

### Issue 9 - March 2011

Spring is nearly here, so hopefully we can look forward to 'fresh shoots' emerging, but we know that 2011 will continue to be a time of uncertainty and of change.

We currently seem to be in a phase of consultations to inform the direction of

a range of activities looking to the future. These include, amongst others, the recent [LLUK review of teaching qualifications](#) (now re-named as 'qualifications for learning professionals'), consultation about [information published by HE providers \(through HEFCE\)](#), plus Committee Inquiries about the [participation of 16-19 year olds in education and training](#), and [about the future of HE](#).

For those engaged in the FE and Skills Sector a big change afoot is the current transition of the [Institute for Learning \(IfL\) to self-financing status](#). For many members this means having to pay their membership fees themselves for the first time since the advent of the 2007 Workforce Reforms. Amidst all the change, now is an important time to gather together and have a collective voice where we can - and to make the most of our newly acquired professional status within the Sector.

We know that there are huge levels of commitment within the Sector, with practitioners at individual level working hard to the benefit of their learners. Let's continue to put forward the case for lifelong learning across all parts of the Sector and do what we can to maintain its profile. On this note we are pleased to congratulate South West colleagues whose contributions have been nationally recognised in the 2011 New Year Honours List:

- [Dr Paul Phillips, Principal & Chief Executive of Weston College](#)  
- appointed an OBE for services to FE and to the voluntary sector
- [Helen Sage, former Programme Co-ordinator at City of Bristol College](#)  
- appointed an MBE for services to FE

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### FUNDING & CHANGES

#### Skills Funding Agency (SfA):

[Changes to Funding Entitlements 2011/12](#) (10 Feb '11)

[Financial health assessment guidance for non college providers](#) (5 Jan '11)<sup>2</sup>

Latest information on how the financial health assessment grade for non college providers is calculated.

[Framework for Excellence: Outputs Guide - Version 1.6](#) (13 Jan '11)

The Framework for Excellence Outputs Guide 2010 explains in full the changes that have been made to the presentation of Framework for Excellence data, and also includes a full explanation of how the outputs are calculated.

[Minimum Levels of Performance and Notices to Improve Guidance applying to the 2011/12 academic year - Version 2](#) (21 Dec '10)

This document sets out how the SfA and the YPLA intend to approach identified provider under performance in the analysis of success rates against Minimum Levels of Performance and the operation of Notices to Improve in the FE system in the 2010/11 academic and replaces the version published on the 14 December 2010.

#### Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA):

[Click here](#) for a list of **YPLA Key Contacts** and the areas they cover. (13 Dec '10)

The YPLA has published the following documents outlining the arrangements for 16-19 funding of education and training in England for the 2011/12 academic year:

- [16-19 Funding Statement and Statutory Guidance: Arrangements for 16-19 Funding of Education and Training](#) (20 Dec '10)
- [16-19 Funding Statement - Q&A](#) (3 Feb '11)

[Why the QCF is tying FE in knots](#) (TES, 28 Jan '11)

It was meant to help students build up academic achievements bit by bit, but the **Qualifications and Credit Framework's** main claim to fame so far is its ability to sow confusion, writes Stephen Exley.

### LIFELONG LEARNING

#### Proposed Changes to ESOL Funding:

[English course cuts 'to hit jobs'](#) (BBC News, 16 Feb '11)

Changes to the way English language courses for foreigners are funded will affect citizenship and the jobs market, claims the **Association of Colleges** in an article on the **BBC website**.

**NIACE** have also issued a statement ["ESOL learners at risk - NIACE's view"](#) (20 Jan '11) highlighting their concerns about the proposed funding changes and have shown their support by signing the ["Action for ESOL" petition](#).

To find out more about the **"Action for ESOL" campaign** and to sign the petition yourself [click here](#).

### [Concerns over latest Ofsted literacy survey](#) (NIACE, 27 Jan '11)

NIACE is concerned about the latest **Ofsted literacy survey "Removing barriers to literacy"**, and raises three main points about the way Ofsted reports on literacy work and about the findings themselves.

### **Lifelong Learning UK:**

#### [LLUK Information & Advice Service \(IAS\) introduces live "web chats"](#) (19 Jan '11)

IAS has introduced a new a live "web chat" service which will enable members of the public to "talk" to an IAS advisor in real time and on a public forum via [LLUK's website](#).

To register for alerts of upcoming "web chat" sessions [click here](#).

### **Publications:**

#### [Implementing the FE Workforce Strategy – A development agenda for Local Adult Learning Providers](#) (published February 2011)

This document, produced in partnership with **HOLEX, the University & College Union (UCU) and NIACE**, supports the Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England 2011, and is designed for use by adult and community learning providers in planning workforce development.

LLUK have also produced the following Workforce Strategy documents:

[Workforce Strategy for the Work Based Learning Sector 2011](#) - produced in partnership with the **Association of Learning Providers (ALP)**. Published December 2010

[Shaping the Future: The Workforce Strategy for the Further Education Sector in England 2011 and Beyond](#) - published December 2010, and developed through consultation and collaboration with the **Workforce Strategy National Partner Group**.

### [Is the providers' 'black box' the key to sustainable employment for young and old alike?](#)

(ALP, 11 Feb '11)

Following consultation with its members the **Association of Learning Providers** has pulled together a simple outline calling for even more co-ordination between three Government Departments (**BIS, DFE and DWP**) in an attempt to bring skills and employment policies closer together.

### **New UKCES Publication:**

#### [Praxis: Working to learn, learning to work](#) (published January 2011)

Why do some workplaces create 'expansive' learning environments, whilst others are more 'restrictive'? In this edition of Praxis, **Alan Felstead, Alison Fuller, Nick Jewson and Lorna Unwin**, explore this question through six case studies.

### [Support Learning at Work Day 2011](#) (SLIM, 9 Feb '11)

The 12th National Learning at Work Day, organised by the **Campaign for Learning**, is due to take place on **Thursday 19 May 2011**. To find out how your organisation can sign up for this year's event [click here](#).

## EU Lifelong Learning Programmes:

### [Enhance Continuing Professional Development \(CPD\) with new "Investing in Learning" Guide](#) (16 Dec '10)

This guide shows how you can enhance CPD in your organisation, through the **EU Leonardo, Grundtvig and Transversal programmes**, and includes:

- information about the range of CPD opportunities available
- tips from project participants and the Ecorys team on how to enhance CPD through careful planning and preparation

and is essential reading if you're thinking about submitting an application.

### Sign up for "e-flashes"

Click on the links below to sign up to receive monthly "e-flashes" for the:

- [Leonardo Programme](#) (vocational education and training)
- [Grundtvig Programme](#) (adult education – non-vocational)
- [Transversal Programme](#) (learning professionals)

### [A bridge to the future: European policy for vocational education and training 2002-10](#) (CEDEFOP, 7 Dec '11)

This document provides an evaluation of the European vocational training policy over the last 8 years and looks ahead to how the new policy framework, Europe 2020, will underpin continuing reform in vocational education and training and lifelong learning in the next decade.

## [Adult Learners' Week 2011 Nominations - A Big Thank You](#)

### [Learning can transform lives and communities](#) (NIACE, 22 Dec '10)

[Sign Up Now](#) is a national outreach initiative which promotes adult learning of all kinds by raising awareness of the learning opportunities that are available to adults and encourages them to take up some new learning during 2011. Co-ordinated by **NIACE**, the campaign and builds on the momentum generated by [Adult Learners' Week](#) to support enrolment activity.

### [NIACE celebrates its 90th Anniversary](#) (NIACE, January 2011)

To celebrate NIACE's 90th anniversary, Editor of "Adults Learning", **Paul Stanistreet**, outlines NIACE's instrumental role in making the case for adult learning throughout its long history - [read more](#).

## Skills - Third Sector:

### [National Skills Networks and Academies: A framework for building and promoting quality in third sector skills](#) (17 Jan '11)

Acting on feedback from consultation, **Skills – Third Sector** are working with partners to develop a network model to help fill key skills gaps in the sector - click on the above link to find out more.

**Skills Policy Briefings** - these regular updates on the latest policies affecting skills and learning in voluntary sector organisations are available to [download](#) from the **Skills - Third Sector website**.

## [2011 - European Year of Volunteering](#)

**2011** will be the **European Year of Volunteering (EY2011)** and aims to celebrate the millions of European citizens of all ages who are willing to invest their time, talents and money to make a positive contribution to their community.

Volunteering is a valuable element of lifelong learning since it leads to new skills and competences, not to mention renewed self confidence and improved employment prospects.

**Visit the official [EY2011 website](#)** to see what fellow volunteers across Europe are doing or share a volunteering story of your own.

[European Year of Volunteering is a welcome boost for the Big Society](#), says **Civil Society Minister Nick Hurd**. (Cabinet Office, 25 Jan '11)

## [Pioneering teenagers to help build the Big Society: National Citizen Service now recruiting](#) (Cabinet Office, 16 Feb '11)

**The Prime Minister, David Cameron**, is personally heading up a new search for pioneering teenagers to sign up for **National Citizen Service (NCS)** in 2011.

The two month programme will mix 16 year olds from a variety of backgrounds, and will include a two week stay away from home. It aims to give 16 year olds a challenge and help them to help their communities.

[National Citizens Service on Facebook](#)

## **EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT**

### [Commons Education Select Committee launches new Inquiry into the participation of 16-19 year olds in education and training](#) (www.parliament.uk - 11 Jan '11)

This Inquiry will address the following points:

- What impact the Education Maintenance Allowance has had on the participation, attendance, achievement and welfare of young people and how effective will be the Discretionary Learner Support Fund in replacing it?
- What preparations are necessary, for providers and local authorities, for the gradual raising of the participation age to 18 years and what is their current state of readiness?
- What impact raising the participation age will have on areas such as academic achievement, access to vocational education and training, student attendance and behaviour, and alternative provision?

### [Improving outcomes for disadvantaged young people: Case studies of effective practice](#) (YPLA, 7 Dec '10)

Social class and socio-economic background remains the strongest indicator of educational achievement. This **YPLA/OPM publication** showcases the work done by 16-19 providers in a variety of settings working with diverse vulnerable and marginalised groups.

### [Today's Young People; Tomorrow's Economy](#) (wired-gov.net - 16 Feb '11)

This report, published by **The Prince's Trust and Citi Foundation**, highlights the potential financial benefits of helping young people into self-employment or other work through The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme.

### [Learner Achievement Tracker Handbook](#) (YPLA, 31 Jan '11)

Handbook for users of Learner Achievement Tracker with information on Value Added, Minimum Levels of Performance and other useful information.

### [LLUK Review of current teaching qualifications for the further education sector in England](#)

The Findings Report from Phase 1 of the Review (January 2011) is now available to [download](#).

The second and final phase of the Review has now closed (21 Jan - 11 Feb '11). As well as being able to submit views via the online survey, over 40 people attended the South West "Open Review Event" in Taunton on 2 Feb '11 to discuss the proposed changes face-to-face with LLUK staff.

A summary document, detailing the outcomes of the second phase of the Review, will be available to download from the LLUK website shortly.

### **Just Released!** - [LLUK/ACETT "Developing & Supporting Effective Teaching Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector - Guidance for Providers"](#) (LLUK, 3 March '11)

Practitioner and inspection evidence shows that teachers and trainers who experience a range of teaching practice and are supported by a mentor have a broader understanding of how to teach and train effectively. Yet organisations, especially smaller providers, have told us that it can be challenging to develop and support effective teaching practice.

To address this challenge, **LLUK** and **ACETT** (the national network of Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training) have worked together to develop this ["plain English" guide](#) which includes links to helpful online resources and ideas.

[Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance \(TAQA\) Update](#) - amended handbooks, TAQA webinar and generic assessment and quality assurance events. (City & Guilds, 13 Dec '10)

[PTLLS, CTTLS and DTLLS Update](#) - details of the teacher training grant and information for candidates undertaking teaching qualifications. (City & Guilds, 13 Dec '10)

### [EU and international ITT qualifications](#) (SVUK, 21 Jan '11)

The "Comparison Tool" for EU and other international teacher/trainer qualifications has been developed in response to the sector's need to understand the scope of these qualifications. **SVUK** thinks it can be developed further to make it even more useful - do you agree? If yes, take this [10 minute survey](#) to back a proposal for further development.

### [Ofsted News - Issue 20 \(January '11\)](#)

The **Adult Learning Section** features stories on:

- [Annual Report focus on learning and skills](#)
- [Having students at the 'heart' of provision](#)
- [You're hired](#)

### [LSIS Online Survey - Feedback on Programmes & Resources](#) (LSIS, 14 Dec '10)

**LSIS** have developed this **10 minute survey** to help gauge how far their programmes and services are meeting the needs of providers of further education and skills training, and individual users.

### [Use the last of your LSIS Account credit on conferences and events before 31 March '11](#)

A reminder that any remaining unused credit on activated accounts will expire on this date.

### [Message from the New Chief Executive of LSIS](#) (LSIS, 27 Jan '11)

[Rob Wye](#), who joined LSIS as their new Chief Executive in January, looks to the future, though warns of a tough year ahead.

### [Work experience opportunities: The Prince's Trust partners with Jobcentre Plus](#)

(direct.gov.uk - 15 Feb '11)

Advisers from youth charity **The Prince's Trust** and other voluntary organisations will be located in **Jobcentre Plus (JCP)** offices as part of a new scheme to help jobseekers find volunteering and training opportunities in their area.

### **Apprenticeships:**

#### [National Apprenticeship Awards 2011 - Nominations Now Open](#)

This annual competition, hosted by the **National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**, celebrates the success of top apprentices and Apprenticeship employers.

New for this year - as part of the 2011 Apprenticeship Awards, NAS will also be working with **City & Guilds** to also honour England's Top 100 Apprenticeship employers.

**To submit a nomination [click here](#). Closing date: Friday 25 March 2011**

#### [John Hayes delivers new quality guarantee for Apprenticeships](#) (BIS, 20 Jan '11)

**FE, Skills & Lifelong Learning Minister, John Hayes**, has announced new measures to guarantee the quality of the Government's flagship Apprenticeship programme, ensuring every apprenticeship delivers training that directly meets the needs of employers and learners.

#### [EU Skills Launch First Ever Waste Management Apprenticeship](#) (NAS, 7 Dec '10)

The UK's first ever dedicated Apprenticeship for the waste management and recycling industry has been launched by **Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills)** - the Sector Skills Council for the gas, power, waste management and water industries.

#### [WorldSkills UK Competitions 2011 - Register your Apprentices now!](#) (NAS, January 2011)

If you believe your apprentices have what it takes to be named the "Best in the UK" then make sure you [register them](#) to take part in WorldSkills UK, the annual set of skills competitions, before its too late.

WorldSkills UK Competitions are run in over 50 skill areas across five sectors and test knowledge and practical application against current industry benchmarks, inspiring apprentices to be their best.

**Most 'classes' are still accepting entries until Thursday 24 March 2011.**

### ['Tenner 2011' Competition challenges students' entrepreneurial skills](#)

(Excellence Gateway, 14 Feb '11)

**Enterprise UK's 'Tenner 2011' Competition** (which runs from 1-31 March '11) gives students a £10 note and challenges them to make as much profit and social impact as possible through enterprising activities.

**To find out more about the scheme and to register to take part [click here](#).**

### [Train to Gain - transition requires a joined-up approach](#) (FE News, 6 Jan '11)

From September next year there will be no Train to Gain funding, yet too many management teams have done little to address the disappearance of that funding stream, or restructure their offer to recognise the move to an Apprenticeship dominated work-based learning environment, writes **Trevor Luker, Managing Director of Pearson Work Based Learning**, in his article for FE News.

### [Employer Perspectives Survey 2010](#) (UKCES, published January 2011)

The **Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS)** is one of two major employer surveys conducted on a biennial basis by **UKCES**. The aim of the survey is to provide robust evidence for policy makers regarding employers' engagement, satisfaction with Government, and support for recruitment and workforce development.

### ['Time to Train' will strike right balance for business](#) (BIS, 16 Feb '11)

This statement, issued by the **Department for BIS**, indicates that the current 'Time to Train' regulations will **not** be extended to employees of small and medium-sized businesses this April, as previously anticipated.

### [Ofqual names new CEO](#) (FE News, 22 Dec '10)

**Glenys Stacey** is to become the new Chief Executive of examinations and qualifications regulator **Ofqual** from March 2011.

## E-LEARNING

### [Online learning needs a strategy, says new report](#) (JISC National, 27 Jan '11)

Universities and colleges need to make online learning a central part of their strategies if they are to stay competitive globally, says a new report written by the **Online Learning Task Force for HEFCE**.

To **download** a copy of the full report "*Collaborate to Compete - seizing the opportunity of online learning for UK higher education*" [click here](#).

### [Get Connected](#) (JISC RSC SW, 10 Jan '11)

**JISC RSC South West** has now setup links and RSS feeds to all its content, including all out webinar videos and presentations.

### [Somerset College leads the way on 'books' with a difference](#) (SCAT, 1 Feb '11)

Bags laden with books may no longer be the hallmark of future students, if trials at **Somerset College, Taunton** are a success.

A pilot project to download huge text books onto tiny "Kindles" (the portable electronic reading devices from Amazon), is putting the College at the forefront of technology - on a par with major universities around the country.

[Go ON - get more out of life online](#) (Direct.gov.uk, 19 Jan '11)

The **"Go ON - get more out of life online" campaign** aims to inspire people to make going online their New Year's Resolution. Activities will be taking place at more than 1,500 UK online centres, Jobcentres, libraries and community centres across England, offering visitors the chance to see how the internet would work for them – [read more.](#)

[Lifelong Learning UK launches practical advice on using technology for learning](#)

(LLUK, 20 Jan '11)

**LLUK** has published the results of its investigation into how technology is changing teaching and learning.

[Online learning reaches out to isolated Scottish students](#) (Guardian, 2 Feb '11)

**University of the Highlands and Islands'** digital network links more than 100 colleges and learning centres in remote communities

[How to beat technology addiction](#) (Guardian, 14 Feb '11)

Has your BlackBerry taken over your life, or your iPhone? Academics are trying to find ways to help.

## **INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING (IfL)**

[Changes to IfL membership announced](#) (IfL, 8 Feb '11)

From 1 April 2011 IfL will become a fully self-financed independent professional body. After this date IfL members will pay their own fees, as is the case for other professional bodies.

[Institute for Learning membership – Q&A sheet](#) (SfA, 8 Feb '11)

[IfL's Impact Review 2009-10](#) (IfL, 3 Feb '11)

This Review highlights some of IfL's achievements over the last year, key facts and figures, and the difference members say IfL has made to their professional practice.

[IfL review of CPD \(2009-10\) – "Excellence in professional development: looking back, looking forward"](#) (published December 2010)

IfL has brought out a second review, outlining the fact that the majority of its members are doubling the minimum number of hours required to complete their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

[Teachers and trainers show strong investment in CPD](#) (FE News, 12 Jan '11)

### [Grants for initial teacher training](#)

There is still time for employers to apply for the £400 initial teacher training (ITT) grant for IfL members undertaking a part time, in-service DTLLS qualification in 2010-11.

### [Wolf Review to cover FE lecturers' role in schools](#) (TES, 28 Jan '11)

**Prof Alison Wolf's report** on vocational education will stretch beyond its remit and advise on whether FE lecturers should be able to teach in schools on a full teacher's salary, ministers have revealed. At a debate in Westminster Hall, **Children's Minister, Tim Loughton**, told MPs the report due in the spring will recommend whether FE lecturers with QTLS (qualified teacher learning and skills) status would have to take separate schools qualifications.

## FURTHER EDUCATION

### [FE has much to celebrate, but more needs to be achieved](#) (FE News, 10 Dec '10)

**Ofsted's Chief Inspector's Report for 2009/10** reveals considerable improvement across the FE sector, with particular emphasis on colleges, adult learning and within the work-based learning sector.

### [Ringing in the new - addressing the challenges for FE](#) (FE News, 21 Dec '10)

Few would disagree that 2010 was a time of tumultuous change for all education institutions. With the start of a new year it's a good opportunity to take stock of some of the adjustments to the FE sector and look at how the land lies going forward into 2011, says **Rob Elliott, Products Manager for Capita FHE**.

### [A new map for reaching 'outstanding'?](#) (FE News, 23 Dec '10)

Most forecasts indicate that FE is entering the perfect storm - an increased demand for skills from those who are un- or under-employed at the same time as spending cuts and the coalition Government's move toward a 'bigger society' and 'smaller state'. With national agencies such as Ofsted likely to play a lighter touch role in future, staff are looking to their leaders more than ever for strong vision, reassurance and motivation. Yet how do college leaders and managers navigate their way through this storm, asks **John Stone, Chief Executive of LSN**.

### [Colleges in the Community Joint Inquiry - Call for Evidence](#) (NIACE, 17 Feb '11)

Following launch of this Joint Inquiry last December, which aims to improve understanding of the relationship colleges have with their communities, **NIACE, AoC and the 157 Group** have issued a **Call for Evidence**.

**If you wish to make submission to the Inquiry the deadline for responses is Friday 18 March 2011.**

### [Colleges must become job brokers](#) (Guardian, 15 Feb '11)

A new government programme designed to cut the number of benefit claimants will place the financial burden on further education colleges, says **Neil Merrick** in the Guardian.

### [EMA cuts put brakes on student transport](#) (AoC, 17 Jan '11)

The proposed abolition of the **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)** will have a significant impact on students' ability to travel to College, according to a new survey conducted by the **Association of Colleges (AoC)** amongst its members.

### [Skills Funding Agency's Data Service launches new MI Library service](#) (SfA, 14 Dec '10)

**SfA's Data Service** has launched a new MI Library service which will give the further education sector and its partners access to a wide range of essential information at their fingertips.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### [HE Student Finance - Good News for Part-time Students](#)

**The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** has announced that part-time students in England will benefit from new loans for tuition from the 2012/13 academic year. These rules introduce a level playing field for full-time and part-time study for the costs of tuition for the first time.

### **The Tuition Fees Debate continues:**

#### [Tuition fees 'to soar despite warnings'](#) (BBC News, 12 Feb '11)

Despite all the Government warnings, the clear signs are that the great majority of universities in England will raise fees above £6,000 - with most going straight to the £9,000 maximum, according to this article on the BBC website, however [Universities in England could be stripped of the power to charge tuition fees](#) of more than £6,000 a year if they fail to admit sufficient numbers of students from poorer backgrounds.

**Steve Besley**, Head of Policy (UK & International) at the Pearson Centre for Policy & Learning also comments on this in his **February Policy Watch** "[Gaining Access to HE](#)".

While [university applications rise as candidates race to avoid higher fees](#), says the **Guardian** (5 Jan '11).

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

**The Commons Business, Innovation & Skills Select Committee** are currently undertaking an Inquiry into "**The Future of HE**" to look at:

- the conclusions of the Browne Report and the content of the Government's proposed White Paper on higher education (including the Government's proposals for widening participation and access); and
- the role and future of state funding in higher education

### [Young people are already turning their backs on university](#) (Guardian, 14 Feb '11)

If you take a proper look at the university application figures, it's clear that many 18-year-olds are already shunning degrees and applying for apprenticeships, says **Mike Baker** in his article for the Guardian.

## **Russell Group publishes its first ever Guide to Post-16 Subject Choices**

**"Informed Choices"**, produced in collaboration with the **Institute of Career Guidance**, is aimed at all students considering A-level and equivalent options. It includes advice on the best subject combinations for a wide range of university courses as well as advice on the best choices if young people don't know what they want to study after school and need to keep their options open.

However, **Tom Sperlinger** warns "[education choices aren't how they seem in this Russell Group guide](#)" in the **Guardian** (14 Feb '11).

## **[HEFCE, Universities UK & GuildHE Consultation on "Providing information that helps students make the right HE choices"](#)** (November 2010)

This is a joint consultation by the **Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)**, **Universities UK** and **GuildHE** on proposals for: giving prospective students useful information about HE courses; developing the National Student Survey; and improving accessibility to the information that HE institutions publish about their courses and which is used for quality assurance.

## **Aim Higher to cease this July**

It has been reported in the **YPLA's Parliamentary & Public Affairs Update (6 Dec '10)** that the Government has announced that funding for the **[Aim Higher](#)** programme will cease in July 2011.

The **Times Higher Education Supplement** also reported on this last November - "[Aimhigher brought down by coalition axe](#)".

## **[Open University may be in its 40s - but students are getting younger!](#)** (Guardian, 3 Jan '11)

It has long been the butt of jokes about 1970s jumpers and straggly beards, but 40 years after the **Open University** broadcast its first televised lecture aimed at mature students, it is increasingly attracting young learners determined to avoid daunting college debts.

## **[Government creates new "Advocate for Access to HE" role](#)** (Guardian, 29 Dec '10)

**The Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader, Simon Hughes MP**, has been appointed as the new **Advocate for Access to Higher Education**, by the Coalition Government.

**The National Union of Students (NUS)** has written an **[open letter to Simon Hughes](#)** welcoming the creation of the role and setting out a series of recommendations that it is essential he address if he is to ensure that the Government's rise in tuition fees does not narrow access to higher education.

## **[Fancy studying for an MA in The Beatles?](#)** (Guardian, 27 Jan '11)

Canadian **Mary-Lu Zahalan-Kennedy** has become the first graduate of **Liverpool Hope University's** MA in the Beatles, Popular Music and Society.

Take this **[quick quiz](#)** to see to if you too could become Beatles MA graduate!

[Publication of studies on flexible and innovative provision in HE](#) (wired-gov.net, 21 Feb '11)

**The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)** has published three studies relating to flexible and innovative provision in HE.

## REGIONAL NEWS & NETWORKS

[South West RDA to close by March 2012](#) (January 2011)

In a statement on their website the South West RDA have confirmed that the Agency will close in March 2012. The South West RDA's [Transition and Closure programme](#), gives a broader account of the work they will continue to undertake leading up to March 2012.

### Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs):

**The Commons Business, Innovation & Skills Select Committee's Inquiry into "The New Local Enterprise Partnerships"** has published its **first report** "[The New Local Enterprise Partnerships: An Initial Assessment](#)" (9 Dec '10). The report looks at the Government's policy of introducing new LEPs to replace the Regional Development Agencies and makes several recommendations including financial support for LEPs during the start-up phase - which the Government had not planned to provide. You can also read the **Committee's statement** on the report [here](#).

[Devon and Somerset County Councils](#) are preparing to submit a joint bid for a council and business-led local enterprise partnership (LEP) covering both local authority areas. (SW Forum, 12 Jan '11)

[Local Enterprise Partnerships - Research by Capacitybuilders](#) (SW Forum, 4 Jan '11)

Research published by **Capacitybuilders** shows that 85% of local voluntary and community sector support providers would be interested in working with a LEP but only 15% have been approached to be involved.

### [Regional businesses call for clarity on LEPs plan](#)

Local business groups have warned confusion over the role of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) is hampering business growth and undermining the Government's rhetoric about a private sector-led economic recovery, writes **Sarah Arnott** in the **Independent** (1 Feb '11).

["LEP Watch"](#) - use this **website** to keep up-to-date with the latest developments regarding LEPs both nationally and regionally.

[BIS to create six Regional Government Offices](#) (SLIM, 15 Feb '11)

**The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** is to set up a network of offices around England to help implement its policies on a local level, just months after the Department for Local Government abolished the eight regional Government Offices as part of a drive for decentralisation.

[Localism Bill - in plain English](#) (www.communities.gov.uk, 17 Jan '11)

**The Government** have published a 'plain english' guide to the **Localism and Decentralisation Bill**.

### **Big cash injection into South West food and drink industry** (SLIM, 11 Jan '11)

Food and drink employers in the South West are being invited to dip into a £290,000 funding pot to help train their staff. The **National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacturing** has secured the cash from the **South West RDA** through **South West Food and Drink** on behalf of its members in the region.

### **Around the Region:**

#### **Swindon Apprentice wins BBC Young Plumber of the Year** (BBC Wiltshire, 8 Dec '10)

Former **Swindon College** apprentice **Aimee Patterson**, 23, competed against hundreds of applicants for the title of Britain's best young plumber on the **BBC 3 show**.

#### **Regional call ups to UK Squad for WorldSkills 2011**

- [Bridgwater College students selected for Squad UK for WorldSkills London 2011](#) (Somerset Life, 10 Dec '10)
- [Weston College Student set to take on the world](#) (This is Bristol, 6 Jan '11)

#### **High praise for Hartpury College** (This is Gloucestershire, 17 Jan '11)

Although **Hartpury College** is already well known for its achievement in sports competitions and for being one of the country's largest providers of land-management courses, its high-quality academic support and care for individual learners have also been identified as key strengths by **Ofsted**.

#### **How College boss taught winning ways** (This is Somerset, 13 Jan '11)

How **Paul Phillips** turned **Weston College** from a failing to a thriving college in 10 years.

#### **How does class affect student behaviour?** (Guardian, 25 Jan '11)

Researchers at the **University of the West of England in Bristol** have just started a major study into how rich and poor students experience university life in different ways by tracking 80 students from their first day of university through to their graduation, and on to their first job.

### **Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network (WVLLN) 14-19 EKEN event:**

#### ***"The Changing Landscape of Vocational Progression to HE"***

**Date: Tuesday 5 April 2011      Venue: University of the West of England, Bristol**

The event will provide an opportunity to:

- find out more about changes taking place in Level 3 vocational qualifications
- hear about the student experience of progression to HE from vocational qualifications
- understand more about Apprenticeships as a progression pathway
- discuss the issues as they relate to you, your work and your learners.

and sessions will include:

- the current context for vocational and vocationally-related qualifications and progression to HE
- an overview of changes to BTEC
- Advanced Diploma progression to HE - the student experience
- Apprenticeships and the development of higher level skills
- discussion groups

**Click here to register for your FREE place now or e-mail [Kate Thomas](mailto:Kate.Thomas@uwe.ac.uk) (tel: 0117 328 1436)**

### [Youth Service Crisis – SW Regional Youth Work Units supports National Rally](#)

(12 Feb '11)

Staff from the **South West Regional Youth Work** travelled with hundreds of young people and youth workers to **Solihull on Saturday 12 February '11** to join the largest rally ever held in support of youth services. The rally was organised as part of the national **[Chooseyouth Campaign](#)**.

Cuts to youth services provided by local authorities and the voluntary sector are expected to be between 20%-30%. In some parts of the South West, local authority funding for youth work will fall by more than 70%, with the closure of hundreds of youth centres and projects.

To show support for your local youth services [click here](#).

### **Adult Learners' Week 2011 Nominations - A Big Thank You**

**Learning South West** would like to thank all those who took the time to submit nominations for this year **[Adult Learners' Week Awards](#)** - we received over 140 nominations from the South West alone! Short listing is now taking place and the winners will be notified by the end of March.

### **["How to run a successful Adult Learners' Week Event" – A Morning Workshop](#)**

**Date: Tuesday 8 March 2011      Venue: Learning SW, Bishops Hull House, Taunton**

We still have a few places left on this **FREE** session which is for anyone who is thinking of running (or planning) an event during this year's Adult Learners Week (14-20 May '10) but doesn't know where to start!

**To book your place on this workshop and to find out more about Adult Learner's Week in the South West Region, please e-mail [alw@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:alw@learning-southwest.org.uk) or call (01823) 347955.**

### **Learning South West Membership reaches 70 plus**

Over 70 organisations have now signed up to **[Learning South West's new Membership Service](#)**. If your organisation is interested in joining us, **please ring the Membership Team** on (01823) 347951 or e-mail [membership@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:membership@learning-southwest.org.uk) to find out more about our various membership packages.

### **Get Weaving with Golden Thread**

There is still time to request support from the **Golden Thread project**, which runs until the end of **June 2011**. It works with private training providers of all sizes, FE colleges, and organisations in the voluntary & community sector who deal with learners and clients with Skills for Life needs. A wide range of support and CPD activities have been delivered to meet the specific needs expressed by training providers and their staff.

Examples include:

- Individual mentoring sessions to help organisations/individuals with specific problems.
- Embedding literacy and numeracy in NVQs and apprenticeships.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment.
- How active learning can help skills for life practice.
- Dyslexia awareness and strategies to support this.

**If you would like to find out more about the project and how it could help your organisation, please contact [sue\\_edwards@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:sue_edwards@learning-southwest.org.uk)**

**LSIS SfLLN/SWCETT/Golden Thread Project - Skills for Life Dissemination Event:**

***"A Window on Language Literacy and Numeracy - Good Practice in the South West"***

**Date: Wednesday 16 March 2011      Venue: Exeter Racecourse, Devon EX2 7XS**

This one-day dissemination event is aimed at all learning and skills providers developing and delivering literacy, language and numeracy programmes to learners and staff across the sector who have an interest in hearing about and sharing examples of good practice.

**To request further information and/or to book your place, e-mail [john\\_gibson@learning-southwest.org.uk](mailto:john_gibson@learning-southwest.org.uk) or telephone (01823) 365650.**

**The closing date for applications is Thursday 10 March 2011.**

**"Assessment & Quality Assurance in the Qualifications & Curriculum Framework (QCF)"**

**Date: Monday 21 March 2011 OR Tuesday 3 May 2011**

**Venue: Learning South West, Bishops Hull, Taunton**

This seminar will help you to understand how the introduction of the QCF will affect your practice and what you need to do, and follows on from our successful ["Introducing the New Qualifications for Assessors" Seminars](#) held earlier this year.

**Who should attend?**

Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers of QCF qualifications, as well as those responsible for their training and development.

**[Click here](#) to book your place now!**

**Institute for Learning (IfL) Regional Conference: "IfL supporting CPD in the Regions - Promoting & Supporting Brilliant Teaching & Training"**

**Date: Wednesday 23 March 2011      Venue: Learning SW, Bishops Hull, Taunton**

[The Institute for Learning](#), as the professional body for teaching and training in the FE and skills sector, is proud to be an organisation "run for members by members". IfL are keen to engage with practitioners across the Region, to hear practitioner views and to encourage members to get involved. Working in partnership with **Learning South West** and the **SWCETT**, IfL are pleased to offer this one-day event to support practitioners in the South West Region

**Who should attend?**

- Practitioners interested in finding out more about IfL and how they can get involved at local level
- IfL Volunteer Connections
- Those interested in encouraging and supporting their colleagues to aspire to 'brilliant teaching and training'

**[Click here](#) to book your place now!**

***Have you ever thought about using Bishops Hull House for your own meetings and events?***

Bishops Hull House is a beautiful Georgian property which boasts 3 well equipped meeting rooms, Priory Winchester and Chantry, and is just a short drive from J26 of the M5 in the Somerset village of Bishops Hull, near Taunton. Our choice of rooms can accommodate your meeting, whether it is large or small, and our friendly yet professional team can cater for all your needs.

**For further details and costs [visit our website](#) or contact Steven Moore on (01823) 347953.**