

Programme

Day One – Wednesday 15 May

09:00 **Registration, networking and refreshments with exhibitors**

10:00 **Conference welcome and opening remarks**

Maggie Galliers CBE, Chair, Learning and Work Institute

10:05 **Introduction to the conference**

Lynn French, Vice Principal: Finance and Resources, Macclesfield College and Chair of the Colleges' Finance Directors' Group

10:15 **Financial data project and the challenges facing colleges**

Matthew Atkinson, Director of Provider Market Oversight, Education and Skills Funding Agency

This session will include:

- Why ESFA is changing the financial plans and finance record to improve the finance data collected from and shared with colleges
- The lessons from college restructuring
- The financial challenges ahead for colleges

10:45 **How to make a merged college work**

Ian Pryce CBE, Principal & Chief Executive, The Bedford College Group

This session will include:

- Defining a merged college
- Determining the initial priorities
- Demonstrating why a good Finance Director makes all the difference

11:15 **Questions and answers with the panel**

11:30 **Refreshments and networking with exhibitors**

12:00 **Breakout session strand one**

Delegates should select to attend one of the following sessions

1.1 Managing multiple sites

Speaker to be confirmed

1.2 Cyber Security: Why it matters to college and to budgets, and why it should matter to you

Hannah H, Education & Academic Engagement, National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)- part of GCHQ

In this interactive session we will learn more about the nature of the cyber threat that colleges need to be prepared for whilst keeping our feet firmly on the ground about the very real financial pressures the sector faces.

We'll hear case studies of what has gone right as well as what has gone wrong and see how cyber security needs to be treated as an inherent business risk, with good practice embedded throughout the organisation. In other words, delegates will learn that cyber security isn't "just good IT" but is about people and processes as much as hardware and software.

- The nature of cyber threats and vulnerabilities faced by colleges – and their potential costs
- Organisational structure and cyber security: who should be responsible for it and why
- Low cost approaches that could significantly reduce your risk of being affected by a cyber attack

1.3 Colleges adopting a collaborative approach to overcome shared challenges

Phillip Moseley, Senior Consultant, Benchmarking, Tribal

This session will use real-life scenarios to reveal how colleges have been proactively sharing benchmarking information to better understand and address their shared challenges around resourcing, strategic decision making, and evidencing performance and value for money statements. We'll explore how their collaboration is enabling them to justify the big decisions and address commonly-held assumptions in order to move their colleges forwards.

- How colleges can embark on collaborative projects in a straight-forward, objective manner, that bypasses the cultural and structural differences that often hinder collaboration.
- The benefits of moving towards evidenced value-for-money statements and what it means for your financial performance as well as the student experience
- How colleges, through a collaborative approach to benchmarking, can take ownership of a cohesive message that can affect views and policy of funding regulators and other stakeholders

1.4 ESFA financial framework

Speaker invited

13:00 Lunch and networking

14:00 Welcome back from the conference chair

Maggie Galliers CBE, Chair, Learning and Work Institute

14:05 Policy and funding update

Julian Gravatt, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

This session will cover what we know, what we don't know and what we can predict including:

- Recent trends in college finance and funding
- Current education policy and what these mean for colleges
- Planning budgets for the 2020s

14:35 Apprenticeships programme and funding

Jonathan Childs, Deputy Director, Apprenticeship Funding and Strategy, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Department for Education

The session will provide an overview of the apprenticeship reforms introduced in 2017 and how the current funding arrangements work, as well as key developments and changes since 2017. It will also reflect on the challenges facing the programme as we enter a spending review to set the future budget for apprenticeships.

- Recent reforms to apprenticeships and current funding arrangements
- Progress of the apprenticeships programme and trends since 2017
- Future challenges

15:05 Questions and answers with the panel

15:20 Refreshments and networking with exhibitors

15:50 Breakout session strand two

Delegates should select to attend one of the following sessions

2.1 How to deal with the demands of combined authorities

Lowell Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Dudley College of Technology

Across England, AEB devolution is happening differently - different strategies, different ambitions and different relationships with colleges. Recognising the need for a coherent college voice, the approach adopted by colleges leaders in the West Midlands is delivering influence, profile and new funding opportunities.

This session explores the behaviours, risks, new ways of working and lessons learned from the work done by college leaders in the West Midlands to be strategically positioned with their Mayoral Combined Authority.

- Discuss how college leaders can work together to make devolution work for colleges.
- Understand the strategic advantages to being close partners with Mayoral Combined Authorities.
- Discuss methods and strategies to engaging with Mayoral Combined Authorities in different local contexts.

2.2 16-19 Funding and Development Update

Kevin Street, Head of 16-19 Funding Development, Education and Skills Funding Agency

This session will provide an update on 16-19 funding and development of programmes in line with the skills plan and will include:

- Current and future funding developments
- An update on the skills plan progress such as T Levels and Transition framework
- An opportunity for finance professionals to discuss how future developments will impact on them

2.3 Pensions update

Julian Gravatt, Deputy Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

This session will include:

- an update on the latest Teacher Pension Scheme valuation
- the forthcoming Local Government Pension Scheme valuation
- the options for colleges (not that there are many)

2.4 Creating an effective FE Estates Strategy: How to capture curriculum vision, drive improved space utilisation and deliver a sustainable financial future

Peter Marsh, Managing Director, Peter Marsh Consulting Ltd

This presentation will consider how an effective estates strategy needs to give an honest assessment of condition, functionality and space utilisation and the range of options open to colleges to align their estates and curriculum visions in an era of limited capital grants and tight revenue funding.

The presentation will draw on lessons from colleges who have been through the SPA and merger process as well as those who have used their estates development to support their journey to achieving outstanding and college of the year. This session will include:

- A discussion on how big your estate should be – tools and techniques to right size, reduce costs and create a vibrant learning community
- Innovative learning strategies and classroom 'boxes' – getting the vision right and achieving a balance of space types
- Finance and funding – options for capital funding and how to generate revenue savings

16:50 Close of day sessions – Delegates to check into hotel

18:45 Drinks reception

19:30 Conference dinner

Day Two – Thursday 16 May

08:45 **Registration, networking and refreshments**

09:30 **Conference welcome**

Maggie Galliers CBE, Chair, Learning and Work Institute

09:35 **What do Colleges, Employers and Learners really need?**

Steve Frampton, President, Association of Colleges

In this session Steve Frampton will look at what colleges need from Government in the Comprehensive Spending Review and share an update on the AoC Campaigning work. Steve will also explore what students and employers really want and need and will share a case study from Portsmouth College which will highlight the potential to meet both with a digital strategy at the core of the work.

10:05 **Keynote**

Jan Edrich, Chief Executive and Principal, Eastleigh College

In the context of continuous policy developments, multiple changes in the funding regulations and the challenges of balancing college budgets, how can you work with the governors to support their understanding of a college's financial position and the strategic options?

In this session Jan Edrich will share her insight on:

- The increasing financial complexities, allocations and speculation, and the challenge it presents
- The expectation of governors in the insolvency regime
- A multi-layered approach to enabling governors to be confident in their understanding of the college's financial position
- How to support an effective curriculum plan from a finance director's perspective
- Balancing college finances and the new problem of constructing a budget given the multiple pressures, reduction of growth opportunity in funding, the need for more commercial work and the fact that now a proportion of GFE budgets are made up from tenders and contracts not allocations anymore.
- Board relationship management - Financial reporting and working with Boards, particularly in the context of the new Insolvency regime

10:35 **Questions and answers with the panel**

10:50 **Refreshments and networking**

11:20 **Breakout session strand three**

Delegates should select to attend one of the following sessions

3.1 Curriculum planning and student engagement

Steve Frampton, President, Association of Colleges

A case study of Portsmouth College. The college is one of UK's most rapidly growing colleges

3.2 Stay VAT alert? Making VAT digital – Brexit – Sector VAT challenges from HMRC

Liz Maher OBE, Director, Centurion VAT Specialists

With all these issues on a Finance Director's agenda it makes sense to stay alert to the latest news affecting the Further Education Sector. Do join Liz Maher as she ensures you get the up to date VAT views on these and other key VAT areas for the sector.

- Latest update on Making VAT Digital issues
- What practical things business can do about preparing for Brexit
- What Challenges we are seeing from HMRC for the Sector

3.3 Debt finance and cashflow modelling

Adrian Ford, Deputy Principal Corporate Resources, Wiltshire College

12:20 **Lunch and networking**

13:20 **Conference welcome back**

Maggie Galliers CBE, Chair, Learning and Work Institute

13:25 **Modern leadership in a modern world**

Jack Lowman, Founder and Author of Hack Yourself

The leadership approaches of the past won't be fit for the future. Digital transformation, innovation, new working environments and many other transformative changes are demanding a new kind of modern leader with the skills and mind-set to navigate the fast paced and uncertain landscape that we now operate in. In this session Jack Lowman will give an insight into:

- What's changing in leadership
- What it takes to be a modern leader in a modern world

- Discuss ways that you can better lead your teams and develop a strong, unified team culture in what is a challenging environment for everyone
- Practical ways to bring modern leadership to life no matter what your job title

14:15 Plenary session closing remarks

14:20 Conference close