75.00 per person
- Full Day - £150.00 per person

*(which can be paid for from your LSIS account funds)*

Visit the [LSIS Online Events Calendar](#) for more information and to book your place now!

## WVPC 14-19 External Knowledge Exchange Network (EKEN) Events:

### [Learning in Context Visits](#)

During 2012 the WVPC 14-19 EKEN is running a series of free "learning in context visits" for small group of staff from schools and colleges to visit specialist facilities at 14-19 EKEN regional university partners, including University of Bath (Sports), Bath Spa University (Music and Performing Arts) and University of the West of England (Forensic Science).

Registration for the first of these visits to Sport @ Bath on 27 February '12 is [now open!](#)

### WVPC 14-19 EKEN Conference - 14 March 2012, Bath Racecourse

The first WVPC 14-19 EKEN Conference will be taking place on 14 March '12 at Bath Racecourse. The theme of the event is "HE in FE: Choices, Challenges and the Student Experience" and the keynote speaker will be Fiona McMillan, Principal, Bridgwater College and President of the AC.

E-mail [Kate Thomas](#), WVPC 14-19 EKEN Co-ordinator, for more information.

## Life Change UK Event:

**'Understanding & Responding to Challenging Behaviour' - promoting positive change for young people and adults, working more effectively with hard to reach groups**

Dates: Thursday 16 February '12 (Plymouth) or Thursday 23 February '12 (Taunton)

For more information on these events and to book a place [click here](#).

## JISC Regional Support Centre South West Events:

### VLE & Intranet Developers Forum - 15 March 2012, Taunton School

**Target Audience:** All staff interested in VLEs, from HE/FE/ACL/Specialist Colleges & WBL sectors

**Price:** £35.00 - click here for [more information](#) and [how to book a place](#).

### Learning Resources Forum - 28 March 2012, Taunton Conference Centre

**Target Audience:** All staff interested in the use and integration of Learning Resources

**Price:** FREE - click here for [more information](#) and [how to book a place](#).

## LSW NEWS & EVENTS

### [Chief Executive re-elected to Institute for Learning Advisory Council](#) (6 Dec '11)

Learning South West are pleased to announce that **Paula Jones, Chief Executive**, has been successfully re-elected to serve on the [Institute for Learning's Advisory Council](#).

### [New Bishops Hull House website launched!](#)

We have just launched a **brand new website** that is **specifically dedicated to the use of Bishops Hull House as a venue for conferences and events**. Located in the centre of the region and close to J26 of the M5, we have a choice of fully equipped meeting rooms with free car parking and wi-fi .

Our lovely house and gardens are available to hire, whatever your event - from business meetings and conferences to christenings, wedding breakfasts , family parties, and wakes.

[Visit our new website](#) to see what we can offer or contact **Georgina Skirton on (01823) 365447** or **Emma Fawcett on (01823) 365438** to discuss your requirements.

### **Learning South West Membership reaches 50+**

Our members include, cross sector organisations, individuals, private training providers and third sector organisations.

To find out how joining Learning South West could benefit your organisation visit our [Membership pages](#) or contact the **Membership Team** on (01823) 347951, e-mail [membership@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:membership@learning-southwest.org.uk).

### **2011 Annual Review published**

Read our [Annual Review](#) outlining our major achievements with members and partners over the period 2010 to 2011.

### **Last chance to 'Have a go' at a new skill**

As part of the **World Skills London 2011** initiative, the '[Have a Go](#)' campaign is allowing people to gain hands-on experience in a new activity **before the end of February 2012** - and hopefully be inspired to find out more about learning.

We've already encouraged **over 4,000 people** to 'Have a Go' at a new skill at various events across the Region, and hope to encourage many more before the end of February!

If you have any events where you would like to give adults the chance to try something new please **contact Hayley Broom at [hayley\\_broom@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:hayley_broom@learning-southwest.org.uk) or 01823 365435 for details of the support available.**

### **Centre for *informal* Learning (CfiL) Qualifications**

The **Centre for *informal* Learning (CfiL)**, based at **Learning South West**, is an [ABC Awards](#) approved centre, accredited to deliver the following programmes throughout the South West Region:

- Level 1 Certificate in an Introduction to Youth Work
- Level 2 Award/Certificate in Youth Work Practice
- Level 3 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Youth Work Practice
- Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement

**If you would like find out more about any of our courses please e-mail [John Gibson](mailto:John.Gibson@learning-southwest.org.uk) or phone (01823) 365650.**

### **Forthcoming Professional Development Opportunities in 2012:**

Regional Inclusion Forum	Friday 24 February '12
South West Regional Teacher Education Forum	Tuesday 6 March '12
South West Regional Staff Development/HR Managers' Forum	Wednesday 14 March '12
Professional Formation - Applying for QTLS/ATLS	Tuesday 20 March '12
Regional Inclusion Forum	Tuesday 15 May '12
Senior Curriculum Managers' Forum	Tuesday 22 May '12

**If you would like further information about any of these events please e-mail: [events@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:events@learning-southwest.org.uk)**